

*Hints about the triadic
hypostasis of Buddha*



Abstract and train of thoughts

Hints about the triadic hypostasis of Gautama Buddha

And hitherto occult explanations of how Gautama associates Himself with Avataras and Saints, and works through them.

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BUDDHAS AND INITIATES SERIES
HOW GAUTAMA WORKS THROUGH AVATARAS AND SAINTS

The Higher Self is not in such a case attached to the lower Ego; its connection is only temporary, and in most cases it acts through decrees of Karma. 11

When the Shruti reached the ear of Gautama, He accepted the revelation, while rejecting the later overgrowth of Brahmanical thought and fancy. 12

As in the case of His Western Successor, Gautama was the first of the Eastern Hierarchy of Adepts, who was moved by that generous feeling which locks the whole of mankind within one embrace, with no petty differences of race, birth, or caste. 12

More! He desired to atone for the sin of His enemies. Then only was He willing to become a full Dharmakaya, a Jivanmukta “without remains.” 12

Shankara, the Great Dravidian Guru, the Adept of adepts, lives to this day in His spiritual entity as a mysterious, unseen, yet overpowering presence among the Brotherhood of Shambhala. 13



Hints about the triadic hypostasis of Gautama Buddha

And hitherto occult explanations of how Gautama associates Himself with Avataras and Saints, and works through them.

*From Blavatsky Collected Writings, (THE MYSTERY OF BUDDHA) XIV pp. 388-99.
Frontispiece by Judith Bergerson.*

Now the mystery of Buddha lies in this: Gautama, an incarnation of pure Wisdom, had yet to learn in His human body and to be initiated into the world's secrets like any other mortal, until the day when He emerged from His secret recess in the Himālayas and preached for the first time in the grove of Benares. The same with Jesus: from the age of twelve to thirty years, when He is found preaching the sermon on the Mount, nothing is positively said or known of Him. Gautama had sworn inviolable secrecy as to the Esoteric Doctrines imparted to Him. In His immense pity for the ignorance — and as its consequence the sufferings — of mankind, desirous though He was to keep inviolate His sacred vows, He failed to keep within the prescribed limits. While constructing His Exoteric Philosophy (the “Eye-Doctrine”) on the foundations of eternal Truth, He failed to conceal certain dogmas, and trespassing beyond the lawful lines, caused those dogmas to be misunderstood. In His anxiety to make away with the false Gods, He revealed in the “Seven Paths to Nirvāna” some of the mysteries of the Seven Lights of the Arūpa (formless) World. A little of the truth is often worse than no truth at all.

Truth and fiction are like oil and water: they will never mix.

Gautama's unintentional mistake of promulgating the dead body of Esoteric Teaching without its vivifying soul, had disastrous effects.

But Karma little heeds intentions, whether good or bad, if they remain fruitless.

His new doctrine, which represented the outward dead body of the Esoteric Teaching without its vivifying Soul, had disastrous effects: it was never correctly understood, and the doctrine itself was rejected by the Southern Buddhists. Immense philanthropy, a boundless love and charity for all creatures, were at the bottom of His unintentional mistake; but Karma little heeds intentions, whether good or bad, if they remain fruitless. If the “Good Law,” as preached, resulted in the most sublime code of ethics and the unparalleled philosophy of things external in the visible Kosmos, it biased and misguided immature minds into believing there was nothing more under the outward mantle of the system, and its dead-letter only was accepted. Moreover,

the new teaching unsettled many great minds which had previously followed the orthodox Brāhmanical lead.

Shankara was born in 510 BC, 51 years and 2 months after the date of Buddha's Nirvana. He had nothing to do with Buddhist persecution.¹

Thus, fifty odd years after his death “the great Teacher”² having refused full Dharmakāya and Nirvāna, was pleased, for purposes of Karma and philanthropy, to be reborn. For Him death had been no death, but as expressed in the “Elixir of Life,”³ He changed —

A sudden plunge into darkness to a transition into a brighter light.

