BRAHMANISM AND BUDDHISM

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In this paper my object is to make a critical study of the valuable paper of Mr. B. Ghosh on "Upasadhistatara and Brahmism" published in the Bulletin of Theology, Vol VI, No. 3. The subject is very wide and so the present paper proposes to deal with these two terms. These are:

1. Brahma and Brahmava
2. Atma and Brahman
3. Pudgavana

At the outset, I should state that both the Upanishads and the Buddhist literature were products of the same country, using the same vocabulary. Pali being a modified form of Sanskrit, and Pali literature also was replaced later by Sanskrit by the Sarvastivadins and the Mahayanaists. So Brahava and Brahma.

The word "Brahava" means "pious, sacred" as in e.g., the word Brahmacarya or Brahmacarya. The word "Brahava" is frequently used in the Buddhist texts, e.g., Brahmaprasastra, Brahmacariyavasa, Brahmasikha (Asitri, Karuna, Moolka and Upakhia) and so forth. Brahmasikha has also been used as a synonym of Bhagavat, as the wheel of law leads to purity. From the word Brahava is derived Brahma, which word is found in the Tattvavajra Shastra (vi. 4.4), Kariksha Vangita (viii. 1) and in many other texts, meaning "descendant of Rishi (sangha), requiring purity and learning like the Vedic Rishi. A Brahava must have presence in knowledge and not mere descent. Sutakrama Jambu was the son of a slave-girl and so his parentage was not known. He frankly told this fact to Rishi Gauarna Hargramata (Ch.) Upan. iv. 4 and so he was accepted as a Brah-min pupil by the sage.

In the 4th-5th centuries B.C. when Prince Siddhartha Gautama was born, Brahmanism had deteriorated into Varna-Dharma attaching importance to birth only and not to purity or learning. The society was divided into four hereditary casts as Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Suddra, which included even Kshavakus and other backward classes as also the untouchables. Worship of gods lost its sanctity and ended in animal sacrifices in the name of gods and goddesses.
The term "Brahmana" of the Upanishads was accepted by the Buddhists. In the undermentioned anantas of the Dhammapada, the use of the word Brahman is illustrated:

\[\text{Not by nattled hair nor by lineage nor by caste, does one become a Brahman. He is a Brahman in whom there is truth and righteousness. He is blessed.}\]

\[\text{Because he has put aside (bhikshatana) evil, he is called a Brahmin; because he lives in serenity is called a Samana.}\]

\[\text{(Him I call a Brahman who is meditative, free from passions, settled, whose work is accomplished, who is free from taints and who has attained the highest end).}\]

\[\text{(Him I call a Brahmin, who knows his former existences, who perceives heaven and hell, has reached the end of existences, is a sage whose knowledge is perfect and has accomplished all that is to be accomplished).}\]

Brahmana both in the Upanishadic thought and Buddhism is accepted as a term for a saint, one who has attained final sanctification. The Brahmin is one who casts off belief in happy worldly existences, the basis of desire (ratham). Not by ritual and sacrifices, not by isolation and trance but by self concentration and exercise of Maitri and Karuna does one transcend rathma and become a Brahmin, who knows the highest truth (paramartha saysa). Buddha says "not off the stream of existence with energy (virya)."

Re. Atman and Brahman.

The background of Buddhism is the same as that of Brahmanism, viz., Brahman the Impersonal but not, of course, the Volatic Par-
toatman, the existence of which is denied in Buddhism. A few extracts are being quoted from the Upanishads in support of this contention of ours.

Bhaduravatsaka Upa (iv.4.3):—


(When all desires, which entered into one's heart, are eschewed, there ens the mortal become immortal and he attains Brahman).

Mundaka Upanishad (iii.2.8):—


(Like rivers flowing into the ocean disappear abandoning name and form, so the wise attains the divine person beyond the beyond (i.e. infinity).

Re. Atmaa (Soul).

The fundamental difference between Buddhist and the Upanishad; thought lies in the conception of soul of an individual (jivatman).

The watchwords of Buddha consisted of dukkha, anicca and anatta. The first word dukkha means that worldly existence is misery because it is impermanent, inconstant (anicca, koshikika) and lastly anatman (i.e. unreal) absence of ninya atman (permanent soul) corresponding to Vedantic jivatman. A person is a composite of namarupa (mind and matter) sub-divided into five constituents (skandhas). These five constituents are ceaselessly changing, hence koshikika. A baby loses its babyhood when it grows up and becomes a young man. The young man loses his youth, his blood, flesh and bone when he becomes old.

