

The 11th Asian Conference on Ethics,  
Religion & Philosophy (ACERP)

# OFFICIAL CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Organised by The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)  
in association with the IAFOR Research Centre at Osaka  
University and IAFOR's Global University Partners

ISSN: 2187-476X



THINK TOKYO

MARCH 29-31, 2021 | TOKYO, JAPAN



“To Open Minds, To Educate Intelligence, To Inform Decisions”

The International Academic Forum provides new perspectives to the thought-leaders and decision-makers of today and tomorrow by offering constructive environments for dialogue and interchange at the intersections of nation, culture, and discipline. Headquartered in Nagoya, Japan, and registered as a Non-Profit Organization (一般社団法人), IAFOR is an independent think tank committed to the deeper understanding of contemporary geo-political transformation, particularly in the Asia Pacific Region.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERCULTURAL

INTERDISCIPLINARY

**iafor**



## The Executive Council of the International Advisory Board

### Mr Mitsumasa Aoyama

Director; The Yufuku Gallery, Tokyo, Japan

### Lord Charles Bruce

Lord Lieutenant of Fife  
Chairman of the Patrons of the National Galleries of Scotland  
Trustee of the Historic Scotland Foundation, UK

### Professor Donald E. Hall

Herbert J. and Ann L. Siegel Dean  
Lehigh University, USA  
Former Jackson Distinguished Professor of English and Chair of the Department of English

### Professor Arthur Stockwin

Founding Director of the Nissan Institute for Japanese Studies & Emeritus Professor  
The University of Oxford UK

### Professor Chung-Ying Cheng

Professor of Philosophy, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, USA  
Editor-in-Chief, The Journal of Chinese Philosophy

### Professor Steve Cornwell

Professor of English and Interdisciplinary Studies,  
Osaka Jogakuin University, Osaka, Japan  
Osaka Local Conference Chair

### Professor A. Robert Lee

Former Professor of English at Nihon University, Tokyo from 1997 to 2011, previously long taught at the University of Kent at Canterbury, UK

### Professor Dexter Da Silva

Professor of Educational Psychology, Keisen University, Tokyo, Japan

### Professor Georges Depeyrot

Professor and Director of Research & Member of the Board of Trustees  
French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) & L'Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris, France

### Professor Johannes Moenius

William R. and S. Sue Johnson Endowed Chair of Spatial Economic Analysis and Regional Planning  
The University of Redlands School of Business, USA

### Professor June Henton

Dean, College of Human Sciences, Auburn University, USA

### Professor Michael Hudson

President of The Institute for the Study of Long-Term Economic Trends (ISLET)  
Distinguished Research Professor of Economics, The University of Missouri, Kansas City

### Professor Koichi Iwabuchi

Professor of Media and Cultural Studies & Director of the Monash Asia Institute, Monash University, Australia

### Professor Sue Jackson

Professor of Lifelong Learning and Gender & Pro-Vice Master of Teaching and Learning, Birkbeck, University of London, UK

### Professor Sir Geoffrey Lloyd

Senior Scholar in Residence, The Needham Research Institute, Cambridge, UK  
Fellow and Former Master, Darwin College, University of Cambridge  
Fellow of the British Academy

### Professor Keith Miller

Orthwein Endowed Professor for Lifelong Learning in the Science, University of Missouri-St. Louis, USA

### Professor Kuniko Miyanaga

Director, Human Potential Institute, Japan  
Fellow, Reischauer Institute, Harvard University, USA

### Professor Dennis McInerney

Chair Professor of Educational Psychology and Co-Director of the Assessment Research Centre  
The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong SAR

### Professor Brian Daizen Victoria

Professor of English  
Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies

### Professor Michiko Nakano

Professor of English & Director of the Distance Learning Center, Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan

### Professor Thomas Brian Mooney

Professor of Philosophy  
Head of School of Creative Arts and Humanities  
Professor of Philosophy and Head of School of Creative Arts and Humanities, Charles Darwin University, Australia

### Professor Baden Offord

Professor of Cultural Studies and Human Rights & Co-Director of the Centre for Peace and Social Justice  
Southern Cross University, Australia

### Professor Frank S. Ravitch

Professor of Law & Walter H. Stowers Chair in Law and Religion, Michigan State University College of Law

### Professor Richard Roth

Senior Associate Dean, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, Qatar

### Professor Monty P. Satiadarma

Clinical Psychologist and Lecturer in Psychology & Former Dean of the Department of Psychology and Rector of the University, Tarumanagara University, Indonesia

### Mr Mohamed Salaheen

Director, The United Nations World Food Programme, Japan & Korea

### Mr Lowell Sheppard

Asia Pacific Director, HOPE International Development Agency, Canada/Japan

### His Excellency Dr Drago Stambuk

Croatian Ambassador to Brazil, Brazil

### Professor Mary Stuart

Vice-Chancellor, The University of Lincoln, UK

### Professor Gary Swanson

Distinguished Journalist-in-Residence & Mildred S. Hansen Endowed Chair, The University of Northern Colorado, USA

### Professor Jiro Takai

Secretary General of the Asian Association for Social Psychology & Professor of Social Psychology  
Graduate School of Education and Human Development, Nagoya University, Japan

### Professor Svetlana Ter Minasova

President of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Area Studies, Lomonosov Moscow State University

### Professor Yozo Yokota

Director of the Center for Human Rights Affairs, Japan  
Former UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar

### Professor Kensaku Yoshida

Professor of English & Director of the Center for the Teaching of Foreign Languages in General Education, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan



The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy – ACERP 2021

Official Conference Proceedings

ISSN: 2187-476X



© The International Academic Forum 2021  
The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)  
Sakae 1-16-26-201  
Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi  
Japan 460-0008  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)



## Table of Contents

<i>The Concept of Existence (Bhava) in Early Buddhism</i> Pranab Barua	pp. 1 - 10
<i>Sankhya, Theosophy and Holistic Approach to Reality</i> Hrishikesh Misra	pp. 11 - 15
<i>Who will Heal the Wounded Soul of Modernity? Is it Spirituality or Spiritual Modernity?</i> Rajesh Kumar Srivastava Pragya Srivastava	pp. 17 – 26
<i>The Palamite Paradigm of Ecstasy and its Impact on Eastern Christian Model</i> Adriana Elena Vlaicu	pp. 27 - 38
<i>The Suga Doctrine: Ethical Issues in Contemporary Japanese Foreign and Defence Policy</i> Craig Mark	pp. 39 - 55
<i>Co-evolution of Human Society and Nature through the Noosphere Concept</i> Naira Danielyan	pp. 57 - 62
<i>Philosophy of India - Dravidology</i> H.V.Visweswaran	pp. 63 - 74



## ***The Concept of Existence (Bhava) in Early Buddhism***

Pranab Barua, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand

The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy 2021  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

The transition in Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) between clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*) is often misunderstood. This article explores the early Buddhist philosophical perspective of the relationship between death and re-birth in the process of following *bhava* (*uppatti-bhava*) and existing *bhava* (*kamma-bhava*). It additionally analyzes the process of re-birth (*punabbhava*) through the karmic processes on the psycho-cosmological level of becoming, specifically how *kamma-bhava* leads to re-becoming in a new birth. The philosophical perspective is established on the basis of the *Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya-Sutta*, the *Mahāvedalla-Sutta*, the *Bhava-Sutta* (1) and (2), the *Cūḷakammavibhaṅga-Sutta*, the *Kutuhalasala-Sutta* as well as commentary from the *Visuddhimagga*. Further, G.A. Somaratne's article *Punabbhava and Jāṭisaṃsāra in Early Buddhism*, *Bhava and Vibhava in Early Buddhism* and Bhikkhu Bodhi's *Does Rebirth Make Sense?* provide scholarly perspective for understanding the process of re-birth. This analysis will help to clarify common misconceptions of Tilmann Vetter and Lambert Schmithausen about the role of consciousness and *kamma* during the process of death and rebirth. Specifically, the paper addresses the role of the re-birth consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*), death consciousness (*cūṭi-viññāṇa*), life continuum consciousness (*bhavaṅga-viññāṇa*) and present consciousness (*pavatti-viññāṇa*) in the context of the three natures of existence and the results of action (*kamma-vipāka*) in future existences.

Keywords: Bhava, Paṭiccasamuppāda, Kamma, Psycho-Cosmology, Punabbhava

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Prologue

*Bhava* is the tenth link in the successive flow of human existence in the process of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Dependent Origination is one of the most profound doctrines, has in-depth meaning in Buddhism, which refers to the mode of being's (*puggala*) birth to death, continuing from one lifetime to another and a clear structure of rotated becoming (*saṃsāra*) within a twelvefold links. Among these links, the transition in Dependent Origination between clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*) is often misunderstood. This article explores the early Buddhist philosophical perspective of the relationship between death and re-birth in the process of following *bhava* (*uppatti-bhava*) and existing *bhava* (*kamma-bhava*). It also analyzes the process of re-birth (*punabbhava*) through the karmic processes on the psycho-cosmological level of becoming, specifically how *kamma-bhava* leads to re-becoming in a new birth. The philosophical perspective is established on the basis of the *Mahātanhāsāṅkhaya-Sutta*, the *Mahāvedalla-Sutta*, the *Bhava-Sutta* (1) and (2), the *Cūḷakammavibhaṅga-Sutta*, the *Kutuhalasala-Sutta* as well as commentary from the *Visuddhimagga*. Further, G.A. Somaratne's article *Punabbhava and Jāti-saṃsāra in Early Buddhism*, *Bhava and Vibhava in Early Buddhism* and Bhikkhu Bodhi's *Does Rebirth Make Sense?* provide scholarly perspective for understanding the process of re-birth. In this paper, I would like to clarify common misconceptions of Tilmann Vetter and Lambert Schmithausen about the role of *kamma* and consciousness during the process of death and rebirth based on the early Buddhist discourses.

The term we are considering is '*bhava*' in Pāli that has various meanings in the discourses of the Pāli Canon, and commentaries, which is formed with the suffix 'a' and the verbal root √bhū (to be, be), and its literal meaning is becoming, being or existence. Different scholars have given different rendering of the term into English. Some of the renderings are 'existence', 'being', 'becoming', 'birth', 'state of existence', 'life', 'mode of becoming', 'origin' and so forth. However, *bhava* is not translated as 'existence' in the metaphysical sense. Bhikkhu Bodhi has described the meaning of the term *bhava* as "sentient existence in one of the three realms of existence posited by Buddhist cosmology" (2000: 52-53). Thanissaro Bhikkhu describes it thus, "a sense of identity in a particular world of experience" (2013). According to him, the term 'becoming' is a prior metaphysical absolute, which refers not from previous sources, but something produced by our mind's activity. Therefore, the term has both psychological and cosmological meanings. For instance, becoming in the process of Dependent Origination is referred to the transition between clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*), which denotes through the clinging (*upādāna*), one acts with the body, speech and mind, and creates the *kamma* that determines one's new becoming (*jāti*, *punabbhava*). *Bhava* is mentioned in many discourses in the Pāli canon, where it is classified in different ways. It is frequently mentioned that there are three kinds of *bhava*: the sensuous mode of becoming (*kāma-bhava*), fine-material mode of becoming (*rūpa-bhava*), immaterial mode of becoming (*arūpa-bhava*) (SN 12.2), which additionally can be understood in terms of a state of mind, a flow of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and the karmic processes on the psycho-cosmological states of being in the three worlds. Jeffery Hopkins explains it as 'lifetime to lifetime' (Tenzin Gyatso, 2015), which is fully potentialized karmic energy in one's last moment that produces another lifetime. In addition, it similarly explains as 'moment to moment' (Steven Goodman, 1992) that creates the new structure of karmic tendencies which will have their consequences in future becoming. I prefer myself the translation of the term '*bhava*' with a common term 'becoming, in order to make readers familiar with the content which this semantically identical in meaning.

First of all, we should identify early Buddhism and the early Buddhist concept of *bhava*, which clarifies some scholars' misconceptions and misinterpretation based on their misunderstanding about the role of *kamma* and consciousness during the process of death and rebirth. Early Buddhism is referred to the pre-sectarian Buddhist period (until the first documented split among the Sangha) that was existed from the Buddha's time to one hundred years after passing away of the Buddha (*mahāparinibbāna*). *Nikāya* manuscripts from Sutta, Vinaya and Abhidhamma Pitaka are considered to be early Buddhist scriptures. According to early Buddhist scriptures, the concept of '*bhava*' is presented into two aspects, namely: (i) linking in the process of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) between clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*), (ii) the karmic processes on the psycho-cosmological levels of becoming. Firstly, *bhava* in the process of Dependent Origination has referred to the doctrine of conditionality (*idappaccayatā*) of 'cause and effect'. According to the *Vibhaṅga-Sutta* (SN 12.2), the term '*bhava*' explains in the context of Dependent Origination as conditioned by clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*) depending upon causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*paccaya*). According to *Mahāvedalla-Sutta* (MN.43), a conversation between Sāriputta, and Koṭṭhita is a logical analysis of becoming, where Koṭṭhita asked Sāriputta some interesting questions in relation to becoming. Secondly, the karmic processes on the three psycho-cosmological levels of becoming show how *kamma* leads to beings to renewed becoming in these three modes of becoming. According to the *Bhava-Sutta* (1) and (2) (AN 3.76 and 3.77), a conversation between the Buddha and his attendant Ānanda can be found where the Buddha illustrates the role of action (*kamma*), consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and craving (*taṇhā*) in the production of renewed becoming (*āyatim punabbhava ābhiniḍḍatti*) as well as the role of intention (*cetanā*) (AN 3.77). According to the *Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya-Sutta* (MN 38), a conversation between the Buddha and a monk called as Sāti on a misconception of self-identical consciousness from one life to the next (*punabbhava*), the Buddha teaches how the role of consciousness based on the conditions of Dependent Origination. So, this discourse teaches how to understand the relationship of consciousness to rebirth.

### The Process of Becoming in Dependent Origination

Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is one of the most profound doctrines in Buddhism. It articulates the cause of suffering in terms of psychophysiological conditions upon rebirth. The Buddha has expressed in the *Nidāna-Saṃyutta* (SN) and the *Buddhātuka-Sutta* (MN) that the law of conditionality in the Dependent Origination demonstrates the causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*paccaya*), thus; "*When this exists, that comes to be; with this arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases*" (Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995: 927). It constructively clarifies the law of causation that a cause leads to a consequence as a result (*kamma-vipāka*). When one seeks the cause of present actions (*kamma*), he understands the origin of suffering (*dukkha samudaya*) and when one penetrates the cause of suffering, he ceases the producing new action that leads to the cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodha*) or the cessation of re-becoming. In the *Paṭiccasamuppāda-Vibhaṅga-Sutta* (SN 12.2), the Buddha teaches the doctrine of Dependent Origination in a systematic way demonstrating the twelvefold links and described the entire lifecycle of a being or the wheel of becoming. In addition, these links are categorized into three life-span related to time, namely; past, present and future (Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, 2010, 287).

Past life	ignorance and mental formation
Present life	consciousness, name and form, six-sense bases, contact, feeling, craving, clinging and becoming
Future life	birth and aging-and-death

Figure 1: Life-span period

Thus, the Dependent Origination illustrates the endless cycle of death and rebirth from one existence to another existence within the twelvefold links. Consequently, it is undoubtedly well accepted that the doctrine of Dependent Origination has profound and in-depth meaning, in addition to its significance to understand the relationship between death and re-birth in the process of following *bhava* (*uppatti-bhava*) and present mode of becoming (*kamma-bhava*) as well as the process of re-becoming (*punabbhava*) through the karmic processes on the psycho-cosmological mode of becoming, specifically how *kamma-bhava* leads to birth (*jāti*) in future.

The law of *kamma* is one of the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism which has a strong connection with the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). The law of *kamma* refers to the law of cause and effect (conditionality): that every volitional deed whether wholesome or unwholesome brings about a certain consequence. Volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*) is the second link of Dependent Origination that implies the present mode of becoming (*bhava*) as an action (*kamma*), whether wholesome and unwholesome deeds through bodily, verbally and mentally (SN 12.2), and its consequence leads to birth (*jāti*) or new becoming (*punabbhava*) and repeatedly transcends into superior or lower *saṃsāric* state of mind (*Cūḷakammavibhaṅga-Sutta*, MN 135). Becoming in Dependent Origination is usually divided into two aspects, namely; *kamma-bhava* and *uppatti-bhava* (Vbh.136: 137). *kamma-bhava* is the present mode of becoming. This present mode of becoming is determined by the present state of volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*) such as intention (*cetanā*), desire (*taṇhā*), clinging (*upādāna*), prides (*māna*), fetters (*saṃyojana*). So, this mode of becoming determines birth (*jāti*) or new becoming (*punabbhava*). According to *Paṭiccasamuppāda-Vibhaṅga-Sutta* (SN 12.2), the present mode of becoming (*kamma-bhava*) and its connections to the clinging (*upādāna*), craving (*taṇhā*) and volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*) which are determined by ignorance (*avijjā*). So, this mode of becoming determines birth, more especially the mode of birth. Here, birth (*jāti*) or re-becoming (*punabbhava*) denotes as *uppatti-bhava* in terms of realms wherein a consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is driven by the clinging (*upādāna*). Understanding this subtle connection between birth and the present mode of becoming, one cultivates the doctrine of the buddha to achieve the cessation of birth by way of attaining the cessation of becoming and by way of ceasing, the volitional formations that determine such becoming. Thus, one ultimately understands that the present mode of becoming together with its volitional formations within this life could work to stop the birth in future.

Depending on the volitional formations such as craving and clinging, the mode of psycho-cosmological becoming continues transforming the karmic energy or consequence of wholesome or unwholesome for birth in future. The mode of psycho-cosmological becoming in future is also called re-becoming (*punabbhava*) that will take place in one's psycho-cosmological becoming in future by transforming the present mode of becoming. Depending upon the mode of becoming in future, rebirth or re-becoming comes in future. Therefore, re-becoming of a person in future is generated through volitional formations which are hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving (*Mahāvedalla-Sutta*, MN 43). The early discourses identify the connection of volitional formations of a person in the cycle of birth and death (*bhavacckka*). The cycle of birth and death implies that a person is going through circles of birth, each potential birth being determined by volitional formations that take place in the mode

of becoming at the time of death. *Atthi Raga Sutta* (SN 12.64) states denoting to this point thus; “Where there is the growth of volitional formations, there is the production of renewed becoming in the future. Where there is the production of renewed becoming in the future, there is future birth, ageing, & death.”