The shock of death was broken, and like many other Adepts, He threw off the mortal coil and left it to be burnt, and its ashes to serve as relics, and began interplanetary life, clothed in His subtle body. He was reborn as Śamkara, the greatest Vedāntic teacher of India, whose philosophy — based as it is entirely on the fundamental axioms of the eternal Revelation, the Śruti, or the primitive Wisdom-Religion, as Buddha from a different point of view had before based His — finds itself in the middle ground between the too exuberantly veiled metaphysics of the orthodox Brāhmins and those of Gautama, which, stripped in their exoteric garb of every soul-vivifying hope, transcendental aspiration and symbol, appear in their cold wisdom like crystalline icicles, the skeletons of the primeval truths of Esoteric Philosophy.

Then the “astral” Gautama entered the outward Shankara, whose Atman was, nevertheless, His own divine prototype.⁴

Was Śamkarāchārya Gautama the Buddha, then, under a new personal form? It may perhaps only puzzle the reader the more if he be told that there was the “astral” Gautama inside the outward Śamkara, whose higher principle, or Ātman, was, nevertheless, his own divine prototype — the “Son of Light,” indeed — the heavenly, mind-born son of Aditi.

¹ [See “Shankara was a contemporary of Patañjali and his chela,” in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

² When we say the “great Teacher,” we do not mean His Buddhic Ego, but that principle in Him which was the vehicle of His personal or terrestrial Ego.

³ *Five Years of Theosophy*, p. 4

⁴ [Note for Students by the Series Editor.

As “astral” man is a reflection of the Dhyāni-Chohans, so the apparitional body of an enlightened man, who has aligned himself with his Spiritual Ego (the Christos within), becomes as solid and tangible as was the late body, and serves as an instrument of the divine soul here on earth. The new body remains visible or, at the option of the Adept, disappears from view, surrounded by the ākāśic shell that screens it.

For further explanations, first read about the three kinds of apparitional bodies in “Astral Bodies or Doppelgangers,” in our Constitution of Man Series. Then study thoroughly “Why the Secrecy of Initiates?,” in the present series, which is a holding title for two consecutive articles, “The Secrecy of Initiates,” and “Some Reasons for Secrecy,” from *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. XIV, pp. 33-47 and pp. 47-59, respectively.

There now follows an edited excerpt from the above compilation:

The preferred option for the Buddha of Compassion is renounce Nirvana and remain on earth for the good of mankind. This He can do in either of two ways:

1. He can consolidate his astral body into physical appearance and thereby re-assume the self-same personality.
2. He can avail himself of an entirely new physical body, whether that of a newly-born infant (as Śamkarāchārya is reported to have done with the body of a dead Rājā), or by “entering a deserted sheath,” and living in it as long as He chooses. This is what is called “continuous existence.”]

Today, though Gautama is in Nirvana, His subtle body is still present among the Initiates.

He will not leave the realm of conscious being, so long as suffering mankind needs His divine help.

This fact is again based on that mysterious transference of the divine ex-personality merged in the impersonal Individuality — now in its full trinitarian form of the Monad¹ as Ātma-Buddhi-Manas — to a new body, whether visible or subjective. In the first case it is a Mānushya-Buddha; in the second it is a Nirmānakāya. The Buddha is in Nirvāna, it is said, though this once mortal vehicle — the subtle body — of Gautama is still present among the Initiates; nor will it leave the realm of conscious Being so long as suffering mankind needs its divine help — not to the end of this Root-Race, at any rate. From time to time He, the “astral” Gautama, associates Himself, in some most mysterious — to us quite incomprehensible — manner, with Avatāras and great saints, and works through them. And several such are named.

Thus it is averred that Gautama Buddha was reincarnated in Śamkarāchārya — that, as is said in *Esoteric Buddhism*:

Śamkarāchārya simply *was* Buddha in all respects in a new body.²

Shankara was a Buddha, an enlightened one, but not a typical reincarnation of Gautama Buddha.

