

36. *Yatteṣām vijñātam viditam vyaktameva buddhyādiviṣayam Brahma vijñānāt
viditāviditavyāvṛttamātmabhūtam nityavijñānasvarūpamātmasth-
amavikriyamamṛtamajaramabhayamananyatvādiviṣayamityevamavijñānāt
buddhyādiviṣayātmatayaivā nityam vijñātam Brahma.*
—Śaṅkara, Vākyabhāṣya on Kena Up. 2.3.
37. *Ānando Brahmeti vyajñāt ... sa ya evam veda pratītiṣṭhati.*—Taittirīya Up.,
3.6.1.
38. *Yadi Brahmātyantamevavijñātam, laukikānām Brahavidām chāviśeṣaḥ
prāptah.*
—Śaṅkara, Padabhāṣya on Kena Up., 2.4.
39. Kena Up., 2.4.
40. *Yatsāksādaparoksād Brahma ya ātma sarvāntaraḥ.* —Bṛhadāranyaka Up.,
3.4.1.
41. *Ataḥ pratyayapratyagātmatayā viditam Brahma yadā, tadā tat matam tat
samyagdarśanamityarthaḥ.* —Śaṅkara, Padabhāṣya on Kena Up., 2.4.
42. *Tasmātpatibodhāvabhasapratyagātmatayā yadviditam tad Brahma tadeva
matam jñātam, tadeva sadmyagjñānavatpratyagātmavijñānam, na
viṣayavijñānam.* —Śaṅkara, Padabhāṣya on Kena Up., 2.4.
43. *Antaḥsthitena caitanyajyotiṣāvabhāsitasya manaso mananasāmartyam.*
—Śaṅkara, Padabhāṣya on Kena Up., 2.4.
44. *Anyo asau anyo ahamasmīti na sa veda.* —Bṛhadāranyaka Up., 1.4.10.
45. Ibid., 2.4.4.
46. Kena Up., 2.1.
47. Śaṅkara, Padabhāṣya on Kena Up., 2.1.
48. Śaṅkarabhāṣya on Brahmasūtra, Introduction.
49. *Iha chedavedīdatha satyamasti na chedihāvedīnmahatī vinastīh.* —Kena Up.,
2.5.
50. *Ātmanā vindate vīryam vidyayā vindate'mṛtam.* —Kena Up., 2.4.
51. *Vidyayā ātmaviṣayayā vindate'mṛtam.* —Śaṅkara, Padabhāṣya on Kena Up.,
2.4.
52. *Ātmavidyākṛtam tu vīryamātmānaiva vindate.* —Ibid.
53. *Yadi cātmanāivamṛtatvam vindate kim punarvidyayā kriyata ityucyate ... yata
āha vīryam'vidyayā vindate'.* —Śaṅkara, Vākyabhāṣya on Kena Up., 2.4.
54. Ibid., 3.2.
55. Ibid., 4.6.
56. *Tasya vanam tadvanam tasya prāñijātasya pratyagātmabhūtatvādvānam
vananīyam sambhajanīyam.* —Śaṅkara, Padabhāṣya on Kena Up. 4.6.
57. Cf. Chāndogya Up., 3.14.1.

Was Acarya Śaṅkara Responsible for the Disappearance of Buddhist Philosophy from India?

DAYA KRISHNA

The disappearance of Buddhism from India is one of those enigmas which defies explanation. For more than fifteen hundred years, it dominated the Indian scene and has left unbelievable marvels in the realm of sculpture, architecture and painting that it is difficult to understand how the faith that created this ceased to function as a living force in the very country where it originated. Sanchi, Karhaa, Ajanta are names to conjure with. And, there are many more located all over India testifying to its glorious presence everywhere in the country. Yet, it all disappeared as if it had never existed sometime around AD 1000.

All attempts at explanation flounder against the single fact that the other great śramaṇic religion still flourishes in India. There are not only various Jain communities in all parts of India, but some of them even proclaim their identities by calling themselves 'Jain'. And they *are* Jains, unlike the so-called neo-Buddhists who not only know nothing about the great traditions of Buddhism in this country but do not seek, or want to seek, any such thing as Nirvāṇa. They have no monks or monasteries or systems of meditation, nor do they have a monastic discipline as the outward manifestations of the inner seeking of the Great Buddha.