As frequently described in the early discourses (SN 12.2, MN 43, 43.15, AN 3.76 and 3.77), becoming (*bhava*) could be in three psycho-cosmological modes of becoming: sensual mode of becoming (*kāma-bhava*), fine-material mode of becoming (*rūpa-bhava*), and immaterial mode of becoming (*arūpa-bhava*). A being can be taken place in any modes of becoming during his wandering in the cycle of birth in accordance with his volitional formations and repeatedly transcended into superior and inferior states ((*Cūḷakammavibhanga-Sutta*, MN 135). The two modes of becoming: the fine-material and immaterial mode of becoming; take place through cultivating the absorption meditations (*jhāna*) and are known as celestial beings (*brahmās*). All three modes of psycho-cosmological becoming are determined by the volitional formations (*kamma*) and when the potentiality of volitional formations is ripened as birth in those modes. Here, the volitional formations work as the seeds for birth in those modes. In the discourses of *Bhava* (1) and (2) (AN 3.76 and 3.77), this is illustrated by the Buddha with questioning by the Venerable Ānanda: “It is said thus, Sir, “becoming, becoming.” To what mode is there becoming?”

“If, Ānanda, there were no volitional action ripening in the sensual mode, would sensual mode of becoming be discerned?”

“No, Sir.”

“If, Ānanda, there were no volitional action ripening in the fine-material mode, would fine-material mode of becoming be discerned?”

“No, Sir.”

“If, Ānanda, there were no volitional action ripening in the immaterial mode, would immaterial mode of becoming be discerned?”

“No, Sir.”

Thus, Ānanda, volitional action is the field, consciousness is the seed, craving the moisture; for beings hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving, consciousness becomes grounded in the lower mode. Thus, there is the production of renewed becoming in future. This is how there is becoming.” (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2012: 309-10)

It should be clearly understood that becoming (*bhava*) is the present state of psychological transformation that takes place in the three psycho-cosmological modes of sensuous, fine-material and immaterial spheres at any time, now or future. Each mode of becoming comes with potentiality for numerous variation modes of birth (*jāti*). For instance, the sensual mode of becoming constitutes birth as human (*manussa*), gods (*deva*), animals (*tiracchāyana yoni*), spirits (*asura*), hell-beings (*niraya*). The fine-material mode of becoming constitutes birth as being celestial beings through the cultivation of absorption meditation: the fine-material of becoming is made by bodily form, but desireless and passionless; the immaterial mode of becoming is made by only consciousness and enjoyed the fruits of the volitional formations (*Jhāna-sutta*, AN 4.123). All these modes and their variation modes as either high or low,

superior or inferior, rich or poor, beautiful or ugly, are determined by the mass of volitional formations (*kamma*) (*Mahasihanada-sutta*, MN 12). Thus, the mode of becoming assists as a motive to new becoming and wandering in the cycle of birth (*jāti-samsāra*). It is clearly shown that the relationship between the mode of birth (*uppatti-bhava*) and present mode of becoming (*kamma-bhava*) in the process of renewed becoming (*punabbhava*) and the role of volitional formations in the three psycho-cosmological modes of becoming that leads to birth in future.

Birth (*jāti*) refers to the potential birth in one of those modes and their variation modes as human, Thais, Indians, Buddhists, animals, gods, spirits or hell beings and so forth. In addition, it also refers to the birth of consciousness in terms of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches and thoughts or the birth of aggregates. The Buddha teaches birth in future, which is not becoming in the sense of eternality, but the uninstructed worldly person who misunderstand the concept of re-becoming or rebirth and its continuous process through the volitional formations on the psycho-cosmological mode of becoming. The doctrine of Buddha is neither easy nor difficult to understand for the ordinary person. However, it is easily confused when a person comes to understand the Buddha's doctrine on birth (*jāti*) for the first time. As the wanderer, Vaccagotta questioned the Buddha related to this matter such as whether or not the world was eternal and whether the enlightened one existed after death. For him, there will be birth for some of his disciples, not other religious teachers or disciples. The Buddha replied him thus, "the other religious teachers or disciples assume birth as a permanent self and the five-holding-aggregates (*pañca-upādāna-kkhandhā*) of matter (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is a permanent or eternal self (*atta*)" (SN 44.8). But, for the enlightened one, the five-holding-aggregates is no-self (*anatta*); there is no permanent person, eternal self, but there is merely the experience of aggregates that is taken as 'this is mine, this am I, this is my self' (Somaratne, 2017: 120). As the formula of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), thus; "*When this exists, that comes to be; with this arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases*" (Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995: 927). Thus, the self, no-self, the same self or a different self, all these are the conventional truths, views due to not seeing the things as they truly are.

Even though, sometimes the doctrine of Dependent Origination on the role of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) in the cycle of birth (*jāti-samsāra*) has misunderstood by the attendants of the Buddha themselves, for instance, Sāti, an attendant of the Buddha who misunderstood the rebirth of this same self or consciousness that runs and wanders through the round of the rebirths (*Mahātanhāsankhaya-Sutta*, MN 38). The aggregate of consciousness among the five-holding-aggregates (*pañca-upādāna-kkhandhā*) is often misunderstood as this self exists after death. In this early discourse, the Buddha asked his attendant, Sāti, thus; "What is that consciousness, Sāti?"

"Venerable sir, it is that which speaks and feels and experiences here and there the result of good and bad actions."

"Misguided man, to whom have you ever known me to teach the Dhamma in that way? In many ways have I not stated consciousness to be dependently arisen, since without the significant conditions there is no origination of consciousness?". (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995: 350)

As it has been clarified in that discourse that consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is arisen by being dependent upon the plenty of volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*), and each of six consciousnesses is also arisen by being dependent upon a sense-base and sensory object (*salāyatana*). And in

many discourses of the Buddha, he identified four nutriment; edible food, sensual feeling, volitions, and consciousness. Here, the nutriment of consciousness is regarded as a condition for the production of a renewed becoming in future (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 2000: 539). This statement clarifies that the role of consciousness is a medium for birth in future. Therefore, consciousness is called a flow or stream of consciousness (*viññāṇa-sota*) in terms of a state of mind that constitutes a renewed becoming and the continuity of becoming. The doctrine of Dependent Origination clarifies that the role of consciousness plays a significant role as a medium for birth in future or renewed becoming during the mode of death and rebirth. The consciousness (*viññāṇa*) in the stream of consciousness is considered to be a single becoming (*bhava*), which is also known as rebirth linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*) that reveals the continuity of becoming from present mode of becoming to re-becoming in future. At the end of every thought process, the rebirth linking consciousness works as life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*) along the process from death to new becoming. Then, at the moment of death, death consciousness (*cūṭi-viññāṇa*), the consciousness is occurred through experiencing the last life-continuum consciousness (*bhavaṅga-viññāṇa*) of the present life and the first life-continuum consciousness of the forthcoming life, which is called the rebirth consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*) of the present life. Here, the rebirth consciousness is connected with the consequence of volitional formations during death and birth, and connecting with the new becoming. It clarifies that the aggregate of consciousness does not run and wander through the rounds of rebirth, neither the same self nor same consciousness, but it changes in every moment of thought process.

The Pāli word ‘*punabbhava*’ refers to re-becoming or renewed becoming, but this term is popularly and mistakenly taken to refer to rebirth. In early discourses, there does not appear any Pāli word corresponding to ‘rebirth’. For that reason, when worldly persons see the concept of re-becoming through the doctrine of the Buddha, they understand that there is no birth (*jāti*) after death, no path to salvation is a necessary, the concept of rebirth implies being born again of the same person and so forth. Parallel confusions still run through the Buddhist traditions to which the modern scholars also contribute through their reckless misinterpretation based on the Buddhist’s concepts of renewed becoming or rebirth. That’s why we should aware of and clarify some of the scholar’s misinterpretations. Among them, Akira Hirakawa, a prominent scholar who does not believe that rebirth was a necessary tenet of the teaching of the Buddha, states thus, “Śākyamuni was primarily concerned with liberation from the suffering of existence. If existence consisted of cycles of birth and death, then deliverance from those cycles was his goal. Thus, Early Buddhists did not need to dismiss rebirth” (Akira Hirakawa, 1990: 6). Similarly, Tilmann Vetter says that “The Buddhist doctrine of salvation.....seems firmly bound to the concept that one must continuously be reborn and die. If there is no rebirth, then one needs no path to salvation, because an end to suffering comes at death.” (Vetter, 1988: XVI).

It is necessary to mention that the Buddha teaches and stimulates only one thing that is the cessation of the suffering or how to stop the cause of suffering. Probably, in that sense, Akira Hirakawa feels that rebirth was not a necessary tenet of the doctrine of the Buddha, but it has a strong integral connection to the fundamental doctrine of the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*) and Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) because both doctrine’s principle objective focuses on the process of the origin and cessation of suffering. The Buddha in Dependent Origination teaches the process of the origin and cessation of suffering as the law of causality— cause and effect, how suffering is an effect of the cause of suffering and the end of suffering is an effect that leads to the cessation of suffering. In many early Buddhist discourses, the Buddha mentioned that craving (*taṇhā*) is the root cause of suffering. In the

discourse of *Mahavedalla-Sutta* (MN 43), Sāriputta states thus, “when craving (*taṇhā*) and ignorance (*avijjā*) ripen together; both are the cause of becoming (*bhava*) (Bhikkhu Bodhi, 1995: 388). According to Dependent Origination, for the reason of mode of becoming (*bhava*), a being exists and has to endure suffering in the cycle of birth and death (*samsāra*) repeatedly. Understanding the connection between birth (*jāti*) and present mode of becoming (*bhava*) in the process of life; one achieves the cessation of birth by the way of attaining the cessation of becoming and by the way of ceasing the volitional formations such as craving (*taṇhā*), clinging (*upādāna*) and ignorance (*avijjā*), one can stop the mode of becoming and birth in future. Thus, the Dependent Origination clarifies how suffering comes to becoming repeatedly and how suffering can be eradicated along the path to liberation. From the standpoints of Dependent Origination and four noble truths, the continuity of becoming or birth (*jāti*) in future exists in the cycles of birth and death (*samsāra*) till applying the path to the liberation and achieving the cessation of becoming.

In Vedic belief, one acts volitional formations either good conduct or bad conduct through bodily and verbally. The soul with volitional formations transforms from one life to another life after death that is called atman or eternal soul or self, soul or self does not change after death (Swami Nikhilananda, chapter II, verse-18). It refers to the aggregates of consciousness or the same self or soul in Veda that runs and wanders through the rounds of rebirth. Tilmann Vetter contrasts early Buddhism along with Vedic belief that good deeds lead to heaven and bad deeds to the underworld (Vetter, 1988: 77). Tilmann Vetter’s statement is indeed not logical from the Buddhist perspective. He tried to reconstruct the Buddha’s view on *kamma* and rebirth with the connection to the Vedic belief on rebirth where they have only a belief in the other world and after staying in heaven a person is reborn as a human being (Vetter, 1988: 78). Lambert Schmithausen emphasized rebirth which can be deal with Vetter’s view that there is no mention of rebirth as an animal or hungry ghost nor even a return to the mode of human, nor there is re-becoming in three modes of becoming in future (Lambert Schmithausen, 1992: 138). To establish and prove these statements, Vetter states, “the old structure that good or bad conduct in the world of mankind either to heaven or to the underworld” with reference to *Puggala-Sutta* (SN 3.21): It states, thus,

“There are four kinds of persons (*puggala*); one who from the darkness goes to the darkness, one who from the darkness goes to the light, one who from the light goes to the darkness, and one who from the light goes to the light. The person who from the darkness goes to the darkness is reborn (*paccājāto*) in a lower-class family of Caṇḍālas, basket makers, hunters, etc., in a poor family with little food and clothing; moreover, the person is ugly and a cripple. And this person leads an evil life with his body, his speech and his thoughts and after death he goes to the underworld. The person who from the darkness goes to the light is also reborn in a lower-class family of Caṇḍālas, etc., is ugly and a cripple, but leads a good life with his body, his speech, and his thoughts and after death goes to the heavenly world. The person who from the light goes to the darkness is reborn in an upper-class family of wealthy warriors, Brahmins, or citizens where there are all the luxuries of life; moreover, the person is beautiful. This person leads an evil life with his body, his speech and his thoughts, and after death he goes to the underworld. Finally, the person who from the light goes to the light is reborn in an upper-class family of wealthy warriors, Brahmins or citizens where there are all the luxuries of life; moreover, the person is beautiful. This person leads a good life with his body, his speech, and his thought and after death he goes to the heavenly world.” (Vetter, 1988: 79-80).

I have no idea how he supposed to establish his statement with only this discourse about the idea of *kamma* that in the earliest period heaven and the underworld was only destinations at death and not future human existence. Tilmann Vetter tried to prove that renewed becoming of

human in future was the later development in Buddhism. I have previously clarified this idea with the reference of early Buddhist discourses such as *Mahātaṇhāsāṅkhaya-Sutta*, the *Mahāvedalla-Sutta*, the *Bhava-Sutta* (1) and (2), the *Cūlakammavibhaṅga-Sutta*, the *Kutuhalasala-Sutta*, where those discourses provide how a being takes place in any modes of three phyco-cosmological becoming in the cycle of birth and death in accordance with his volitional formations. For instance, re-becoming in one of the three phyco-cosmological modes of becoming as human (*manussa*), animals (*tiracchāyana yoni*), gods (*deva*), spirits (*asura*), hell-beings (*niraya*), and so forth. In Buddhism, the consciousness during death and birth functions as a medium for birth in future that changes at the end of every thought process. Thus, the same consciousness does not run and wander in the cycle of birth and death like Vedas after death, the same self or soul runs, wanders and transforms to birth in future without any changes.

## Ending Mark

To conclude I would like to summarize the key point of this paper in simple terms: Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is the mode of being's birth to death, continuing of becoming from one lifetime to another and a clear process of rotated becoming (*saṃsāra*) through twelvefold links. The transition of becoming (*bhava*) in Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) between clinging (*upādāna*) and birth (*jāti*) is often misunderstood. The term '*bhava*' has two meanings from a metaphysical and cosmological perspective. In that sense, becoming in Dependent Origination is usually divided into two modes: *kamma-bhava* is the present mode of becoming that determined by the present state of volitional formations such as intention, desire, clinging, prides, fetters, and ignorance, which determines birth (*jāti*) or renewed becoming (*punabbhava*) in future. The mode of birth or renewed becoming in the three modes of phyco-cosmological becoming: sensual, fine-material, and immaterial mode of becoming; are regarded as *uppatti-bhava*. Here, birth (*jāti*) is the birth of present mode of becoming in new becoming in future that conditioned by the five-holding-aggregates (*pañca-upādāna-kkhandhā*) of matter, feeling, perception, volitional formations and consciousness. Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is a stream of consciousness in terms of a state of mind as medium for the renewed becoming and its continuity in future. The consciousness in the stream of consciousness is a single becoming, is also known as rebirth linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*) that reveals the continuity of becoming from present mode of becoming to re-becoming in future, and that rebirth linking consciousness works as life-continuum (*bhavaṅga*) which changes at the end of every thought process, and at the moment of death, death consciousness (*cūti-viññāṇa*) occurs through experiencing the last life-continuum consciousness (*bhavaṅga-viññāṇa*) of the present life and the first life-continuum consciousness of the next life. Thus, the rebirth consciousness is connected with the consequence of volitional formations during death and birth, and connecting with the new becoming. Through the above explanations, this analysis has clarified common misconceptions of Tilmann Vetter and Lambert Schmithausen about the role of consciousness and *kamma* during the process of death and rebirth.

## References

- Bodhi, Bhikkhu. (2000). *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya*. Translated from the Pāli. Boston: Wisdom Publication.
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu. (2005). Does Rebirth Make Sense? *Access to Insight*.  
[http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bps-essay\\_46.html](http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bps-essay_46.html) (Retrieved: June 30, 2020).
- Bodhi, Bhikkhu. (2012). *The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya*. Translated from the Pāli. Boston: Wisdom Publication.
- Buddhaghosa, Bhadantacariya. (2010). *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*. Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society.
- Enomoto, Fumio. (1989). On the annihilation of karman in early Buddhism. *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan*, 34, 43-55.
- Gombrich, Richard. (2009). *What the Buddha Thought*. UK: Equinox Publishing Ltd.
- Goodman, Steven D. (1992). Situational Patterning: Pratītyasamutpāda. *Footsteps on the Diamond Path*, V, 1-3.
- Hirakawa, Akira (1990). *A History of Indian Buddhism: From Śākyamuni to early Mahāyāna*. Trans. and Ed. by Paul Groner. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.
- Hopkins, Jeffrey. (2015). *The Wheel of Life: Buddhist Perspectives on Cause and Effect*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Ñāṇamoli, Bhikkhu and Bodhi, Bhikkhu. (1995). *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*. Translated from the Pāli. Boston: Wisdom Publication.
- Schmithausen, Lambert. (1986). Critical response. *Karma and Rebirth: Post-classical developments*. Ronald W. Neufeldt (Eds.), (pp.203-230). Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Somaratne, G. A. (2016). Bhava and Vibhava in Early Buddhism. *Journal of Buddhist Studies*, XIII, 123-140.
- Somaratne, G. A. (2017). Punabbhava and Jāti-samsāra in Early Buddhism. *Journal of Buddhist Studies*, XIV, 115-138.
- Vetter, Tilmann. (1998). *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism*. Leiden: Brill.

**Contact email:** pranabbarua70@gmail.com

***Sankhya, Theosophy and Holistic Approach to Reality***

Hrishikesh Misra, Dev Sanskriti University, India

The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy 2021  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The Sankhya doctrine envisages the deepest insight into the working of the human psyche and spirit in the evolutionary Human plane and the Aatmic plane after the physical existence transcending to the Supra Cosmic Conscient aura. Astrology-the ancient science from which one learns fate and destiny is rooted in Sankhya. The seven continents, the seven oceans, the seven basic notes of Harmonica, the seven horses of the sun's chariot speaking of the seven colours of the sun's ray and probably the seven universes to be established by us in the Assembly of learned as truth with Sankhya's seven,-universe. All life forms reincarnates into another being or as an iota,-Panchtatva(The God Particles) mingles with the Supra Conscient Light. This higher immortal self who is the spiritual element in man does not represent the highest aspect of his nature. Within him abides eternally the Monad, the Purusha of the Sankhya Philosophy, the Aatma of the Vedanta, that unseen mysterious eternity about whom we cannot form any idea though He is the very core of our complex being and this whole process of knowing 'who am I' and 'why am I' is the essence of the Vedanta s, shankhya, Christian and Theosophy for carrying the spiritual Consciousness to the Zenith of glory and happiness.