While the expression in its mystic sense is true, the way of putting it may be misleading until explained. Śamkara was a Buddha, most assuredly, but he never was a reincarnation of the Buddha, though Gautama’s “Astral” Ego — or rather his Bodhisattva — may have been associated in some mysterious way with Śamkarāchārya. Yes, it was perhaps the Ego, Gautama, under a new and better adapted casket — that of a Brāhman of Southern India. But the Ātman, the Higher Self that overshadowed both, was distinct from the Higher Self of the translated Buddha, which was now in Its own sphere in Kosmos.

He was direct incarnation of Logos, one of the Primordial Seven Rays, an Avatara in the full sense of the term.

Śamkara was an Avatāra in the full sense of the term. According to Sāyanāchārya, the great commentator on the *Vedas*, he is to be held as an Avatāra, or direct incarnation of Śiva — the Logos, the Seventh Principle in Nature — Himself. In the Secret Doctrine Śrī Śamkarāchārya is regarded as the abode — for the thirty-two years of his mortal life — of a Flame, the highest of the manifested Spiritual Beings, one of the Primordial Seven Rays.

And now what is meant by a “Bodhisattva”? Buddhists of the Mahāyāna mystic system teach that each BUDDHA manifests Himself (hypostatically or otherwise) simultaneously in three worlds of Being, namely,

¹ [Monad (*μοναδα*, in Greek) is the accusative case of *μονας*. However, as the term is here used in the nominative case (*μονας*), *i.e.*, the subject of the verb, it should be transliterated as *monas* (*pl.* monases), *i.e.*, the object of the verb, and not as *monad* (*pl.* monads). The same grammatical rule applies to duad, triad, heptad, ogdoad, hebdomad, decad, *etc.* — ED. PHIL.]

² *op. cit.*, p. 175, 5th edition of 1885

- 1 In the world of Kāma (concupiscence or desire — the sensuous universe or our earth) in the shape of a man;
- 2 In the world of Rūpa (form, yet supersensuous) as a Bodhisattva; and
- 3 In the highest Spiritual World (that of purely incorporeal existences) as a Dhyāni-Buddha.

The latter prevails eternally in space and time, *i.e.*, from one Mahā-Kalpa to the other — the synthetic culmination of the three being Ādi-Buddha,¹ the Wisdom-Principle, which is Absolute, and therefore out of space and time. Their interrelation is the following: The Dhyāni-Buddha, when the world needs a human Buddha, “creates” through the power of Dhyāna (meditation, omnipotent devotion), a mind-born son — a Bodhisattva — whose mission it is after the physical death of his human, or Mānushya-Buddha, to continue his work on earth till the appearance of the subsequent Buddha. The Esoteric meaning of this teaching is clear. In the case of a simple mortal, the principles in him are only the more or less bright reflections of the seven cosmic, and the seven celestial Principles, the Hierarchy of supersensual Beings. In the case of a Buddha, they are almost the principles *in esse* themselves. The Bodhisattva replaces in him the Kāraṇa Śarīra, the Ego principle, and the rest correspondingly;² and it is in this way that Esoteric Philosophy explains the meaning of the sentence that “by virtue of Dhyāna [or abstract meditation] the Dhyāni-Buddha [the Buddha’s Spirit or Monad] creates a Bodhisattva,” or the astrally clothed Ego within the Mānushya-Buddha. Thus, while the Buddha merges back into Nirvāna whence it proceeded, the Bodhisattva remains behind to continue the Buddha’s work upon earth. It is then this Bodhisattva that may have afforded the lower principles in the apparitional body of Śamkarāchārya, the Avatāra.

¹ It would be useless to raise objections from exoteric works to statements in this, which aims to expound, however superficially, the Esoteric Teachings alone. It is because they are misled by the exoteric doctrine that Bishop Bigandet and others aver that the notion of a supreme eternal Ādi-Buddha is to be found only in writings of comparatively recent date. What is given here is taken from the secret portions of *Dus-Kyi Khorlo (Kāla-Chakra, in Sanskrit, or the “Wheel of Time,” or duration)*.

² [Notes for Students by the Series Editor.

What is Kāraṇa-śarīra?

