

A Prolegomena to the Philosophy of Relations in Buddhism

Buddha's discovery in the light of the Philosophical Atmosphere in India before and during the time of the Buddha

1—Man, The Object of Inquiry

THE attention of the philosopher and thinker in India was centred more on the individual than on the external world unlike in the western world where the attention of the philosopher was more directed to the problems of the external world divorced from the individual. Their speculations on the reality of the external world was derivative of the speculations on the reality of man. Interest in the environment was prompted by an interest in the individual. It was the problem of religion that stimulated the philosophic spirit. There was to be noticed in India a very harmonious kinship between religion and philosophy, for the Indians never strived to divorce theory from practice. Knowledge being the prerequisite of conduct, philosophy served as a corrective to religion. Therefore in India, the philosophic attempt to determine the nature of reality started with the "thinking self" and rarely with the object of thought. "Know thyself" (*ātmanāṇi viddhi*)¹ summed up the whole endeavour of religious pursuit. This subjective approach to the realization of the deepest truth is one of the salient characteristics of Indian thought.

The Brahmajāla Sutta² among a host of others, testifies to the existence of innumerable theories about the nature and reality of the individual (*atta*) and the world (*loka*). As is evident from these texts, India was seething with philosophical speculations when the Buddha appeared on the scene. A congeries of conflicting theories about the internal as well as external reality was formulated by teachers and founders of separate schools of thought depending on definite epistemological standpoints. According to the Brahmajāla Sutta, these teachers, excluding the theologians who mostly depended on testimony,³ depended on two ways of knowing, namely

1. Bhṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad II. 4.5; Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad I. 12.
Etad ātmanāṇi nityam evātmasamsthā
Nātaḥ param veditavyam hi kiñcit.

2. D. I. 1 ff.

3. M. I. 520 ff.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

the intuitional and the rational, in propounding their theories. On the one hand there were the rationalists (*takkī, vīmamsī*)⁴ who resorting to logic and dialectics (*takkapariyāhataṃ vīmamsānucaritaṃ*) constructed their theories about the reality of the individual and the external world. The others, whom we might aptly call religious teachers, depended on intuition⁵ for the realization of truth about man and universe. By a gradual process of taining the mind (*ātappaṃ anvāya padhānaṃ anvāya anuyogaṃ anvāya*) they were able to reach such rapture of mind (*tathārūpaṃ cetosamādhiṃ phusati*) that they could gain extra-sensory powers such as reminiscence of past births (*pubbenivāsānussati*) and the knowledge of appearance and disappearance of beings (*cutūpapāta ñāṇa*) by which they could verify for themselves the truth.

2.—*Development of the Two Trends*

Out of these two trends, one the rational and the other the intuitional, it appears that the former dates back to the time of the Ṛg Veda, if not earlier. If, for example, we take into consideration the problem of survival dealt with in the Ṛg Veda, later developed in the Brahmanas and some of the Upaniṣads, we see that it is a theory of speculative origin. In the Ṛg Veda we do not come across the belief in rebirth. We find only a one-life-after-death theory⁶ which held that man on the dissolution of the body at death, passes on to the heaven where he revels in the company of Yama, the first of the mortals to go there.⁷ Here, uniting with a glorious body, he enters upon a life of bliss which is free from imperfections and bodily frailties, in which all desires are fulfilled and which is passed among the gods. Life here was considered to be everlasting. It was taken for granted that the wicked had no place in this heaven for only those who have acquired merit by performing sacrifices etc., are born there. The sinners are said to fall into a bottomless pit of darkness.⁸ When we come to the time of the Brahmanas it was believed that more the number of sacrifices performed, greater was one's store of merit. This resulted in the differentiation in one's status within heaven. These speculations led to a natural development. If the length and glory of one's next life depended on what is done here, if the sum total of merits is limited, then the question arose as to what happens

4. D. I. 16.

5. *ibid.* 13 ff.

6. RV. X. 14.

7. *ibid.* X. 14. 2—Yamo no gatur prathamo viveda.

8. *ibid.* X. 132. 4; IV. 5. 5; IX. 73. 8; X. 152. 4.

to a man when the stock of merit is exhausted (*ksīṇye punye*).⁹ This resulted in the formation of the conception of "second death" (*punar mṛtyuḥ*).¹⁰ The greatest fear of the Brahmanical thinkers was the fear of this second death. Some believed that the second death resulted in the individual fading out into non-existence—a suggestion of the later doctrine of annihilation. Others suggested that after the second-death there was a possibility of rebirth on earth. In the Upaniṣads we find this theory being further elaborated and a fanciful description of the path by which man returns to earth is also given.¹¹ A careful examination of this theory of survival would thus reveal its speculative origin.

Along with this theory of rebirth which is the work of the rationalist (*takkī, vīmaṃsī*) there existed the findings of the Yogins (*muni*) who had developed intuition. There is plenty of justification to say that the intuitional method of verifying truth is not one that belongs to the Vedic tradition but to the non-Aryan tradition which goes back to the time of Mohenjodāro.¹² The sage (*muni*) who developed such powers was a stranger to the Vedas.¹³ On the other hand if we can believe in the theory put forward by some scholars¹⁴ that the Mohenjodāro-Harappa civilization was Dravidian, that of the non-Aryans who inhabited the Indian continent before and during the time of the advent of Aryans, then we are not hard put to it to say that the practice of Yoga, as revealed from one of the seals discovered at Mohenjodaro was current among the pre-Aryan inhabitants of India.¹⁵ Due to the assimilative nature of the Aryan civilization we find that during the time of the Aṛanyakas, the Aryans were accommodating this practice within their religious system. After that it became a part and parcel of the Vedic civilization and during the time of the Upaniṣads the development of intuition has become a predominant feature of the higher religion.

When we come to the time of Buddha we see that divergent and conflicting theories about the nature of reality, the reality of the world beyond, and the continuance of the soul after death were put forward and as the Brahmajāla Sutta goes on to state very clearly all of them were based on these two methods¹⁶ of verification. From the same Sutta, it appears that

9. Belvalkar and Ranade—History of Indian Philosophy. II. p. 27.

10. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. II. 3. 3. 8; and X. 4. 3. 12; Jaiminiya—Up. Br. III. 28. 4.

11. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. VI. 2. 15-16.

12. Punde. G. C.—Origins of Buddhism (1957), p. 256.

13. RV. X. 136 (Kesi Sūkta.)

14. Marshall—Mohenjodaro and Indus Civilization. I. 70.

15. Wheeler—Indus Civilization. p. 79.

16. D. I. 13.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

they were not only the rationalists who engaged themselves in metaphysical speculations of this nature, but also the mystics, as mentioned above, who had a glimpse into the nature of reality by developing the higher faculties of perception, who began to speculate and thus fell into difficulty. Speculation on their findings led them to describe that reality each one according to his own whims and fancies¹⁷ and thus came about the diversity of theories. Buddha describes how these religionists who had developed extra-sensory powers had been able to penetrate into a limited period of the past¹⁸ and depending on that knowledge and made declarations about the nature of reality. So it was not only the rationalist philosopher, but also the Intuitionist, who began to speculate on whatever he discovered by the development of intuition, who entered into the controversies regarding the nature of reality.

