SUNYATA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN BUDDHISM

By—N.A. S., 1877.

The concept of Sunyata is one of the main topics in Buddhism. Its early reference has been found in the Majjhima Nikaya, III, p. 194, in connection with the elucidation of Sunyata-vihara (सून्यताधराय). It is stated there that the monastery is Sunya, devoid of elephants, cows and hoes, etc., but not devoid, Sunya, of monks; and this is common characteristic. One dwelling in the forest may be devoid of the village and its men, but not devoid of the forest existence. In the same way when a meditator meditates on the earth as one object without its rivers and mountains, etc., he remains devoid of men, forest or hills, etc., but not devoid of the earth-ness. When the meditator rises up to the fifth meditation concentrating his mind on infinite space, this much remains in his mind as a real object, auma. Similarly in his subsequent higher meditations on infinite wisdom, etc., on the state of nothingness, aumemy, and on the state of nothing-consciousness his meditations become devoid of every other object but not devoid of the meditated objects. In his last meditation on the absence of any object samiti-nidhac-vena, he finds the even this concept is not everlasting and permanent and thus he gets rid of his three sota of things; rebirth and ignorance. Even though the meditator in this last meditation is freed from these impurities, auma, he, however, refuses the form of his body as constituted of the six organs as the end of his life. Thus we find explained in this Discourse the internal voidness Sunyata and the external voidness Sunyata, viz. the formless is the deliverance of one’s mind from the said impurities, whereas the latter is the absence of something else in a particular place or object, e.g., monastery, etc. It is most likely that this internal Sunyata is conveyed in such a passage like: “Sunyata-gadha” Sunyata-grhiniyasas, “discoursers are very deep...” and co. and Sunnata, internal purification.”

A new interpretation of the term may be traced in S. IV 1, p. 54. Ananda makes a query to Buddha on the meaning of the world empty and Buddha’s answer is that it is empty because of the absence in it of the soul and of anything of the soul. This new interpretation is put up throughout the later Pali texts like the Sutta Pitaka, and other S. and it remains as well.

A new expression has been formed in S. I, p. 133 to convey the absence of soul in man in a stanza attributed to Arya Bhikshu. It
reads: "To conceive a permanent living being, in this body, is a wrong view coming from the god of death, Mara. For, this body is pure collocation of the manifest elements, and there is not found a permanent living being, Suttra."

Thus the term, Sunya assumed a new definition; significance which fact will be more and more confirmed in the subsequent citations.

Svageto-Samadhi is mentioned along with animitta and anupadises in Vacana IV.3, Digh III, 219, Sam IV, 360, Ang. I. 299 (Lamotte, Histoire, p. 47).

The above three Samadhis occur sometimes under three Vimokkas (emancipation) and sometimes under Dhammapa (channel of emanation). Suncita-vimokka (sunnitavimokka) is when one's mind is completely free from the three impurities (Dhammapa, Sect 3, ver. 4). Dhammapala has only two vimokkas, viz. Sunnata and animitta as in the Cula-Sunnata-sutta of Majjhima-nikaya.

S. vimokka-mukha results from the contemplation on the non-soul-conception (Compendium, p. 216, Abb. Sin. IX, 39). The Vsmuttimagga of Upatissa, (p. 313) also makes clear how the void-emancipation is fulfilled through penetration into no-soul-thought. One dwelling on the no-soul-thought obtains Sunnata-vimokka-mukha, says the Pati-sambhoda (cited in Abh. Dipa, p. 474, n. 3). This specified import of Sunyata has been much amplified by other Pali authors like Nagasena and Buddhaghosa. The former comments: "the self-character of all the manifest elements, the supreme voidness, i.e., absence of any living-being and intention the extreme voidness should not be made bright."

Samh оборинов sunglasses-sunnam nirrka-nigjissam-acchanna Sunnam akkhandham 2 (Milleus, Bombay Univ. Series, p. 404); while the latter remarks: Just as a wooden mill is void, i.e., free of any living-being and intention (nigjissam nitrissam) and yet it acts as if it walks and

1. Note it is sunya (Suttra) because there is no Sunna, a sentient being in it.

2. वैचारिक संबंध परमाधान निदृष्टिभूषण ।
अनुवाद-निदृष्टिभूषण ॥

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stand; just so is Namo-maha, man; he be void, i.e. free from any living being and intention (ajjivin na thim), yet he looks as if he has a self and intention and discharges duties, etc. (Vis. magga, ch. 18).