The change is effected every moment as our nails grow and need trimming every week or fortnight and so it is said that there is no continuous personal identity (na ca so na ca arno). (Vide Milindapatha, p. 46). This conception is expressed in these stanzas:—


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All things are impermanent (anitya), lacking in self (atmott) or reality and therefore sorrowful (dukkha).

Re: Padgala
dada

Padgala (Padgala-dasa) is the fundamental doctrine of Vatsiputra and Sampitijya, who were also known as the Avantakes, because they claimed as their patron saint Mahakaccham, the direct disciple of Bhagavan Buddha, and a native of Avanti. Besides this fact, the Sampitijyas had many adherents in Avanti. It is striking that at Hsuen Tsung's time, the largest number of monks belonged to the Sampitijya school. In the inscription of Sarvak of the 4th or 5th century B.C. it is seen that the name of Sarvastivada was replaced by their name. From the inscription it is evident that this school had its origin prior to this date. Hsuen Tsung states that 15 treatises of this school were translated into Chinese. One of these texts, the Sampitijya-nikayasutra, has been translated into English by Professor Vedasana of the Vaisakabaran. This text is the main source of information, apart from the treatises on sects written by Vasumitra, Bhavya and Yuktadatta. The latter two exist in Tibetan translations.

The Pudgalavadin rely on the following statements of Buddha:—

(i) आयत्तं पुनि जननासनीपदाः पतितेः
(there is a being who suffers for his own good).

(ii) एकभूतवर्गो अनेकमात्र हृदयादिक्षेत्र विक्रमादिक्षेत्र
there appears a person who exerts for the good and happiness of many out of compassion for the world of beings.

Kathavatthu 1.

Basing on such words of Buddha, the S. (henceforth abbreviated for Sampitijyas) state that the puggala of the above-mentioned passages is something positive. It is not nothing apart from the five constituents (skandhas) of a being; it is not possible to establish a relation between the puggala and the skandhas, i.e. like the container and the contained. On the other hand, though it possesses all the characteristics of the skandhas, it is not like them caused and conditioned (aseta appanayata).

In support of their contention the S. rely on the Bharabhasutta of the Sampitijya Nikaya (III, p. 235), which is as follows:—

कथा निःसिद्ध, भगवान?

उपचतादयाधिकाभिः पुनर्य

कथा न दशः? केवलविद ण्वाधिकाभिः, वेदान्ताधिकाभिः,

संदुहदयाधिकाभिः, संसाराधिकाभिः, वेदान्ताधिकाभिः; अम दश: कठिन, निःसिद्ध भगवान?

10
(What, O bhikkhu, is the burden? Burden refers to the five constituents: matter, feeling, perception, impression and consciousness. These are called dhamma.)

(yaṁ guṇaḥ, bhikkhu, sattāḥ bhava? pūpakād tissatāḥ kāloviṅgro!)

yakṣaṁ āsāsma eva nāvā evaṃ evāvāṃ; eva kāvyāṁ, nīlaṅkāre sāvatārā!

(What is, O bhikkhu, the carrier (pārada) of burden? The person (puggala), which has a name, a lineage is called the carrier of burden.)

In the Tattvānugaha (p. 130) Kamalinda quotes its Sanskrit version

bāhaṁ: kāsaṁ: pūpako,
	eva āsāsamapātanena naṁ
	ena kāyaṁ, evaṁ āsāsma
	ena yaksorā pāradaṁ
	ena diśārūpavāraṁ pāradaṁ pragjñātā!

(Note: The Sanskrit version is slightly better. It is not translated as it is easily intelligible).

Another very important argument put forward by the S. is that a person (puggala) in the first stage of sanctification (sotapanna) is called also sattāghatapāna (i.e. will have seven more existences at the most) to attain Nibbāna. This implies that Puggala continues. The S. make their position clear by stating they accept the tradition of Buddha but they contend that puggala is not soul but something apart from the skandhas but having all the characteristics of the skandhas. It maintains the link between two existences of a being, but there is an end in it of Nibbāna.

Sāṃyutta Nikāya III, p. 16:

bhārā kāla puggalā, bhārāhaṁ u puggalā!

bhārādhip yuddha jīvā, parinibbāyitaṁ u puggalā!

[Commentary]

bhārā, bhārādhip, bhārāhaṁ u puggalā!

[Commentary]