There were eternalists (*sassatavādi*)¹⁹ who believed in the continuance and permanency of the individual self (*atta*) as well as the world (*loka*); unqualified eternalists (*ekaccasassata-ekaccāsassatavādi*)²⁰ who considered the individual self and the world to be partly eternal and partly not. There were believers in fortuitous origin or chance occurrence (*adhiccasamuppannavādi*)²¹ and some others believed in the creative activity of an almighty God (*issaranimmānavādi*).²² Lastly, to be met with, were the materialists who very strongly held that the individual after death is completely annihilated, is cut off and destroyed (*ucchedavādi*).²³

These wranglers went on abusing one another and demonstrating their several theories with the help of logic and reason.²⁴ The theory that one of them held to be true and irrefutable, the other proved to be false by equally convincing arguments.²⁵ Therefore the alternatives left were that either all of those theories should be correct or all were false.²⁶ The first alternative cannot be accepted for there cannot be several truths in the world. The Kalahavivāda Sutta²⁷ very clearly analyses this situation and shows

17. D. I. 14.

18. Ibid. 13-14.

19. Ibid. 13 ff.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid. 28 ff.

22. M. II. 222 f.

23. D. I. 34 f.

24. Sn. 886.

25. Yamāhu saccam tathiyam'ti eke,
Tamāhu aññe tuccham musā'ti.—Sn. 883.

26. ibid. 890.

27. ibid. p. 168 ff.

the futility of all speculative theories and philosophical controversies as they do not contribute to knowledge. One philosopher calls the other a fool; and the other retorts with the same term of abuse. According to the Sutta if they were both correct, either they should both be fools, or they should both be wise men and there should be no fools at all among the religionists.²⁸ Unfortunately these arguments engender passion and lead to a considerable amount of heart-breaking and thus the real purpose behind their quest for knowledge was completely defeated. None of them appears to have been aware of the nature and scope of the main instrument, i.e. reason, that they were making use of.

It is, therefore, not at all surprising to hear people complaining to the Buddha, who had come with a new message of hope, about their utter dissatisfaction with regard to the teachings of these philosophers and religious teachers.²⁹ The statement of the Kālāmas of Kesaputta is a shining example of this dissatisfaction and remorse. Approaching the Blessed One who had paid a visit to Kesaputta, the Kālāmas are represented as saying, "Sir, Certain recluses and brahmins come to Kesaputta. As to their own view they proclaim and expound it in full but as to the views of others; they abuse it, revile it, depreciate it, and cripple it. Moreover, Sir, other recluses and brahmins, on coming to Kesaputta, do likewise. When we listen to them, Sir, we have doubt (*kaṅkhā*) and wavering (*vicikicchā*) as to which of these teachers is speaking the truth and which speaks falsehood."³⁰ The direct result of these endless logomachies, as would become clear from the above passage, was chaos and disintegration of values. This indecision of thought was really injurious to man's ethical interest and endeavour. "Anarchy in thought was leading to anarchy in morals."³¹ Minute distinctions of metaphysical conceits and the habit of restless questioning, or the refinement of reason by the subtle disputes of sects did not lead to man's emancipation or happiness. Moral life descended to a low ebb due to the metaphysical subtleties and theological discussions absorbing the time and energy of the people. A correct evaluation of the Buddha's teaching would be possible only in the light of this background for "every system of thought embodies and reflects the tendencies of the time, and cannot be understood unless we realize the point of view from which it looked at the world and the habit of thought which made it possible".³²

28. *ibid.* 890.

29. A. I. 189 f.

30. A. I. 189 f.

31. Radhakrishnan—Indian Philosophy, Vol. I. p. 353.

32. *ibid.* p. 352.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

A correct and true estimation of the teachings of the Buddha could be made only against this background which is so clearly portrayed to us in the Pali Nikāyas.

3.—*Buddha's Discovery*

The foregoing remarks describe the philosophical atmosphere in which the Buddha was born and bred. He himself bears testimony to the fact that he had been, before he attained perfect and supreme Enlightenment (*pubbe va abhisambodhā*), a follower of many of these schools of thought.³³ The Pali texts stress the fact that the Buddha had attained Enlightenment without the help of a teacher;³⁴ and this is acceptable with reference to the final stages of emancipation. The Mahāyānist Scriptures have gone beyond the limits in their elaboration of the same theme.³⁵ Other frequent references in the Pali canon would show that he was said to be teacher-less (*na me ācariyo atthi*) only in a qualified sense; in that he had transcended or gone beyond his own teachers like Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. From the Ariyapariyesana Sutta,³⁶ as well as from the Brahmajāla and Sāmaññaphala Suttas,³⁷ it is clearly evident that he, in his search for truth, resorted to yogic concentration, i.e. the intuitionist approach to reality. A careful analysis of the contents of the Ariyapariyesana Sutta would reveal the fact that the Buddha attained perfect and supreme Enlightenment by following the same path along which he was led by Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. Even if we are to take into consideration the gradual path, recommended in the Buddhist texts, which leads to the attainment of final emancipation (*saññāvedayita-nirodha*) we see that the immediately preceding two rungs in this ladder of spiritual development are the two states, "the sphere of nothingness" (*akiñcaññāyatana*)³⁸ and "the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception" (*nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*)³⁹ the attainment of which the Buddha is said to have learnt under Ālāra⁴⁰ and Uddaka⁴¹ respectively.

33. M. I. 77 ff; 163 ff.

34. *ibid.* I. 171.

35. Lalita-vistara. See E. J. Thomas—The Life of Buddha, p. 46 f.

36. M. I. 160 ff.

37. D. I. 70 ff.

38. M. I. 160.

39. *ibid.*

40. *ibid.* 163-5.

41. *ibid.* 165-6.

All the references to the Buddha's attainment of supreme Enlightenment, in the Pali Nikāyas, are agreed in saying that the Buddha had developed intuition (*abhiññā*) and through that verified the truth. But the Buddha was clearly aware of the difficulties and contradictions into which his predecessors and contemporaries had fallen. It is because of this that he is made to say that the truth, the *dhamma*, discovered by him is not only profound, imperceptible, of difficult comprehension but also transcends the sphere of logical thinking (*atakkāvacara*).⁴² Unlike his predecessors and immediate contemporaries he clearly saw the difficulties and dangers involved in describing in symbols like words a reality which is open only to extra-sensory perception. The reluctance on his part to teach the doctrine or to impart the truth that he had discovered to the people was prompted not only by his awareness of the proneness of humanity to sensuality given in the Ariyapariyesana,⁴³ but also by the intellectual difficulty arising from the attempt to explain and so convince the people of an ultimate truth which transcends all forms of conceptions and hence of logical thinking.

4.—*Buddha's Silence Regarding Ultimate Problems*

Culla Mālunkya Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya describes only the pragmatic value of the Buddha's silence pertaining to problems of ultimate reality. "Whether there is the view that the world is eternal or whether there is the view that the world is not eternal there is birth, there is ageing, there is dying, there are grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation and despair, the suppression of which I lay down here and now."⁴⁴ Speculation on the problems of ultimate reality was thus, according to the Buddha, of no utilitarian value. It does not solve the immediate problem of the elimination of suffering.

But this is not the only reason which prompted the Buddha to observe silence with regard to such questions. There is another, and more important, reason given in the Aggi-Vacchagotta Sutta⁴⁵ and repeated in the Samyutta Nikāya,⁴⁶ which explains the intellectual difficulty, i.e. the difficulty arising from the attempt to describe and explain in empirical terminology something that is transcendental. Here we are told how a man called Vaccha was at a loss to understand the Buddha, how he was bewildered and confused

42. D. I. 12; M. I. 167.

43. M. I. 167.

44. *ibid.* 430.