Even so, in Mahavim Shatru, he has favored the idea that Udaya, the Sunyata, conceives the counteracta Samyukta-drsti, belief in soul (Lamotte, Vin. k. v. i. p. 148, K. v. 16, and Mahayanaamaditti, p. 27) as against the Sadbhavaka, the Sutra’s saying:

"Voidsness does neither arise nor die as all these things are devoid of their self-character.

न पूर्णमाद यो न विदिते

स्मरणयति व इत्यसंवर्णानि: ।


Let us see now what Naga jina, the great champion of the Sunya tathas, says. He makes a new t., then he, in addition, shows how to prove the t.-brothers, the Niga jinas, classified. However, it should be noted that he is a Pusarthika, that is a Prajapati, i.e. he would combat strongly and radically every proposition relating to any reality in the topic put forward by his opponent. Who, e.g.: the proposition is presented, viz. cat, in one produces certain results, he finds fault with every t. of the proposition, asking whether the cat is not an existent, non-existent, or non-existent yet concludes ultimately that both the cat and the self, the Sunya, void. This conclusion he makes clear in the topic, viz.:

"This world is not: there is no continuity of causes and effects; there is no reality here; being is being (sahajam) in the original talk. For a void thing comes out of void things".


The idea is that the process of cause and result continues for ever without the Self. The consciousness is the fundamental topic of the Shriyama-Sutra. Note the causation formula stated in the Sutra:

"The seed while producing the fruit does not think I am producing it; he produces, while being produced does not think I am produced by the one, etc. (P. 4). Thus the entire process of causation is free from consciousness. This is a quiet nirvinna (p. 3). Categorically the Thangtib: Saddhatma dharmadana vipada, Saddhatma mokshadana.

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"Pure in production of things and pure is the continuity of the manifest elements" substituting an old terminology Siddha, pure for Sunya, void, (Adhiniruta-bhara's Ver. 12) and note his another saying : Siddhara anuamam catur, "This is all pure and without an ex-verb" (Ibid. 9).

We can now see that the comments on Sunyata (सून्यता) made by Ngoteru and Buddha-gsha as noted above (p.18) are quite in keeping with the traditional thinking of the early Buddhists.

Thus the cause, effect and the act of production being void, Nagaurama declares:

"What is the dependent origination,
We call it voidness" (Madh. Sastra, ch. 14, Ver. 18).

The same idea he spells out in another context:

"Dependent origination is nothing but voidness, and (10) accepted by you."

Cited in Bodh-Panjika, p. 416 from his Lokatita-vaya 20.

In all these passages the original idea of sunyata, selflessness intended in the term must not be overlooked by us. So the premises made by the Mahayanaik authors as dharmas are Sunya, void and apramit, non-substantial are quite sensible and suggestive. Although one may plead with Bhavavaca (Kancala, p. 107) that these two terms are synonymous, they have their own primary ideas and significances.

Some early Buddhists raise objection to such a wide application of Sunyata on the plea that Buddh presided it as a vacans to gain insight into as-soul-idea, (चर्मका). Nagaurama replies in this celebrated stanza:

"Sunyata has been preached by Buddh with a view to removing all wrong speculations. But those who resort to it as an ultimate end are to be declared as incorrigible fellows". (Madh-Sastra, XIII, 8).

The above introductory statement by Chandrakirti in his Prasannapada makes clear that it was Nagaurama who widened the application of Sunyata to the entire field of philosophical speculation. However, the

1. सून्य समस्तसुन्नात: सून्य संबकालिति:
fact that the Sanyata-doctrine must be viewed as a suitable weapon to check all the wrong views and opinions has also been well stressed by Nagasena, a predecessor of Nagarjuna (See Milinda, p. 464).

Doctrine of Sanyata (सून्यता) is a fundamental topic of the Sutravaidi which adopted it as an antidote against the reality-notions of separate elements including the concepts of Umapata, etc. Sanyata is not applied to prajnapati dharma, empirical things like chariot, house, etc. reality of which is negated by means of studies of the scripture. Sanyata-concept is not an end by itself, it is also put a step to at the Nirvanic state (Ch. 141).