Keywords : Sankhya, Theosophy, Oneness in Multitudeness

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

The sankhya doctrine envisages the deepest insight into the working of the human psyche and spirit the evolutionary human and the Aatmic plane after the physical existence transcending to the supra cosmic conscient Aura. It offers the true sublime answer to the questions confronting the human soul in the lonely hours of his life. Firstly, How to live on this earth, Secondly, How to face the end of this short earthly pilgrimage, and thirdly what after existence here. The sankhya Doctrine instils the truth that the universe consist of two independent realities- Purusha (Consciousness) and Prakriti (Matter). When Purusha integrates with Prakriti Springs to the enlightenment. “JIVA” (Life form). Sankhya does not revolve into the labyrinthal concept of God. God is neither male or female. Ancient wisdom establishes creation without the union of male and the female species. Vishnu in Serenity on Sheshnaga the king of the phylum Reptilia with mother Goddess Mahalaxmi besides his feet with Brahma the inspiration of creation springing from his naval in the Bosom of Lord Shiva. The lord does not allow even a drop of the poisonous venom that he had inhaled to save the Universe from extinction and with in-depth determination that no harm or abuse is caused to any life form. His neither swayed by the vastness of the wealth lying in Mahalaxmi the Goddess of Materialism. Shiva holds in his hand the trident sphere (Trisul) that results in total negation and insignificance all Physical, Daivik, Material, Self accepted Angelic demons ideolise as Demi Gods.

The trinity beseeches oneness and manifold – Universal Brotherhood in virtuous oneness in multitudeness this is theosophy as entrained by Madam Blavatsky and Col.Olcott the founder of theosophical society in the master treatise “The secret doctrine” Shiva is the destroyer of evil and vishunu – the preserver and Brahma the creator all symbiotic of the three virtues essential for the life forms. This repudiates the concept of God as an idol. Buddhi, Ahankar i.e; the Cosmic view, Wisdom, Knowledge, Intelligence and Consciousness all are manifestation of Panch Tatva, the very basic sub ionic elements that constitute the entire Universe. As all are iotas of Panch Tatva. That have energy embedded in it. Their energy have influence on the ‘Jiva’ as well. Astrology too is formulation of Panchtatva that entails cosmogenetic ultrasismic ethereal supra. Consciential consciousness. It enjoins a magnamously whirlpool of inner awareness enshrined in ancient cosmological sciences. They are evident planets have influence on life forms. And these influences project that fate and destiny are rooted in like forms as per timing of Birth. But Sankhya assents that they are not immortally fortified and may changed with the ultraviolet rays the supra conscious light of which meditation form is mere a straw has reached greater zenith of voluminous knowledge, experimental experience is mere a Saga tools. The planets and the stars affect the body of life form but consciousness provides not merely relief but totally how to out do the negative expected results if one has faith in Tantrayana, Mantrayana. And self consciousness (Buddhism) that formulates mediation and identifies him with Shiva- the self hood i.e. the central authority. Sankhya does not delve into the debate of existence of God. The school considers the Vedas a reliable source of knowledge. It is an atheistic philosophy.

The term 7 is a lucky number but We are ignorant of the fact why? We have the seven continents, the seven oceans, the seven basic notes of Harmonica, the seven stars (the Saptarishi) and most important among the seven Horses racing the chariot of luminous Lord of flames “The Sun” with the Seven Colours (VIBGOYR) integral for life. Sixteen SANSKARAS from the time of birth to the spirit leaves the body for another Journey. These sixteen keys termed as natural beauty and (1+6) equals to 7 as for numerology. And probably

the seven Universes to be established by us in the assembly of learned souls manifested as truth with sankhya seven "Universe".

Seven brothers of Krishna the karmayogi were done to death Just after birth by his uncle kansha. And this seven resulted in the birth of the Divine, karma tantra as enshrined in the Geeta. Moses too was born in the slave family and left in a basket in the swift current at the mercy of his new mother Nile. As the ruler of Nation has ordered that all male child should be done to death at the time of birth itself. Later on Moses give up and gave to the world his thoughts enshrined in it the old Testament of the Holy Bible. It is paradoxical that the small split of land gave birth to Moses. And prophet Mahammad the founder of Islam and Lord Jesus the son of God.

But the question arises where is God who gave birth to the solace elixir to life spirits. It is the ID, Ego, superego that had and has crippled the Thought Wave Consciousness of our psyche. It does not merely appear but true is the realisation of the eternal truth that the existence of God non-sensical and total Neisence. The omnipotent, the omniscient God are merely words of few letters in dictionary. However, their symbol of all superior values that should be inculcated in all life forms by the Universal Mother form time before the embryo is generated in the womb. These are the qualities that should be manifested in education and culture for a serve happy enjoyable and resonant life. Stephen Hawkins meditates the Globes and black holes and worm holes and white holes. May sun- the lord of Luminous rays and Gayatri throbbing with intense Supra Cosmic Universal Mother spirit dawn upon all life form the novel luminosity of the truth. And God the may a certain religions a sect is mere a herb that soothes and ailing hopes through device religious methodology.

Go out to the world at large and live for the common Good of mankind. LOVE thy neighbour as thy ownself, said the holy Prophet of Nazareth. Lord Jesus, he also rose up from his grave on easter to sprout the blessings of oneness.

Hinduism too proclaims (Shivoaham) (I am shiva) vgÅ] vgÅ iq:"k% 'kksgfLe (I am what you are). It is the supra conscient future all aiming to bring about a happier cheerful aura of life from time the body is in the womb ot the when the spirit elixir leaves the body to repeat another life. It is quest throbbing with unflinching Zeal to integrate all the supreme virtues in the consciousness and oneness in all life forms. As per the fourth volume of the Mahabharata Abhimanyu learnt how to get through the six doors of the labyrinthal strategic formulation (chakra-viyu) of the enemy soldiers but failed to get through the seventh. This was on account of the reason that his mother, subhadra had fallen asleep while his father Arjuna was narrating the means of getting through the seventh and winning the war. Here also results the nomination lucky seven for victory. Abhimanyu have missed it and faced a valorous death. However we should not dependent on our parents and neighbour anyone for sprouting and magnifying consciousness. Abhimanyu could have learnt how to get through the seventh wall if he had sent his consciousness to the distant obscurity and obtained a vision of sublimity.

Shinto is an indigenous fast Asian religion and originated in Japan and before affects the colonization of ethics and religions Philosophy in Bosnia, Latvia, Lithuania and many more nation. Nature worship as religion had flourished in ancient Aryavardha with its genius in Panchtatva Shinto emphasizes inner purity and concern for all life forms. It is identical to the thoughts and consciousness encouraged and enshrined in the Vedas and Upanishads . Zoroasterism is a monotheistic religion that believe in one eternal God who is epitome of just behaviour and goodness . They worship fire and regard the earth and fire and sacred, pious

harbingers of life , they believe that dead matters a corrupting element to everything and hence they place the dead bodies in open to be eaten by the vultures.

## Conclusion

Death rebirth are illusory notions , there is no death and no rebirth. What occurs is mere change of form the elephant chews the kathe fruit with the crackling sound it appears as it hard nutty coating has been broken to pieces. But low:- it comes out totally unfeathered without even pin hole in it. But the intrinsic flesh is gone ,where has it gone? It has just undergone a change of form as the Flesh, Blood and Consciousness doesn't differ form matter but within itself it witnesses intense acivity in short infiniticible mal, infinitemal movements affecting a chnge of form. Matter is indestructible. The body becomes motionless after the Aatman leaves it for the esoteric ethereal bondage of oneness in zenith of paradise the body in the grave burn to ashes or as faeces after being engulf by vultures turned as fertilizers and mingal with the soil . when we saw a seed it sprouts in to saplings giving nutrition for germination of the sperm and the ovum and the babe in the womb also receive nutrition through naval chord. Judaism too is a monotheistic religion but persecuted by islam thus it is manifested that religion is a way one leads life dharte iti dharma and Christianity are religions of identical views with merely different in words. Islam envisages that after death one has to cross the "pool –al – sharat" the river and the wrong door is punished there is leading to jahannum in Islam , hell in Christianity, Narak in Sanatana or Jannat as per Swarga or Heaven. As per the mention of the tongue of a calf in the holy Quaran Mazeed has outdone,- a novice a thought wave. The Hindu donate the calf to a Brahmin (who cherises the knowledge of Brahma-creation) so that his ancestors may access the "Baitarni" reach the access of Swarga or heaven or Jannat. Besides a s mentioned in the Holy Quaran Mazeed. When a weathly Jew was done to death by unknown person muses prescribed the tongue of the calf particular breed and colour to be placed on the chest of the dead jeweller at a juncture when the tongue was placed the jeweller rose up alive. Surprisingly, merely a month back a mummy was found is the pyramid that had a tongue of gold. This is esoteric mysticism pray to noble August audience endowed with superior wisdom and knowledge to enlighten about the Prometheus tongue. However, this is everlasting endeavour does not end here and it shall continue to work to unveil the truth. The unseen eternity about whom we cannot from any judgement though he is very core of our complex being and the whole process of knowing 'Who am i' and 'Why am i' is the essence of the Vedantas, Sankhya, Sufiasm, Zorotrism, Nature Worshipper and all seekers of truth.  
(one who knows God, Himself, becomes God)

## Acknowledgement

Abraham Lincoln and John Fitkder Kenndy erstwhile President of the United States, Dr.Rajendra Prasad and APJ Abdul Kalam the missile man and the President of India, Reveron Sister Philomena IPMV of St.Joseph Convent , Reveron Father Kelvin Clearie SJ, Kamlesh Verma St.Xaviers, Patna, JAgdish Lala, Jawaha Lala Nehru university, New Delhi, Smt.Vidya Mishra and Pt.Shri Gupteshwar Mishra Commissioner of Income tax but all ardent beseechers and crusader of Human Values, Human Dignity and Human Justice are no more in physical existence but earned for themselves a life of eternity in the Holy abode of the Supra and Ethereal , Esoteric Consciental aura with the followers as Hon'ble Prof.Girish Chowdhary and Dr. Chinmay Pandya to profess reality in their efforts.

**Contact email:** [hrishikeshpatna3@gmail.com](mailto:hrishikeshpatna3@gmail.com)



***Who will Heal the Wounded Soul of Modernity? Is it Spirituality or Spiritual Modernity?***

Rajesh Kumar Srivastava, Government Degree College Dhara, India  
Pragya Srivastava, University of Delhi, India

The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy 2021  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The ancient sages of the world had been the real practisers to obtaining the optimal quantum of spirituality for rhythmic life. Soul loves fertile spiritual field to be cultivated. She needs a pure pool of water, a puff of air, and a serene and blessed environment to awaken the cosmic energies and spiritual forces. Unfortunately, we have confined ourselves with the narrowed walls of contamination, corruption, consumption, commercialization, and perishable comfort zones. The real tragedy behind it is that we don't want to come out of these boundaries. The body and soul both are badly wounded. They are endeavoring to convince our inner self to heed their agonies and pains but blinded and mesmerized with the material science, the God of modernity, we have turned our eyes and ears from the real and austere urges of body and soul. Spirituality is the doctor that can cure the injuries of the body and wounds of the soul because it is the spirituality that has the potential to control the Mind. The Designer has the Grand Design of which we know nothing. This designer has no name. He is the only DESIGNER of the cosmos. This is what the eastern and the western philosophers state in refined epistemological terms. The entire game of human existence through the philosophers of the world convinces us is the defined equation of Body, Mind, and Soul. In this equation, none has lesser significance. My conviction in this paper is to epistemologically analyze the roadmap for spiritual modernity in the world.

Keywords: Spirituality, Modernity, Soul

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

The study of history foregrounds the four categorical out-breaking events in the formation of human civilization in the world. Firstly, the invention of 'the wheel' by the early people, secular in nature, had equal importance for every individual, made the struggle for life easier. Secondly, after a considerable long gap, the Renaissance took place and the new scientific discoveries and inventions changed the entire mindset of the orthodox world. Due to this movement, a wonderful new awakening in the people was perceived that put a strong challenge before the church and Christianity. Thirdly, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Industrial Revolution occurred, owing to this revolution the exploitation of natural resources and refinement of human life and behavior commenced simultaneously. And at last, in the fourth stage, the IT (Information Technology) revolution has brought ne-positive (negative and positive) effects in human life. The various forces which emerged in this civilizational development including religion, science, technology, modernity, evolved understanding of the universe, politics, economics have tightened their grip over human life with every passing day. Their excessive interference in human life has snatched the peace and tranquillity of the human mind.

Evidently, within this framework, we claim that we have erected the skyscraper buildings to live in, constructed high speed maintain roads for our transport system, developed well equipped national forces to protect our international borders, established vigorously sophisticated laboratories where other than scientific experiments natural RNA and DNA are being restructured, remodeled and redesigned. We are proud of our philosophies, literature, art, architecture, sculpture, and painting, etc. We are proud of our ultramodern medical system and information and communication technologies. At the same time, at every moment, we struggle against natural forces for our very survival. It is our long-cherished desire to control nature and its constructive and destructive forces for our vested interest. We are proud of our production and consumption habits. We are proud of our nuclear and biological weapons that can turn this civilization into dust within no time. We are proud of the fact that we have explored the traces of life-supporting surroundings on other planets and satellites known to us. We are proud of our magnificent military and embedded missile systems. With extreme confidence and pride, we declare that we have a sound educational and political system to bring prosperity and peaceful co-existence in the world.

Amidst all the luxury and comfort, we have made our lives capable of, is it not the fact that this pseudo pride has given birth to our pains and sufferings? Don't you think that the temperament of the modern and ultra-modern way of living has been succumbing to the entire humanity in the name of a comfortable life, brittle dreams, and adventurous lifestyle? Has it not evaporated the ooze and sharpness of our soul? Have we not mortgaged our physical, mental, and spiritual pursuits in the direction of the wrong run? Can we deny the fact that we have rendered this beautiful earth into a wasteland? It is not very easy to answer these questions. Have we ever focussed our attention on the facts what are the root causes of our sufferings and pains? Is it not possible to lead a painless life? But the fact, we must take into account, is that the diseases have fettered us in the form of endemic, epidemic, and pandemic. It is we who have invited these calamities and destruction before humanity. It is we who have rendered the world to lead the tiresome schizophrenic life. It is we who have polluted the natural elements (earth, air, water, fire, and space) that sustain life on this earth. It is we who have devastated the social harmony in the name of religion. It is we who are imposing war after war on humanity. It is we who are felling trees, destroying environmental diversity, killing innocent animals for our different mundane purposes. When will it come to

an end we don't know? But the coming generation will blame us for these atrocities which we have done to nature and natural resources because the course of history has never forgiven anybody.

A major setback to all our false points of pride has already been evident in the last year of the COVID-19 pandemic. All the systems and forces which we had nurtured in our civilizational development to accord meaning to our lives collapsed within few months of handling the spread of an invisible virus. With the external forces giving up in the time of crisis, the physical, psychological, and social health of humanity stand challenged. There has arisen a need today to change the paradigms in which we envisage life, a requirement to shift our focus from external forces to internal journey. In this backdrop, it becomes inevitable to acknowledge that we need to redefine our ways of living to conform to the new normal. This paper presents spiritual modernity as one of the alternatives to remodel human life. The paper delves into spiritual modernity around three pillars. First, an understanding of spirituality. Second, distinguishing spirituality from religion. Third, converging the first two pillars to arrive at an understanding of what spiritual modernity entails.

### **What is Spirituality?**

We have traveled much, known more, and boasted the most but have we ever endeavored to know ourselves? Have we ever made any serious journey inside us? Some two thousand and five hundred years back in the past an Indian prince (Siddharth) renounced his palace and family to know himself. This is the first instance in the history of the entire civilization of the world of realization of the self. He searched and researched the truth and cast spell on the curtain of illusion and delusion and ultimately became the Enlightened one. He taught us to maintain the balance between what we think and what we do. But we ignored this matchless treasury of wisdom and teachings and the preaching of the Enlightened One. Resultantly, we enslaved our real existence. We confined ourselves into the four walls of our desires, ambitions, greed, mutilated the sanctity of our life, and plunged ourselves into the sea of sufferings and pains. We have maximized our needs and greed and are so much accustomed to them that we become restless when we are away from them. If one wants to free oneself from the bondage of one's sense of perception every individual should ask seven simple questions to himself.

Who am I?

Where have I come from?

Why have I come for?

Where have I to go after this life?

Is there any God?

If yes, where does He live?

If not, why do we pray and worship?

If we honestly ask these questions to ourselves and try to find answers, this self-interview will open the closed doors of spirituality for the entire humanity of the world. Although, answers to these questions are not so easy because the magic of the material world will not allow an individual to reach this philosophical temperament. Tragically, everyone accepts the fact that ego, uncontrolled ambitions, hegemonic attitude, electronic gadget mania, narcissistic tempo, imbalanced food habits, intrusion of machines and home appliances in our daily life have shattered our routine and lifestyle. If we want to get rid of these clutches, we have to go into the shelter of spirituality and natural life. Now the question is how to

experience and practice spirituality in our life? To answer this question, we have to understand what spirituality is.

Right from the beginning of human civilization, the philosophers of both material and the spiritual sciences have been endeavoring to define this term, but in every definition, there has always been the space and scope of addition and subtraction in its very kernel from time to time. So, spirituality is a process of purification of body, mind, and soul. Out of these three entities, the soul has been proclaimed as invincible, free from any bondage. It follows the path of Dharma (Natural Law). That is why after the death of the body (perishable) soul leaves her abode for the other world (the so-called heaven and hell which we have no information of, we have only speculations) and mingles with the Ultimate Reality (ontological and epistemological scholars say so, of which we have no experience but our claim is based on the proclamations of the scriptures of the different religions of the world). But the matter of fact is that soul cannot exist without body and mind. At this factual point, we must focus our entire attention to wash out the impurities of body and mind. Out of these two elemental facts, the mind plays a vital role to formulate the set of thought processes. If the mind postulate positively body can be sustained. If negativity occurs in the thought process of the mind it harms the soul. Now the whole responsibility of existence depends on the mind. Immanuel Kant establishes it by saying, 'I think therefore I am'. The Hindu scripture, The Gita too has widely spoken about the different spectrum of the race and pace of mind. Because the restless mind destabilizes the stability of human existence. It is very difficult to control the mind but it can be done through the practice of meditation and Pranayama regularly.

Asamsayam mahabaho mano durnigraham calam

Abhyasen tu kaunteya vairagya ca grhyate.

(Lord Krishna says, 'The mind is restless no doubt, and difficult to curb, Arjun; but it can be brought under control by repeated practice (of meditation) and by the exercise of dispassion, O son of Kunti)

By and large, the same practice was prescribed by the Enlightened One, The Buddha through, another name that is Vipassana (mindful meditation). In both practices, emphasis has been laid on the mind. The same philosophy has been conclusive, expounded by the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (AD) the Indian spiritual scholar and sage Patanjali through his Astangic Marg or Noble Eightfold Paths (Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dhyana, dharana, and samadhi). According to this school of philosophy, the main objective of life is to get liberation from the life cycle, get salvation and attainment of Moksha (to mingle one's existence in the existence of Absolute Reality from where there is no birth, no death, no suffering, no pain, no desire, no cravings, no aversion, no despondency and so on. There is only equanimity and stability and our very soul transmigrates this material world and stays in the blissful condition with the Supreme Being.