45. *ibid.* 483 ff.

46. S. IV. 392-3; 396.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

and how even the measure of satisfaction he had from former conversations with the Buddha was lost, due to the indefinite replies given by the Buddha to the questions he raised pertaining to the nature of ultimate reality.⁴⁷ Buddha's reply was that he ought to entertain doubts, he ought to be bewildered and confused, for this *dhamma*, this ultimate truth, is deep, difficult to see, difficult to comprehend, peaceful, excellent, beyond dialectic (*atakkāvacaro*), subtle and intelligible to the wise. With the help of several similes he goes on to explain how such transcendental truths cannot be denoted by terms and symbols, such as those of language, which have originated in the explanation of phenomena.⁴⁸ Concepts, which according to Kant⁴⁹ are "categories," cannot be applied in the attempt to explain them. "Critical philosophy" which Kant is said to have initiated in the Western world,⁵⁰ was initiated by the Buddha in India, centuries ago.

This same difficulty is explained in the Sutta Nipāta, according to which there is something inherently wrong in the very premises, from which such speculation starts. On a careful examination and analysis they are all seen to rest on three things i.e., things seen (*ditṭha*), things heard (*suta*) and things cognised (*muta*).⁵¹ These three things belong to the sphere of sense-experience, the sphere of discursive reasoning (*saññā*).⁵² Hence, no doubt, the states transcending the sphere of sense experience are indescribable in terms of concepts belonging to the sphere of sense-perception.

Logical thought works with conceptions in which the totality of all possible experience undergone by the senses is preserved. The material it uses is, therefore, the world perceptible to the senses. For that very reason the forming of conceptions, and thereby all logical thought *per se*, is limited to that perceptible world. What is not accessible to perception through our senses cannot be caught and shut up into a conception and cannot therefore be made the object of logical thought. It does not lie within the realm of logical or conceptual thinking.

Out of the two reasons discussed above with regard to the Buddha's silence, one the pragmatic and the other the intellectual, the former explains why the Buddha *did not* and the latter why he *could not* explain such problems.

47. M. I. 487.

48. *ibid.*

49. Critique of Pure Reason—Tr. by Norman Kemp Smith, (1950), p. 308 f.

50. Höffding, H.—A Brief History of Modern Philosophy, (1922), p. 138.

51. Sn. 887.

52. *ibid.* 874.

Some of the modern-day Rationalists have expressed the view that the Buddha uses the expression *atakkâvacara* in *one* clearly defined case *only*, without exception, exclusively and solely, and this unique instance is when speaking of the state of a Delivered One (*nibbuta* or *parinibbuta*).⁵³ They are reluctant to believe that by using the term *atakkâvacara* Buddha had declared his doctrine itself (*dhamma*) to be inaccessible to logical thought or reasoning, for they argue, "How utterly absurd, however any such interpretation would be, has, no doubt, become sufficiently evident from the foregoing alone. He who by concentration of the mind united with energetic logical thought and reflexion, defines the road to the Absolute, to the state of Nibbāna, to the final goal,—he thereby certainly does defend himself (and in the sternest manner at that) against the insinuation that he declares his doctrine not to be within the realm of logical thought—his doctrine which, in its totality, is nothing but the road to the Absolute, the road to Nibbāna, to the final goal."⁵⁴

By trying to place the state of the Delivered One only to be beyond the realm of logical thinking these scholars have betrayed their ignorance of some important statements in the Pali texts themselves. In the first place the logical thought and reflexion which they refer to has to be given up in the next stage of the development of the mind only after which one is able to develop the higher faculties of perception (*abhiññā*) and thereby could see the nature of reality.⁵⁵ Not only the state of the Delivered person, but even the reality of a person who passes from one existence to the other, being propelled by his own kamma, is said to be beyond the realm of logical thought for it is perceived only by the development of the higher faculties such as the knowledge of the reminiscence of past births (*pubbenivāsānussati ñāṇa*) and the knowledge of the disappearance and appearance of beings (*catūpapāta ñāṇa*), the contents of which too are described as *atakkâvacara*.⁵⁶

From this it becomes clear that not only the state of the Perfected One, but also the reality of the unperfected individual as also the reality of the external world, were indescribable and are open only to extra-sensory perception. This appears to be the same position held by Kant, the "father

53. George Grimm—*The Doctrine of the Buddha, The Religion of Reason and Meditation*—Edited by M. Keller-Grimm and Max Hoppe, (1958).

54. *ibid.* p. 390.

55. D. I. 74.

56. *ibid.* 12. Note also the significance of the term *atikkantamānusaka* used to denote this faculty of seeing.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

of critical philosophy" in the Western world. According to Kant,⁵⁷ the outer world causes only the matter of sensation, but our own mental apparatus orders this matter in space and time and supplies the concepts by means of which we understand experience. Things in themselves which are the causes of our sensations, are unknowable, nor can they be described by any of those general concepts which Kant calls "categories." Therefore, critical philosophy starts with the Buddha who, like Kant of our times, showed the nature and scope of logical thinking, twenty-five centuries ago.

But through compassion for the suffering humanity, the Buddha though with reluctance and hesitation, at last decided to preach the dhamma that he has discovered. He was perfectly aware of the difficult task that lay before him. Anyhow his skill in means (*upāyakaṇṣālyatā*⁵⁸—as the Mahāyānists would call it) came to his rescue.

He adopted the graduated method of imparting instruction (*ānupubbī kathā*).⁵⁹ Knowing fully well the limited capacity of the ordinary man to grasp and understand anything, he declared that ultimate realization would not come all of a sudden (*na ādiken'eva aññārādhanam*) and that only by a gradual training (*anupubbāsikkhā anupubbakiriyā anupubbapaṭipadā*) that he could be able to realize for himself the deepest truth.⁶⁰ This led him to recognise the validity of some epistemological standpoints by means of which an individual, who had not attained realization, would be at least convinced of the truth, before he could realize it. Let us consider what these epistemological standpoints are after the analysis of the statement of the problem of truth. It should be clearly kept in mind that, since the dhamma, the truth that he had discovered was beyond the realm of logical thought, he made an attempt to describe the salient features at least *approximately*. This description is so essential for convincing the ordinary man and thus lead him on to the correct path. The philosophy of the Buddha begins at this stage when he attempted to state the problem, i.e. to put down in language as approximately as possible the truth that could be reached only by religious experience.

57. Critique of Pure Reason, p. 134 ff.

58. Dasabhumika-sutra, pp. 95, 127, 490; Lalita-vistara, pp. 345, 474.

59. D. I. 110; II. 41. sq.; M. I. 379; JA. I. 8; Miln. 228.

60. M. I. 395; 479; II. 213; S. II. 224; JA. VI. 567.

Buddha's Statement of Causality in the Light of Pre-Buddhist Theories

5 — *Theories Rejected by the Buddha*

The Buddha's analysis of the theory of causality, it must be said, was prompted by purely ethical and practical considerations. A strictly philosophical discussion of the theory of causality is rarely met with in the Nikāya texts. It is only from the discourses in the Sutta Piṭaka where he had applied the theory of causality to explain the fact of suffering (*dukkha*) that the philosophical standpoint could be gleaned. Such a treatment of this theory of causality is to be met with in the *Acela Sutta*.⁶¹ It discusses four theories all of which the Buddha rejected. Against these current views Buddha is represented as preaching his own doctrine of causality and only against this background could the value of it be assessed. The four theories are :

(1) that suffering is caused by oneself (*sayamkataṃ* or *attakataṃ*). This is the theory of self-becoming according to which all human actions and events are due solely to the individual's own agency. The whole position is analysed as:⁶² "The statement that the behaviour of the individual is determined entirely by his own nature is contradicted by empirical evidence to the contrary. The whole universe constitutes an environment to the individual. It is at least physically impossible for an individual to live altogether apart from the world since it is the ground on which he lives." Not only is an individual influenced by other individuals surrounding him, but also he is influenced by the physical forces, the physical environment within which he lives. Even if he were to escape the physical environment, the influence of other individuals, yet he cannot live altogether apart from his own physical frame which is external to his mind. Hence the Buddha rejected this view as being untenable.