The S. Siddhi employs the term Sanyata along with other three terms with reference to the elements in this order: anitya, dhatva, Sanyata and anatman. Sanyata has been made into 'selfless' in keeping with its early usage. Now the idea of anatman, 'selfless' becomes redundant; hence the term is treated as conveying the idea of non-substantial (chs. 189, 190, 191). The Siddhi presumably implies thereby the theory of two-fold soullessness, anatman of the Brah-Yatists.

We may now try to find out whether we have any early authority employing all the four terms in parallel as in the S. Siddhi. The Thangka (Talapata's ver. 27) refers to them thus:

अनिन्य दुष्कर्म बिरमेष्ट बिनिमयो

We have here two more characteristics, agaham, sinful and anaham, destructive. The Thera addresses his mind to be watchful of things in their true characteristics in order that it may remain aloof from them.

The mind's watchfulness over the separate personality elements is one of the four ways of mindfulness, Satipatthana. It is explained in the Nikayas as to keep watch over the fact that dharman like the removal of the hindrances, nirvana, seven factors of Bodhi and four noble truth, etc. are revolved and so on. But Tushahudda gives a different meaning of dharma-m projection. "The person engaged in it penetrates into the elements under four aspects: anitya, impermanent, dhatva, sorrowful, Sanyata, void and anatman, selfless." (Abh. Kosa, VI. 15). This interpretation should not be viewed as Vanibhandu's own, but it is, in fact, based on that of the early Sarvastivadin authors as many other topics of the Kosa are. Cfr. the same interpretation in the Abh. dipa vil. Vatti, p. 316-17. We have the same four aspects stated in another context. The Sarvastivadin Abhidharmikas, e.g. Prajna-Vastika, p. 10, insists that the comprehension of the four Arjan truths must be effected.
under four aspects each. The first truth, dharmatva is characterized as anitya, dukkha, anatman and anatman. Sigm. Dukkha-nya conveys the entire universe (S. Siddhi, ch. 193) the subject of Saccadhamma at a great epoch of such topics and proved their ontological enshrink well founded. It was probably S. Siddhi and his follower who picked up one important aspect of the dharmas, i.e., anitya and built out of it stupendous phalas (ydhak) known (v. my paper in G. University, Bulletin, Theology, Vol. XIII, 1, pp. 328, and Puja pramana in my netowing Buddhist idealism).

The Ratnakuta probably refers to the four characteristics (lokasamudg) of dharmas: anitya, dukkha, anatman and santanartha (liv, 17) and in its comment to four aspects (sphota) under sannya: anitya, dukkha, anatman and santanartha. Though these four are not spoken of here under santanartha the context implies that they are described as characteristics of things under that truth (p. 109). Four perfections (ghosita) are mentioned as related to the four characteristics; merit, endowments, qualities, towards impermanent things, happiness towards and happiness things. Self-attraction towards selfish things and self-attraction towards ugly things. Since the non-body of siddharmakaya is fed from the four perfections, converse of them are attributed to the non-body, viz. niruparamita, permanent-climax, noble, happy-climax, unuparamita, self-climax and subuparamita, auspicious-climax.

According to S. Siddhi these four perfections are to be checked by their four samskara (puryaksh), viz., four ways of negligence than the four mindfulnesses. The four mindfulnesses on the body checks the perfections, self-satisfaction, on the feeling, happiness, self-esteem, and self-climax, permanent perfections, suparnining on the separate perfections elements the soul-perfections, Dharma (Kap, VI, 25 with Ishw. and Ahb. Dipa, p. 316). By exercising the four mindfulnesses the said four aspects are to be observed in order to check the mindless, a perversion. The poet Asanga who preceded the S. Siddhi employs the terms in parallel and explains thus: The dharmas, are anitya, void because there is neither producer nor object in them; they are anatman, because there is no dharmas independent (Sudhara, XVII, 10-21. It becomes now evident that the S. Siddhi and Asanga have faithfully kept up the errors of the earlier in interpreting anitya into sounder or selfless but in respect of anatman, the S. Siddhi mode it into anitya, sounder or selfless, probably following Nagarjuna and his school whereas Asanga put it into desirless. Therefore four characteristics of the dharmas are described by Nagarjuna in his Sm., he did not explain it (as the text, p. 16).
A CONTROVERSY BETWEEN THE YOGACARA AND THE MADHYAMIKAS