It is the higher Ego is the higher Manas illuminated by Buddhi; the principle of self-consciousness, the “I-am-I,” in short. It is the Kāraṇa-śarīra, the immortal man, which passes from one incarnation to another. Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (DREAMS) X p. 249.

Kāraṇa-śarīra means simply the *human Monad* collectively or the reincarnating ego, the “causal body.” *ibid.*, (WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR FELLOW-MEN?) XI p. 476.

Blavatsky’s comment on *John* iii, 3, “. . . unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (RSV): “Born” from above, *viz.*, from his Monad or divine EGO, the seventh Principle, which remains till the end of the Kalpa, the nucleus of, and at the same time the overshadowing Principle, as the Kāraṇātman (Causal Soul) of the personality in every rebirth. In this sense, the sentence “born anew” means “descends from above,” the last two words having no reference to heaven or space, neither of which can be limited or located, since one is a state and the other infinite, hence having no cardinal points. *ibid.*, (SOME REASONS FOR SECRECY) XIV p. 57 *fn.*

Erroneous use of the term

Kāraṇa-śarīra is often mistaken by the uninitiated for *Linga-śarīra*, and since it is described as the inner rudimentary or latent embryo of the body — confounded with it. But the Occultists regard it as the *life* (body) or *Jiv*, which disappears at death — is withdrawn — leaving the 1st and 3rd principles to *disintegrate* and return to their elements. *ibid.*, (THE SEPTENARY PRINCIPLE IN ESOTERICISM) IV p. 579 *fn.*

The esotericisms of the Buddhists and Vedāntists, though one and identical, sometimes differ in their expressions. Thus what we call *Linga-śarīra*, the interior subtle body of the gross, or the Sūkshma of the *Sthūla-śarīra*, is called by the Vedāntists the *Kāraṇa-śarīra* or causal body, the rudimentary or ethereal embryo of the body. *ibid.*, (A LEVY OF ARMS AGAINST THEOSOPHY) IV p. 548 *fn.*]

Now to say that Buddha, after having reached Nirvāna, returned thence to reincarnate in a new body, would be uttering a heresy from the Brāhmanical, as well as from the Buddhist standpoint. Even in the Mahāyāna exoteric School, in the teaching as to the three “Buddhic” bodies,¹ it is said of the Dharmakāya — the ideal formless Being — that once it is taken, the Buddha in it abandons the world of sensuous perceptions for ever, and has not, nor can he have, any more connection with it. To say, as the Esoteric or Mystic School teaches, that though Buddha is in Nirvāna he has left behind him the Nirmānakāya (the Bodhisattva) to work after him, is quite orthodox and in accordance with both the Esoteric Mahāyāna and the Prasanga Mādhyamika Schools, the latter an anti-esoteric and most rationalistic system. For in the *Kāla-Chakra* Commentary it is shown that there is:

- 1 Ādi-Buddha, eternal and conditionless; [First Logos] then come
- 2 Sambhogakāya-Buddhas, or Dhyāni-Buddhas, existing from (aiōnic) eternity and never disappearing — the *Causal* Buddhas so to say; [Second Logos] and
- 3 The Mānushya-Bodhisattvas. [Third Logos] The relation between them is determined by the definition given. Ādi-Buddha is Vajradhara, and the Dhyāni-Buddhas are Vajrasattva;² yet though these two are different Beings on their respective planes, they are identical in fact, one acting through the other, as a Dhyāni through a human Buddha. One is “Endless Intelligence”; the other only “Supreme Intelligence.” It is said of Phra Bodhisattva — who was subsequently on earth Buddha Gautama:

Having fulfilled all the conditions for the immediate attainment of perfect Buddhahood, the Holy One preferred, from unlimited charity towards living beings, *once more* to reincarnate for the benefit of man.