This theory is based on the philosophical notion of effect as not being different from the cause and is something inherent in the cause. Being potential it becomes actual. This is the theory of causality advocated by the Sāṅkhya system of Philosophy.⁶³ According to them things are produced from themselves and external factors are not contributory to such a production.

61. S. II. 18 ff.

62. W. S. Karunaratne—Concepts of Freedom and Responsibility in Theravāda Buddhism—UCR. Vol. XVII, Nos. 3 and 4. p. 79.

63. Murthi—Central Philosophy of Buddhism. p. 133.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

(2) that suffering is caused by others (*paramkataṃ*). According to this view human behaviour is determined by factors external to the individual. Sometimes it may be determined by external individuals including God (*issara*), or some times it may be physical factors. "If it is true that behaviour is entirely determined by extraneous circumstances, then, for instance, two individuals placed in identical situations can be expected to act and react in an altogether identical manner."⁶⁴ But this never happens.

This theory can be said to be based on the philosophical theory of cause held by the Naiyāyikas⁶⁵ according to whom the effect is something completely different from the cause. It is something new and other than the cause.

(3) that of the Jains who combine the two extreme views enumerated above, insisting on the continuous as well as the emergent aspect of the effect. Because each of these views asserts something that is incomplete and inaccurate, an organic integral unity, a homogeneous whole, cannot be obtained by putting them together in this manner.

(4) that of the fortuitous originists (*adhiḥcasanuppannikā*) who held that events arise unrelated to the past. There is no order in the universe. Everything in this universe is due to chance-occurrence.

6.—Buddha's Statement of Causality

It was against this background that the Buddha preached his theory of conditionality (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). He did not advocate any of these extreme views. Nor did he try to bring about a reconciliation of these conflicting views as the Jains did. In the interest of consistent completeness he disallowed the continued existence of the two theories as two extremes and reformulated the whole thing altogether afresh by taking into consideration the facts as fully as they are found. This was the middle path (*majjhimā paṭipadā*) that he staked out.

A careful examination of the above theories, in so far as their philosophical basis is concerned, would reveal one salient feature common at least to the first three. It appears that these three schools of thought analysed the whole causal process into two water-tight compartments as cause and effect. This arbitrary compartmentalization of the causal process into

64. W. S. Karunaratne—*ibid.* p. 80.

65. Murthi—*ibid.* p. 133.

cause and effect created insuperable difficulties for the advocates of these theories and left their theories open to attack especially by the Mādhyamikas⁶⁶ at a subsequent period.

Buddha was quite aware of these conflicts that would result from such a division of the causal process into cause and effect. The Buddhist view is very clearly set forth in the words of Bhikkhuni Selā.⁶⁷ To the question posed by Māra as to how this personality had come about, Selā is represented as giving the following answer.

Neither self-made *this body is*,⁶⁸ nor yet
By other wrought is this ill-plighted thing
By reason of a cause it came to be
By rupture of cause it dies away.⁶⁹

Not being satisfied with this much she goes on to explain the causal process, with the help of a very striking simile, a simile which brings into light all the prominent features of the Buddha's theory of causation. It runs thus—

“ Like to a certain seed sown in the field
Which, when it lighteth on the taste of earth
And moisture likewise, by these twain doth grow,
So the five aggregates, the elements,
And the six spheres of sense—even all these—
By reason of a cause they come to be
By rupture of a cause they die away.”

The salient features that stand out very prominently out of this description are firstly,

(a) that Buddhism does not analyse the causal process into two watertight compartments as cause (*hetu*) and effect (*phala*) but recognises the existence of a plurality of causes. The commentators who grasped the

66. Mādhyamika Kārika, I. 1.

67. S. I. 134.

68. I have replaced the phrase “the puppet” occurring in the translation with the phrase “this body”.

69. The Book of the Kindred Sayings, I. 169.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

real import of this description go on to say that a harmony of causes (*paccaya-sāmaggi*)⁷⁰ is necessary for the arising of the effect. Rupture of cause (*hetu-bhaṅgi*) they explain as the deficiency of the necessary causes (*paccaya vekalla*).⁷¹ The group of causes (*hetu-samūha*) producing some effect would not be able to do so were they mutually independent and deficient.⁷² Therefore through mutual dependence, equally (*samaṇi*) and together (*saha*), they produce the resultant states, not a portion at a time.⁷³ Anything arises on account of (*paṭicca*), not regardless of (*apaccakkhāya*) the harmony of causes (*paccaya sāmaggi*).⁷⁴ The emphasis on the harmony of causes points to the fact that if the process is deficient, if any of the necessary causes is not found, then the desired result would not follow from that.

The causal process examined in the simile cannot be analysed into two as cause and effect and also it cannot be said that the seed (*bīja*) is the cause and the tree, the effect. For, the existence of the seed alone is not sufficient for the arising of the tree. In the first place it must contain within itself the potentiality to produce the tree, for, not all seeds are fertile.⁷⁵ Secondly, a seed thrown on a dry land or even on a rock would not always sprout forth. It would be destroyed for lack of other requisite conditions.⁷⁶ Therefore to say that the seed is the cause and the tree, the effect would not be correct since the cause must always produce the effect ; otherwise we cannot speak of a law of causation (*niyāma*). On the other hand, it would become clear from the simile that there must be not one but several causes. Along with the seed there also must be the essence of the earth (*paṭhavi rasa*) and moisture (*sinheha*) not to mention the fertility of the soil, sunlight, etc. Therefore according to the Buddhist theory of causality there must be a harmony of causes (*paccayasāmaggi*). Any instance of mental as well as physical phenomena is thus the result of a harmony of several causes.

(b) Secondly, that this plurality of causes or the various causes that go to produce the effect are related to the effect in diverse ways. A knowledge of this salient feature revealed by the simile would be a clue to the proper understanding of the theory of Relations (*paccaya*) analysed in the *Paṭṭhāna*.

70. Vism. p. 521.

71. SA. I. 193.

72. Vism. p. 521.

73. *ibid.*

74. Vism. p. 521.

75. S. III. 54.

76. *ibid.*

The plurality of causes that go to produce the effect, in this case the seed, essence of the earth and moisture are related to the effect, i.e. the tree in a number of ways. There is no doubt that the seed in this case can be described as the main cause or the root cause (*mūlatthēna hetu-paccayo*, according to the *Abhidhammikas*).⁷⁷ Moisture, essence of the earth and even sunlight serve as food (i.e. *āhāra-paccaya*) necessary for the sustenance of the tree. It would not be wrong to describe the earth as the support (i.e. *nissaya paccaya*) on which the tree stands.

