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Spurious Parallels to Buddhist Philosophy

AFTER AN EXAMINATION of the genuine parallels between European and Buddhist philosophy,* we shall now consider a few of the more widely advocated spurious parallels. They often originate from a wish to find affinities with philosophers recognized and admired by the exponents of current academic philosophy, and intend to make Buddhist thinkers interesting and respectable by current Western standards. Since this approach is not only objectively unsound,¹ but has also failed in its purpose to interest Western philosophers in the philosophies of the East, the time has now come to abandon it. Modern academic philosophers normally have no interest in what Buddhists care for, and vice versa.

A philosophical doctrine can be viewed from at least four points of view: (1) as the formulation of certain propositions, (2) in terms of the motivation which induced their author to believe them to be true, his motives being connected with the purpose he had in mind, (3) in terms of the argumentation through which he tries to establish their truth—the reasons which he adduces being rarely those which actually impelled him, and (4) in terms of the context in which the statements are made, a context which is determined by the philosopher's predecessors and contemporaries, and by his social, cultural, and religious background. When we compare Buddhist and European thought, it happens quite often that the formulations agree, whereas considerations of their context, of the motives behind them, and of the conclusions drawn from them suggest wide discrepancies. Verbal coincidences frequently mask fundamental divergences in the concepts underlying them. For pages upon pages Shinran Shōnin and Martin Luther in almost the same words expound the primacy of "faith," and yet

* See "Buddhist Philosophy and Its European Parallels," *Philosophy East and West*, XIII, No. 1 (April, 1963), pp. 9–23. (Comment and Discussion pieces on Dr. Conze's two articles will be welcome.—Ed.)

¹ As explained in the first article of this two-article series, *ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

in fact their two systems disagree in almost every other respect.² Berkeley's denial of matter seems to re-state literally the absolute idealism of the Yogācārins,³ but, nevertheless, (a) his immaterialism sets out to deny a conception of matter derived from Locke, etc., and unknown in India; (b) his idea of Mind agrees none too well with that of the Vijñānavādins; (c) his uncritical acceptance of sense-data conflicts with the *dharmatheory*; and (d) his idea of "God" would not commend itself to Buddhists.

Far too often "soteriological" are confused with "philosophical" concepts, and the Buddhist "Void"⁴ is thus regarded as being on the same level with the Aristotelian or Plotinian idea of "matter," or with the "pure potentiality" of the *Timaeus*, which is empty of all distinctions and full of infinite possibilities. Nor must it be forgotten that spiritual sickness is apt to ape or counterfeit (*pratīvarṇika, pratirūpaka*) the language of spiritual health. If the words alone are considered, the emptiness doctrine may be mistaken for one of the forms of European post-Nietzschean nihilism,⁵ and the self-naughting of saints is to some extent mimicked by the self-destructive tendencies of German Romantics, like Schlegel, Tieck, Novalis, and so on.⁶ Likewise, we could in recent years observe in the Anglo-Saxon countries certain of D. T. Suzuki's followers using the Master's sayings to justify a way of life diametrically opposed to the one envisaged by him.⁷

These examples might be multiplied almost indefinitely. In this article I will confine myself to three kinds of false parallels. (1) Some, like Kant, are not "parallel" at all, but tangential. (2) Others, such as Bergson and the existentialists, are preliminary. (3) Others, again, like Hume, are merely deceptive.

² See H. Butschkus, *Luthers Religion und ihre Entsprechung in japanischen Amida-Buddhismus* (Elmsdetten: Verlags-Anstalt Heinr. & L. Lechte, n.d., probably 1950).

³ See the quotation in my *Buddhism* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 168.

⁴ E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1962), pp. 242ff.