Spirituality establishes a close bond between life and nature, between God and its practitioners, between the matter and the mind, between nature and the human life, between all the flora and the fauna available on the earth. It sustains the perpetuity of peaceful and harmonious life. It begets fellow feelings and social harmony. It discloses the channels of liberation. It clears away all the dust and rust of our body and mind, and generates pure thoughts, pure perception, pure character, and infuses pure streams of sainthood in us. At this point cravings and aversions don't disturb us, because human beings are very close to the truth and sanctity of life. It is the spirituality that enabled the Buddha to search for the causes

of human sufferings and pains. So spiritual men and women may measure the depth of soul and Ultimate Reality because he/she is the master of unfathomed cosmic energies. The American poetess, **Emily Dickenson** points this fact out in these words- “Brain is wider than the sky, deeper than the sea, and it equals the weight of God”. Science and sages have discovered that in the beginning there was nothing and, in the end, there will be nothing. The entire struggle is between to nothings. The entire chemistry of the world is an amalgamation of illusions and delusions. The moment they vanish, a flash of light of knowledge appears before us and we come to know the reality of mind and matter. Spirituality is capable to foresee what was, what is, and what will be between the two extremes of nothingness. It has divine eyes to visualize the unseen, divine ears to listen to the whispers and vibrations of the motioned universe, divine heart to sensationalize the intensified soft and swift messages of mysterious plans of the Grand designer (if there is any). It has divine messages a very few can sense it and last of all the divine dance of Lord Shiva destroys everything that is material.

Consequently, there is an acute softness in the modus operandi of a spiritual individual. It has a treasury that can buy peace of mind, the harmony of body, and the successful journey of the soul. It has the potential to understand the difference between the dream and reality. It can cure the bleeding wounds to which modernity has given birth to. A spiritually operated mind thinks beyond the normal limit and scope. It is like the firewall that protects our body, mind, and soul from all the impurities of the world. It can reformulate, reformat, and restructure our mundane life. It kills our ego, the emperor of all evil. A human being can get perfection through spiritual practices. It is secular. It is free from caste, religion, race, color, nationality, or any social, economic, and geographical boundaries. There have been very sound and practical spiritual tendencies and techniques in every religion of the world and people have been practicing it since time immemorial. It is the need of time that the practice of spirituality must be propagated and promoted far and wide to enable people to get an advantage out of it. In every school, college, university, and other academic and non-academic institutions a separate cell of spiritual science should be established with secular democratic values. Apart from it, the spiritual practices should be mandatorily incorporated in the curriculum and its proper teaching and learning must be ensured in the premises of every institution. It is the only way, without any doubt, that may bring the sustainable development goals prescribed by the United Nations Organization.

### **Difference between the Oriental and the Occidental Approaches of Spirituality**

Concerning the practice and study of spirituality here I would like to mention the difference between the oriental and occidental philosophies. The West talked about wealth while the east talked about health. The West talked about the matter while the East talked about the mind. The West talked about physical pleasure while the East talked about mental peace. The West concentrated its energy on exploitation while the East focussed its attention on the preservation and conservation of nature and the environment. Both these philosophies and their approaches are endeavoring to explore the reality and truth of the world and its affairs with different approaches. Interestingly, the West is striving to explore this reality in the outer world (material world) while the Eastern schools of philosophy in the inner world (spiritual world). Both have certain lapses. On the one hand, while exploring the outer world West completely ignored the spiritual world and thought that science, technology, nuclear and biological weapons can sustain the world and have the potential to answer the serious questions and challenges laid before human existence and they rendered the world into the worshipper of materialism and very cunningly, this materialism gave birth to the commerce, trade, comfortable life, medical facilities, endemics, epidemics, and pandemics, etc.

On the other hand, the oriental approaches side-lined the material world and concentrated all their energies in getting salvation from the cycle of birth and death and attaining the abode of God (whom none has seen so far) in the form of liberation and deliverance. To tell this truth to the suffering humanity the saints and seers have been coming on the Indian soil from time to time, sometimes as the preachers and sometimes as the social reformers. Unfortunately, the West and the East never met together. Had they met and discussed the variegated issues of the material and the spiritual world and studied the reasons of pains and sufferings of the world, undoubtedly, the human race would have been free from the clutches of wars, battles, terrorism, pandemic, ignorance, blind ambitions, disharmony, communal bigotry, black and white racial discrimination, superstitious practices, gender inequality, disparities, infanticide, poverty and miseries of life, etc.

### **Difference between Spirituality and Religion**

Occasionally, it is observed that we mistake religion for spirituality. Here it is pertinent to distinguish the difference between these two. It is a well-known fact that religion is a sect that has rites, rituals, dogmas, superstitions, and political terms. It can be said that it has an agenda or in other words, a group of like-minded people who have their scriptures, who follow a patterned belief and faith, who have their promotor, real and imaginary stories is attached with him that proves that they are not ordinary human beings but supermen and regarded as prophets. It has a well-organized operative system. Nobody has any right to put the question before them. Everybody has to follow the principles prescribed by the religious authorities. More or less this kind of system cannot be more than sectarianism. Time and again, followers of sectarian principles endeavor to prove their superiority over others. People have been practicing it at every age under the banner of a specific sectarian. Things become worse when politics intrudes in it.

Consequently, unnecessary wars are imposed on humanity. People who are involved in it, have nothing to do with spirituality and the peaceful coexistence of the people. They have the only goal to fulfill that is their political agenda. Contrary to it they declare that they are religious people. They can be religious but not spiritual because religion divides people and brings tension and ego. As Karl Marx says, 'Religion is an opium'. Historical pieces of evidence show that in the past the people of almost all religions did not have any hesitation to shed innocent blood in the name of religion. It is an opportune time to come out of the narrow walls of our prejudices to save the humanity of the world.

When we examine it neutrally, we find that it is far away from spiritual practices. Spirituality avoids any kind of shortcuts. It follows the natural laws (dharma, the Indian concept) and cannot violate them. This wonderful science (spirituality) concentrates its entire attention on the six sensory (five physical- eye, ear, nose, tongue skin, and one mental that is mind) experiences through which we try to understand the physical world. These six sensory bases play a vital role in sensation (sense of perception) and emotion. To understand the outer world, we take the help of all five sensory bases but when we try to know ourselves, we use 'mind' that is the sixth sensory organ. Sensation and emotion arise because of the contact with our sensory bases as Buddha says, "Contact of the eye with a vision, contact of the ear with sound, contact of the nose with odor, contact of the tongue with taste, contact of the body with something tangible, contact of the mind with any thought, emotion, idea, imagination, and memory." In a nutshell, spirituality is that journey within which not just helps us understand ourselves better but also nurtures our relationship with other human beings as well as the natural world. This understanding of spirituality and one's inner self is

often associated with saints and seers who have abandoned the material realities. Adopting an ascetic lifestyle, as is associated with spirituality, appears just non-feasible for modern life. That leads us to expostulate a viable alternative that entwines the principles of spiritual living and demands of modern life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: spiritual modernity.

### **Spiritual Modernity and How It Can Be Made Accessible to Entire Humanity**

Here we have two responsibilities, firstly, we have to know this material world and secondly, we have to know ourselves of our very existence. Knowing the world as well as oneself is to know the changing streams of consciousness. We are supposed to know the changes taking place inside our physical body, the changes taking place in the entire cosmos, feel the flow of blood in our veins and arteries. Every moment we pass through the different phases of physical, chemical, and mental changes. It is well experienced during the Vipassana practices. The physical realities are changing constantly. This is what the Buddha realized by examining himself. “With his strong concentrated mind, he penetrated deeply into his nature and found that the entire material structure is composed of minute subatomic particles which are continuously arising and vanishing.” The question is how to be aware of oneself, of the physical and psychological changes happening in us? In addition, how to integrate self-awareness with the overall wellbeing of the world? Answer to these questions involves congregated efforts of three stakeholders: individual, the community of which the individual is part, and the policy framework in which the community operates. Joint efforts at the level of these three stakeholders can pave the way towards a lifestyle that is imbued with tranquillity, peace, and love without compromising the demands of modern life.

#### **Individual-level**

Every individual must ensure:

- the avoidance of fast-food habits particularly in children.
- promotion of Yoga, meditation, and Pranayama in our daily routine.
- the enhancement of vegan culture in the world.
- the promotion of traditional and local health medication systems.
- the efforts to curb the scope of food adulteration.

#### **Community-level**

The community should strive for:

- feeding the hunger by establishing a Foodbank in poverty-prone areas.
- providing clothes to the naked through Clothe bank.
- helping the weak and beggars from donations received by the church, mosques, temples, and other religious institutions.
- educating the ill-fated children and saving them from child labor through book, pen, pencil, eraser, and notebook bank.
- caring senior citizens through services in the old age care centers.
- sensible care for nature.
- promoting fraternity with human beings, animals, and plants.
- checking any kind of cruelty against animals.
- encouraging community Vipassana centers where people can gather for some time off worldly affairs and replenish their spiritual selves.

## Public Policy Level

The governments must initiate for:

- massive plantation movement for the protection of our environment.
- conservation and maintenance of existing wetlands like pools, ponds, and lakes to supply the needs of water for animals and birds.
- adaptation of some concrete measures for population control particularly in South Asia.
- the minimization of herbicides, pesticides, and other chemical products and by-products in agriculture and animal husbandry sectors.
- the reduction of carbon emission.
- redesigning the education system which inculcates all the above-listed values into a child's mind from the very beginning because the way children are brought up in a society reflects a society's future.

Here, I would like to clear this fact that this discussion does not mean that we should forsake this material world and go to the forest as a recluse to seek the truth. No, we are not supposed to do it because the ancient sages and truth-seekers of the world have already done it and prescribed a balanced path to be followed. There are many ways to go in this direction. Firstly, we have to practice equanimity, reduce our necessities, maintain the balance between the material and the spiritual world, control our mundane activities. Secondly, if we are concerned with the life of spiritual modernity we may go to medical institutions and offer our services to the sufferers. That is the real place where we can detach ourselves from the chain of pains and agonies, and know how to lead a healthy life. Here the person crying in pain does not need material wealth. His only wish there is how to recover health and get rid of pain and suffering. Thirdly, we have to develop our habit to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, help the weak and beggars, educate the ill-fated children. Apart from these steps, some more feasible efforts are to be initiated. We must strive for the eradication of social evils. This effort should not be confined within the national boundaries but it is the demand of time that we must propagate the good practices in every nook and corner of the world.

After doing these social works we may get innumerable benefits and immeasurable peace of mind. In this selfless duty, both the giver and the receiver will sense happiness indices and will increase the harmonious bond between the different groups of people. We have become so much self-centered and profit-oriented that we have forgotten all our innate attributes bestowed by enlightened people. We consider that the building that we have constructed and the paraphernalia we have collected and decorated around us are our indestructible kingdom. We think that it will never die. Working in the line of the material world, we mistake that this is the permanent world, but the truth is that one day we will have to renounce this world forever. Nothing will go with us after the death of this body. We will have to amend our habits because the amended habits will make us aware and cement the balance between the modern material and spiritual world.

## Conclusion

The world in which we are living today is the age of bombs, biological weapons, and missiles. These bombs and missiles will swallow this green earth within no time. How surprising is this fact that we had started our civilizational journey much before the Stone Age and today we have entered into the Space Age where we are searching the traces of life on the other planets but our cravings for shedding blood could not be prevented. In the

beginning, we would use these weapons against the dangerous animals in the forest during the days of our struggle for a comfortable and secure life but now amazingly we are deliberately using these weapons against human beings. It is not an exaggeration to say that we are sitting on the pile of gunpowder. We are manufacturing lethal weapons and supplying them to the militant's and terrorist's groups in the world and making money. Don't you think that it is the double standard of the political establishments of few countries? This is one of the many causes of unrest in the world and ironically, we are playing this game in the name of modernity and security. Is it very difficult to prevent the wrong practices for the sake of humanity and the earth? We have lost many things in the run of modernity and comfortable life. Once again, we must have to revive Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity for the peaceful coexistence of the world otherwise there will be nothing in our hands except dust and sand. The coming generation will curse us. We have seen this kind of sharp reaction in the blame speech of Greta Thunberg, the Swedish environmental activist who asks the world leaders for bringing destruction and devastation in the world and says, "You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with empty words. And yet I am one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are at the beginning of mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!"

## References

Palgrave, F.T. (2002) *Golden Treasury*, OUP.

Vyas, Veda (2001) *Bhagwat Gita*, Gita Press Gorakhpur.

Hart, William, (1988) *Vipassana Meditation*, VRI.

Ibid.

Thunberg, Greta, (23rd Sept. 2019), *Speech* at UNO, New York.

**Contact email:** dr.rajesh\_sri@rediffmail.com  
rkbasti3@gmail.com

***The Palamite Paradigm of Ecstasy and its Impact on Eastern Christian Model***

Adriana Elena Vlaicu, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Romania

The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy 2021  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

“Is human being an ecstatic being? Is it possible for a human being to live without any kind of spiritual experience?” Even from ancient times people were searching through various methods, ways to reach some high spiritual experiences regardless their religious views or methods they used such as iatromantis, yoga, Buddhist meditation, Kabbalah, Rumi or Christian and not only. This is proof that human beings do search for a spiritual experience that exceeds the material world and its rationality. For Eastern Christianity a moment of a great importance was the controversy between Barlaam, the monk from Calabria and Gregory Palamas, a greek theologian and philosopher, this controversy marking actually the first confrontation between Eastern tradition and the new occidental man. It pinpointed the articulation of hesychasm, moving from living the experience to reflecting upon it. Eastern mysticism talks about a direct knowing of God, a union with Him, while Western rationalism implies more of an imitation of God, a rational knowing of God, denying any divine implication in this process, which makes ecstatic experience completely different. Palamas presents the monologue kind of prayer, focused on repeating the name of God. It was used by the Dessert Fathers and was known as Kyrie eleison, Prayer of the mind, Prayer of the Heart to transform later into Jesus’ Prayer or Remembering the Word. This prayer is the core of the whole byzantine spirituality.

Keywords: Spiritual Experience, Ecstasy, Gregory Palamas, Hesychasm, Jesus’ Prayer, Eastern Christianity

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

The term of ecstasy is quite an intriguing one when it comes to spirituality. The question that rose at the beginning of my research into this topic was related to whether human beings have it in their nature to unconsciously search for this kind of experience. With just a look back at the history of this term we could say that the answer is yes. Regardless the cultural and religious background, these kind of experiences were discussed, searched, needed through all our human history. It did influence culture, religion, personal beliefs and personal experiences. This paper will try to provide a brief introspection into the Orthodox type of ecstasy following Gregory Palamas teachings. It's not exhaustive considering I am still at the beginning of my travel onto this path.

This paper contains a part of my research on this topic. The main theme of my PhD thesis is "Anthropology and Spiritual Experience on André Scrima". Scrima was a Romanian theologian and priest, also a philosophy professor at Catholic University Saint-Joseph of Beirut (1968-1989) and at University Saint-Esprit from Kaslik, Liban. He is having an interesting perspective on what it means the spiritual experience. But to be able to understand his point of view I had to research to the origins of this term in Eastern Christian model. Hesychast way of reaching and describing a spiritual experience, be it called ecstasy or rapture or just spiritual experience, was acknowledged in the 14<sup>th</sup> century after the controversy between Barlaam and Gregory Palamas.

This article has six parts where I treat the topic of ecstasy in Christianity, the way hesychasm is a pattern in guiding the ecstatic experience, the specificity of Eastern Christian pattern and the birth of palamite one, the impact it had on the Eastern Christian model, the main differences that are still creating a gap between the Catholic and Orthodox Church and, at the end, some brief conclusions.

### 1. Ecstasy in Christianity

In Christianity, the term ecstasy, ἐκστασις, literally means "getting out of", some sort of "withdrawal" from the normal estate. This term appears a few times in Septuagint without having though a technical signification, only referring to Adam's sleep, fear of God, madness, etc. In Christian ascetic literature this term had two main meanings. The first is a complete negative connotation and it refers to the madness caused by different factors such as sins or demons. The second sense could mean "amazement", "aim", and the implications are positive. In the most Christian writings, it refers to a special mystical experience that could be named in certain situations "rapture", the main characteristic being the mind breaking free from the body, losing all senses together with other physical and mental estates. In the Bible can be found some examples of mystical ecstasy such as Peter's in Acts 10:10, or Pavel's in II Cor. 12, 2-4. In the last it's not about a "trance" but more about a "rapture" considering the fact that he, himself, didn't know if he was still in body or not. Descriptions of similar experiences could be found in hagiographic writings<sup>1</sup>, these kinds of experiences being something normal and natural at the time.

Among Byzantine theologians, St Gregory of Nyssa, Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor paid a lot of attention to this term. Gregory sees it most of the time as "vertigo", "passionate love", "ascension". Dionysius on the other side it's influenced in his theory by Neoplatonism in

---

<sup>1</sup> Writings about life of saints

using negative terms and Gregory of Nissa by using the symbolism of darkness. For Dionysius ecstasy is strongly related to the love of God and most of the times it's described as a sudden rapture where no thoughts or feelings could be described using human language. It's more like a union with God, the highest form of contemplation and supernatural knowledge. Maximus the Confessor had also superior experiences of mind. He accepts the general idea of ecstasy that Dionysius proposes and understands it as a fulfilling resemblance to God of the human being, a union that is proof of the transformation of the human being with the help of divine grace. When it comes to ascetic literature, we can mention John Climacus that sees the true hermit as being in an endless ecstasy. He also talks about ecstatic seeing of God's light. Isaac of Nineveh also has some descriptions of ecstasy, but it's a must to mention that in Syrian language there's no equivalent for the Greek ekstasis and *in the original text of Isaac of Nineveh, words as **tehra** or **temha**, both translated as **amazement**, are used as approximate equivalents.*<sup>2</sup> However, in the Greek versions of his writings, the term ekstasis is used a few times, in one of them even mentioning the physical elements that accompany it.<sup>3</sup>

On another side, Symeon The New Theologian thought that the knowledge about God is given to us by Him as a gift and it depends a lot on the nature of our belief. The unknowability of God but also having an opportunity to get to know Him is specific to Traditional Christian Orthodox Church. He is *one of the only mystics of the Middle Ages that openly talks about his personal experiences, visions.*<sup>4</sup> For Symeon the divinity is a paradoxical mystery, impossible to be comprehended by the human mind. However, for those that are worthy of this privilege it can reveal itself as a gift. Many of the visions that Symeon experienced had ecstatic characteristics such as loss of his conscience, self-forgetfulness, also losing sight and forgetting everything around him and even leaving his own body.<sup>5</sup> Symeon mentions into his writings, many times, the term ekstasis, even considering it to be a synonym with *arpage*, ἀρπαγε, rapture and with *alloiosis*, change.<sup>6</sup> Ecstasy has two different stages, one being impetuous, enthusiast and rare that most beginners have, and another that is ceaseless, a state of being continuous of the ones that can contemplate the divine light without losing their conscience and without leaving their bodies behind. One should surpass the first type of ecstasy transforming it into the second. It's more likely that this conception was influenced by his own evolution, his youth being marked with rarer and dramatic experiences to get more frequent and well mastered ones as he grew older. And it's why he ends up believing that those experiences mentioned by the greatest saints, might be in fact a gift that beginners have. Symeon confesses that the main point of Christian experience is being able to communicate with the one that's impossible to do so and getting to know what's impossible to be known. And that's possible through Incarnation of Christ that purified man and made him able to reach this kind of bliss. The same thing will be reminded later by Gregory Palamas.