For reasons adduced below, the attention of the Buddha as well as his immediate successors, was directed on to the first aspect of the theory of causation. They were not interested in finding out the ways in which things (*dhamma*) are interrelated.

With the insight he gained as he seated himself under the Bodhi-tree at Gayā on the full-moon day, the Buddha was able to penetrate into the deepest truth about the nature of phenomena (*dhamma*).⁷⁸ He saw the orderliness of things, how they arise and pass away according to set patterns causally conditioned. Phenomena, mental as well as physical, were in a state of flux (*santati*), continually changing and never static. They are not constituted of discrete momentary states succeeding one another, but are dynamic processes which could only be compared to a flowing river (*sota*).⁷⁹ This reality is not given to sensory experience, but is open only to extra-sensory perception. This orderliness, the relation that one phenomenon bears to the other is static whereas the things (*dhammā*) that come within this framework, under these relations, are always in a state of flux, but never static. Phenomena (*dhammā*) are continually changing but the orderliness according to which they change i.e., the relations obtained among these phenomena, is found at all times, in every thing and everywhere. It is the knowledge of this truth that prompted the Buddha to say that "Whether there be arising of Tathāgatas, or whether there be no such arising, this nature of things (*dhammadhātu*) remains constant (*thitā'va*) this causal status (*dhammaṭṭhitatā*), this causal orderliness (*dhammaniyāmatā*), this relatedness of this to that (*idappaccayatā*),"⁸⁰ thus emphasising the constancy of the causal law. It is said that the Buddha is fully enlightened on this,

77. Tikap. I. 12.

78. Vin. I. 1 f; Ud. p. 1 f.

79. D. III. 105; S. I. 15; IV. 126.

80. S. II. 25.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

has fully understood it, and then goes on to declare, teach, reveal, set forth, manifest, explain and make plain this causal orderliness.⁸¹

An apt simile is made use of by the Buddha to illustrate this causal process. In describing the process of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) which is one of the causal processes,⁸² the Buddha has compared it to a flowing stream. Very significant is its comparison to a flowing stream (*sota*).⁸³ On the one hand a stream is something that cannot be analysed and shown to consist of a succession of discrete particles of water. On the other hand, it is fed by several rivulets or streamlets. Even so is this causal process, this saṃsāric existence (*bhavasota*)⁸⁴ which is fed by various factors or conditions (*paccaya*). It gathers momentum and flows fast when it is fed by the necessary conditions (*paccaya*). Buddha perceived with his Divine Eye how phenomena or processes, mental as well as physical, are continued in a certain order (*niyāma*) with relations. Relations are obtained among mental and physical phenomena, as well as among themselves separately. "Only when one comes to know the cessation of these relations (*paccaya*), then only doubts cease assailing him."⁸⁵ Once again it is said that, "That which is true (*tathatā*), not otherwise (*avithatā*) not otherwise (*anānīthā*), this relatedness of this to that (*idappaccayatā*) is called the causal happening (*paṭiccasamuppāda*)."⁸⁶

As far as the early Buddhist texts would reveal, the Buddha's examination of causality was undertaken with a purely practical end in view. His immediate environment suggested to him the expediency of arriving at a practical solution to the problem of suffering (*dukkha*). The tone of the Culla Mālunkya Sutta⁸⁷ makes explicit this attitude of the Buddha. There was theorising and speculation around him *ad nauseam*. The very failure of these theoretical methods to arrive at and advocate a satisfactory solution to the problem would have emphasised the immediate need for a method

81. S. II. 25—*Tam Tathāgato abhisambujjhati abhisameti, abhisambujjhivā abhisametvā ācikkhati deseti paññāpeti paṭṭhapeti vivarati vibhajati uttānikaroti.*

From this description too, it is evident that this truth is open only to extra-sensory perception and that the Buddha makes every attempt possible to express it in language in an intelligible form.

82. M. I. 256 ff.

83. D. III. 105.

84. S. I. 15. IV. 126.

85. Ud. p. 2—*Yadā have pātubhavanti dhammā ātāpino jhāyato brāhmaṇassa, Athassa kaṅkhā vapayanti sabbā yato khayam paccayānam avedi.*

The occurrence of the term *paccaya* in the plural is significant here.

86. S. II. 26.

87. M. I. 426 ff.

that would, at least as far as the individual was concerned, save him from the inner unrest that was tormenting him. No sensitive individual could remain untouched by the pervading chaos and disintegration of values.

At this juncture Buddha must have thought of the futility of discoursing on the analysis of the various ways in which phenomena are related to one another. His interest lay not in the way or manner in which things are related but only in the things (*dhamma*) themselves which are so related. The need of the immediate environment was not to know the various ways in which birth (*jāti*) is related to decay (*jarā*) and death (*maraṇa*), but only to know as to what it is that is related to decay and death, what it is that is in causal relation to decay and death, so that with its discovery and elimination, suffering too could be eliminated. This would become clear when we examine the statement of causality found in the Dvayatānupassanā Sutta.⁸⁸ The main problem raised here is the origin of suffering (*dukkhassa sambhava*) and when and how this suffering could be ended (*yattha ca sabbaso dukkhaṃ asesam uparujjhati*). In the attempt to explain the causality of suffering, the sutta enumerates not one but several causes. Dukkha is related to several things (*dhamma*) such as the substratum of rebirth (*upadhi*), dispositions (*sankhāra*), consciousness (*viññāṇa*), attachment or lust (*taṇhā*), clinging or grasping (*upādāna*), birth (*jāti*), inception of energy (*ārambha*), food (*āhāra*), vacillation (*iñjita*) etc. The enumeration of the efficient cause as against the causal antecedents led to the better understanding of the principle. Hence the enumeration of the most important and prominent cause. This was prompted purely by practical considerations. If the most important cause is known and eliminated, they knew that they could put an end to the effect. After examining the various factors that are related to an effect (*phala*) and keeping in mind only the most prominent cause (*hetu*), the Buddhists formulated the general rule of causality which is given a very prominent place in the Nikāyas. The formula runs : “When this exists that exists, on the arising of this that arises. In the absence of this that does not come into existence, on the cessation of this that ceases to be.”⁸⁹ Prompted by purely practical considerations the Buddhists in their statement of the general theory of causality referred to only one factor which is the most prominent. If not they would have stated it in a different way,

88. Sn. p. 139 ff.

89. M. I. 264; S. II. 28—*Imasmiṃ sati idam hoti, imassa uppādā idam uppajjati. Imasmiṃ asati idam na hoti, imassa nirodhā idam nirujjhati.*

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

to wit, "When these exist that exists, on the arising of these that arises,"⁹⁰ for causation is not a one to one relation but a many to one relation.

According to the formula given above which is a universal proposition and which reigns supreme in every sphere, the pattern of events is such that whenever A happens, B happens and whenever A does not happen, B does not happen. In such a case A and B are causally related. This is the doctrine of Paṭicca-samuppāda (lit. arising on account of). This causal pattern may be in the realm of things (*utuniyāma*),⁹¹ in biology (i.e. *bijaniyāma*),⁹² in psychology (i.e. *cittaniyāma*),⁹³ in phenomena (*dhammaniyāma*)⁹⁴ or in the moral sphere (*kammaniyāma*).⁹⁵ The whole universe is said to have this causal character. The truth or reality, the ever-existent nature of things is the relation that exists between any of these phenomena. There may be various ways in which things are related. The relation existing between A and B may be different from the relation existing between B and C or even A and C, but anyhow there is a relation. Thus there may exist various forms of relations, the analysis of which was not the main task of the Buddha and his immediate disciples.