⁵ In my *Der Satz vom Widerspruch* (Hamburg: Selbstverlag, 1932), I have, at no. 300, collected a few characteristic statements of Nietzsche, for example, "The only reason why we imagine a world other than this one is that we are motivated by an instinct which makes us calumniate life, belittle and suspect it." "It is not life which has created the other world, but the having become weary of life." "It is of the utmost importance that one should abolish the true world. It is that which has made us doubt the world in which we are, and has made us diminish its value; it has so far been the most dangerous assault on life." Whatever this "life" may be, it is surely not the spiritual life.

⁶ See Fritz Brüggemann, *Die Ironie als entwicklungsgeschichtliches Moment* (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1909). Eckart von Sydow, *Die Kultur der Dekadenz* (Dresden: Sibyllen Verlag, 1921).

⁷ N. M. Jacobs, in *The Times Literary Supplement*, May 3, 1963, p. 325, speaks appositely of "Miller and those Beat writers who abandon practical affairs for the inner life and self-realization—or destruction—by means of Zen, Sex or Drugs."

(1) Professor T. R. V. Murti⁸ has found between Kant and the Mādhyamikas close similarities, which Jacques May⁹ has rejected as “*perfidie*,” or “treacherous.” In judging this issue, we must first of all bear in mind that it is the whole purpose of Kant’s philosophy to show that morality and religion, as understood by the German Protestantism of East Prussia, can survive, even though Newtonian physics be true and Hume’s skepticism significant. So great had the pressure of natural science become by his time that he is a man divided against himself. On the one hand, he longs to preserve the decencies of the perennial philosophy. It seemed vital to him to confine the intellect, conceived as the progenitor of natural science and therefore the foe of all human values, to the phenomenal world. In consequence, he resembles the perennial philosophers insofar as he maintains that true reality cannot be known through sense-data or concepts, but must be contacted by a pure spiritual intent—in his case, a completely disinterested act of the will. On the other hand, he takes the assertions of natural science very seriously, and is concerned as much to find reasons for their universal validity as to define their limits.¹⁰

Kant’s great specific contribution to philosophy stems from his insight into the problems posed by the tension between traditional values and the implications of natural science, and in his having found a solution acceptable to many for a long time. This tension was quite unknown in India. Since he answers a question no pre-Macaulayan Indian could ever ask, his answer can have no real correspondences in Indian thought, which never underwent the onslaught of the “mechanical” method. Therefore, all those modern thinkers who either accept the ideal of “mechanical” knowledge or give it great weight cannot have much affinity with Buddhist thought. Kant’s

⁸ *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (Hereafter, *CPB*) (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1955), pp. 294–301, though with serious reservations. Stcherbatsky, on the other hand, had seen Kant as closely similar to the later Buddhist logicians, and had likened the Mādhyamikas to Hegel and Bradley. See Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, pp. 264–269.

⁹ (1) “Kant et les Mādhyamika,” *Indo-Iranian Journal*, III (1959), 102–111. (2) “La philosophie bouddhique de la vacuité,” *Studia Philosophica*, XVIII (1958), 131–134. Some valuable comments by J. W. de Jong are in *Indo-Iranian Journal*, V (1961), 161–163.

¹⁰ This is one reason why the Kantian “phenomena” cannot be simply equated with the Buddhist “*saṃsāra*.” From the point of view of the Absolute, both Kantian empirical and Buddhist conventional knowledge are non-valid. But Kant never questioned the value of empirical knowledge. In Buddhism, however, the *saṃvṛtīsatya* (conventional truth) is a mere error due to nescience (*a-vidyā*, *a-jñāna*), and conventional knowledge represents no more than a deplorable estrangement from our true destiny. In its uncompromising monastic form, Buddhism maintains that the empirical world is not worth exploring, that all one has to know about it is its worthlessness and inanity; its scientific exploration, as irrelevant to the escape from the terrors of *saṃsāra*, is deemed unworthy of attention. A second reason why the Kantian phenomena/noumena cannot be equated with the Mādhyamika *saṃsāra*/*Nirvāna* is that the latter are identical, whereas the first clearly are not. The one dichotomy, in any case, is defined by its relation to science, the other by its relation to salvation.

position in regard to Buddhist philosophy is the exact reverse of Schopenhauer's. There the analogies were essential, and the discrepancies fortuitous, whereas here the similarities are incidental and the differences vital.