<sup>2</sup> Ilarion Afeyev, *Sfântul Simeon Noul teolog și tradiția ortodoxă*, Ed. Sophia, București, 2010, p. 297

<sup>3</sup> *Most of the time [the man] is bend over his knees when he prays and his hands are raised towards the sky and his eyes are gazing at Christ's Cross, gathering all his thoughts about God into his prayer. And suddenly ... a spring of delight moves his soul. And his limbs go limp and his face bends down towards the ground and his thoughts change; all in such a way that he cannot do his prostrations because of a feeling of happiness that spreads all over his body.* Ibid, p. 299

<sup>4</sup> John Meyendorff, *Sfântul Grigorie Palamas și mistica ortodoxă*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, 1995, p. 40

<sup>5</sup> *One day he felt immersed into a purifying water and he saw sparkles all around him. He saw the rays of His face mingling into the water, like he was washed by those shiny waves, feeling as if his spirit left his body being so thrilled as if he was in ecstasy. He said he lived like this for a while and then, through a even bigger mystery, he saw himself being taken away by God, without knowing if he was taken together with his body or not.* - Cf. John Meyendorff, *Op. Cit.*, p. 42, *Apud.* Trad. M.L. – B. în „*Vie spirituelle*”, XXI, 1931, p. 305 - 308

<sup>6</sup> In Catechesis 16 and 36 he mentions two of his ecstatic experiences.

## 2. Hesychasm as a Pattern in Guiding the Ecstatic Experience

Hesychasm was mentioned from the very beginning of monasticism and its biblical origins are obvious. It was probably the most important spiritual phenomenon in Christianity and it represents an ascetic tradition that appeared around the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, but it took a formal and more solid state in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries when Jesus' prayer appeared as a contemplation method. Hesychasm passed through two major turn points, each time getting rebirthed, renewing Orthodoxy completely. One happened in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the other in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. I will refer to the one that happened into the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Macmillan Dictionary of Religion defines hesychasm as an ascetic system of meditations that include breathing exercises together with a continuous repetition of Jesus Prayer, developed by the monks on Mount Athos. The purpose of this practice was visualizing the light that was believed to be the energy of God that is opposed to His essence. This meant that knowing God could only happen through illumination – which opposes revelation that the Church usually meditates over.<sup>7</sup>

Hesychast practice has three major aspects:

- 1) The prayer of the mind, Jesus' Prayer, the Prayer of the Heart, lived as a doxology.
- 2) A method, integrated part of spiritual formation that the maestro gives to their disciple.
- 3) A personal reflection communicated through text such as: treatises, letters, etc.

Hesychasm comes from ancient Greek word *hesychia* that sends us towards the verb *hêsthai*, his Latin equivalent being *sedere*: to sit, to be seated. It proposes two directions: one would be physical, exterior and one would be spiritual, both together, never separated. In its origin the expression “to sit”, “to be seated” implies the idea of stability, calmness even peace. So, hesychasm is a way of maintaining and leading a spiritual estate and the peace as such. “To sit” and “to be seated” leads us to the idea of stability itself, even a physical one. The silence, the peacefulness requires a contemplative estate which makes possible our union with God. In our hearts unity and peace are inseparable. These two open a new horizon that is “one” and in the same time “the only one”, it's solitude that must be understood through its material aspect. It only makes sense if through it one gets a communion with God and self-transcendence; otherwise it could “kill” us, throws us back into the world. Solitude involves an element of obedience. Hesychasm searches for that solitude in oneself, but not to obtain the solitude itself but to be able to hear the voice of God. The one that searches God, when reading the Bible, always finds certain expressions that manage to reach them into a complete personal and different way. A word can suddenly illuminate and give a meaning to that inner search that one has. Hesychasm is associated to a non-anxious estate, is the search that can allow oneself to consume their life into God. The hesychast strives only towards Him and their own being is lead through this desire.

Praying is the core activity of hesychasm. The true prayer is the one that can focus. This prayer is the one that fulfills a desire of accomplishment, it becomes a formula and during the 5<sup>th</sup> century it will be defined as the core invocation of hesychasm. It gains a form that contains the essence of the prayer itself - monolôgistos euché → invocation → name of God. The keyword in hesychast spiritual life is heart. Heart is the original center and also the depth of a person. At some point the hesychast reaches the core of their heart and this comes also with a feeling of pain that later turns into peace and that peace is revealed through tears. Tears are also a gift,

---

<sup>7</sup> Michael Pye, *Macmillan Dictionary of Religion*, The Macmillan Press LTD, London, 1994, p.108

tears of love, of light that describe the feeling of finally returning to where God resides, in the heart.

The dominant trait of hesychia is the prayer that calls the divine name. Name → heart. First major presupposition of calling the “Name to the heart” is focusing one’s mind. Hesychasts talked about the need of a certain physical posture and a certain rhythm of breathing. Invoking the Name means *anamnesis*, always having God in mind and keep Him in the heart. First requirement of the prayer is to remain focused, to be present into that prayer, to live for remembering continuously God. Anamnesis leads towards *presence*. The practice of this exercise of focusing proves that a *technique* is necessary eventually. The wisdom of the spiritual experience itself makes the hesychasts to understand the need of a certain body position. The breathing technique is also important. While practicing this kind of prayer hesychasts also learn the art of breathing. They are taught to *restrain the movement of the lungs so breathing won’t be done freely because the breathing that starts from the heart darkens the mind. If any kind of thoughts appear, be them good or bad, they should be ignored. Breathing should be restrained as much as possible and locking the mind into the heart while always invoking Jesus’s name.*<sup>8</sup>

The next important element is understanding the connection between spiritual experience and hesychast doctrine. Spiritual experience means living in accordance with the Holy Spirit that it is there since birth. As mentioned before hesychia has two components: silence and peace. The first shouldn’t be mistaken for muteness. In the depths of silence takes place the amazement: in front of the ultimate reality our word cannot do anything else but become silent. Peace is the peace of God. *Sometimes Jesus’s prayer should be said with the words or with the mind. They’re both recommended because when the mind cannot focus on saying it because it’s overwhelmed by thoughts and other times mouth cannot say it. So, one must pray both ways.*<sup>9</sup>

### 3. The Specificity of Christian Orthodox Pattern and the Birth of Palamite Paradigm

When we mention a dogma we think at what it can do to make a spiritual development possible. What Christian dogmas have in common as a system that wants to be experimented is the fact that it urges an intimate communion between the believer and the divinity that decided to get incarnated for this precise purpose. Orthodox spirituality is faithful to Revelation considering the fact that the final purpose of the man is rebirth and eternal unity with Christ. Man is the only creation that is allowed to have a close relationship with its Creator. Thus, the relationship that is established between creature and its Creator is a direct and personal one. It’s a permanent dialogue, a special one.

A significant moment of the 14<sup>th</sup> century was the controversy between Barlaam and Gregory Palamas that marked actually the first dispute between the Eastern tradition and the new occidental man. One of the good things that came out of this was the “wording” of hesychasm, the pass from experience itself to meditating on it. On the other side, it also had a negative impact because it turned hesychasm into a bizarre sect for western theology. In the turbulent history of Byzantium at the end of first millennium, hermits and monks discover Mt Athos. The epoch of hesychast regeneration is marked by Palamas that arrives at Athos to live a life of a hermit. The dispute between him and Barlaam starts in 1330. Barlaam was a monk from Calabria, a product of the first occidental Renaissance of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century. Barlaam

<sup>8</sup> \*\*\*, *FILOCALIA* sau culegere din scrierile Sfinților Părinți care arată cum se poate omul curăți, lumina și desăvârși, Vol. VII, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Române, București, 1977, p. 172

<sup>9</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, *Viața și învățătura Sfântului Grigorie Palama*, Editura Scripta, București, 1993, p. 38

spends some time at Athos and then goes back to Constantinople and launches some accusations against hesychast monks. He was an earthly spirit, mastering a knowledge that based all the issues related to belief on concepts. Palamas responds to these accusations which attracts repartees and so this situation will last a longer period of time. The major purpose of this dispute on the 14<sup>th</sup> century was that the hesychasm was shown and explained to the others so they could grasp its purpose and meaning on a side, while on the other side it made appear an image of the Eastern theological universe which was latent until then.

Barlaam said that love for the true belief was what made him leave Italy and go search for the truth. He criticized Latin theology which he considered to be a Thomist one, disapproving the belief they had that God could be known and also the fact that they were trying to prove that Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son also. What caught his attention in the Eastern Christianity was the apophatism, the fact that knowing God was impossible. Greeks believed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only while Latin believed that Holy Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son, adding later, on the 7<sup>th</sup> century this to the Credo (Filioque). Barlaam tried to know better his new opponents so while he was at Thessaloniki and Constantinople he spent some time at hesychast cloisters where he discovered the psychophysical kind of prayer which was in contrast with his humanist and Platonist formation.<sup>10</sup> Thus, he ended up resembling hesychasm with Messalianism and Bogomilism heresies that were popular at the time. He started to write his opposition towards these heresies and exactly to these writings responded Gregory Palamas with his Triads. He considered that God's essence can be also seen with human eyes and to support this theory the byzantine synods of the 14<sup>th</sup> century ratify the distinction between divine essence and uncreated energies that Palamas proposes. The first official document that was written as a reply to Barlaam's accusations was the Hagioritic Tome which was signed by monks and abbots from St Mt Athos. In this way all the community was taking position towards nominalist humanism of Barlaam. In 1341 two synods took place where Barlaam was convicted so he had to return to Italy.

Barlaam's position had two basic principles and around these the whole controversy took form:

1. The aristotelic postulate according to which any knowledge, including knowledge of God, has as basis perception and experience that comes through the senses.
2. A postulate of neoplatonic provenience based on Christian writers, especially on Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, according to which God is beyond any experience that forms through senses and that's the reason why He cannot be known, He is unknowable. Barlaam said that any knowledge that we can get about God is an indirect one and that even the mystical form of knowledge was in fact a symbolic one.<sup>11</sup>

Palamas didn't consider this way of life as something that was only suited for monks and hermits so he tried to spread the practice of Jesus' Prayer outside the monasteries as well. He truly believed that it was the best way to value baptism. He was also stressing on the difference between divine essence and uncreated energies. To see God face to face didn't mean to be able to see His divine essence. God choosing to reveal himself it's by His own choice and what we

---

<sup>10</sup> He mentions in the 5<sup>th</sup> letter addressed to Ignatius that he was initiated into some monstrous and absurd doctrine of a heretic belief. He said that he was presented a teaching about some amazing separation, union of mind and heart, the connection that demons have with the last, about the differences in between the red lights and the white ones, about what gets in and out through the nostrils during breathing, about the shields that form close to the navel, about getting united with God through the soul. - Cf. John Meyendorff, *Op. Ct.*, p. 70, Apud. „Scrisoarea V către Ignățiu”, ed. G. Schiró, în „Barlaam Calabro”, Epistole Grecești, Palermo, 1954, p. 323 - 324

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 85

get to see and experience is in fact an energy. Palamas mentioned the difference between God's essence and his uncreated energies but he also stated that His unity wasn't threatened because He was fully present in each one of them.

Hesychasts were mentioning the taboric light when they were referring to the divine experience and for them the light they were seeing was the same with the one that the apostles saw on Mt Tabor. The novelty that Palamas brings is exactly the difference between His essence and the uncreated energies through which He communicates and reveals himself. Palamas states that His essence causes the energies and each one of them is a divine property because they're acts of God that is Unique. He replies to Barlaam that this light mentioned by the hesychasts is actually the light of the Transfiguration of Jesus. He argues that on Mt Tabor Jesus wasn't the one that changed and that the actual change happened to the apostles. They got the power to see the light of God in all its splendor. It seems that Adam had the same power before the original sin. This light belongs to the Trinity itself and not only to one of the three persons of it. It's the light of divine nature and it can be seen only with divine benevolence. Once the hesychasts are united with this light, they do know that it's nothing that was created, that it's above everything. But even this term of "union" is improperly used because when it comes to this kind of experience notions as union, seeing, feeling, conscious, understanding or illumination are just fitting the descriptions in some way but they cannot contain it. *"That light is the core, the substance and the beauty of the era that is to come. Is the only true light, eternal, unchanged, through which we become light as well, like sons of the light."*<sup>12</sup> What Barlaam could not understand is that saying something about divinity and seeing it or have it are two separate things. The apophatic theology that he sympathizes it's rational but seeing is above ration. When he didn't like this term of seeing Palamas proposes him a new one that can contain the previous also and that was "understanding". But, for Barlaam the ecstatic experiences are results of fantasies and again Palamas explains how there are differences in between the fantasies that we create and the ones that come from the Holy Spirit. God created world and this creation is an act of free will and not only a natural consequence of divinity. It's the work of a personal God, of the Trinity that holds the free will of its three persons.<sup>13</sup> Being created in the image of God is like a divine seal that is meant to deepen the connection between creature and its creator, a connection that is personal and unique for each human being. Palamas considers that freeing yourself from passions it doesn't consist in "killing" one's passionate part, but to straighten it up towards the good, because thanks to this passionate part we can love God, the one that is close to us and we can also hate and reject evil as well. Gregory considers that the salvation is not only for the soul but for the body too. Barlaam also thinks that the most important knowledge is the one of things and that wisdom comes from sciences and these have the capacity to show us their very first models. For him the Scripture was inferior to science, only able to give symbols of wisdom but not the wisdom itself. Palamas on the other side perceived the study of sciences being an impediment for the soul to gain the true wisdom.<sup>14</sup> Barlaam doesn't admit any other form of knowledge aside from the purely rational one.

<sup>12</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, *Viața și Învățătura Sfântului Grigorie Palama*, Ed. Scripta, București, 1993, p. 58

<sup>13</sup> Vladimir Lossky, *Teologia Mistică a Bisericii de Răsărit*, Ed. Anastasia, București, 1990., p. 124

<sup>14</sup> Gregory Palamas says that the begging is the fear of God from which continuous and painful prayer arises and following His demands. Through these, reconciling with God, fear turns into love, and the pain from the prayer turns into happiness, a flower of illumination rising within us, from which a knowledge of God spreads like scent. The one that is overwhelmed by love for fake wisdom, tortured by theories and the complications of sciences, can never reach the true wisdom. Not even its beginning because their soul is preoccupied with countless reflections. Not even knowing the dogma is not enough without an exemplar christian life. - Cf. Dumitru Stăniloae, *Viața și Învățătura Sfântului Grigorie Palama*, Ed. Scripta, București, 1993, p. 32

The Prayer of the Heart is the kind of prayer that mind does inside of the heart, that has the capacity of cleaning and purifying both thoughts and senses and that channels all the activity of the one that prays towards fulfilling God's wish. This prayer wants to bring the mind into the heart and from there to start the real prayer: "*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*"

Once the dispute starts Palamas makes clear that hesychasts don't see and don't consider that they can see God in His essence. They can only contemplate the uncreated energies that radiate from Him. This distinction wasn't something Palamas came up with. It existed from before in hesychast tradition in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century. What Palamas did was to gather these teachings into a dogma that the Orthodox Church accepted. These energies are available to see just to those that search for them. The only method that Palamas accepts is the Prayer of the Heart considering that this prayer only has the capacity to purify both body and spirit and with God's will the senses of the one that prays are reshaped, regenerated, renewed and in this way is given the access to contemplate the divine light with own senses.

Even though Palamas never talks openly about ecstasy, the method that he proposes has a profound ecstatic character when it comes to the spiritual experience. Even if he might consider that this term is not the right one to express the outcome of Jesus' Prayer, the experiences have a profound ecstatic form. The believer that prays like this has the chance to contemplate the Light of God and His uncreated energies, using both body and soul.

#### **4. The Impact the Palamite Doctrine Had on Eastern Christian Model**

The hesychast dispute was the collision between western scholastic type of thinking and the eastern traditional one, leading to the necessity of the Eastern Orthodox Church to take a position, which turned soon into a doctrine. The eastern mysticism claims a direct knowledge of God by the human being through his own forces. Dumitru Stăniloae says that Palama's doctrine doesn't transform the divinity through ration and reflection into an abstract and absent one. He considers that what the Occident did was to transform even Christ into an impersonal and distant character that only came to do His part and this is the reason why they got buried into so many atheist doctrines and philosophies.

Nowadays is impossible to speak about Orthodoxy without considering the implication that Palama's doctrine had and the way he influenced its future development. In 1351 took place the most important Synod, this occasion being the official way through which the Orthodox Church approved Palama's doctrine by publishing the Synodal Tome. The decisions that were taken during this synod were continuously perfected and straightened thorough all the 14<sup>th</sup> century during future synods. What Palamas could never accept was the fact that Barlaam's naturalism was preventing any opportunity for the Holy Spirit to be involved in getting to know God. Barlaam considered that the body is like a prison for the body, so the idea of one that can receive the grace was absurd. For Palamas this was possible considering the Incarnation of Christ which blessed the bodies of human beings making them worthy of getting the grace in both body and spirit. Actually this was the hottest topic of their whole dispute. The anthropological frame where Palamas inserts the hesychast spirituality is that, from the moment of the Incarnation of Christ, our bodies *become temples of the Holy Spirit that resides within us*.<sup>15</sup> And that's the precise reason for which the man needs to preserve his body and search for the Holy Spirit through the Holy Mysteries. So, God is inside of us and there's where we need

---

<sup>15</sup> I COR 6,19

to go and find the Light from the Mt Tabor. The apostles could only see it from the outside because at that time Jesus didn't die and revive yet. The Christian orthodox mystic knows that, with the Mystery of Baptism and the Eucharist Mystery, he has the chance to get to know the divine and he looks for Him inside his heart. The grace that comes from God it's uncreated same as the light from Mt Tabor. Palamas was the one that planted the fundamentals of Christian Orthodox world. He was the one that got the bases of orthodox dogma of knowing and experiencing God through the Prayer of the Heart. The only point he agreed with Barlaam was the fact that God will always remain impossible to be known in his essence. He could only be known through his uncreated energies.

