

Vedanta and Buddhism



There is no difference whatever between Esoteric Buddhism and those Vedantins who understand the correct meaning of Shamkaracharya's teachings, the advanced Advaitis.

THE ESOTERICISMS OF THE BUDDHISTS AND VEDĀNTINS, 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 Vedāntins the *Karana-śarīra* or causal body, the rudimentary or ethereal embryo of the body.¹

Parabrahm as defined by Vedantins

I beg to call the attention of those who are interested in the question of “Personal, Impersonal, or No God,” to the following extract of a dialogue in Urdu which took place between myself and a Sannyāsi (Brahman ascetic) at Lahore Railway station on the evening of the 3rd instant. He is a Chela of a Vedāntin Sannyāsi of Benares known as Śankar-Giri Swami. He has studied, he said, *Guru Gītā* and *Upanishads*. He refused to give out his name, of course, for no Sannyāsi will ever give it.

Is God kind?

Paramātma is the *sat* (essence) of everything and *all* the rest is *mithyā* (illusion) brought on by ignorance. There is nought but Parabrahm. To whom or to what then can it be kind?

Do you pray?

To whom am I to pray? I do not, for I am myself Parabrahm. I only contemplate. Contemplation is a state of mind.

* * * * *

Are you then a nāstika [atheist]?

No.

Are you a Mussulman or a Christian?

Neither.

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (A LEVY OF ARMS AGAINST THEOSOPHY) IV p. 548 *fn.*

What religion to you then belong to?

I am a Buddhist, that is to say, a Vedāntin of Śamkarāchārya's school.

I *thrice* questioned whether he was a Buddhist, and to my utter amazement he *thrice* replied in the affirmative. I am myself a strict orthodox Brahman and believe in one Personal God, discarding the idea of the thirty-three crores¹ of gods.

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(Travelling on duty with the President)*

Sialkot, 4th April, 1883

The above statement took place in the presence of a Chela from the north who corroborates the statement.

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So true is the claim that there is no difference whatever between esoteric Buddhism and those Vedāntins who understand the correct meaning of Śamkarāchārya's teachings — the advanced Advaitīs — that the latter are spoken of throughout southern India as *Prachchanna Bauddhas* — or “Buddhists in disguise” especially by the *Viśishtādvaitīs*.²



¹ [33 x 10,000,000]

² First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV (No. 8), May 1883, pp. 204-5. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (PARABRAHM, DEFINED BY VEDANTINS) IV pp. 450-51.