To begin with, it is wrong to describe Nāgārjuna's position as epistemological, since it is clearly ontological.¹¹ For perennial philosophers everywhere, philosophy is a way of life based on an understanding of reality as reality, of being as being. They all agree with Aristotle's famous remark according to which "The question which was raised long ago, is still and always will be, and which always baffles us—'What is Being?'—is in other words 'What is substance?'"¹² The whole theme of Nāgārjuna's work is the search for the own-being (*svabhāva*) of *dharmas*.¹³ Epistemology, by contrast, is a branch of "sciential" philosophy, and became an object of inquiry only in modern times. Following the hints of the nominalists, Descartes tore apart thought and being, and then decided that we are more immediately aware of our thoughts about things than of the things themselves, that the data of inner experience are more immediate and clear to us than the experience of outward things.¹⁴ Kant succinctly expressed the shift from the ontological to the epistemological approach in his famous remark about the "Copernican Revolution," which Murti has surely misunderstood.¹⁵ Kant says¹⁶ that "hitherto it has been assumed that all our knowledge must conform to objects," whereas he himself prefers "to suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge." This assertion of the primacy of the subjective over the objective assumes a separation between subject and object which is alien to Indian thinking. In the Mādhyamika system, on the highest level, i.e., on that of the fully realized perfect wisdom, they are one and identical. On the lower levels, they are occasionally distinguished, but never with the rigidity of post-Cartesian philosophy. The division between subjective and objective facts is always incidental and never fundamental. Their basic unity lies in their all being dharmic facts. Just as truth (*sat-ya*) does not describe a particular kind of knowledge, but a state of being, so all cognitive acts are viewed as factors in the interplay of objective facts (*dharma*) which bring

¹¹ On this subject, see also the excellent remarks of Jacques May (1) 104–108, (2) 135–138 (see note 9).

¹² *Metaphysics*, Z 1, 1028b. H. Tredennick, trans. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933), p. 313.

¹³ Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, pp. 239–241.

¹⁴ This is not a psychological but a philosophical statement, because psychologically it is manifestly untrue. The normal and untutored mind is usually quite at ease among external objects, and, unable to even understand this doctrine of the "primacy of internal experience," is much more immediately aware of a chair than of its awareness of a chair.

¹⁵ *CPB*, pp. 123–124, 274.

¹⁶ *Critique of Pure Reason*, N. K. Smith, trans. (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1961), p. 22.

about, not just a false view of the world, but the origination (*samudaya*) of a false world alienated from true reality. There is no room here to show the existential character of *avidyā* (ignorance), *dr̥ṣṭi* (false views), *prapañca* (idle speculations), etc., but the reader should always bear in mind that false views are not merely wrong knowledge, but wrong knowledge on the part of a viewer who is in a false position and surrounded by distorted objects.

All Mādhyamika reasoning has the one single purpose of enabling transcendental wisdom to function freely. In his remarks about "intellectual intuition," Kant questions the possibility of such a faculty, and, in addition, he could not possibly formulate a spiritual discipline which could lead to it,¹⁷ because no man can be much wiser than his age. The essence of Buddhism concerns the one true reality (*Dharma*), which can be realized only in the discipline of a traditional system of meditation, of which the Christian counterparts vanished from sight in Northern Europe soon after the Reformation.