Even after Constantinople fell hesychasm didn't disappear. Through its simplicity it could influence both clerics and laity. Mt Athos remains the center of spiritual life. For the hesychasts it was obvious that Jesus' Prayer couldn't replace the grace received through the Holy Mysteries. This prayer's only purpose is to help the believer with their search. The permanence of the hesychast tradition, its continuous development inside the Orthodox Church, wouldn't have been possible without the doctrinal and anthropological coherence to which it corresponds. It's actually a model of fidelity towards the only truth of all Christian life and in this way we can speak of Jesus' Prayer as a true manifestation of orthodox spirituality. There are authors believing that because of Palama's victory any possible reform in Orthodoxy became impossible. This victory was the victory of Christian humanism against the pagan one that the Renaissance was proposing.

Yannaras considers that the confrontation between Orthodoxy and Occident is not a matter of abstract theoretical antagonisms, neither a historical dispute between two different institutions and that's why it cannot be solved with brotherly efforts of reconciling the two Christian Churches. He states that the theological differences themselves are not that important, but their immediate consequences on life and historical impact are. Orthodox conscience has to face the challenge of occidental atheism and nihilism that destroyed - literally and not coincidentally - Christianity that turned into a religion of the Occident. The critique applied to religion by Illuminism, Liberalism, Marxism, Freudism, atheistic existentialism, scientific agnosticism seemed to be fundamental and justified historically. Today the impasse of occidental civilization surpassed theoretical borders. It manifests in the agony and absurdity the way everyday life is lived. This civilization of "balancing horror", of rational programs of "general happiness", of toxic waste, of unhealthy consumerism, of enslavement of human existence with totalitarian ideologies ended up threatening life itself at a global level. In this general death, the Church still waits for the Universal resurrection. It's like the "wheat grain" that seems to die in vain into the ground - this is Orthodoxy today.<sup>16</sup> So in the next part I will just name some of the most important differences between the Orthodox and Catholic Church that are present nowadays too.

## **5. Differences between Catholic Church and Orthodox Church Today**

Even if the basis of their belief is same, there are still crucial differences even today that make a reconciliation most likely improbable. And I will name briefly and the most important ones.

a) First of all, the Catholics believe that aside from Heaven and Hell there's the Purgatory where the souls stay for several centuries before going to Heaven. For the Orthodox there is no such thing. In the Gospel of the final judgement there are mentioned just two places: heaven

---

<sup>16</sup> Christos Yannaras, *Abecedar al Credinței*, Editura Bizantină, București, 1996, pp. 200 - 201

and hell. When Christ will come again to make His final judgement he will split people in two: the ones that go His right and the ones that go to His left and so, the ones on the right will be sent to Heaven and the ones from the left, the sinners, will be sent to Hell.

- b) Filioque. Catholics believe that Holy Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son. Orthodox believe that this is a crucial dogmatic mistake because John the Evangelist himself says that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and its send into the world **through** the Son.
- c) Papal supremacy. The Catholics consider the Pope to be the supreme head of the Church, the successor of St Peter. While the Orthodox consider this to be incorrect and mainly see it as a sin of pride.
- d) Papal Infallibility. Catholics consider that the Pope cannot make mistakes as a human being when it comes to faith and when he preaches which is also a new dogmatic idea that the Orthodox Church rejects quite vehemently. As human beings we're all prone to mistakes, perfection belonging only to God.
- e) The Immaculate Conception of Virgin Mary. Catholics believe that she came through the Holy Spirit, but the Orthodox believe that she was born from earthly parents as a fruit of their prayers.
- f) At the blessing of the Holy Gifts Catholics don't have the prayer where the Holy Spirit is invoked like Orthodox. They do believe that those get blessed by themselves when they say the words "Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you."<sup>17</sup>
- g) Catholic priests don't get married which, from Orthodox point of view, goes against Ecumenical Councils that decided for the priests with a parish to have families and set examples.
- h) Papal Indulgences. Orthodox believe that no money can underdo sins and that there's another way to repent for one's sins and in Orthodox Christianity this is an important part of a Christian's life.
- i) Chrismation, known also as Confirmation, the Holy Mystery by which a baptized person is granted the gift of the Holy Spirit through anointing with oil. The Orthodox do it right after baptism, before the first reception of Holy Communion, while Catholics have it reserved to those of the age of reason.

## Conclusion

The ones that study spirituality describe ecstasy as a mystical estate par excellence. Mystics from everywhere agree that ecstasy is a great estate, one in which the soul of the man is united with divinity. The term of ecstasy became synonym with exaltation. Mystical ecstasies are universal and have many things in common regardless the religious background of the ones that get to experience them. Their purpose is to lead the man to a superior place, very different than the normal one, getting to know the divine, discovering the truth and also the true knowledge. All the knowledge got from this type of experience are suddenly give the one experiencing them the feeling of a knowledge that comes from inside which is in fact the only truth. The one that experiences it is brought face to face with the ultimate reality that can be experienced through intuitions and emotions.

The dispute between Barlaam and Palamas was one between different thinking models. Barlaam represent the rational thinking following an intellectualist model, where ration is the one that has the capacity to have an intuition about God. On the other side, Palamas is the one that, even if not contesting the value of ration, when it comes to natural knowledge, he has to admit its limits when it comes to knowing God. Ration is the one that works with objects and

---

<sup>17</sup> I Cor 12:24

all that gets to be known is objectified and represented. Faith on the other side is the one that personifies. Trying to use same “language” that Barlaam uses, Palamas proves that God is person and because of that He is impossible to be known as such. If objects can be known as beings, persons represent something mysterious and they could never get to be known as beings. The only way to know God is through His uncreated energies and by communicating with Him. To know divinity only rationally is impossible. The world is His creation and a place where His energies are emanated.

The knowledge that a man can get is an experimental one and not one based only on ration. When Barlaam denies the possibility of a union with God, Palamas defends it. If he considers that a man can see God only at Universal resurrection, Palamas considers that this kind of knowledge and “seeing” can begin even in this world, when the passions of the soul are transformed and not eliminated. The kind of prayer that he proposes has as purpose the purification of both body and soul and with that the chance of contemplating the uncreated light of God becomes real with the benevolence of the creator. Is not a reward for personal efforts but a gift. Thus, Palamas does not propose a technique that can guarantee and ecstatic kind of experience, but emphasizes the importance that this technique has. It’s about an experience that any believer has the chance to live. As personal as this estate is, the more important is the community to which he belongs because it can offer a landmark, a certitude of the lived experiences.

The echoes of their dispute are still felt today, the orthodox have same highlights that Palamas defended so many centuries ago even though less and less orthodox live the spirituality of their church. Secularization is a general phenomenon that affects even countries that are orthodox. If Occident was allowed to develop freely starting with the second millennium, the Christian Orient was repeatedly pressured by foreign forces or ideologies that prevented any healthy development such as the communist system that managed to destroy most of the souls of the people under its domination. Also, we should keep in mind that the occidental spirit is mainly oriented towards analytical ration and pragmatism while the oriental spirit is mystical, speculative and oriented more towards the other world. *“For here we have no fixed resting-place, but our search is for the one which is to come.”*<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Hebrews 13:14

## References

Afeyev, I. (2010). *Sfântul Simeon Noul teolog și tradiția ortodoxă*, Bucharest: Ed. Sophia

Lossky, V. (1990). *Teologia Mistică a Bisericii de Răsărit*, Bucharest: Ed Anastasia

Meyendorf, J. (1955). *Sfântul Grigorie Palamas și mistica ortodoxă*, Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică

Stăniloae, D. (1993). *Viața și Învățătura Sfântului Grigorie Palama*, Bucharest: Ed Scripta

Yannaras, C. (1996). *Abecedar al Credenței*, Bucharest: Editura Bizantină

**Contact email:** [adriana.vlaicu12@gmail.com](mailto:adriana.vlaicu12@gmail.com)

***The Suga Doctrine:  
Ethical Issues in Contemporary Japanese Foreign and Defence Policy***

Craig Mark, Kyoritsu Women's University, Japan

The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy 2021  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

In 2016, former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared the strategic objective of a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific'. This concept has become standard diplomatic rhetoric shared among Japan's partners in the reinvigorated Quad security partnership, concerned with China's rising hegemonic challenge. Under Abe's successor Yoshihide Suga, the ruling conservative Liberal Democratic Party has continued what some scholars have termed the Abe Doctrine, of more active use of the enlarged Self Defense Forces to support the U.S. alliance, and engage with a wider range of military partners, ranging from the Indo-Pacific region, to Europe. One of the final acts of the Abe cabinet in September 2020 was to consider acquisition of cruise missiles, and development of hypersonic missiles. The new Suga cabinet proceeded towards complementary acquisition of more sea-based anti-ballistic missile systems, and ongoing annual record increases to the defence budget. This paper examines how the Abe Doctrine has continued under the Suga government, and how ethical concerns over Japanese foreign and defence policy are being expressed through controversies raised in domestic Japanese politics. These ethical issues include: constitutional change to allow more active deployment of the Self-Defense Forces, developing a first-strike missile capability; and closer military cooperation with the U.S., Australia and India in the revived Quad, as well as with other regional middle powers. Japan is due to hold a general election by October 2021, so foreign and defence policy may yet have a significant electoral influence.

**Keywords:** Japanese Foreign Policy, Alliance Diplomacy, Public Policy Ethics

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

In September 2020, the longest-serving Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe resigned, claiming illness. His successor, former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, has since carried on the 'Abe Doctrine'. This has transformed Japan's foreign and defence policies over the previous decade, replacing the long-running postwar Yoshida Doctrine, which strictly limited Japan to self-defence within the constraints of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty (Dower, 2000, pp. 395, 552-553). This paper will outline the main features of the Abe Doctrine, and examine how its approaches have been continued by the Suga government, particularly as the United States (U.S.) has made its own domestic political transition from the Trump to the Biden Administration. Ethical challenges presented by the 'Suga Doctrine' will then be critically analysed, concluding with consideration of how the electoral politics of 2021 might influence any policy changes.

### 1. The Abe Doctrine

#### 1.1. Strengthening the SDF

One of the consistent policies of the conservative nationalist Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) government since it returned to office in 2012, led by Prime Minister Abe, is increased defence spending. Under Abe's record eight-year tenure, the budget for the Ministry of Defense rose each fiscal year. This has been one of the core elements of what has been termed the Abe Doctrine, which aims to: 1) increase the capabilities of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF); 2) deepen the military alliance with the U.S.; and 3) increase diplomatic activity in the Indo-Pacific region, as part of a revamped role for Japan in international affairs (Envall, 2020, pp.31-59).

The Ministry of Defense budget grew from ¥4.65 trillion in 2012, to ¥5.07 trillion in 2020, the eighth largest in the world. The expansion of the SDF's arsenal, outlined in the 2019 National Defense Program Guidelines, includes refitting two aircraft carriers to deploy 42 F-35B strike/fighter aircraft, in addition to the 105 F-35As being purchased from the U.S., plus development of a locally-produced stealth fighter (Kelly, 2020a).

The number of submarines will increase to 22, and extra destroyers and frigates will raise the number of capital ships in the Maritime SDF to around 60 by 2024. The 150,000 strong Ground SDF has expanded its amphibious warfare brigade, and sited air defence and anti-ship missile units in the southern islands of Okinawa prefecture. The SDF is acquiring greater cyberwarfare capabilities, and the Air SDF is activating a space-based operations unit, following the example of the U.S. Space Force (IISS, 2020, 279-283). The 2020 Ministry of Defense White Paper stated China's military activities in the East China Sea are a 'grave matter of concern', so deterring the growing capabilities of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) forces remains Japan's main strategic challenge, with Russia and North Korea the other major security threats (MOD, 2020a).

Anxious over any threat to global shipping lanes, which Japan heavily relies upon, the SDF has participated in a multinational antipiracy mission since 2009, operating from Japan's first postwar overseas bases, hosted in Djibouti. In 2019, the Abe cabinet authorized the dispatch of another MSDF vessel and two more ASDF maritime patrol aircraft to the Middle East, in rotating deployments for intelligence gathering missions off the Strait of Hormuz, in response to rising regional tensions between Iran and the U.S. (Asahi Shimbun, 2020).

As one of the final acts of the Abe cabinet, in September 2020 the National Security Council (NSC) raised the acquisition of cruise missiles, and approved research and development of hypersonic missiles. This would give the SDF capacity to carry out pre-emptive strikes against hostile external forces preparing an imminent attack on Japanese territory, implying the missile threats from China, Russia, and North Korea (Kelly & Takenaka, 2020).

## **1.2. The U.S. Alliance and the TSD**

A core aspect of the Abe Doctrine was strengthening the U.S. alliance, primarily through collective self-defence, possibly the most far-reaching legacy of the Abe government. Following the creation of the U.S.-modelled NSC in 2013, the Abe cabinet ignored objections from many legal scholars, and in 2014 reinterpreted force-restricting Article 9 of the constitution, arguing Japan was within its rights under the UN Charter to come to the defence of other countries. Utilising comfortable majorities in both houses of the Diet, the LDP passed legislation in September 2015 which allowed the SDF to participate in collective self-defence, primarily to assist the U.S., but potentially for other favourably-aligned countries, without geographic restriction (Mark, 2016, 101-104, 113).

Collective self-defence was first invoked in 2017, when SDF vessels accompanied U.S. Navy warships on naval patrols and escort missions (Smith, 2019, 161). Along with promised large-scale purchases of U.S. military equipment and weapons systems, this action helped ameliorate the obstreperous impulses of President Donald Trump, who threatened to extort higher costs on Japan for hosting U.S. military bases (Lind, J, 2018, pp.241-242). One of the major diplomatic achievements of Shinzo Abe was thus his ability to flatter Trump, and defuse his long-held suspicions towards Japan (Mark, 2017).

A parallel development was to deepen the ‘quasi-alliance’ with Australia, part of a hedging strategy to balance against the rise of China. This was enabled through Japan joining Australia and the U.S in the Trilateral Security Dialogue (TSD), aimed at improving security policy coordination, including cooperation between intelligence agencies (Samuels, 2019, 199-201). The first TSD meeting between the U.S., Japan and Australia was held in 2002 at the bureaucratic level; the first ministerial meetings were held in 2006. The first informal TSD leaders’ meeting briefly took place at the sidelines of the 2007 Sydney APEC summit, between Prime Ministers Shinzo Abe (just before he resigned a year into his first term, due to illness) and John Howard, and President George W. Bush (Ashizawa, 2010, 100-101).

The TSD oversaw a steady increase in defence cooperation between the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) and the SDF. This formally commenced in 2007 through the bilateral Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (JDSC), and the trilateral Security and Defence Cooperation Forum (SDCF). These agreements authorised unit-level exchanges, ship and aircraft visits, and joint trilateral training with the US military. This commenced in 2008, when the SDF first participated in the ADF’s regular *Kakadu* manoeuvres held in northern Australia (MOFA, 2008).

In 2010 an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) was signed, allowing mutual supply and maintenance of defence equipment. A Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology Agreement was then signed in 2014, and the first formal TSD leaders’ meeting was finally held on the sidelines of the G20 Brisbane Summit in 2014, between Prime Ministers Shinzo Abe and Tony Abbott, and President Barack Obama (Satake, 2017, 3-4).

Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper by then considered Japan a 'Special Strategic Partner' (DFAT, 2017, 40-41). A ministerial-level meeting of the TSD was held in August 2017, followed by a leaders' summit between Prime Ministers Abe and Malcolm Turnbull and President Trump on the sidelines of the Manila ASEAN summit in November (Reuters, 2017). One outcome of Turnbull's visit to Tokyo in January 2018 was to have the Royal Australian Air Force conduct reconnaissance patrols from SDF air bases in Japan, to enforce sanctions against North Korea (Mark, 2018).

### 1.3. Indo-Pacific Diplomacy

During his first term in office, in 2007 Prime Minister Abe proposed extending the TSD into a Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or the 'Quad', by inviting India's participation, invoking the four countries' cooperative response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The MSDF and Royal Australian Navy joined the *Malabar* Exercises in 2007, the manoeuvres held semi-annually between the U.S. and India since 1992. However, Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd withdrew Australia from the Quad in February 2008, not wishing to alienate China (Medcalf, 2008).

The second Abe government from 2012 still determined to increase the tempo of Japan's diplomacy in the region, and Abe went on to become the most-travelled Prime Minister in Japanese history, visiting all the ASEAN states in his first year back in office. Japan became the leading source of foreign investment and Overseas Development Aid (ODA) for ASEAN, which includes support for maritime security training and operations (Mark, 2016, 62-63, 66).

In Nairobi, Kenya for the 2016 Tokyo International Conference on African Development TICAD summit in August, Abe announced the strategic vision of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) (MOFA, 2016). This led to the re-emergence of the Quad, driven by mutual concerns over the growing hegemonic challenge of China. A foreign ministers' meeting of the Quad first took place in New York in September 2019, and again on the sidelines of the 2019 East Asia Summit in Bangkok in November (Panda, 2019).

## 2. The Suga Doctrine

### 2.1. Continued SDF Expansion

One of the first national security decisions of the new Suga cabinet was to explore acquisition of sea-based anti-ballistic missile systems, as the plan for the Aegis Ashore anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system had been abandoned in June 2020, due to domestic opposition. The anticipated sea-based replacement system, based around a larger class of Aegis-equipped destroyer, may blow out to twice the original expected cost of Aegis Ashore, to over US\$4 billion. The deployment of the system is likely to be delayed until 2028, beyond the intended 2025 deadline for Aegis Ashore (Kelly, 2020b).

A Cabinet decision on December 18, 2020 confirmed the reinforcement of ABM defences, which includes upgraded PAC-3 Patriot missile systems. Despite concerns by the LDP's more pacifist-inclined coalition partner Komeito, the Cabinet also approved extension of the range of the SDF's ground-to-ship missiles, to up to 1,000 kilometres (Tsuyoshi, 2020).

The budget for FY2021 passed the Diet in March, with another record deficit of ¥106.61 trillion. This included another record defence budget, of ¥5.34 trillion (Kyodo News, 2021).

¥33.5 billion will be directed towards development of Japanese-manufactured stand-off long range anti-ship missiles, a new class of submarines, and Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capabilities such as the new P-1 patrol aircraft. More minesweepers and amphibious warfare vessels, as well as the continued acquisition of F-35s, and the expansion of the amphibious warfare brigade will also be priorities (MOD, 2020b, 14-25). One assessment now ranks the SDF as the seventh most powerful military force in Asia (Lemahieu and Leng, 2020).

¥240 billion will also be allocated for research and development of hypersonic missile technology; the Ministry of Defense's Acquisition, Technology and Logistics Agency has contracted Mitsubishi Heavy Industries to have hypersonic cruise missile and hypervelocity gliding projectile models ready to enter production and service by 2026 (Yeo et al, 2021).