And it is not only the Jains who flourish and survive, but also the Zorastrians, the Syrian Christians, the Jews, the Armenians and many others. The synagogues of the Jews in Kerala are well known, but the Armenian Church in Calcutta, established long before the coming of the British, deserves equal attention.

The myth of Vedic Hinduism, 'swallowing up', all the other non-Hindu religious traditions in India, so persistently propagated by certain vested interests, is really a myth, unsubstantiated by any evidence whatsoever. There has, of course, been conflict and controversies, even violent ones, but never 'religious wars' in the form they have occurred in the West. Yet, it remains a fact that Buddhism did disappear from India, the land where

it originated and flourished for more than fifteen hundred years. But though the causes of the disappearance are little known, one has still some substantial knowledge of the reasons for the disappearance of Buddhist philosophy from the Indian scene where it had a visible dominating presence for so long. And, it is with this issue that we are concerned in the present paper.

Normally, the dramatic disappearance of Buddhist philosophy from the philosophical scene of India is ascribed to Śaṅkara who refuted the Buddhists in such a decisive way that they could not hold their own after being defeated by him. It is also alleged that as, through a subtle diplomacy, he had assimilated all the crucial elements of their distinctive thought in his own system which he ascribed to the Upanisads, the Brahma Sutras and the Gita, there was nothing here for the Buddhists to claim as distinctive in their own philosophy. Yet, however widespread the thesis, it does not even *prima facie* make any sense. Śaṅkara refuted not just the Buddhists but almost all the other schools of Indian philosophy as well. But in spite of his refutation, they continued to flourish in India. Why should there have been an exception in the case of Buddhism? Normally philosophical schools do not die of criticism. Rather, they get a new life and vigour as they try to meet the challenge, usually introducing interesting modifications in their positions or different arguments in support of the old one. The history of philosophical schools, in all traditions, is the history of argument and counter-argument and there is no reason to support the notion that Buddhism was an exception to this, especially when it was the main protagonist in the philosophical debates of the pre-Śaṅkara era of philosophy in India.

Even if we disregard these considerations, the history of Buddhist philosophy after Śaṅkara completely refutes the claim that it disappeared from the Indian philosophical scene because of his decisive demolition of their position by his arguments. In fact it did not disappear. Rather, it continued to flourish for almost five hundred years after Śaṅkara is supposed to have finally driven them away from the philosophical scene in the country. Not one, not two, but literally scores of Buddhist thinkers flourished during this period and if one compares them with those who followed in the steps of Śaṅkara's thought, one is amazed as to how such a contention could ever have been made by anyone.

Potter's *Bibliography of Indian Philosophy* (3rd ed.) lists at least forty-three (47?) important Buddhist thinkers from the 8th century to the first quarter of the 13th century, that is AD 1220. The list includes such well

known names as: Śanta Rakṣita, Kamalaśīla, Dharmottara, Mallavādin, Jitendra Buddhi, Yaśomitra, Prajnākara Gupta, Pandita Aśoka, Jñānaśrī Mitra, Atiṣa, Ratnakīrti, Mokṣākaragupta and Aniruddha. If we break the list centurywise, we find that from 700 to 800 we have eight thinkers, from 800–900 seven thinkers, from 900–1000 five thinkers, from 1000–1100 thirteen thinkers and from 1100–1200 there are eleven thinkers.

It may be remembered in this connection that only one thinker is listed in the *Bibliography* after 1200, the date usually given for the destruction of Nalanda by Bakhtiyar Khilji in the standard books on Indian history. This would mean that from 1150–1250, the *Bibliography* lists six thinkers, most of whom have written on Aniruddha who is supposed to have flourished around 1120 and is said to have been a Sthaviravadin. In fact Aniruddha seems to have been a subject of intensive discussion among Buddhists, as even earlier the two thinkers who succeed him, Vimalbuddhi and Sumangala II, had written on him. This shows how alive the Buddhist philosophical tradition was even at this late period; what could be a surer sign of intellectual vitality than the sustained discussion of a thinker by his contemporaries and successors? In fact, the Buddhists seem to have had a lively tradition of discussion regarding the important thinkers who occurred both during the post-Śaṅkara period and the outstanding ones in the pre-Śaṅkara period such as Nāgārjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Buddhaghōṣa, Dignāga, Candrakīrti and Dharmakīrti.

