

Purpose, Method, and Policy of this Work

Part 15 of 15

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As a further parenthetical statement, the thought has come to me to develop a tape on the subject, the sense in which I am a Buddhist. Just as is true in the case of Christianity, there are different forms of Buddhism, possibly more numerous than the various forms of Christianity. And it is impossible for an individual to belong or associate himself with all the forms in either case. Thus, an individual could not be both a Roman Catholic and a Unitarian, for the conception of the Trinity is of fundamental importance in the Catholic form of doctrine, whereas, among the Unitarians, this conception is abandoned. One would have to be either a Roman Catholic or a Unitarian, or be oriented to some other form of Christian discipline, but he could not be both in the same sense and at the same time. The same fact is true of Buddhism in its various manifestations.

The most important division in Buddhism is between the form known as *Hinayana* and the form known as *Mahayana*. The *Hinayana* form maintains the position that the individual can attain Liberation or Enlightenment only by his own efforts and that no aid can be rendered to him. The *Mahayana* takes a counterposition and maintains that while individual effort is of great importance, nonetheless, aid can be rendered to the aspirant restricted in some measure at least by the *karma* of the individual. Thus, one could not be both a *Hinayana* Buddhist and a *Mahayana* Buddhist. He would be one or the other. There are other divisions in Buddhism where the same dichotomy exists; so that if an individual calls himself a Buddhist, the question then arises, in what sense is he a Buddhist?

There are certain features in Buddhism in which all who identify themselves with this movement seem to concur, and these may be listed as follows: first, a prime orientation to the Blessed One himself; second, the acceptance of the fourfold noble path, or the fourfold truths; third, the eightfold steps on the path; next, the series of *Nidanas*, or the theory of the causes of the wrongness in the world; next, the doctrine of *Anatman*, in other words the idea that the Self or centered consciousness is not ultimate; next the idea that the supreme in the universe is not a person, but a principle.

For my own part, I concur with all these features and am most strongly oriented to the Blessed One. I might raise the point that a different theory of the wrongness in the world might be advanced at least in some respects different from the theory given by the Blessed One. And further, one may look upon the wrongness as suffering, as the Blessed One did, but one could also look upon it as due to ignorance as Shankara emphasized. I, in this respect, orient myself more to the standpoint of Shankara but I acknowledge that ignorance causes suffering. But beyond these fundamentals, there is a question as to in what sense is the Self, or subject, or the 'I', subordinate and derivative. Is it subordinate to the object, or not? I differ from that form of Buddhism that views the I, or Self, as subordinate to the object of consciousness. This would be the schools

of realistic Buddhism. I do find in my own *imperience* that the Self is not ultimate, that it is derivative, but it has a persistence more fundamental than that of the object, but not an ultimate persistence. There is a certain differentiation from familiar forms of Buddhism here.

Beside the familiar differentiation between *Hinayana* and *Mahayana* Buddhism, there are other differentiations. Thus, there are very aesthetic forms of Buddhism, such as the Zen, and there are rational forms of Buddhism. My orientation would be with the rational forms of Buddhism rather than with the aesthetic forms, and this implies an attaching of more importance to the conceptual function in consciousness than to the sensational function.

There are the *shunya* and the *ashunya* forms of Buddhism. The *shunya* form is the form that predicates of everything whatsoever that it is only Voidness. An extreme statement of this appears in a logical form presented by Nagarjuna. Concerning the Ultimate he says, it is not being, and not not-being; it is not both being and not-being; it is not neither being and not-being. And you wind up in a condition that seems like intellectual suicide. I am not oriented to this kind of Buddhism. I have never found the *shunya* doctrine helpful, but I do orient to the *ashunya* form of Buddhism, one in which it is predicated that the Ultimate is *Alaya-Vijnana*. And if one looks up these terms in a Sanskrit dictionary, he will find that they give the meaning of Root Consciousness, which coalesces perfectly with my conception of Consciousness-without-an-object-and-without-a-subject; so that I would line up, in this respect at least, with this form of Buddhism rather than with the *shunya* form of Buddhism.

I am quite in agreement with the Buddhistic thesis that the Ultimate is not a person but is a principle. On the other hand, in a subordinate sense, higher entities than man, who may be regarded as having a personal aspect, very well may exist and may help in the guidance of the evolution of man and of all creatures; but these higher entities are themselves products of evolution and are not the ultimate principle upon which all is based.