The Yogacara idealists maintain that the objective world that we experience is a false reflection of our mind. It is unreal because it does not stand our critical and logical test as Dignaga has proved (Dumhota-pariksha). Its one phase of the store-consciousness which is an accumulation of hysteric forces from immemorial time (sambhogapravartana). The store-consciousness must be checked and substantiated by a pure ultra-mundane knowledge. To do away with it is to acquire anumāna loka (v. sahajatā-nirāsraya, M. Vīkāga, I, 5, तथा विठ्ठितं तिर्यो त्रिमात्रा, 3).

Maitreyanātha calls it Sūnya, voidness on the ground that it is cleansed of all deluding forces which generate illusory appearance of the external things as well as attachment to them. Voidness is not an absolute non-entity but something more. His plea is that the liberation is secured as a result of cleansing one's own mind of its misconceptions and perseverances. Because our consciousness presents an illusory show before us, we cannot deny its existence altogether. We deny its illusory characters; its self-substance remains there. The illusory characters are gradable and growing aspects (sambhogapravartana). Its self-substance is beyond the reach of the ordinary mind, hence it can hardly be denied (v. m., Vīh. Tīka, p. 16, 10-11).

This conception of Sūnya differentiates it from the Madhyamikas. For Nagarjiṇa, propounds of the Madhyamika School, Sūnya, voidness conveys the idea of non-substantiality (ni sathvam) and serves as an antidote against all misconceptions and false notions. It has also been equated with the idea of relativity, i.e. some contingent existence of things. Nagarjuna says; whenever is brought about by causal relations is not really produced, and hence non-existent. He sometime raises

1. Cfr. Maji, III, pp. 194f; Culaanunata-Sutta. The purport of this Sutta is summarized up thus: "The true solitude is not to be found in forest-dwelling nor in the Concentration of heart from all ideas, but from in attaining to the deliverance from avastas."

Mahā Sahāra, Pali Proper Names, p. 994-5.

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the concept of Sāmyuṣa to the status of the Absolute Truth, which he
defines as free of four essential attributes, etc. etc. (v. M. Vetti,
pp. 176, 491 & 327); but he never says that Sāmyuṣa by itself
is the Truth.

The Idealists do not agree with N. gorjuna’s line of thinking,
Mātreya, leader of the school has presented convincingly his case and
shown how the concept of Sāmyuṣa should be viewed in order to accom-
plish the cherished purpose. He asks: How is voidness to be viewed?
His reply is:

When something is absent in a place, that place is devoid
(वृण) of that something: what is left out there over and above
that something, exists there forever. Perceiving it in this manner
one is said to have grasped voidness as a true perspective. Grasping
this, one is said to have penetrated deep into voidness. This point
is further illustrated as follows:

Suppose, we have here some object (सम) specified as Rūpa,
etc. When its aspect coming under category of designation does not
at all exist as it is imposed thereon, that object is devoid of the aspect
that is designated as rūpa, etc. What is seen there is the object design-
ated as rūpa, etc., and what serves as the basis of the designation: this
पदि (पदि) (serving simply as necessary to such designation)
is something real. When one understands truly well these two: the
basic object and the designation, he does not impose anything that is
not there, does not negate the basic truth (पुर्ण), neither exaggerates
nor belittles, neither removes nor imposes, but understands the truth
well; that is the Tathāta (तथाता) which is indiscribable in its nature:
This is known as well-grasped voidness.

The fact that every element is indiscernible in its nature is
to be ascertained from the scripture also. Buddha says in the Bhau-
Sankāntiśa:

Whichever thing is designated with which, we designation
(नयन) that (designated) thing does not at all exist in
itself: this is true law of elements (प्रातिशा). (V. 25, 27, 29)

1. The same idea is expressed in M. J., III, p. 106:
मस्ताकित् देवर्भुपि देवर्भुपि
तेन देवर्भुपि सन्दुर्भितानि
मस्ताकित् देवर्भुपि देवर्भुपि
मस्ताकित् देवर्भुपि सन्दुर्भितानि
मस्ताकित् देवर्भुपि हृदि
सन्दुर्भितानि भवति

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Dharmata according to Kumāralīla is prakṛti, true characteristic of all elements that remain outside of all discursive talk.