There remains the apparent analogy between Kant's antinomies and the Buddhist treatment of speculative questions (*avyākṛtavastūni*). They agree in a few details, i.e., in that they are both concerned with whether the world is finite or infinite, etc., and in that they are both left undecided. The difference, however, is the following: The antinomies are insoluble because one can argue convincingly on both sides, and so no decision is possible. The deadlock of reason indicates that it has overstepped its boundaries. The argument concerning the "indeterminate topics" is totally different. They "are not explained, set aside and ignored," because they are not conducive to salvation. There are answers to them, and the Tathāgata knows them, but he does not reveal them because they are of no use to us.¹⁸ In the one case, these questions fall outside the scope of scientific, in the other of salutary, experience. The similarity is purely formal, and quite trivial when the formulations are viewed in their respective contexts.

(2) We now come to those who go but part of the way. Bergson and the existentialists, among others, agree with the Buddhists in their revulsion from the nightmare of a sinister and useless world, but cannot follow them into the transcendental world, just for lack of expertise and because of their

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 268, 270–271. Murti, *CPB*, p. 300. May (1) 108: "La dialectique kantienne est le jeu de l'impuissance de la raison. . . . Au contraire, la dialectique mādhyamika est véritablement constitutive de la réalité, elle accomplit en abolissant." See note 9.

¹⁸ This is perfectly clear from *Majjhima Nikāya*, No. 63, and the fuller account of Nāgārjuna, Étienne Lamotte, trans., *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse* (Louvain: Bureau du Muséon, 1944), Vol. I, pp. 154–158.

unfamiliarity with any definite spiritual tradition—whereas Kant had still stood squarely in the Protestant tradition, however impoverished that may have been by his time.

(2a) Bergson, like Kant, strives hard to show that spiritual values can co-exist with the findings of science. He does this by contrasting the largely false world of common sense and science (in which he, nevertheless, takes a keen interest) with the true world of intuition. He is perfectly lucid and even superb so long as he demonstrates that both the intellect and our practical preoccupations manifestly distort the world view both of everyday experience and of mechanical science. But, when he comes to the way out, to his *durée réelle* and his "intuition," vagueness envelops all and everything. His positive views have therefore been rightly described as "tantalising," for "as soon as one reaches out to grasp his body of thought it seems to disappear within a teasing ambiguity."¹⁹ Mature and accomplished spiritual knowledge can be had only within a living tradition. But how could a Polish Jew, transplanted to Paris, find such a tradition in the corridors of the Collège de France or in the *salons* of the 16th *arrondissement*? It is the tragedy of our time that so many of those who thirst for spiritual wisdom are forced to think it out for themselves—always in vain. There is no such thing as a pure spirituality in the abstract. There are only separate lineages handed down traditionally from the past. If any proof were needed, Bergson, a first-class intellect, would provide it. His views on religion are a mixture of vague adumbrations and jumbled reminiscences which catch some of the general principles of spirituality but miss its concrete manifestations. Tradition furnished at least two worlds composed of objects of pure disinterested contemplation—the Buddhist world of *dharmas* and the Platonic ideas in their pagan, Christian, or Jewish form. Here Bergson would have had an opportunity to "go beyond intellectual analysis and to recapture by an act of intuitive sympathy the being and the existence in their original quality."²⁰ But for various reasons he could not accept either of these traditions. Like Schopenhauer, he regarded art as one of the avenues to the truth,²¹ but, otherwise, his "intuition," this "ecstatic identification with the object,"²² this "spiritual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it, and consequently inexpressible,"²³ is never explained as a disciplined faculty.

¹⁹ Th. Hanna, ed., *The Bergsonian Heritage* (Hereafter, *BH*) (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 1; also pp. 27, 53.

²⁰ *BH*, p. 40.