## **2.2. Closer Bilateral Alliances**

Under the Suga government, Australia has become only the second nation after the U.S. to have SDF protection provisions under the 2015 collective self-defence legislation. Announced during the visit of former Australian Defence Minister Linda Reynolds to Tokyo in October 2020 to meet new Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi, this declaration intensified the Special Strategic Partnership between Australia and Japan (Teramoto, 2020). Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison was the first world leader to call Suga to congratulate him on becoming Prime Minister, followed up the month after in the first official visit by a world leader to meet Suga as Prime Minister in Japan (PMOA, 2020).

This visit finally confirmed a long-negotiated Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA), although the sticking point over ADF personnel being subject to the death penalty if they committed capital crimes in Japan was left unresolved. The RAA nevertheless now allows the ADF to fully utilize bases and facilities in Japan, and the SDF of those in Australia, the only such arrangement Japan now enjoys other than with the U.S. The next stage in the Australian-Japanese security relationship would be a formal military alliance, which China would certainly resent (Mark, 2020).

The primary foreign policy priority of the Suga government remains the U.S. alliance though. Suga was among the first world leaders to hold a call with newly-inaugurated President Joe Biden, which reassured the U.S. commitment to Japanese control of the Senkaku Islands (claimed as the Diaoyu Islands by China), under Article 5 of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty (White House, 2021).

This was reinforced by the first overseas visits of the new Secretaries of State and Defense, Antony Blinken and Lloyd Austin, to Japan and South Korea on March 15-17, for '2+2' summits with their northeast Asian allies. These summits confirmed the renewal of Status of Forces Agreements (SoFA) in both countries, and in Japan, the talks coordinated planning for a joint response by U.S. Indo-Pacific Command forces and the SDF to any Chinese incursions into the Senkakus, and any potential attack by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) against Taiwan (U.S. Department of State, 2021).

A confrontational meeting between chief Chinese and American diplomatic officials, including Secretary Blinken, in Alaska on March 18 further signalled the Biden administration's willingness to confront China. Sanctions were imposed on Chinese officials by the U.S. (but not yet by Japan), over China's genocidal actions in Xinjiang province against its Uighur population, and for crushing democracy in Hong Kong (Qingguo, 2021,

6-7). This diplomatic activity culminated in Prime Minister Suga's visit on April 16 to the U.S., the first foreign leader to be officially hosted by President Biden. Their meeting recommitted the U.S.-Japan alliance as the cornerstone of the FOIP, and referred to Taiwan for the first time in a U.S.-Japan summit since 1969 (NHK, 2021b).

This summit was the fulfilment of the consistent efforts of first the Abe, and then the Suga governments, to secure the U.S. military presence in the region. For several years, Japan has been the highest-spending foreign lobbyist nation in the U.S., followed by South Korea. Japan's recent lobbying efforts have been to encourage the Pentagon to upgrade resources in the Pacific by \$35 billion, via passage of the Indo-Pacific Deterrence Act. As well as encouraging Japanese trade and investment, up to a quarter of Japanese lobbying expenses has gone towards military-related policy (Freeman, 2021).

The PLA Navy has nevertheless continued to assert its presence, with more frequent and larger-scale naval exercises and cruises, including regular deployment of its aircraft carriers closer to Okinawa (Lendon, 2021). While Japanese Ministry of Defense officials are concerned about China's new assertive Coast Guard law, negotiations with their counterparts are ongoing to establish a hotline between the SDF and PLA, to prevent territorial incidents escalating into hostilities (NHK, 2021a).

Japan's strategic difficulty is maintaining smooth relations with China, its largest trading partner, as the Sino-American relationship has become ever frostier (Medcalf, 2020, pp.153-155). This was managed fairly successfully under the Abe government, backed by major factions in the LDP (such as the one led by LDP Secretary-General and powerbroker Toshihiro Nikai), and its coalition partner the Komeito party, which stress the mutual benefits of trade with China; this has largely continued under Suga (Chan, 2021). Upon his return from Washington D.C., Suga was pressed during Diet questions that there was no explicit commitment for the SDF to defend Taiwan (Smith, 2021). It was revealed though that scenarios for the SDF to assist the U.S. in case of a Chinese attack are being explored (Kyodo News, 2021b).

More hawkish LDP members such as Defense Minister Kishi, who strongly back Taiwan, and favour balancing with ASEAN, India and Australia, are pushing a tougher line, with concerns over China reiterated in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' 2021 Diplomatic Bluebook (Qi and Xiaojing, 2021). A panel of LDP Diet members has proposed revising the Japanese Coast Guard Law and the Police Duties Execution Act, to allow greater action by the Japan Coast Guard (JCG) to deal with grey zone scenarios; other LDP politicians and the JCG itself maintain current laws already allow the JCG to respond with force against illegal landings on Japanese islands, with backup from the SDF if required (AMTI, 2021).

### **2.3. The Deeper Quad**

In August 2020, former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun opined the Quad could become a 'mini-NATO' in Asia. Pressed for a reaction, incoming Prime Minister Suga denied this was a path Japan intended to follow. Beijing still reacted angrily, claiming the Quad aimed to contain China (Jaipragas and Sukumaran, 2020). As mutual concern about China escalated into 2020, the second foreign ministers' meeting of the Quad was held in Tokyo on October 6. While there was no direct reference to China, all four countries reaffirmed a mutual commitment to the FOIP; this term is now utilized as standard diplomatic

rhetoric by Quad members, but denounced by China as propaganda to justify U.S.-dominated hegemony (Madan, 2020).

Australia then resumed participation in the November 2020 Malabar naval exercises, ending a 13-year hiatus. This finally brought the Quad back into a cooperative military arrangement, if not yet a joint military alliance (Greene, Dziedzic, and Oaten, 2020). The first leaders' summit of the Quad, held online on March 12, 2021, again did not directly mention China, but it was clearly the implied target, as all leaders committed to upholding the FOIP's 'rules-based maritime order in the East and South China Seas' (PMOJ&C, 2021).

The Suga government is therefore continuing the policies of the Abe government to encourage the Quad, and build security ties with ASEAN and Europe. Suga's first official overseas trips as Prime Minister to Vietnam (as was Abe's in 2013), and then Indonesia, was largely to counter rising Chinese hegemony, even though this was never overtly stated (MOFA, 2020). '2+2' security meetings have now been held with Germany, adding to those already conducted with the UK and France (Yamaguchi, 2021). There is also now a push for Japan to join the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing agreement between the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Mark, 2021b).

### **3. Ethical Concerns over the Suga Doctrine**

#### **3.1. Pushing Constitutional Limits**

Chief among the ethical worries about the direction of Japanese security policy is whether the planned acquisition of new weapons systems exceeds the legal restraints of self-defence, imposed by Article 9 of the constitution. Development of long-range cruise missiles, and hypersonic missiles would potentially empower the SDF with an offensive strike capacity for the first time. While a deterrence capacity can be justified as defensive, such weapons can also be unleashed beyond self-defence. Adaptation of the *Izumo*-class carriers to operate F-35B fighter aircraft provides greater air defence capability for the MSDF, but could also conduct offensive airstrike operations (Iida, 2021, pp.12-15).

Shinzo Abe had favoured altering Article 9 to formally mention the SDF, in what would have been the first ever change to the constitution. However, despite having the window of a two-thirds majority in both Houses of the Diet from 2017 to 2019, which could have allowed the passage of bills for a constitutional referendum, Abe squandered this opportunity. His government was consumed instead with economic issues, such as raising the consumption tax, nepotism scandals, and other foreign policy challenges, especially handling relations with the frequently erratic Trump administration (Mark, 2019a).

Abe was also likely deterred by realizing changing Article 9 does not enjoy the widespread public support needed to pass any referendum with a simple majority (Kingston, 2019, p.78). A member of the ultranationalist lobby group *Nippon Kaigi*, as is Abe and most other LDP Diet members, Suga is similarly in favour of constitutional change. This is a long-held ambition of the LDP, which desires numerous liberty-eroding amendments in its preferred draft to the constitution (Boonen and Herber, 2020, pp.10, 15).

However, given the persistently poor approval ratings of the Suga cabinet, which has mishandled the ongoing pandemic with a range of largely reactive and indecisive public health measures, and a series of corruption and influence-peddling scandals, it is unlikely that

Suga, or any successive LDP leaders will dare to attempt constitutional ‘reform’ in the near future (Siripala, 2021). The long-held opposition by the LDP’s coalition partner Komeito to altering Article 9 will also continue to be an important constraint (Neary, 2019, p.180).

### **3.2. Overriding Concerns of Local Communities**

Symbolic of the burden long endured by Okinawa, which has the majority of U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ), is the relocation of the main USFJ air base from Futenma to Henoko. The national government in Tokyo has determined it will go ahead, despite the opposition of local communities, and the Okinawan prefectural government (Dudden, 2019, pp.178-181). The estimated cost of the project has nearly tripled to ¥930 billion, and the completion date extended from 2022 into the 2030s. Concerns about soil instability, in addition to the political controversy, have increased doubts that the relocation will ever be completed (Kuniyoshi, 2021).

There are also concerns over the risk of accidents from U.S. military helicopter flights even in central Tokyo (Oba and Uchihashi, 2021). However, the proposed Aegis Ashore ABM system was abandoned after protests by local communities in Akita and Yamaguchi prefectures over safety concerns, which were ineptly handled by government officials. This shows democratic action can lead to policy change, and greater actual security for ordinary people (Unbehauen and Decker, 2020, pp.103-105).

### **3.3. Escalating the Regional Arms Race**

Global military spending reached US\$1917 billion in 2019, and for the first time, two Asian countries were in the top five spending states. China (\$261 billion) and India (\$71 billion) were the second and third largest spenders, after the U.S., followed by Russia and Saudi Arabia. Japan (\$47.6 billion) and South Korea (\$43.9 billion) were the next largest spenders in Asia, where military budgets have increased every year since 1989. Japan’s arms imports have increased by 124% over the past five years (SIPRI, 2020, 240).

To forestall this escalation, a Conventional Forces in Asia (CFA) treaty is sorely required, with particular emphasis on limiting the development of cruise and hypersonic missiles, the weapons likely to initiate a future war in the Indo-Pacific (Reddie, 2020). At present, there seems to be little interest among the region’s leaders, including those of the Japanese government, for any diplomatic effort towards even beginning to seriously discuss arms control. A multilateral CFA treaty could curtail the wasteful and dangerous arms race, and be the badly needed diplomatic circuit breaker that reduces regional tensions (Gatopolous, 2020).

Suga is thus continuing Abe’s strategy to encourage maintenance of American hegemony in the Pacific, through utilizing its regional alliance structure, of which the dominant U.S. military presence in Japan, South Korea, and increasingly Australia is key (Brenes and Steinmetz-Jenkins, 2021). Towards this end, the Suga government also continues to refuse to sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, citing its reliance on the nuclear deterrent of its US ally, despite objections from disarmament groups and the aging *hibakusha* survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings (ICAN, 2021).

The hazards of pursuing this policy were reflected in the annual East Asia Strategic Review of the Japanese Ministry of Defense think tank, the National Institute for Defense Studies. It

paid particular attention to a declaration in February 2021 by the PLA's Coast Guard, that it reserves the right to use force against foreign vessels making unauthorized incursions in China's claimed territorial waters, which includes the Senkakus/Diaoyus. The report alarmingly claimed a 'new Cold War' is already under way between the U.S. and China (Kyodo News, 2021a).

### 3.4. Risk of Middle East Conflict Escalation

The decision by the Suga cabinet to renew SDF deployment to the Middle East, again without referring to a vote in the Diet, shows an ongoing tendency to evade parliamentary accountability. It also displays a lack of regard for the popular sentiment against placing the SDF at risk, in an unstable region. This remains a consistent danger, given the first airstrikes by the Biden administration against Iranian-backed militias in Syria (Barnes-Dacey and Geranmayeh, 2021), and naval incidents in the Persian Gulf (Mitchell, 2021).

Also of concern are ambitions to promote the Japanese arms export industry (Sakaki and Maslow, 2020). Potential clients being sought for Japanese-manufactured weapons systems include Saudi Arabia and the Emirates, despite the role of their military forces in perpetuating the humanitarian disaster of the war in neighbouring Yemen, which has led to arms embargoes by European countries (Lamont, 2020).

### 3.5. Deeper Ties with Human Rights Violators

Showing how the democratic ideals of the FOIP are readily compromised by *realpolitik*, the Japanese government continues to develop security ties with Indo-Pacific countries that have poor human rights records (Kersten, 2021). Japan has increased its maritime security training with both Vietnam and the Philippines, supplying weapons systems such as coast guard vessels (Jain, 2020). This is despite Vietnam remaining a Communist dictatorship (U.S. Department of State, 2020), and widespread extrajudicial killings perpetrated by the government of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte (Al Jazeera, 2021). Japan also retains close relations with Thailand, despite the ongoing suppression by its military junta of the student-led democracy movement (Strangio, 2021).

While the Chief of the SDF joined 11 other allied Defence Chiefs to condemn the recent military coup in Myanmar, and the mass killing of democracy protesters, the response of the Suga government has otherwise been muted (Gibbons, 2021). Beverages conglomerate Kirin, and other Japanese companies have sought to divest themselves from the military regime. However, a consortium of construction and property management companies and banks, led by the government-owned Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment (JOIN) firm, and the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation are still investing in a major hotel and office construction project owned by the Myanmar military, in development since 2017. As well as large amounts of ODA, Japan is the fifth-largest foreign investment source for Myanmar, investing over \$1.4 billion since 2016 (Park and Geddie, 2021).

As the relationship of the Quad intensifies, there has been little consideration of the implications of closer security ties with India, such as the ACSA signed in September 2020 (Laskar, 2020). The deterioration of civil rights under the autocratic direction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist government, including citizenship laws that erode the rights of Muslims (Human Rights Watch, 2021), and violent policing of mass protests by farmers against agricultural deregulation, are of recent concern (Vanaik, 2021).

This is in addition to the geopolitical hazards if the Quad develops into an enmeshed military alliance involving the Indian Defence Forces (IDF); long-running counterinsurgency operations are still conducted against separatists in Kashmir, and the Maoist 'Naxalite' rebel movement (Ganguly, 2021). The IDF also confronts the perennial nuclear standoff against neighbouring Pakistan, and has had recent violent border clashes with China (Tarapore, 2020).

A cross-party group of Diet members is nevertheless seeking to make human rights a priority for Japanese foreign policy. They are lobbying for a bill similar to the U.S. Magnitsky Act, which would allow easier imposition of sanctions against individuals and organizations in oppressive countries, with China a desired target. This is not favoured by the Suga cabinet though, reflecting the contradictions within the government over its China policy, so any such legislation is unlikely to be passed for the time being (Sato and Nikaido, 2021). Instead, the Diet has approved Japan's entry into the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, centred around China (NHK, 2021c)

#### **4. The 2021 Election – Possible Policy Change?**

Suga faces an LDP leadership election in September, and the Diet's lower house election must be conducted by October 2021. The upcoming election is likely to be dominated by the government's lacklustre response to the coronavirus, worsening inequality in the sluggish post-pandemic economic recovery, climate change and nuclear safety, and the dubious legacy of the Tokyo Olympics (Mark, 2021a).

Foreign policy is unlikely to be a major focus, unless the opposition parties can promote distinctive policies. When the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) was in government, in its previous manifestation as the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the U.S. alliance was also the core of its foreign policy, despite disputes over the development of the Henoko base in Okinawa, which contributed to the downfall of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama in 2010 (Hook, 2012, p.150).

In reparation for the 2021 election, the CDP has released a revamped policy platform, hoping to avoid the severe election defeat suffered by the DPJ in 2017. Based on issues such as raising economic support for the middle class, promoting gender equality, including for the monarchy, phasing out nuclear power, and transitioning to a zero-emissions economy, it also pledges to repeal the 'unconstitutional part' of the 2015 security laws, and review the 2013 Designated State Secrets Law. The relocation of the Henoko base in Okinawa would be cancelled, and the SOFA renegotiated, while maintaining the deterrence of the US alliance. The JCG would be strengthened, to deal with 'grey zone situations', uphold the rule of international law, and oppose changing the status quo through use of force. The CDP will also work towards global nuclear disarmament (CDP, 2021).

It remains to be seen whether the CDP, currently led by Yukio Edano, can successfully market this new platform to sufficiently appeal to the electorate, and win government.

Any future CDP government is unlikely to reverse the main emphasis of Japanese foreign and defence policy, so any changes are likely to be marginal. A CDP government may at least be more cautious about the deployment of offensive weapons, and sending the SDF overseas. Since the LDP, with Komeito and aligned independents, has a comfortable majority of 311 out of 465 in the lower House of Representatives the Diet, it remains a daunting challenge for

the CDP to win power. The LDP enjoys the benefits of incumbency, a gerrymandered electoral system, and a largely submissive media (Kingston, 2019, pp.150, 174). However, if the opposition can significantly erode this majority, as occurred in the 2019 Upper House election, an electoral rebuke may at least caution the next LDP government against any tendency towards militaristic adventurism (Mark, 2019b).

## **Conclusion**

The foreign and defence policies of any Japanese government are unlikely to depart far from the current path of increased military spending, a reinvigorated U.S. alliance, and closer military ties with the other middle powers of the region. This direction also brings along the potential ethical risks inherent in pursuing these policies, particularly in a time of worsening geopolitical and geoeconomic rivalry. Along with its Quad partners, Japan faces a classic security dilemma with neighbouring Russia, North Korea, and especially China, where any country increasing its military strength engenders an adverse reaction from the others.

## References

- Al Jazeera* (2021). ‘Appalled’: UN urges probe into killing of Philippine activists’, March 10.
- Asahi Shimbun*. (2020). Diet must keep vigilant watch on SDF operations in the Middle East. February 7.
- Ashizawa, K. (2010). Australia-Japan-U.S. trilateral strategic dialogue and the ARF: Extended bilateralism or a new minilateral option. In J. Haacke and N. M. Morada (eds.), *Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific: The ASEAN Regional Forum*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI). (2021). Force Majeure: China’s Coast Guard Law in Context. Washington D.C.: Center For Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), March 30.
- Barnes-Dacey, J., and Geranmayeh, E. (2021). Force of habit: Why the US risks being sucked into a military showdown with Iran. Berlin: European Council on Foreign Relations, March 10.
- Boonen, M.C.H., and Herber, E.D. (2020). Japan’s Constitutional Conundrums: A topical review of Japanese Constitutional Revision. Leiden: LeidenAsiaCentre.
- Brenes, M., and Steinmetz-Jenkins, D. (2021). Legacies of Cold War Liberalism. *Dissent*, Winter 2021.
- Chan, M. (2021). Japan feels diplomatic squeeze as US-China tensions rise. *South China Morning Post*, April 7.
- Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) (2021). About: Basic policies. Tokyo: The Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan. March 30.  
<https://cdp-japan.jp/about/basic-policies>
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). (2017). 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper: Opportunity, Security, Strength. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.  
<https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/2017-foreign-policy-white-paper.pdf>.
- Dower, J. (2000). *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Dudden, A. (2019). Okinawa today: spotlight on Henoko. In J. Kingston (ed.), *Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Envall, H.D.P. (2020). The ‘Abe Doctrine’: Japan’s new regional realism. *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, Vol.20, No.1.
- Freeman, B. (2021). From K Street with love: The Biden Cabinet’s first trip abroad. *Responsible Statecraft*, March 24.
- Ganguly, S. (2021). India Embattled. *Foreign Policy*, April 16.