How one is said to have ill-grasped voidness is also elucidated by Mātranga thus: If any ascetic or Brahma does not wish to concede that what is devoid of something that something is non-existent and what is left out there is existent, then voidness becomes ill-understood. Why so? Because it is proper to say that when there is something absent, that something is non-existent; when in it is absent, that basic element is existent. If every thing (i.e. both) is non-existent, how will it be? What is it that is devoid? Of what is it devoid? Nor is it proper to say that it is devoid of itself. Therefore the concept of voidness in this manner becomes ill-grasped (B.G. IV, etc., E. L.V. Pou in: Note on Sunya). with an extract from Bodhisattva-bhumi.

Speaking earlier of the Nihātists (Viśvāksa) who denies absolutely this fundamental basic principle underlying our talk and designations Mātṛkā observes: We shall disclose how a Nihāṭist who challenges the very basic principle hidden beneath the surface of things like rūpa, etc. (matter) shall be fallen from this spiritual discipline (dharma-vyaya). To the person who denies even the basic principle (anumāna) in such things it is impossible to speak of the basic truth and the designations. For example, the talk of the soul (pudgala) is possible only in the presence of five aggregates of elements, matter etc. but not in their absence. Likewise in the presence of the basic truth underlying the matter, etc., the designations of such things are possible but not otherwise. In its absence one makes idleless talk. When there is no basic principle, the baseless talk also will not be there. Thus there are certain people who on account of their ill-understanding, having heard the discourses that are inclined to Nāgārjunaian ideas and attached to the elucidation of voidness and logical meanings, do not grasp the true meaning of what is preached there, speculate wrongly, and with the help of improper and ill-formulated logic conceive wrong ideas thus: Designation is only one principal truth; one who conceives in this manner conceives not well. For them the basic principle that serves as substratum of designation is absent and the designation also by no means is possible. How can there be the designation itself as the basic principle? In this manner they destroy both the principle as well as designation. The basic principle being denied, he is to be declared as a principal Nihāṭist (Prajñāna-nāṭika). As such he devises neither conversation nor co-existence with the wise men. He not only dupes himself but dupes others too. Buddha with
this idea in view says: Every thing is possible for certain person of
the soul-view, but nothing is possible for him who misconceives
voidness. Why so? A man of soul-view may be deluded in respect
of one knowable reality (potha) : but he does not dispute every knowable
reality. Nor will he, due to that view, fall into unhappy state of life.
He will neither dispute with any secker of truth, nor will he dupe him.
He may on the other hand, make the person secure a true dharma.
But a man of misconceived voidness will be deluded in respect of knowable
reality and neglect it. Due to that he will fall into unhappy state of
life and destroy the seeker of truth and the end of misery. He will
become finally negligent in his religious duties (sikapade). This person
neglecting the truth (knowable reality) will fall from the spiritual
discipline (dharma-nigraha) (I ibld.)

Prof. Louis de Vallee Poussin thinks that the absolute Nihdist
(Vaisnavites) referred to in the passage cited above is perhaps Bhavavivaka
of the Madhyamika school or the Madhyamika system itself which
maintains the views similar to those expressed in the passage. It is
most likely that the passage criticizes Nagarjuna's school which holds
the view that everything including Nirvana is absolutely void. Nagarjuna,
too warns that voidness being ill grasped will destroy the seekers of
the truth; e.g. the serpent when one catches it improperly destroys
the person (M. Sutra, XXIV, II).

It is interesting to note that the above passage throws among
other things a new light on the origin of the Idealistic thought in Buddhism.
Maurya makes absolutely clear that his school was started with a view
to reinterpret the concept of Sunyata (ध्यात्म) which was elaborated
in the Prasangika Sutras and which was made again the subject
matter of the Madhyamika Sutra. It was the Madhyamika who upheld
the view that Sunyata stands for an absolute negation of any conceivable
thought about the ultimate truth. He never speaks of any fundamental
principle (अभिधिमुक्त) underlying our daily experiences. The Idealistic
characterizes it as not, existent whereas the Madhyamika keeps it clear
from such characterization. For him the absolute in free of any attribu-
tute, existence or non-existence.

