Notes & Topics

THE ANCIENT PATH OF THE BUDDHAS

The article on Upanishadic terms in Buddhism (pp. 4-7) traverses a controversial ground involving academics as much as believers. The controversy boils down to Buddha's notion of Atman and we invite scholars to throw light from Tibetan and Mongol literary sources.

It is appropriate to add here, for the general reader, that as Brahmanical terms in Buddhism raise a presumption in favour of borrowing, Buddhist terms like Budhik or Niratra in Brahmanism have the same bearing. If the Buddha had appropriated the thunder (Vajra from Upanishads, Nāgajīmara returned it in a refined form, Gādāpa, Gāvinda, and Sānta retrieved it. In Tibet, tradition Sankara is a beneficiary and a remade of the Dharma. Bhāratīkā's Fāhyakāitya, drawn upon by the Jñanaśāra school of Tibet, drew considerably from Buddhist.

Sankara is even known to have offered this salutation to the Buddha.

\[ \text{भरतीकायाः पारस्परिप्रेरितं} \]
\[ \text{प्रसन्नविद्यास्य मथनांकार्यं} \]
\[ \text{व मन्त्रे कल्याणं मोहिनं भक्तस्य} \]
\[ \text{सुदु: यशुज्ञलू मित्रस्ययौ} \]

Rādhakrishnan takes the word Buddhahāra for the historical Buddha, Gautama Siddhartha. Those who deny the historic allegation that Sankara was "a Buddhist in disguise" would read this as 'So any or all the Enlightened before Sankara. Rādhakrishnan's particularization does not diminish the glory of Sankara but emphasizes the precise historic legacy which, along with others, contributed to the greatness of Sankara's philosophy.

A millennium and a half before Sankara, Gautama Siddhartha said: I have discovered an ancient track. In olde times the Enlightened Ones trod this path. (Sāntaṇa Nīkāya 12.63).

The encounters between the two creeds resulted in exchanges at different levels from philosophy to rituals. While the worshippers of Siva adapted much from the Buddhist Tantras as practiced in the north-west (Swat-Gilgit) or in the north-east (Lohit-Bratmaputra), Guru Padmasambhava of Uddiyana had no less authority among the Hindu-devotees than Rsi Vasishtha of Kamarupa. The worshippers of Vishnu adored Gautama Siddhartha as an Avatāra.
"O you of merciful heart denounced the Veda where the slaughter of cattle is taught: O Kesara, you in the form of Boddha, victory to you, Hari, lord of the world."  (Pug. trans. Radhakrishnan)

The Buddha's revolt was primarily against the animal sacrifices and the social injustice sanctioned under the label of Vedic infallibility. The Buddha preached against ego either in its or thought; he refined and refined the Vedic Ego. With the humility of a Bodhisattva, Gautama Siddhartha affirmed that he had found a lost path.

NIRMAL C. SINHA

SEVEN SOVEREIGN JEWELS

RGYAL-SRIE RIN-CHEN SNA-BDUN on pages 19-27 is a fresh interpretation of the symbolism of a sovereign Seven Precious Jewels from the erudite pen of Lama Angarika Govinda and will no doubt engage the experts in several fields of religion and anthropology in pursuing the matter further.

As a student of history, I drew the notice of the general reader to a similar institution in Vedic polity. The royal consecration called Rajasuya consisted of a number of rituals. While most of these rituals were purely or dominantly of the nature of sacrifice in ordinary sense, one unique ritual related directly to kingship, namely, Rata-savaswahi (Jewel-offerings). While in other rituals the sacrificer was usually called Yajamana or Sayamana, in the Jewel-offerings he was called Najan.