It is obvious even from a cursory glance at this data that there can be no question of the disappearance of Buddhist philosophers and philosophy from India during the post-Śaṅkara period so that the question of ascribing to Śaṅkara the reason for their disappearance does not arise. A comparative study of the Advaitic thinkers influenced by Śaṅkara during this period may be helpful in understanding the relative position of these two important philosophical traditions.

A close look at the data about the advaitins given in Potter's *Bibliography* reveals, surprisingly, that if we exclude Śaṅkara and his immediate disciples, the total number of Advaitic thinkers hardly exceeds five during a period that covers roughly five centuries, that is, from 750–1250. The important Advaitic names during this period are those of Jñānaghana (AD 900), Vimuktātman (AD 950), Vācaspati Miśra I (AD 960), Sarvajñātman (AD 1027) and Gangādhara (AD 1137). The situation does not change very much even if we include Maṇḍana Miśra, the author of the *Brahmasiddhi* in this list, or Sureśvara, Padmapāda, Hastāmālaka and Tṛṭṭaka, Śaṅkara's immediate disciples. To have had not more than half a dozen thinkers

during a period of almost five hundred years does not speak very highly of Ācārya Śaṅkara's *Digvijaya*, so loudly proclaimed not only by his disciples, but others, in the Indian tradition.

There can thus be no ground for ascribing to Śaṅkara the responsibility for the disappearance of the Buddhists from the philosophical scene of India as is usually done by scholars and laymen alike. It is a myth like many other myths and should be recognized as such. The cause of its disappearance lay in the destruction of Nalanda, the internationally acclaimed intellectual centre of Buddhism in AD 1200, though even that leaves many questions unanswered such as why, unlike Jainism, it had only one centre in the whole country. But, whatever may be the answer to this question, there can be little doubt that Ācārya Śaṅkara had no hand in its disappearance from India.

DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

A Note on the Idea of Human Rights

In this brief note I would like to raise just one issue which seems to me to be among the basic issues connected with an adequate formulation of a human rights perspective. There are different possible starting points for this. I shall take the following: one claim which has been resolutely made on behalf of human rights is that such rights are unique and universal—unique and universal at least to the extent that the idea of a human being is unique and universal. The uniqueness and universality of the idea of a human being is part of the official ideology of modern liberalism. Perhaps the best way of showing this is to point out its easy derivation from modern epistemology. My knowledge of the world, according to this latter depends crucially on my capacity to take a totally disengaged view of it—disengaged, that is, from any particular circumstance in which I happen to be situated. The philosopher Nagel has very picturesquely characterized this as the 'view from nowhere'. What enables me to achieve this is my reason or rationality understood in the sense of my capacity to carry out procedures in my thought or mind which have strict pre-given criteria of correctness, clarity and distinctness. The modern idea of freedom is an adjunct of this concept of rationality. My freedom consists in my rational ordering of my desires so that they can be maximally satisfied. Human dignity consists in upholding this freedom. Every human being is potentially rational, and, therefore, the potential locus of freedom and dignity. Human rights are rights, which belong to human beings, *qua* human beings, as beings who can exercise freedom through reason. Such rights, therefore, are unique to human beings and apply universally to all human beings.

Suppose we accept: (1) the modern concept of knowledge; (2) the idea of freedom associated with it; and (3) the idea of human dignity as premised on this freedom. Then the argument for human rights can be constructed with a great degree of convincingness. But as the critique of modernity—in its different, and sometimes incompatible, forms (e.g. Gandhi and Foucault)—has shown all these are highly contentious issues. It is not necessary, however, to enter into the critique of modernity.