The Nirvāna of the Buddhists is only the threshold of Parinirvāna, according to the Esoteric Teaching: while with the Brāhmins, it is the *summum bonum*, that final state from which there is no more return — not till the next Mahā-Kalpa, at all events. And even this last view will be opposed by some too orthodox and dogmatic philosophers who will not accept the Esoteric Doctrine. With them Nirvāna is absolute nothingness, in which there is nothing and no one; only an unconditioned All. To understand the full characteristics of that Abstract Principle one must sense it intuitively and comprehend fully the “one permanent condition in the Universe,” which the Hindūs define so truly as

. . . the state of perfect unconsciousness, bare Chidākāśa (field of consciousness) in fact,

¹ The three bodies are:

1 the Nirmānakāya (Tul-pa'i-Ku in Tibetan), in which the Bodhisattva after entering by the six Pāramitās [generosity, virtue, patience, vigour, meditation, and wisdom] the Path to Nirvāna, appears to men in order to teach them;

2 Sambhogakāya (Dzog-pa'i-Ku), the body of bliss impervious to all physical sensations, received by one who has fulfilled the three conditions of moral perfection; and

3 Dharmakāya (in Tibetan, Cho-Ku), the Nirvānic body.

[Cf. *Voice of the Silence*, pp. 95-97; and Hui Neng's *Platform Sutra*, ch. 6.]

² [In Tibetan, Vajradhara and Vajrasattva are Dorjechang (First Logos), and Dorjesempa (Second Logos), respectively. See Diagram and Notes in our Secret Doctrine's First Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

— however paradoxical it may seem to the profane reader.¹

Śamkarāchārya was reputed to be an Avatāra, an assertion the writer implicitly believes in, but which other people are, of course, at liberty to reject. And as such he took the body of a southern Indian, newly-born Brāhman baby; that body, for reasons as important as they are mysterious to us, is said to have been animated by Gautama's astral personal remains. This divine Non-Ego chose as its own Upādhi (physical basis), the ethereal, human Ego of a great Sage in this world of forms, as the fittest vehicle for Spirit to descend into.

Said Śamkarāchārya:

Parabrahman is Kartā [Purusha], as there is no other Adhishtāthā,² and Parabrahman is Prakriti, there being no other substance.³

The middle principles of Gautama Buddha, which did not go to Nirvana, formed the middle principles of Shankara, the earthly Entity.

It is therefore nearer the truth to say that the “astral” Gautama, or Nirmanakaya, was the upadhi of Shankara's spirit and not a reincarnation of Gautama.

When a Śamkarāchārya has to be born, naturally every one of the principles in the manifested mortal man must be the purest and finest that exist on earth. Consequently those principles that were once attached to Gautama, who was the direct great predecessor of Śamkara, were naturally attracted to him, the economy of Nature forbidding the re-evolution of similar principles from the crude state. But it must be remembered that the higher ethereal principles are not, like the lower, more material ones, visible sometimes to man (as astral bodies), and they have to be regarded in the light of separate or independent Powers or Gods, rather than as material objects. Hence the right way of representing the truth would be to say that the various principles, the Bodhisattva, of Gautama Buddha, which did not go to Nirvāna, reunited to form the middle principles of Śamkarāchārya, the earthly Entity.⁴

It is absolutely necessary to study the doctrine of the Buddhas esoterically, and understand the subtle differences between the various planes of existence, to be able to

¹ *Five Years of Theosophy*, 1885 ed., “Personal and Impersonal God,” p. 202, by T. Subba Row.

² Adhishtāthā, the active or working agent in Prakriti (or matter).

³ *Vedānta-Sūtras*, Ad. I, Pāda iv, Śloka 23 (*Commentary*). The passage is given as follows in Thibaut's translation (*Sacred Books of the East*, xxxiv), p. 286:

The Self is thus the operative cause, because there is no other ruling principle, and the material cause because there is no other substance from which the world could originate.

⁴ In *Five Years of Theosophy* (article: “Śākya Muni's Place in History,” p. 372, note) it is stated that one day when our Lord sat in the Sattapanni Cave (Saptaparna) he compared man to a Saptaparna (seven leaved) plant. He said:

“Mendicants, there are seven Buddhas in every Buddha, and there are six Bhikshus and but one Buddha in each mendicant. What are the *seven*? The seven branches of complete knowledge. What are the *six*? The six organs of sense. What are the *five*? The five elements of illusive being. And the ONE which is also ten? He is a true Buddha who develops in him the ten forms of holiness and subjects them all to the one.”