²¹ "So art . . . has no other object than to brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself." *Le Rire*, quoted in *BH*, p. 88.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 158.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Because of this disseverance from a concrete spiritual practice, Bergson has now no disciples, and his work belongs to the past. As Raïssa Maritain put it so well, "Bergson travelled *uncertainly* towards God, *still far off*, but the light of whom had already reached him."²⁴ Unable, like Moses, to reach the promised land, he, nevertheless, cleared the way for the Catholic revival of the twentieth century, which enabled many French intellectuals to regain contact with at least one living spiritual tradition. At the same time, he realized that the inanition of the spiritual impulse slowly deprives life of its savor among the more finely organized minds of Europe, and he wrote in 1932, "Mankind lies groaning, half-crushed beneath the weight of its own progress. Men do not sufficiently realize that their future is in their own hands. Theirs is the task of determining first whether they want to go on living or not(!). . . ."²⁵

(2b) It is at this point of despondency that the existentialists had, after World War I, arrived on the scene. By that time the speculative vigor of European philosophers had declined so much that they got the worst of both worlds. As for the world of science, they rejected its pretensions with a lordly disdain. As for the world of the spirit, they did not know where to find it.²⁶ Their beliefs reflect to perfection the social position of the post-1918 intelligentsia on the European Continent. In the provincial perspective of England both logical positivism and existentialism are often explained as reactions against German idealism. This is not the case. Logical positivism is descended from the philistinism of the English commercial middle classes,²⁷ and, long before the days of Ayer, Wittgenstein, and Wollheim, the "British school of philosophy" had found its classical and superbly brilliant expression in Macaulay's essay on Lord Bacon.²⁸ As for existentialism, it is derived from the hopeless anxieties of the more intelligent European intellectuals. Their *Sorge* and *existentielle Angst* spring, not from

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92 (my italics, but not my translation from the French).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99. If this statement, which goes on to speak of the "universe" as "a machine for the making of gods," is collated with that which Italo Svevo (Ettore Schmitz) made in 1924 in his *Confessions of Zeno* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons), pp. 411-412, it must become clear that we do not owe our present plight merely to the brilliant achievements of our able technicians. The progressive decline of spiritual wisdom may well have weakened the will to live and correspondingly strengthened the death wish. On this subject, refer to Erich Heller, *The Disinherited Mind* (London: Penguin Books, 1961), whose conclusions I take for granted throughout.

²⁶ I speak here only of the "secular" existentialists. The "religious" existentialists would require separate treatment.

²⁷ Matthew Arnold, after dividing the English population of his time into "barbarians, philistines, and populace," well defined the philistine as "a strong, dogged unenlightened opponent of the chosen people, of the children of light," in A. C. Ward, *Illustrated History of English Literature* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1955), Vol. III, p. 227.

²⁸ July, 1837. Th. B. Macaulay, *Literary Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 364-410.

their reading of Pascal and Kierkegaard, but from their own objective social situation. Russell was certainly not under the influence of either Pascal or Kierkegaard when he wrote in 1903 that "only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth[!] be safely built."²⁹ We naturally ask ourselves what might have happened to "henceforth" necessitate so much despair. By way of reply we are told that "the world which Science presents for our belief" is "purposeless" and "void of meaning."³⁰ If Russell had realized that the methods of Science, with a capital S, preclude it from ever recognizing any objective purpose or meaning even if there is one, he might have saved himself much unnecessary worry. Millions of people like him take the conventions and hypotheses of mechanical "Science" for "truths,"³¹ and are plunged into deep gloom forever after. Existentialism, like logical positivism, arose primarily from social conditions. Secondly, of course, when these two movements reached the universities, their followers naturally rubbed themselves against the professors who were entrenched there and who were then in the habit of expounding the tenets of German idealism, and they also added a few frills of their own, such as Moore's characteristically Cambridge "preciousness," etc.