The doctrine of survival after death, on which the whole of the moral consciousness as well as religious endeavour were based, is one of the keystones of Buddha's philosophy. This doctrine is not one that is formulated beaten out by argument (*takkapariyāhatam*) or after reflective thinking (*vimamsānucaritam*), nor is it one that is taken for granted or accepted by the Buddha depending on the testimony of others.⁹⁶ How the renewal of existence effects itself in the moment of death is a mystery to those of us whose intellect is covered by the dust of ignorance (*rajakkhajātika*) but not to those who have unveiled the covering (*vivattacchada*) who have developed the higher forms of intuition (*paññā*) by the culture of the mind. According

90. In this case the former statement should be reconstituted in the following manner—*Imesu santesu idaṃ hoti, imesaṃ uppādā idaṃ uppajjati. Imesu asantesu idaṃ na hoti, imesaṃ nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati.*

91. D. III. 84, 86.

92. S. III. 54.

93. S. IV. 87.

94. D. II. 12; M. II. 32; S. II. 25, 28; A. I. 26, 152; V. 184; Thag. vv. 676-8.

95. A. I. 28.

96. The contention of Dr. Saratchandra who says that Buddha had "taken for granted the entire background of popular belief in the continuation of the individual in a number of births and deaths" (Buddhist Psychology of Perception, 1958, p. 87) does not hold ground because in the first place it was not a popular belief but it was the finding of the yogi who had developed extra-sensory powers, (D. III. 108 ff) and Buddha too verified this truth in the same manner.

to Schopenhauer,⁹⁷ to point out the bridge between death and rebirth would certainly mean the solution of a great problem. It is considered to be a problem that from all time has been insoluble.⁹⁸ It becomes an insoluble problem so long as we exist in this state and then try to apply categories to it which it transcends.

7—*Development of the Theory of Causation explaining the Cycle (vaṭṭa) of Existence*

The Buddha and his disciples applied the above mentioned theory of causation especially to explain the problem of survival. Explanation of sansāric existence was a need of prime importance for them.

As soon as the Buddha reached the insight that rebirth is the real form of our living on, then without further ado, the insight into the beginninglessness of the round of our rebirths and thereby into the immeasurable space of time we have already wandered through is reached too. If the birth that has conditioned the present life was not the first one, then neither was the preceding one the first and so on without cessation, back to the beginningless infinity of the past. Thus according to the Buddha the extremities of the sansaric existence are inconceivable (*anamataggo ayaṃ saṃsāro*) the beginning is imperceptible (*purimā kotī na paññāyati*)⁹⁹ and so is the end unless we make our own effort to put an end to it.

This picture of the sansaric existence definitely prompted the Buddhists to conceive it in the form of a circle (*vaṭṭa*) because it is logically impossible to show the beginning or the starting point of a cycle. This being the reality that they had to describe, the Buddhists took the next step in placing the individual and separate factors which were given as causes of suffering (*dukkha*) in the *Dvayatānupassanāsutta*, in a certain logic order or sequence. Thus originated the theory of causality (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) where one factor is given as conditioning the other and this conditioning was conceived in the manner of a circle without a beginning. Several stages of the development of even this theory of causation are noticeable in the scriptures.

The first one that we come across and which is considered to be the oldest account of the *paṭiccasamuppāda* stated in the manner of a cycle (*vaṭṭa*) is found in the Mahāpadāna Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya¹⁰⁰ where ten items

97. See Grimm, George. *ibid.* p. 40.

98. *ibid.* p. 40.

99. S. II. 178 ff.

100. D. II. 55 f.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

form the constituents of the cycle and are given in backward order reasoning from the appearance of suffering (*dukkha*) in this world, of age and death towards the cause of it in *viññāna*. The same statement is found again in the Samyutta Nikāya.¹⁰¹ The final development shows twelve links where ignorance (*avijjā*) and dispositions (*saṅkhārā*) are added to precede consciousness (*viññāna*).

Personality which consists in the inter-action of the five groups of grasping (*pañca-upādānakkhandha*) was considered by the Buddhists as a machine of suffering.¹⁰² Especially this corporeal personality, becomes worn out, grey and wrinkled, vitality disappears and the senses become dull.¹⁰³ Until at last in death entire ruin and dissolution follow. These two fundamental qualities of the substratum of personality, old age and death, give at the same time to the whole process of personality the stamp of transiency, and in doing so make life as such full of suffering. In old age and death, therefore, suffering culminates ; they are sufferings most poignant and pregnant expression. To the question raised by himself in his attempt to find out the cause of suffering : "Are old age and death dependent on something ?" the Buddha gave a positive answer and traced it back to rebirth (*īdā*).¹⁰⁴ Because old age and death are nothing but the gradual decay and dissolution of this corporeal organism, therefore they are inevitably bound up with its birth. It should be noted that this is only a logical answer to the question and is further proof to our contention that the theory of causality (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) with its twelve links is a logical development. Then the cause of birth was sought after and it was described as becoming (*bhava*).¹⁰⁵ It is the continuance of the individual. Becoming is due to grasping or clinging (*upādāna*) and this takes us back to the previous life. One grasps something due to one's attachment (*taṇhā*) for the same.¹⁰⁶ Attachment is the result of sensation (*vedanā*).¹⁰⁷ Our likes and dislikes are determined by the way in which things affect us, i.e. according to our sensations. There cannot be sensations without any contact (*phassa*)¹⁰⁸ and contact does not come about unless there are the individual (*nāmarūpa*) experiencing that contact and an external object (*salāyatana*)¹⁰⁹ with which

101. S. II. 104 ff.

102. Vin. I. 10.

103. D. I. 76.

104. D. II. 57; S. II. 104.

105. *ibid.*

106. D. II. 58.

107. D. II. 58.

108. S. II. 104.

109. *ibid.*

he comes into contact. The existence of the external spheres (*āyatana*) alone is not sufficient to bring about contact, for the individual (*nāmarūpa*) must also be present. If the Buddhists had stopped at this juncture they would have found it difficult to explain how this *nāmarūpa* came about, who created it, etc. But according to their philosophy of life this *nāmarūpa* had to be connected to the previous one, hence it was said that this *nāmarūpa* could not develop without the influence of *viññāṇa* which connects the individual with his previous life.¹¹⁰

As it appears from the Mahāpadāna Sutta, at first the Buddhists were satisfied with this explanation. But later the problem was raised as to what this *viññāṇa* is. So far one of the most important problems of the individual life-flux has not been solved. How is one to account for moral responsibility? In the attempt to give a solution to this most fundamental problem the Buddhists had to make room for volition in the statement of causality. So at last, they added to it *sankhāras* which are explained as the result of kamma,¹¹¹ the impressions left behind by one's actions which also have the power or potentiality to mould and give individuality to *viññāṇa*.¹¹² Hence this connected the *viññāṇa* to the kamma of the previous life and thus moral responsibility could be explained to a certain extent satisfactorily. Not being satisfied by this because they saw that conation and feeling do not sum up what we mean by mind, that something existed between these two connecting them, they recognised the existence of knowledge, intelligence. Our feeling and conation, and hence actions, are determined by the nature of our intellection. The nature of intellection determines the nature of our actions (*kamma*) and hence of the dispositions (*sankhāra*). This close connection between intellection and conation on the one hand and conation and action on the other is amply illustrated by the Kukkuravatiya Sutta.¹¹³ This prompted the Buddhists to include *avijjā* or ignorance in the causal formula which explains the conditionality of suffering.