Which means that every principle in the Buddha was the highest that could be evolved on this earth; whereas in the case of other men who attain to Nirvāna this is not necessarily the case. Even as a mere human (Mānushya) Buddha, Gautama was a pattern for all men. But his Arhats were not necessarily so. [Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. V, p. 247.]

comprehend correctly the above. Put more clearly, Gautama, the human Buddha, who had, exoterically, Amitābha for his Bodhisattva and Avalokiteśvara for his Dhyāni-Buddha — the triad emanating directly from Ādi-Buddha — assimilated these by his “Dhyāna” (meditation) and thus became a Buddha (“enlightened”). In another manner this is the case with all men; every one of us has his Bodhisattva — the middle principle, if we hold for a moment to the trinitarian division of the septenary group — and his Dhyāni-Buddha, or Chohan, the “Father of the Son.” Our connecting link with the higher Hierarchy of Celestial Beings lies here in a nutshell, only we are too sinful to assimilate them.

There is a great similarity between Eastern and Western Saviours.

Six centuries after the translation of the human Buddha (Gautama), another Reformer, as noble and as loving, though less favoured by opportunity, arose in another part of the world, among another and a less spiritual race. There is a great similarity between the subsequent opinions of the world about the two Saviours, the Eastern and the Western. While millions became converted to the doctrines of the two Masters, the enemies of both — sectarian opponents, the most dangerous of all — tore both to shreds by insinuating maliciously-distorted statements based on Occult truths, and therefore doubly dangerous. While of Buddha it is said by the Brāhmins that He was truly an Avatāra of Vishnu, but that He had come to tempt the Brāhmins from their faith, and was therefore the evil aspect of the God; of Jesus the Bardesian Gnostics and others asserted that He was Nebo, the false Messiah, the destroyer of the old orthodox religion. “He is the founder of a new sect of Nazars,” said other sectarians. In Hebrew the word “Naba” means “to speak by inspiration” (נָבֵא, ¹ and נְבוֹ is Nebo, the God of wisdom). But Nebo is also Mercury, who is Budha in the Hindu monogram of planets. And this is shown by the fact that the Talmudists hold that Jesus was inspired by the Genius (or Regent) of Mercury confounded by Sir William Jones with Gautama Buddha. There are many other strange points of similarity between Gautama and Jesus, which cannot be noticed here.²

Gautama lived to the ripe old age of one hundred years, sowing the seeds of Truth to the world.

He left the most dangerous parts of the Secret Knowledge untold but failed to conceal certain dogmas, thereby causing those dogmas to be misunderstood.

If both the Initiates, aware of the danger of furnishing the uncultured masses with the powers acquired by ultimate knowledge, left the innermost corner of the sanctuary in profound darkness, who, acquainted with human nature, can blame either of them for this? Yet although Gautama, actuated by prudence, left the Esoteric and most dangerous portions of the Secret Knowledge untold, and lived to the ripe old age of eighty — the Esoteric Doctrine says one hundred — years, dying with the certainty of having taught its essential truths, and of having sown the seeds for the conversion of one-third of the world, He yet perhaps revealed more than was strictly good for posterity.

¹ [Cf. 1 Samuel x, 11; Amos ii, 12; Jeremiah ii, 8]

² See *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, p. 132

The Nazarene Sage was a Bodhisattva with the spirit of Buddha in Him.

Jesus had promised His disciples the power of producing “miracles” far greater than He had ever produced, but died leaving but a few disciples, men only half-way to knowledge.