I further differentiate my position from the stand taken by the logical Buddhists Dignaga and Dharmakirti. They affirm, particularly in the case of Dignaga, that there are two, and only two, organs, faculties, or functions of cognition, namely, sense perception and conceptual cognition. In contrast, I affirm that there are three, at least three, organs, functions, or faculties of cognition and that these are sense perception, conceptual cognition, and 'introceptual' cognition, which is *knowledge through identity*. Also, I differ from Dignaga and Dharmakirti in giving primacy and superior authority to sensuous cognition as contrasted to conceptual cognition. These two conceive of the ultimate as in the form of point-instant sensation which is essentially meaningless but has efficiency, whatever that efficiency may mean, and that this is the real; that the conceptual part is only instrumental in dealing with essentially practical matters. On the contrary, as I hope I have made clear heretofore, I view the conceptual function as something superimposed upon the life of the sensual being, and it springs from a higher source; that whereas the perceptual deals with the concrete particular, the conceptual deals essentially with the universal and is emphatically a higher power, but not the ultimate power of cognition, the latter is that which I call introception, and I conceive of conceptuality as lying between perception and introception and as the intermedator or

antaskarana between these two; that ultimate rulership belongs to the introceptual order of knowledge, but in the absence of the functioning of the introceptual order, the conceptual order functions or serves the office of a viceroy authority and that the sensational or perceptual order is wholly subordinate. It is that which we hold in common with the animals. The conceptual order is that which differentiates the human from the animal, and the introceptual order brings us into line with the consciousness of those beings which we might call the gods or the superhuman entities; that these are supreme, but their minister here below lies in the conceptual order not in the perceptual order. Now, in the discussion of the thought of Dharmakirti, Stcherbatsky in his book points out that Dharmakirti recognized that in the consciousness of the Saint there was a third way of cognition over and above perceptuality and conceptuality.¹ I agree with this position and that I view their lack of emphasis of this as a neglect. This is, I think, the key to the real transcendental authority in cognition.

In the division between the *Tantric* and non-*Tantric* forms of Buddhism, I align myself with the non-*Tantric* forms. I do not reject the idea that attainment may be achieved through *Tantric* methods, but they are not the methods which I have found useful and in a study of the history of the *Tantra*, it appears that there is great danger on the part of the individual aspirant or practitioner to fall into the *Vamacharya* or left-hand path form of it. I therefore warn against *Tantric* practice except in the case of the right man under the immediate guidance of a competent instructor in this field. But I would warn every individual from playing with techniques connected with *Tantra*. By temperament, I am oriented to the non-*Tantric* forms of Buddhism.

Further, there are statements in the literature which indicate that the Buddha took a *tulku* incarnation in the person of Sri Shankaracharya. As a result of the *Brahminical* persecution of his disciples, he said he would come to the *Brahmins* directly, for his compassion was sufficient not only to embrace the victims of the persecution, but also the perpetrators of the persecution. Here he taught a highly rational philosophy and a highly rational technique; and, in point of fact, historically, the form of Vedanta brought forth by Shankara lies essentially closer to Buddhism than any other form of Vedanta, and it is said there are forms of Buddhism that lie closer to the Vedanta than other forms of Buddhism. My orientation would be to the Buddhism that falls in this category, so that I view myself as, in a sense, both a Vedantist and a Buddhist; but inevitably there is a certain pruning involved. There are forms of Vedanta, such as the *Visishtadvaita* or the *Dvaita*, to which I am not oriented. I am oriented to the *Advaita*, or nondualistic form of Shankara and to those forms of Buddhism that are closely allied to it.

¹ Th. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhistic Logic*, vol. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1962), 161:

The Sanskrit term for perception therefore contains more in extension than sense-perception alone, it means direct knowledge or intuition, as contrasted with indirect knowledge or knowledge by concepts. Sense-perception is only one variety of intuition. There is another intuition, an intelligible one. Ordinary humanity does not possess the gift of such intuition, it is the exclusive faculty of the Saint who, according to theory, is not a human, but a superhuman being. A moment of this intelligible intuition is admitted to be involved in every perception in its second moment, the moment following on pure sensation.

This defines now the sense in which I would say I am a Buddhist, and very glad to be such; but, also, I am a Vedantist in the sense of Shankara's Vedanta; and in addition to all this, I find myself lined up with that current in which Pythagoras would stand as the top figure in the West, namely, the theoretical component in things as contrasted to the aesthetic component in things. This is a brief statement in which I hope I have made myself clear as to the sense in which I would regard myself as a Buddhist and the senses in which I differ from different schools of Buddhism. Let there be no mistake on this point, I am profoundly oriented to the Blessed One himself, one who lived on earth in a human body known as Gautama, and I regard him as the central figure in all current Buddhism.

In listening to the tape produced so far, I find I have left out certain points. First of all, I am oriented to the *Mahayana* form of Buddhism, rather than to the *Hinayana* form; and I accept the validity of the *Kwan-Yin* vow and the instruction given in *The Voice of the Silence*, particularly the third section, and the recommended renunciation of the Great Reward so that this value may be shared with all creatures. This is what I understand to be the true Buddhism.