The rite of Jewel-offerings begins in the preparatory stage for the Rajasuya. The king makes offerings to certain appropriate deities on successive days at the houses of certain specific persons. These persons count up to 14. The list in Tamirapa Sambha enumerates 11 persons: Priest (Brahman), Noble (Rajanya), Chief Queen (Mahisha), Neglected Consort (Parivriti), Army Chief (Paras), Minister (Satya), Village Headman (Gruman), Carrier (Khartri), Chariteer (Sangrihi), Collector (Bhagadugha) and Master of Dice (Akehavaya). Each person symbolizes or represents a deity; Brahman represents Brhaspati, Rajaya Indra, Mahshi Aditi and so on and so forth.
It may be noticed that the different persons called Ratin in the Satapatha Brahmana the pre-eminence is for the Army Chief; the Chief of the State has a top place (third) in all lists. The Ratin is indeed the King's Jewel; it is for him (or her) that the King is consecrated and by worshipping the relevant deity the king earns the allegiance of the custodians of the deity. The loyalty of the VIP, in modern terminology, is sworn through the珠宝; even the Neglected Consort or the Master of the Dies cannot be omitted, and in the context of a semi-tribal semi-territorial society, as the Gothic one, every potential source of power like Charioteer or Village Headman is recognized and prostituted. A comprehensive description of the ritual will be found in Heesterman: The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration (The Hague 1957).

There are conflicting interpretations of the Jewel-offerings ritual. Jayaswal in Hindu Polity (Calcutta 1914/Bangalore 1964) holds that the ritual pertains to the character of election and thus the consecration amounts to election of the king. A correct assessment, in my submission, is that of Ghoshal in Studies in Indian History and Culture (Calcutta 1926/1965). "The true significance of the ceremony" in Ghoshal's words "consisted in winning for the king the allegiance of these important persons", Coomaraswamy, in The Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power in the Indian Theory of Government (New Haven 1947), reads his ritual as another symbol of the marital bond between the Purohita (i.e., Church) and the Rajan (i.e., State). I do not accept Coomaraswamy’s warning that the Vedic Jewels' are not to be confused with the seven Jewels of a Chakra-varin (p. 17). Coomaraswamy admits that "the categories partly coincide".

Like many Vedic categories, both in doctrinal and ritualistic matters, Ratin itself was transmitted into Buddhism. Most of these categories undoubtedly underwent changes in content in Buddhism. It is not unlikely that the Seven Jewels of Sovereignty in Buddhism were a development from the King's Jewels as in Vedic policy. The Seven Jewels symbolize the vital limbs of state: in the Ven. Aria's language the Seven Jewels are the seven nerve centres of the body. Historical data about consecration ceremony of a Buddhist King in India are altogether lacking. Evidence from Northern Buddhist countries would testify to the Indian origins of such ceremony; these origins are to be traced in the Vedic and Brahmanical literature.

A recent celebration of the Buddhist Jewel-offerings was witnessed in Sikkim on 4 April 1965 at the GSER-HKIBI-MNGIH-BGSL of
Miwang Palden Thondup Namgyal as the 12th Chogyal of Sikkim. For a student of Indian history, this recalled Indian Vedic and Buddhist ritualism. The Vajracharya (Bdo-rje skod-dpon of Palsha-yang-tse; the royal chaplain and presiding priest) offered to the Chogyal, in iconic symbols, the Seven Jewels: Chakra (Discus), Chintaman (Wish fulfilling Gem), Mahishi (Consort), Mantri (Minister), Hasti (Elephant), Asva (Horse), and Senani (Army Chief).

The brihad-devata, a later Vedic compendium of deities and rituals, lists the Jewels thus: Discus, Chariot, Gem, Consort, Earth, Horse and Elephant.

षष रत्नो माण्डलः भूमिर्दशी गुरुवर्धी।
श्रीमान्न सर रज्ज्ञानिन सर्वभृत्तिः प्रक्षणिनामश्च।

Vishnu Purana, a Brahmanical composition of a few centuries after Nagarjuna but anterior to the migration of Mahayana into Trans-Himalayas, lists 14 Jewels in two sets, humanate and animate. These are (i) Discus, Chariot, Gem, Sword, Armour, Flag and Treasure; and (ii) Consort, Priest, Army Chief, Charioteer, Soldier, Horse and Call Elephant.

षष रत्नो माण्डलः यहःधर्म ज्ञानम यमानस्य।
केकुणिनिष्ठ सर्वेनस्माद धनवर्धी।
महाराज सुपरिचिति सप्तमाणि गुणवर्धी।
श्रीमान्न सर रज्ज्ञानि सर्वभृत्तिः प्रक्षणिनामश्च।

There were several eminent scholars like Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee (India) and Professor F.H. Pott (Holland) who witnessed the Coronation in Sikkim and such scholars may enrich the pages of this Bulletin with their views. Meanwhile I expect a Sikkimese scholar to carry this discussion into the next number.

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32