But Jesus, who had promised His disciples the knowledge which confers upon man the power of producing “miracles” far greater than He had ever produced Himself, died, leaving but a few faithful disciples — men only half-way to knowledge. They had therefore to struggle with a world to which they could impart only what they but half-knew themselves, and — no more. In later ages the exoteric followers of both mangled the truths given out, often out of recognition. With regard to the adherents of the Western Master, the proof of this lies in the very fact that none of them can now produce the promised “miracles.” They have to choose: either it is they who have blundered, or it is their Master who must stand arraigned for an empty promise, an uncalled-for boast.¹ Why such a difference in the destiny of the two? For the Occultist this enigma of the unequal favour of Karma or Providence is unriddled by the Secret Doctrine.

The unequal favour of Karma between Gautama and Jesus can be explained by the necessity of a sacrificial Nirmanakaya, ready to suffer for the misdeeds or mistakes of the new body in its earth-pilgrimage, without any future reward on the plane of progression and rebirth.

The Higher Self is not in such a case attached to the lower Ego;² its connection is only temporary, and in most cases it acts through decrees of Karma.

It is “not lawful” to speak of such things publicly, as St. Paul tells us. One more explanation only may be given in reference to this subject. It was said a few pages back that an Adept who thus sacrifices himself to live, giving up full Nirvāna, though he can never lose the knowledge acquired by him in previous existences, yet can never rise higher in such borrowed bodies. Why? Because he becomes simply the vehicle of a “Son of Light” from a still higher sphere, Who being Arūpa, has no personal astral body of His own fit for this world. Such “Sons of Light,” or Dhyāni-Buddhas, are the Dharmakāyas of preceding Manvantaras, who have closed their cycles of incarnations in the ordinary sense and who, being thus Karmaless, have long ago dropped their individual Rūpas, and have become identified with the first Principle. Hence the necessity of a sacrificial Nirmanakāya, ready to suffer for the misdeeds or mistakes of the new body in its earth-pilgrimage, without any future reward on the plane of pro-

¹

Before one becomes a Buddha he must be a Bodhisattva; before evolving into a Bodhisattva he must be a Dhyāni-Buddha. . . . A Bodhisattva is the way and Path to his Father, and thence to the One Supreme Essence. (*Descent of Buddhas*, p. 17, from Āryāsanga.

I am the way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (*St. John* xiv, 6)

The “way” is not the goal. Nowhere throughout the New Testament is Jesus found calling himself God, or anything higher than “a son of God,” the son of a “Father” common to all, synthetically. Paul never said (*1 Timothy* iii, 16) “God was manifest in the flesh” [King James Bible] but “He who was manifested in the flesh” (Revised Edition). While the common herd among the Buddhists — the Burmese especially — regard Jesus as an incarnation of Devadatta, a relative who opposed the teachings of Buddha, the students of Esoteric Philosophy see in the Nazarene Sage a Bodhisattva with the spirit of Buddha Himself in Him.

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[See “Higher Manas and Lower Manas” and “Higher Self and Higher Ego,” in our Confusing Words Series.]

gression and rebirth, since there are no rebirths for him in the ordinary sense. The Higher Self, or Divine Monad, is not in such a case attached to the lower Ego; its connection is only temporary, and in most cases it acts through decrees of Karma. This is a real, genuine sacrifice, the explanation of which pertains to the highest Initiation of *Jñāna* (Occult Knowledge). It is closely linked, by a direct evolution of Spirit and involution of Matter, with the primeval and great Sacrifice at the foundation of the manifested Worlds, the gradual smothering and death of the spiritual in the material. The seed “is not quickened, except it die.”¹ Hence in the Purusha Sūkta of the *Rig-Veda*,² the mother fount and source of all subsequent religions, it is stated allegorically that “the thousand-headed Purusha” was slaughtered at the foundation of the World, that from his remains the Universe might arise. This is nothing more nor less than the foundation — the seed, truly — of the later many-formed symbol in various religions, including Christianity, of the sacrificial lamb. For it is a play upon the words. “Aja” (Purusha), “the unborn,” or eternal Spirit, means also “lamb,” in Sanskrit. Spirit disappears — dies, metaphorically — the more it gets involved in matter, and hence the sacrifice of the “unborn,” or the “lamb.”