The existentialist diagnosis of the plight of human existence agrees with that of the Buddhists. "So human life is nothing but a perpetual illusion. Man is nothing but disguise, lie and hypocrisy, with respect to himself and with respect to others,"³² and so on and so on. In terms of the Four Truths, the existentialists have only the first, which teaches that everything is ill. Of the second, which assigns the origin of ill to craving, they have only a very imperfect grasp. As for the third and fourth, they are quite unheard of. They just do not believe that "there is, O monks, an Unborn, an Unbecome, an Unmade, an Unconditioned; for if there were not this Unborn, Unbecome, Unmade, Unconditioned, no escape from this born, become, made and conditioned would be apparent."³³ Knowing no way out, they are

²⁹ *Mysticism and Logic* (London: Penguin Books, 1951), p. 51. The whole essay (pp. 50-59) is worth re-reading because now, sixty years later, it shows clearly the grotesque irrationalities of a "scientist" philosophy, which in nearly every sentence blandly went beyond all scientific observations made even up to the present day. May I explain that my attitude cannot be called "anti-scientific," because nowhere have I said anything about "science" as such, either for or against. My strictures concern only extravagant philosophical conclusions drawn from a few inconclusive scientific data. Sir Isaac Newton, as is well known, said at the close of his life, when all his work was done, that he had only played with pebbles on the sea shore, and that "the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." This is all I try to say, neither less nor more.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

³² Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, no. 100. For a good comparison in some detail see Constantin Regamey, "Tendances et méthodes de la philosophie indienne comparées à celles de la philosophie occidentale," *Revue de théologie et de philosophie*, IV (1950), 258-259.

³³ *Udāna*, viii, 3: *no . . . nissaranam paññāyetha*.

manufacturers of their own woes. As distinct from their world weariness, that of the Buddhists is cheered by the hope of ultimate release and lightened by multifarious meditational experiences which ease the burden of life. Denied inspiration from the spiritual world, existentialists are apt to seek it from authoritarian social groups (Nazis, Communists, the Roman Catholic hierarchy). They are prone to ascribe their disbelief in a spiritual world to their own "unblinking love of truth." I myself was brought up among them, and they were clearly the bedraggled victims of a society which had become oppressive to them through the triple effect of Science, technology, and social decomposition, and in which no authoritative spiritual teaching could any longer be encountered, except in some obscure nooks and corners inaccessible to the metropolitan intelligentsia.

(3) By "deceptive" comparisons I mean those which concern statements that are negative in either form or content. A negative proposition derives its true meaning from what it is directed against, and its message entirely depends, therefore, on its context. In different contexts two identical negative statements may, therefore, have nothing in common. One single example must suffice.

Hume's denial of a "self" seems literally to agree with the *anattā* doctrine. Buddhists are certainly at one with him when he rejects the notion of a permanent self-identical substance in favor of a succession of impermanent states and events.³⁴ Furthermore, his assertion that our mind is "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions,"³⁵ united together by certain relations" would win at least their qualified approval. The unity of the personality is a fairly loose one for Hume, just as for Democritus and the Epicureans it was a mere assemblage (*concilium*) of subtle moving atoms, and all that Hume did was to substitute "perceptions" for the "atoms" of the ancient materialists. He understood our personality after the image of inanimate objects,³⁶ which also have no "self," or true inwardness, of any kind. In addition, those inanimate objects, as well as the human personality, were subjected to the mechanical method, which discarded Aristotle's "substantial forms" and "intelligible substances," and which, in accordance with the "law of inertia," allows for no center of inward initiative. For Hume, only a stream

³⁴ So, Murti, *CPB*, p. 130.

³⁵ "For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perceptions." David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, T. H. Green, ed. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1874), Vol. I, p. 534. When I first saw this sentence forty years ago, I thought it unanswerable. What now strikes me is the immense vagueness of the word "perception."

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 537-540.

of successive ideas exists, and there is no permanent self within, nor is any subject of experience needed to hold the ideas together, or to guide them. The mind, a mere stage for its contents and for their relations and interactions, is reduced to the drifting passage of an aimless temporality.