This would reveal the manner in which the theory of causality with the twelve factors developed. In the first place it should be kept in mind that this is only an attempt to explain and illustrate the life-stream (*bhavasota*) which is perceived only by the extra-sensory faculties. Due to ethical and practical reasons the application of the universal theory of causation was restricted to the life-stream (*bhavasota*) only.

110. D. II. 62-63.

111. M. I. 387 sq.

112. S. III. 87—*Viññāṇaṃ viññāṇattāya saṅkhatam abhisankharoti.*

113. M. I. 387 sq.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

The question can be raised as to how this theory giving one factor as conditioning the other, could be reconciled with the theory of causation which believes in a plurality of causes as is evident from the simile discussed above. Buddhaghosa explains this problem when he says that the most important and prominent factors alone are taken into consideration leaving aside the minor factors.¹¹⁴ According to him, "He (the Buddha) teaches a single cause (*hetu*) or fruit (*phala*) for the establishment of the teaching and the convenience of possible converts, owing to the meaning being sometimes established (*padhānattā*), sometimes evident (*pākaṭattā*) and sometimes specific (*asādhāraṇattā*). He has stated one cause and fruit by establishing the meaning as 'conditioned by contact, sensation comes to pass'. For, contact is the established (*padhāna*) root cause of sensation, because sensation is fixed according to contact."¹¹⁵ Likewise could all the factors of the twelve-fold formula be explained.

As pointed out earlier, the Buddha discussed the problem of causation in this manner with a purely ethical end in view. The attention of the Buddhists during the period of the Nikāyas was mainly directed on to the things (*dhammā*) that are related and out of these too, to the more prominent things so that the elimination of one would mean the elimination of the other. They were not bothered about the various ways in which these things are related to one another because it is a purely speculative problem having no relevance to the immediate need of putting an end to suffering. The theory of causality with its twelve factors is only an illustration, done to the greatest approximation, of the dhamma that could not be fully stated by language. As the practical way of solving the problem of pain (*dukkha*), the Buddhists made an attempt to show the most important factors in the life-flux with a view to enable one to get rid of these and thus put an end to pain. Beyond this there was no speculation.

Development of Scholasticism and the need for the Formulation of the Theory of Relations

8.—Early Buddhist Monastic Ideal

Scholars, both of the East as well as the West, have made attempts to show a change in the life of the Buddhist monks. According to them the earliest community of Buddhist monks practised the eremitical ideal.

¹¹⁴. Vism. p. 542.

¹¹⁵. *ibid*.

Itinerancy was the essential and inalienable condition of the life of the earliest disciple of the Buddha.¹¹⁶ It cannot be denied that this was the earliest ideal for it was based on the admonition of the Buddha to go forth and expound his message to the world for the good and welfare of the people.¹¹⁷ But it is not this aspect only that is emphasised by these scholars. They try to couple it with another aspect which they call the unsocial or anti-social attitude of the monks.¹¹⁸ Basing all their arguments on individual discourses like Khaggavisāna¹¹⁹ and Muni¹²⁰ Suttas and also the references to austere (*dhutaṅga*) practices which were sometimes commended by the Buddha¹²¹ they declare that the earliest Buddhist monk lived in the forest groves, away from human habitat and that this was the earliest and true ideal. The attempt of these scholars is directed to show a change from this anti-social ideal of life to a life in society. These two sections existed from the earliest times and we are not able to say that the one is later than the other. There was a group of monks who advocated a life in the forest groves far removed from the busy and active life in the society. And monks who held such views continued to exist until very recent times. On the other hand there was another section of monks who advocated a life devoted to the weal and welfare of mankind. They were the arahants who, having freed themselves from all suffering in this world and putting an end to sansaric existence, went about preaching the way to peace and happiness to those ignorant people engrossed with worldly things. Once a person after a strenuous course of self-training and self-taming had attained to moral and spiritual perfection, he could live in a society without being smeared by the vices and viles of society.¹²² His mind is such that on coming into contact with the worldly things it does not waver.¹²³ Such a person can continue to live in society and work for the welfare and amelioration of the ills of society without doing harm to himself. On the other hand the Buddha had not been very strict with regard to austere practices such as living in forests, feeding solely on alms, wearing cast-off rags, etc. as is evident from his refusal to make compulsory the observance of the five precepts placed before him by Devadatta.¹²⁴ While commending these

116. Dutt, S.—Buddha and five after-centuries, (1957), p. 66.

117. Vin. I. 21—*caratha bhikkhave cārikaṃ bahujaṇaṇhitāya bahujaṇasukkhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya devamanussānaṃ.*

118. Dutt, S. op. cit. pp. 68, 70.

119. Sn. p. 6 ff.

120. ibid. p. 35 ff.

121. A. I. 23.

122. M. I. 169.

123. Sn. 268—*Phuṭṭhassa lokadhammehi cittaṃ yassa na kampati Asokaṃ virajaṃ khemaṃ*

124. Vin. II. 197.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

five practices, the Buddha also allowed exceptions to these practices but only as extra-allowances (*atireka lābha*).¹²⁵ Yet a careful examination of these would reveal the fact that these exceptions effectively cancel the rules out.

9.—*Change of Monastic Ideal*

Considering these facts it becomes apparent and clear that the change is rather from the ideal of a wandering monk to a settled monastic ideal, than from the so-called "unsocial or anti-social" to the social. As is evident from the texts the climatic conditions coupled with the generally accepted beliefs of the masses, prevented them from practising the ideal of a wandering monk throughout the whole year,¹²⁶ and we see how the whole wandering community used to suspend wandering and go into residence until the skies cleared, rain-floods subsided and streams became fordable. As a result *āvāsas* came to be staked out and out of these colonies for rain-retreat the beginnings were made of cenobitical life among the monks. The Thera and Theri gathās of the Khuddhaka Nikāya very clearly portray the life of the monks and nuns who lived in these *āvāsas*. *Āvāsas* became places where men and women tormented by the ills of life gathered round eminent disciples of the Buddha, thirsting for spiritual guidance.¹²⁷ This life devoted to the pursuit of spiritual perfection and a search for ways and means of putting an end to immediate suffering, changed after the passing away of the Buddha.

It appears as if the final injunction of the Buddha to Ānanda, viz., "What dhamma and vinaya have been promulgated and proclaimed by me, let that be, after my death, your teacher,"¹²⁸ had led to a change or revolution not second to any other, in the history of the Sāsana. This definitely points to the fact that the authority that was vested in the Buddha during his life-time devolved now on the *dhamma* and the *vinaya* that he had preached and proclaimed, thus heralding a new epoch in the history of the Buddhist Order.

In a religious order which recognised no leadership after the passing away of the founder and in which spiritual allegiance to a person had come to an end with his death, the spirit of questioning, disputing, testing rules

125. Vin. I. 58.

126. *ibid.* I. 137 ff.