It is quite logical to plead with the Idealists that there ought
to be some basic principle on which our illusory talk is founded. This
point is well elucidated by Candrakirti in course of presenting the
Idealistic position in his Madh. Avatara as follows:

"The relative existence (parastana) ought to be upheld since
it is considered to be the basis of entire chain of imaginations. The
illusion of snake arises on the support of a rope. No such illusion
would arise in the absence of rope. Likewise the idea of blue, etc.
arises on the support of some basic mind. If this basic fact is absent, why would the basis of the idea of blue, etc.? Therefore we ought to uphold paratantra, the basic mind is basic cause of the blue-idea, etc. It is also a causing-gent of dispersing (sunyata) as well as purifying one. In this manner one realizes that what is absent in a place is co-existing truly. This (realization) is what is called truly entering into voidness. By realizing this wise voidness becomes well conceived." (V. my Sankrit text p. 47, f. pub. in JOR. M. Supplement, 1930).

C. Note: Kittu earlier remarks that the advocate of God holds that He is creator of the universe, whereas the advocate of the store-consciousness pl. does not. It is the cause of delusion and hence produces the appearance of the world. But there is one difference between these two schools, viz., God is permanent for the former and the store-consciousness is impermanent for the latter (I bid.).

This argument set forth by the Advaitists is in favor of one basic principle that is remarkably with one presented by the Advaita Vedanta. The universe for the Vedanta is in illusion, and so is the impersonal Brahman which is eternal and serves as basis of all illusion and illusory titles. The Buddhist Idealists agree with the Advaita Vedanta in so far as one basic reality (विद्वेश) is considered, but differ from the latter in viewing it as momentarily. Since the basic store-consciousness is momentarily saturated with these creative of vedanta, consequently it is gradually to be eliminated and substituted finally or converted into a permanent ultramundane knowledge.

Vishalabha’s definition of the perfect knowledge is that when the basic consciousness, paratantra, is the born of all the imposed ideas (parikalpa), it becomes perfect knowledge (paripurna). Since the latter is evolved from the former, the former is considered as a real entity. In Maitreya’s terminology samatha Tathata (समाधितथा) is paratantra and Vipala Tathata (विपलतथा) is paripurna or ag to Tathagatagarbha is paratantra and Dharmakaya is paripurna, or according to Madhyantavibhanga Abhava-parikalpa (अभवपरिकल्पन) is paratantra and Tatha Sambhava (तथासम्भव) is paripurna.

Maitreya remarks that the Absolute is sometimes covered with impurities, and sometimes freed of them. Owing to contamination man strongly adheres to the idea of subject-object relations in his mind and entertains a mingling about the concept of Sanyata, i.e., ideation: hence, entennuncate. When he gives up this idea and acquires the true knowledge, then the true concept of voidness dwells in his mind and he is said to be freed from impurities. Thus the pure etc.
impure state of mind is contingent (स्वविचार) or conditioned and does not affect its own nature; for it is forever shining in its nature (प्रकटप्रभावमय). The water or gold, e.g., is pure in its nature but becomes impure on account of its contamination with impure elements. Likewise is the mind. But the contaminated state is something actual and not our guess. Otherwise all people would become at once wise and noble (M. Vibh. Tika, p. 471). Its original purity also cannot be questioned; otherwise all our efforts for our spiritual betterment would be in vain and produce little effect. A Bodhisattva takes to the spiritual path in order that he could serve people and fulfill their desires. That is the primary purpose in his life.