All this corresponds well to the picture of Pāli Buddhism which British civil servants gave about eighty years ago. It takes no account, however, of the context of Hume's statements. When applied to the human personality, the Aristotelian synthesis used the term "substance" to indicate that some features of man are more essential to him than others, closer to his true being.³⁷ For Hume, on the other hand, all mental contents are of equal value, and for him it makes no sense to speak of "surface" or "depth," of "inwardness" or "alienation." In consequence, from his point of view, there can be no sense in the spiritual approach of which Augustine has so well said, "*In te ipsum redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas.*"³⁸ Although Aristotle's theory of substance may have been a rather clumsy way of providing an ontological basis for the spiritual life, its rejection by Hume meant that he dropped all quest for the transcendental, and, appalled by his own nihilism, turned away from philosophy and occupied himself with re-writing the history of England in the interest of the Tory Party.

Whereas Hume reduced selfhood to the level of the sub-personal, the Buddhist doctrine of *anattā* invites us to search for the super-personal. Its whole point lies in that, since everything in this empirical self is impermanent, unsatisfactory, etc., therefore it constitutes a false self, and none of it can be mine, me, or myself. In consequence, I must look beyond the *skandhas* (heaps) to find my true and abiding transcendental self (which is the Tathāgata).³⁹ The *Dhammapada* says that, if the egolessness of all *dharmas* is seen with the eye of wisdom, it will then lead to a turning away from all ill.⁴⁰ Suzuki, commenting on this verse, defines the *prajñā*-eye as

³⁷ For Aristotle, intelligence (*dianoētikos*) was a man's true self (E.N., 1166a8), and, for Porphyry (*de abst.*, I. 29), the *Nous* is his *ontōs auton*. The *Nous* is man's sovereign (*kyriotaton*) and his better part (*ameinon*) (E.N., 1178a2). The connection between man's *ousia* (essence) and his proper objective purpose is made particularly clear in Aristotle's *Protreptikos*. For the quotations, see E. Conze, *Der Satz vom Widerspruch* (Hamburg: Selbstverlag, 1932), no. 141.

³⁸ Approximately: "Enter into yourself, for the truth dwells in the inmost heart of man." Likewise, in the Far East, Ch'an taught that "a man could be a Buddha by immediately taking hold of his inmost nature." D. T. Suzuki, *The Essentials of Zen Buddhism*, Bernard Phillips, ed., (London: Rider & Co., 1963), p. 175. Also George Grimm, *The Doctrine of the Buddha* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958), p. 175: "We must retire from the world back into ourselves, to the 'centre of our vital birth,' and by persistent introspection seek to find out how we have come into all this Becoming in which we find ourselves enmeshed."

³⁹ This side of the *anattā* doctrine has been explained with great subtlety and acumen by Grimm, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116, 140, 147, 149, 175, 369-372. For my own views, see *Buddhist Thought in India*, pp. 36-39, 42, 122-134, 208-209.

⁴⁰ *Dhammapada*, V. 279: *yadā paññāya passati, atha nibbindati dukkhe.*

"a special kind of intuition enabling us to penetrate right into the bedrock of Reality itself."⁴¹ To Hume, such a penetration would not have been a particularly meaningful undertaking, and he would have been still more displeased by Suzuki's sequel, when he says: "The problem of the ego must be carried on to the field of metaphysics. To really understand what Buddha meant by saying that there is no *ātman*, we must leave psychology behind." Those who equate Hume and Buddhism on the subject of the "self" overlook the fact that no passage in the Buddhist scriptures teaches that there is no self, although the self is often called "inconceivable" and inaccessible to verbalized knowledge, that the whole subject of the existence and non-existence of a self is relegated to the class of the fruitless "indeterminate topics,"⁴² and that the fixed conviction that "there is not for me a self" is expressly condemned as a false view.⁴³

These comparisons with European philosophers could be continued for many more pages, but enough has been said to clarify the general principles which in my view a comparative study of Buddhist and European philosophy must observe.

⁴¹ *Mysticism, Christian and Buddhist* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957), p. 39.

⁴² Grimm, *op. cit.*, p. 140n.

⁴³ *The Majjhima Nikāya*, I, p. 8. Edited by V. Trenckner. (London: Pali Text Society, 1888).