Why the BUDDHA chose to make this sacrifice will be plain only to those who, to the minute knowledge of His earthly life, add that of a thorough comprehension of the laws of Karma. Such occurrences, however, belong to the most exceptional cases.

When the Shruti reached the ear of Gautama, He accepted the revelation, while rejecting the later overgrowth of Brahmanical thought and fancy.

As in the case of His Western Successor, Gautama was the first of the Eastern Hierarchy of Adepts, who was moved by that generous feeling which locks the whole of mankind within one embrace, with no petty differences of race, birth, or caste.

More! He desired to atone for the sin of His enemies. Then only was He willing to become a full Dharmakaya, a Jivanmukta “without remains.”

As tradition goes, the Brāhmins had committed a heavy sin by persecuting Gautama BUDDHA and His teachings instead of blending and reconciling them with the tenets of pure Vaidic Brāhmanism, as was done later by Śamkarāchārya. Gautama had never gone against the *Vedas*, only against the exoteric growth of preconceived interpretations. The Śruti — divine oral revelation, the outcome of which was the *Veda* — is eternal. It reached the ear of Gautama Siddhārtha as it had those of the Rishis who had written it down. He accepted the revelation, while rejecting the later overgrowth of Brāhmanical thought and fancy, and built His doctrines on one and the same basis of imperishable truth. As in the case of His Western successor, Gautama, the “Merciful,” the “Pure,” and the “Just,” was the first found in the Eastern Hierarchy of historical Adepts, if not in the world-annals of divine mortals, who was moved by that generous feeling which locks the whole of mankind within one embrace, with no petty differences of race, birth, or caste. It was He who first enunciated that grand and noble principle, and He again who first put it into practice. For the sake of the poor and the reviled, the outcast and the hapless, invited by Him to the king’s festi-

¹ *1 Corinthians* xv, 36; [αφρων, ου ο σπειρεις, ου ζωοποιεεται εαν μη αποθανη]

² *op. cit.*, Mandala X, hymn 90, 1-5

val table, He had excluded those who had hitherto sat alone in haughty seclusion and selfishness, believing that they would be defiled by the very shadow of the disinherited ones of the land — and these non-spiritual Brāhmans turned against Him for that preference. Since then such as these have never forgiven the prince-beggar, the son of a king, who, forgetting His rank and station, had flung widely open the doors of the forbidden sanctuary to the pariah and the man of low estate, thus giving precedence to personal merit over hereditary rank or fortune. The sin was theirs — the cause nevertheless Himself: hence the “Merciful and the Blessed One” could not go out entirely from this world of illusion and created causes without atoning for the sin of all — therefore of these Brahmins also. If “man afflicted by man” found safe refuge with the Tathāgata, “man afflicting man” had also his share in His self-sacrificing, all-embracing and forgiving love. It is stated that He desired to atone for the sin of His enemies. Then only was he willing to become a full Dharmakāya, a Jīvanmukta “without remains.”

Shankara, the Great Dravidian Guru, the Adept of adepts, lives to this day in His spiritual entity as a mysterious, unseen, yet overpowering presence among the Brotherhood of Shambhala.

The close of Śamkarāchārya’s life brings us face to face with a fresh mystery. Śamkarāchārya retires to a cave in the Himālayas, permitting none of his disciples to follow him, and disappears therein forever from the sight of the profane. Is he dead? Tradition and popular belief answer in the negative, and some of the local Gurus, if they do not emphatically corroborate, do not deny the rumour. The truth with its mysterious details as given in the Secret Doctrine is known but to them; it can be given out fully only to the direct followers of the great Dravidian Guru, and it is for them alone to reveal of it as much as they think fit. Still it is maintained that this Adept of Adepts lives to this day in his spiritual entity as a mysterious, unseen, yet overpowering presence among the Brotherhood of Śambhala, beyond, far beyond, the snowy-capped Himālayas.¹



¹ [For a traditional life story see *Sankara-Dig-Vijaya* by Madhava-Vidyaranya, tr. by Swami Tapasyananda, Madras, Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1978. — *Dara Eklund*.]

Artwork by Megan Duncanson