127. Thig. vv. 43-44, 68-70, 102-103, 119, 124-125 etc.

128. D. II. 154.

and doctrines in the light of individual reason and conscience were alert and unchecked. So it happened in the history of the Buddhist Sāsana as is evident from the incidents of Subhadda¹²⁹ and Purāṇa¹³⁰ recorded in the Cullavagga. The direct result of it was that an attempt was made to define and stabilise the *dhamma* and the *vinaya* that was preached and proclaimed by the Buddha.¹³¹ The historicity of the First Council, the activities of which is to a great extent exaggerated by the later texts, would become more and more clear when we view it against this psychological background. Any attempt to appoint an individual to lead the order of monks was rendered useless by the injunctions of the Buddha himself.¹³² Thus in the absence of a leader appointed by the founder or the community of monks and the dependence on the teaching of the founder for guidance with regard to the conducting of their lives, it is not at all surprising to see the monks who had by now settled down in āvāsas devoting their whole time to the study of the Buddha-vacana. Not only did some give up wandering for the weal and welfare of the others, but even neglected their own spiritual emancipation. The studying and systematising of the teachings of the Buddha absorbed their attention and this was further necessitated and accelerated when outside schools of thought, which Buddhism had antagonised because of the severe criticisms which it levelled against them, began once more to raise their heads.

10.—*Development of Scholasticism*

The history of Buddhism from that time onwards was thus characterised by conventionalization and assimilation. In the face of the criticisms of the other schools of thought Buddhists felt the real and imperative need for the systematisation and moulding of their own teachings. Thus came into existence scholastic activity divorced from ethical and practical life. The first century after the death of the Buddha witnessed the systematisation and the development of the doctrines contained in the Sutta piṭaka and the disciplinary measures in the Vinaya piṭaka. Next came the Abhidhamma-piṭaka. The history of human ideas has surely no more striking evolution of pure scholasticism to offer than that which is here sampled. So far as we can get at the founder of Buddhism at all, we see a man spending nearly

129. Vin. II. 184-285.

130. *ibid.* 289-290—Purāṇa who was informed of the rehearsal of the Dhamma and the Vinaya and was asked to accept it, replied thus, "Well chanted by the elders are the dhamma and the vinaya, but in that way that I heard it in the Lord's presence, that I received it in his presence, in that same way will I bear it in mind."

131. *ibid.* 285.

132. D. II. 100 f.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

half a century in adapting his simple gospel of the good life to every shade of individual spiritual need that came before him. At the other extreme of this passionate patience to help the particular case we find, a few centuries later, the gigantic effort of the Paṭṭhāna to make a class or type of every possible particular case that can be imagined. The result may be imposing in its complexity and ingenuity. But we there move in a world of *dhammas* as far removed from the flesh-and-mind actuality of this man's case or that woman's as are the symbols in a book of Algebra. Years were spent on that result, without the work of the founder being advanced a step. The monks of this later stage in the history of the sāsana were not teaching their fellows how to live ; they were instead doing their best to think. This was the only difference, a colossal difference indeed. Their object of thought was human character as revealed by past human experience and reduced to a mass of abstract judgments. It was not kept alive, corrected and improved upon by intercourse with and observation of the little world without them, much less of the greater world that lay to them inaccessible. Hence their object of study was a fixed rigid world, admitting of no exceptions, yielding always uniform results. It was divorced from the ever-fluid world of the living.

11.—*Development of the Theory of Relations in the Abhidhamma*

In the earlier chapter an attempt was made to show whatever difference there is between the theory of Paṭiccasamuppāda with the twelve factors and the doctrine of Relations (*paccaya*) analysed in the Paṭṭhāna and later Abhidhamma works. It was also pointed out how the theory of Paṭiccasamuppāda with the twelve factors developed out of the general theory of causality in an attempt to explain the cause of suffering (*dukkha*). In a theory of Relations it was shown that there are two aspects, i.e., the things that are related and the ways in which these things are related. The Nekkāyikas, due purely to ethical and practical reasons, were not at all interested in the latter, namely the ways in which things are related, for it is purely a speculative problem. On the other hand their attention was absorbed by the things that are related. The knowledge of the related things, rather than the ways in which they are related, is so essential for the elimination of one would mean the elimination of the other. They were therefore more interested in the causes of suffering (*dukkha*) for an understanding and clear comprehension of these causes would enable the elimination or destruction of them so that their resultant suffering (*dukkha*) could be completely destroyed.

Thus in the Nikāyas we find the analysis of mental as well as physical processes into discrete moments, undertaken with a view to facilitate proper understanding and clear comprehension. They deal with no abstraction but only with particular instances of discrete mental and physical phenomena. But with the development of pure scholasticism as described above, we see how the Abhidhammikas had made a perusal of all these phenomena (*dhamma*) that had already received full treatment in the Nikāyas. But the method adopted by the Nikāyikas was not systematic and it fell to the lot of the Abhidhammikas to enumerate these phenomena in an orderly and systematic manner. This systematic treatment of all existent phenomena is to be met with in the Dhammasaṅgani, the first book of the Abhidhamma piṭaka. The Brahmanical schools of thought were not completely crushed by the severe attacks on their substantialist position launched by the Buddha and his followers. After the attack of the Buddhists they emerged with greater force and vitality. The origin and development of texts like the Dhammasaṅgani was the direct result of the counter-attack launched by the Buddhists. The fresh treatment of things that were already discussed in the earlier texts was thus necessitated by the systematisation and crystallization of the doctrines of these outside schools of thought which believed in the reality of permanent entity (*ātman*) underlying this body and mind. Following the footsteps of the Buddha, the Abhidhammikas too are seen cherishing this anti-substantialist position carefully and conscientiously and it is because of this that they undertook to analyse and examine every instance of mental and physical phenomena and to show that such an entity as a soul could not be obtained in this psycho-physical entity called personality. As is evident from the Dhammasaṅgani there is no instance of mental or physical phenomenon that has escaped the scrutiny of the Abhidhammikas. But if they had been satisfied with this analysis they would have naturally fallen into a position where they had to share the views of the Vaiśeṣika school of thought which believed in the existence of a plurality of discrete phenomena, thus contravening the early Buddhist philosophy of life discussed in the earlier chapter.

But the Abhidhammikas avoided falling into such inconsistencies by formulating the philosophy of Relations (*paccaya*) which explains the way in which these discrete phenomena related themselves to each other thus presenting a synthesis, a unified whole as it were. Therefore they were naturally led on to the examination of the ways in which these phenomena

THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELATIONS

are related to each other. Thus originated the whole book of Paṭṭhāna. In the Paṭṭhāna twenty-four such forms of relations obtained among phenomena are enumerated, to wit,

1. Root-condition (*hetu*),
2. Object (*ārammaṇa*),
3. Dominance (*adhipati*),
4. Contiguity (*anantara*),
5. Immediate contiguity (*samanantara*),
6. Co-existence (*sahajātā*),
7. Reciprocity (*aññamañña*),
8. Dependence (*nissaya*),
9. Sufficing condition (*upanissaya*),
10. Pre-existence (*purejāta*),
11. Post-existence (*pacchājāta*),
12. Habitual occurrence (*āsevana*),
13. Karma (*kamma*),
14. Effect (*vipāka*),
15. Food (*āhāra*),
16. Control (*indriya*),
17. Rapture (*jhāna*),
18. Means (*magga*),
19. Association (*sampayutta*),
20. Dissociation (*vippayutta*),
21. Presence (*atthi*),
22. Absence (*natthi*),
23. Abeyance (*vigata*) and
24. Continuance (*avigata*).

D. J. KALUPAHANA