Now let us note the Ratnasûtra's comment on Sunyata. Tathâgata-pattum is void of the accidental impurities which are of separable character, and non-void of the highest virtues of inseparable character (I. 153). There is nothing to be removed, nor is there anything to be imposed upon it (absolute). The absolute (अवैयुक्त) should be viewed as such by one who views it in its true perspective gets released. In these statements the characteristic of Sunyata is elucidated as a middle path (अपयज्ञा) since it has been denied of either impulsion or exultation. The author further denounces the Madhyamikas and their mode of thinking. Those whose thought is diverted from the enunciated import of Sunyata or not composed or concentrated upon it are declared to be drifted from the Sunyata. In the absence of true comprehension of Sunyata the highest import (paramārtha) the indiscriminate absolute element (अवैयुक्त) cannot be comprehended or cognized introspectively. With this intention it is stated (by Buddha): Tathāgata's comprehension of Sunyata is not other than that of Tathāgatā-pattum which is unknown or unrealized by the Stāvakar and Patriyak-buddhas, etc. (P. 36). The same treatise declares those who profess and adhere to the Sunya-concept itself are maddened in the doctrine. Buddha declares towards such persons: Far better is the belief in soul (मनोमूल) of Sumera mountain dimension than an absurd sunyata-concept (p.38, I. 11). Nagajuna too is not less emphatic in denouncing such obsession: Those who adhere to the Sunyata-concept by itself, we call them inscrutable (M. Sastra, XII, 8). These two statements make it plain that each school holds its own interpretation prime facie correct and condemns other's one a fallacious. An interesting parallel to this idea of Sunyata, not ideal by itself can be traced in the Lopanisad, mantra, Bone of contention between the Yogacara and the Madhyamika schools is the question of Paramārtha. The Yogacara (Vijnānavādin) holds it as real and existing, because it serves as a basis of our designations and imputations. However Bhāviveka, a champion of Svatantrika Madhyamika school refuses to accept its reality. He has also
criticized the interpretation of Sunyata as has been shown in the above cited passage (of the Yogacarabhumi: वैदिक पूण्य तत्त्वस्य, etc.), Read his Karatalakana (Visvabhrati pub 1949, pp. 15-16 57-59). He has been accused by Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hsuan Tsang and others that he has made Mahayana lacking in lankana, paramatma, etc. (p. My Intro p. XII-III, Karatala).

For the Vijnavadin, paramatra, relative entity may be unreal only in so far as its imposed aspect is concerned कर्मणश्च विच्छेद अवयुः but not absolutely unreal. It is an entity which consists of eight consciousness elements (अद्वैत द्वारा ज्ञात) M. Vih. Tika I, p. 15).

This point has been emphasized in the first stanza of his treatise by Maitreyas:

There is a (foundation of) unreal imputations, but in its duality (of the subject-and-object-aspects) is not there. There is, however, Sunyata, voidness; in that voidness even there is imputation. (Mahayana, I, 2).

Here the foundation of imputation is the mind and mental states (verse 9): they continue by way of causes and conditions upto the tinge of Nirvana and cover the three spheres of existence (Maldi. Tika, p. 12. L. 1-10-11; also Trimsika, p. 41).

The later schools of Buddhism in Tibet and Mongolia which sprang from the Yogacara school have admitted the mind as the ultimate principle and viewed it as samata with the implication of advay, non-dual. Note, for example, Tibet's great yogin Milarepa's statement (Lama Kazi Dawa Samdup's translation) "I understood the Samata and Nirvada to be dependent and relative states and that the Universal cause is mind which is distinct from ideas of interestensess or partiality. This universal cause, when directed along the path of Disbelief (or selfishness) resulted in the Samata; while, if it be directed along the path of Ahimsa, it resulted in Nirvana. I was perfectly convinced that the real source of both Samata and Nirvada lay in the voidness (of the Supra-mundane Mind)"—p. 199. Previously Milarepa is said to be well versed in the exposition of the science of the clear void of mind, wherein all forms and substances have their course and origin. Here the mind is viewed as the void which however is not the void of nothingness, but the primordial uncreated, unformed, incapable of being described in terms of phenomenal experience (pp. 39-7). The primordial cause is pri-
mordial Mind, the one unity. All pairs of opposites being but concepts of mundane mind—when viewed by the supra-mundane-ness of enlightenment merge in at-one-ment, and duality is realized to be illusion (p.15. n. 1. v. Ev.na wentz, Mil. repa, Oxford, 1918).

Note

The term, Sunya in the following instances indicate the absence of people or some person:—

[sanskrit text]

Again let us note Vasubandhu’s comments on these two terms, Sunya and Anatman:—

[sanskrit text]

Kosabhasya, p 400.

N. A. Sastri,
Santiniketan.