- Gatopolous, A. (2020). The Asia-Pacific arms race has taken an ominous turn. *Aljazeera*, July 11.
- Gibbons, S. (2021). Japan's Weak Response to Myanmar Coup. *Shingetsu News Agency*, March 24.
- Greene, A., Dziedzic, S., and Oaten, J. (2020). Australia to rejoin 'quad' naval exercises in move certain to infuriate Beijing. *ABC News*, October 20.
- Hook, G.D., Gilson, J., Hughes, C.W., and Dobson, H. (2012). *Japan's International Relations: Politics, economics and security*, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Human Rights Watch (2021). India: Government Policies, Actions Target Minorities. *Human Rights Watch Report*, New York, Human Rights Watch, February 19.
- Iida, M. (2021). China's Security Threats and Japan's Responses. *Strategic Japan 2021: The Future of Japan-China Relations*, Strategic Japan Working Papers 2021, Washington D.C: Center for Strategic & International Studies.
- International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). (2021). Banning Nuclear Weapons | How is your country doing? | Asia | Japan. Geneva: ICAN. <https://www.icanw.org/japan>.
- International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). (2020). *The Military Balance*, London: Routledge.
- Jain, P. (2020). Japan's weapon-export industry takes its first steps. *East Asia Forum*, October 30.
- Jaipragas, B., and Sukumaran, T. (2020). 'Indo-Pacific Nato': China's Wang Yi slams US-led 'Quad' as underlying security risk at Malaysia meeting. *South China Morning Post*, October 13.
- Kelly, C. (2021). What a 'kinetic war' over Taiwan with an increasingly aggressive China could look like. *The New Daily*, April 17.
- Kelly, T. (2020a). Japan's military asks new government to continue strengthening of armed forces. *Reuters*, September 30.
- Kelly, T. (2020b). Japan's plan to build missile defence system at sea faces mounting Costs. *Reuters*, October 22.
- Kelly, T., & Takenaka, K. (2020). Abe plan for land-attack counterpunch could mark major military shift for Japan. *Reuters*, September 11.
- Kersten, R. (2021). Response to Rory Medcalf's "Balancing Act". *Australian Foreign Affairs*, No.11, February.
- Kingston, J. (2019). *Japan*, Cambridge: Polity.

- Kyodo News*. (2021a). Japan's Diet enacts record 106.61 tril. yen budget for FY 2021. March 26.
- Kyodo News*. (2021b). Japan gov't studies SDF response in event of Taiwan Strait conflict. April 24.
- Kuniyoshi, M. (2021). Henoko project 'unlikely' to be completed, says U.S. think Tank. *The Asahi Shimbun*, April 4.
- Lamont, C. (2020). Japan's Evolving Ties With the Middle East. New York: Asia Society Policy Institute, July 28.
- Laksar, R.H. (2020). India, Japan sign key pact for reciprocal provision of supplies, services between defence forces. *Hindustan Times*, September 10.
- Lemahieu, H., and Leng, A. (2020). Lowy Institute Asia Power Index. Sydney: Lowy Institute. <https://power.lowyinstitute.org/>.
- Lendon, B. (2021). China flanks Taiwan with military exercises in air and sea. *CNN*, April 8.
- Lind, J. (2018). The Art of the Bluff: The US-Japan Alliance Under the Trump Administration. In R. Jervis et al (eds.), *Chaos in the Liberal Order: The Trump Presidency and International Politics in the Twenty-First Century*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Madan, T. (2020). Order from chaos: What you need to know about the "Quad", in charts. Washington D.C: The Brookings Institution, October 5. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/10/05/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-quad-in-charts/>.
- Mark, C. (2016). *The Abe Restoration: Contemporary Japanese Politics and Reformation*, Lanham, MD: Lexington.
- Mark, C. (2017). Has Abe got Trump's measure? Gold diplomacy puts Japan back on the green. *The Conversation*, February 14.
- Mark, C. (2018). Turnbull's Tokyo visit draws Australia and Japan's defence forces closer. *The Conversation*, January 19.
- Mark, C. (2019b). What's at stake in Japan's 2019 upper house election. *South China Morning Post*, July 19.
- Mark, C. (2019a). Abe is Japan's longest-serving PM. Is that the extent of his legacy? *South China Morning Post*, November 20.
- Mark, C. (2020). Morrison's Japan trip yields defence pact, but travel bubble less certain. *The Conversation*, November 18.
- Mark, C. (2021a). Japan is facing a fourth COVID wave and sluggish vaccine rollout. Will it be ready for the Olympics? *ABC News*, April 16.

- Mark. C. (2021b). From Five Eyes to Six? Japan's push to join the West's intelligence alliance. *The Conversation*, April 22.
- Masuda, T. (2020). Japan approves new missile policy. *NHK World*, December 22.
- Medcalf, R. (2008). Mysterious quad more phantom than menace. *ABC News*, April 9.
- Medcalf, R. (2020). *Indo-Pacific Empire; China, Amercia and the Contest for the World's Pivotal Region*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Mitchell, E. (2021). US Navy fired warning shots at Iranian vessles Monday evening. *The Hill*, April 27.
- Ministry of Defense. (MOD). (2020a). 2020 Defense of Japan, Tokyo: Japan Ministry of Defense, March.
- Ministry of Defense (MOD). (2020b). Defense Programs and Budget of Japan: Overview of FY2021 Budget Request, Tokyo: Japan Ministry of Defense, September.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). (2008). Japan-Australia Joint Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultations: Joint Statement 2008. Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, December 18.  
<https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/australia/2plus2joint08.html>.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). (2016). Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Opening Session of the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI). Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, August 17.  
[https://www.mofa.go.jp/afr/af2/page4e\\_000496.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/afr/af2/page4e_000496.html).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). (2020). Prime Minister Suga Visits Viet Nam and Indonesia (October 18-20, 2020). Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, October 20. [https://www.mofa.go.jp/a\\_o/na1/page3e\\_001069.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/na1/page3e_001069.html).
- Neary, I. (2019). *The State and Politics in Japan*. Cambridge: Polity.
- NHK. (2021a). Japan conveys concern over China's coast guard law. *NHK World*, March 30.
- NHK. (2021b). Suga, Biden speak after Japan-US summit. *NHK World*, April 17.
- NHK. (2021c). Japan's Diet approves RCEP. *NHK World*, April 28.
- Oba, H., and Uchihashi, T. (2021). US Navy helicopters conducting dangerous training at low altitudes over central Tokyo. *The Mainichi*, March 5.
- Panda, A. (2019). US, India, Australia, Japan 'Quad' Holds Senior Officials Meeting in Bangkok. *The Diplomat*, November 5.
- Park, J., and Geddie, J. (2021). Japan state-funded hotel deal pays rent to Myanmar defence ministry. *Reuters*, March 24.

- Prime Minister of Australia (PMOA). (2020). Japan-Australia Leaders' Meeting Joint Statement, November 17. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia.  
<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/japan-australia-leaders-meeting-joint-statement>.
- Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet (PMOJ&C). (2021). Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: "The Spirit of the Quad". Tokyo: Cabinet Public Relations Office.  
[https://japan.kantei.go.jp/content/pdf/210312joint\\_statement\\_e.pdf](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/content/pdf/210312joint_statement_e.pdf).
- Qi, W., and Xiaojing, X. (2021). Japan's diplomatic bluebook mentions China 273 times as it plays up 'China threat' theory, but leaves room for 'two-pronged' strategy. *Global Times*, April 27.
- Qingguo, J. (2021). Malign or Benign: China-US strategic competition. *East Asia Forum Quarterly*, Vol.13, No.1, January-March.
- Reddie, A.W. 2020. Hypersonic missiles: Why the new "arms race" is going nowhere Fast. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, January 13.
- Reuters. (2017). Trump meets Japan, Australia leaders over trade, North Korea threat. November 13.
- Sakaki, A., and Maslow, S. (2020). Japan's new arms export policies: strategic aspirations and domestic constraints. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*. Vol. 74. No.6.
- Samuels, R. J. (2019). *Special Duty: A History of the Japanese Intelligence Community*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Satake, T. (2017). US-centred triangles: US-Japan-Australia. 11<sup>th</sup> Berlin Conference on Asian Security (BCAS), *Triangular formations in Asia: Genesis, strategies, value added and limitations*. Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Affairs, September 7-8.
- Sato, T, and Nikaido, Y. (2021). Lawmakers eye law to punish violators of human rights. *The Asahi Shimbun*, February 8.
- Siripala, T. (2021). Japan's Prime Minister Hit With Nepotism Scandal. *The Diplomat*, March 21.
- Smith, S.A. (2019). *Japan Rearmed: The Politics of Military Power*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Smith, S.A. (2021). Much Ado About Taiwan. *Asia Unbound*, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, April 21.
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). (2020). *SIPRI Yearbook 2020: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Strangio, S. (2021). Amid Legal Crackdown, Thai Protest Movement Gains Momentum. *The Diplomat*, March 25.

- Tarapore, A. (2020). The Army in Indian Military Strategy: Rethink Doctrine or Risk Irrelevance. New Delhi: Carnegie India, August 10.
- Teramoto, D. (2020). Japan agrees to protect warships, military assets of Australian Forces. *The Asahi Shimbun*, October 20.
- Unbehauen, M., and Decker, C. (2020). Japan Cancels Aegis Ashore. *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, Winter.
- U.S. Department of State. (2020). 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Vietnam. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Washington D.C.: United States Government.  
<https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/vietnam/>.
- U.S. Department of State. (2021). Secretary Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, and Japanese Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi at a Joint Press Availability. Iikura Guest House, Tokyo, March 16.  
<https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-austin-japanese-foreign-minister-toshimitsu-motegi-and-japanese-defense-minister-nobuo-kishi-at-a-joint-press-availability/>.
- Vanaik, A. (2021). Farmers Are Leading India's Biggest Social Movement in a Generation. *Jacobin*, April 17.
- White House. (2021). Readout of President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. Call with Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga of Japan. Washington D.C.: United States Government, January 27.  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/01/27/readout-of-president-joseph-r-biden-jr-call-with-prime-minister-yoshihide-suga-of-japan/>.
- Yamaguchi, M. (2021). Japan, Germany hold 1<sup>st</sup> security talk to deter China. *Associated Press*, April 13.
- Yeo, M., Pittaway, N., Ansari, U., Raghuvanshi, V., and Martin, C. (2021). Hypersonic and directed-energy weapons: Who has them, and who's winning the race in the Asia-Pacific? *DefenseNews*, March 15.



***Co-evolution of Human Society and Nature through the Noosphere Concept***

Naira Danielyan, National Research University of Electronic Technology, Russia

The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy 2021  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The article makes an analysis of the noosphere concept as a way to sustainable development of our planet. It suggests considering the epoch of noosphere as the period when the human mind will be able to define the terms necessary for nature and society co-evolution while forming a collective will of the mankind. It analyzes three main problems having appeared owing to the latest development of the anthropogenic civilization: 1) surviving in terms of continuing perfection of weapon of mass destruction; 2) raising the ecological crisis worldwide and its deepening because of the global financial downturn; 3) keeping a personal individuality as a biological and social structure while strengthening comprehensive processes of alienation. The ideas of such Russian cosmists as Feodorov, Tsiolkovsky, and Vernadsky are considered in the context of undesirable and destructive consequences of human activity. These philosophers trusted in human mind, humanism of scientific activity, triumph of good and beauty. Some of their ideas were great predictions. Vernadsky understood the concept of noosphere as a symbol of faith, an ideal of human sensible intervention into biosphere processes under the influence of scientific and technological achievements. The article gives proofs that overcoming the global ecological crisis is closely connected with the following components of noosphere: joining efforts of all the mankind without any exceptions, adopting new values of national and interpersonal cooperation, improving relationships among the nations, developing science and culture, changing the governmental and individual approaches to the usage of natural resources, spreading new principles of noosphere education.

Keywords: Biosphere, Noosphere, Russian Cosmism, Co-Evolution, Human Society, Technological Development, Ecological Crisis

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

What is human purpose of life? What do we seek cognizing nature and ourselves? These timeless questions of human being have become especially topical due to the fast development of technological thought. Biogeochemist and philosopher, Russian academician V.I. Vernadsky wrote at the beginning of the XXth century: “Soon man will produce the atomic energy. This source of power will allow him to handle his life as he likes... Will he be able to use this power positively or will he destroy himself by means of it? Has he gained the ability to use the power that the science should provide him inevitably?” [Vernadsky 1977, p. 32] So, *ecology* - such a popular and fast developing science concerning interaction of man and nature - appeared from this concern. Nowadays ecology is directed to the regulation of relationships between man’s scientific and technical thoughts and preserving the nature surrounding him, but also safeguarding the biosphere.

According to Vernadsky, *biosphere* is a whole system possessing the highest level of self-organization and the ability to evolve. He introduces it as a special geological body, which structure and functions can be defined by some special features of Earth and space. Considering biosphere as a self-reproducing system, Vernadsky stresses that its functioning is mainly stipulated by “a living substance existing inside it as a set of living organisms” [Vernadsky 1977, p. 14]. A special feature of biosphere as a living organism is its orderliness.

Biosphere as a natural system should have a dynamic equilibrium to support its existence. But it is a special type of equilibrium due to the process of regular development of biosphere under the influence of inner relations among its structural components and increasing impact of anthropogenic factors.

## Body

### Noosphere Concept

Vernadsky pointed out that it was possible to observe the intensive growth of influence of the civilized humanity on biosphere changes. Biosphere turns into a new state – *noosphere* – under the influence of scientific thought and human labor [Vernadsky 1944, p. 117]. According to him, life should be considered as an integral evolution process which is included as a special component into space evolution.

Vernadsky’s ideas have been developed in some directions. First of all, it’s necessary to mention the concept of co-evolution (i.e. joint development) of mankind and biosphere. This concept is related to a possibility of regulation of scientific and technical development inside the civilizational processes. Any event in the world may be represented as a regular selection when only some classes and types of conditions are chosen from a number of possibilities.

The noosphere epoch is a period of time in the history of mankind when the human mind will be able to define the terms which are required to provide the co-evolution of nature and human society. This period will provide the formation of collective will of humanity to develop noosphere genesis processes.

Modern Russian scientists (e.g., N.N. Moiseev [Moiseev 2001], A.D. Ursul [Ursul 1998], V.A. Lektorsky [Lektorsky 2012]) consider noosphere as the highest point of biosphere evolution which is connected with the appearance and development of mankind in it.

Mankind studying laws of nature and improving technologies exerts some crucial influence on natural and space processes. Thus, having appeared on the Earth, noosphere has a tendency to its regular expansion becoming a special structural space element. Nowadays the scientific activity has gained such features as a fast rate, coverage of vast territories, depth of research, intensity of the performed transformations. They permit to foresee the scientific motion with the scope that hasn't existed in biosphere yet.

Having appeared on the Earth, noosphere has a tendency to its regular expansion, becoming a special structural space element. Nowadays, the scientific activities have gained such features as a fast rate, coverage of vast territories, depth of research, intensity of the performed transformations. They permit to foresee the scientific motion with the scope that hasn't existed in biosphere yet.

### **Russian Cosmism and the Idea of Co-evolution**

Let's consider some influential ideas of such Russian cosmists like N.F. Fedorov [Fedorov 1982], P.A. Florensky [Florensky 1990], K.E. Tsiolkovsky [Tsiolkovsky 2001]. It's very difficult to give an exact definition to this direction in Russian philosophical thought as there are different directions in it, which are united by the idea of integral vision of the world like an organism with interconnected and mutually influencing parts. All cosmists had a common opinion on the following items:

1. Man is internally connected with space and nature. This connection is organic.
2. Mankind is united as a planetary community.
3. It is necessary to state a new human attitude to nature based on the unity of consciousness and action (inner and outer aspects). This attitude can't stay meditative as with time man understands not only his deep dependence on space, but he influences it more and more. Such his invasion requires an integral vision of the world.
4. The result of the above is the idea of co-evolution which is so popular nowadays. Rational nature regulation, joint and coordinated transformation of nature and mankind by people suppose a human refusal from anthropocentrism for the sake of 'antropocosmism'. Its ideas together with cultural centrism, i.e. the priority of cultural and spiritual values over material ones, and the idea of general unity of mankind and space should become factors of a routine consciousness in the near future. Thus, according to cosmists, cooperation of man and nature should become the basis of the society in ecological and social aspects, i.e. their co-evolution will take place.

It means the appearance of a universal human being capable to evolve together with nature without doing any harm to it. This approach considers man as a collaborator with nature who has a patient and responsible attitude to his surroundings.

Russian cosmists believe all parts of our life are interconnected, but spiritual and moral guidelines are the only true way in it. They consider a man formed due to the rapid development of new technologies as a creative and free personality, responsible for the whole Universe. It is the creative work that opens the limitless human nature.

It is also necessary to point out the importance of conciliarism, general unity, God-manhood, developed in works of Russian philosophers. They suggest the idea that mankind is united and its future is connected with overcoming its isolation and autonomy. They considered a man as a "world personality", appearing as a result of free dialogue of the international culture and possessing some universal moral ideas. These thoughts are becoming especially

topical nowadays from the position of the latest technological achievements due to their influence on the future of our civilizations.

### **Technological Progress and Global Challenges**

The interaction of the modern human society and nature is determined mainly by man's non-biological needs. His technical power has reached the level which might be compared with biosphere processes. For instance, the mining machinery moves to the Earth surface more soil annually than all rivers worldwide move soil into seas as a result of water erosion. Human activity changes the Earth climate, influences the composition of atmosphere and the World Ocean. Modern economic activity of the mankind undermines nature's reproductive powers. We can observe more and more cases of irretrievable losses of some life forms, worsening the ecologic situation on our planet.

We should stress here that under appropriate public conditions the technology can serve as a basis of humanization of man's technical activity, usage of modern science intensive technologies as a means of rehabilitation and preservation of natural environment and man's release from routine and uncreative jobs. Fast development of information technologies has provided unprecedented opportunities to improve everyone's intellectual potential and creative abilities.

In connection with the above, the choice of further technological development acquires a special meaning for mankind nowadays.

Among numerous global challenges we can mark out three main problems having appeared owing to the latest development of the anthropogenic civilization and threatening the existence of mankind:

- 1) surviving in terms of continuing perfection of weapon of mass destruction. As we know, in the nuclear age the problem of mass mortality has become an especially actual one for humanity, and this sad result is a "side effect" of scientific and technical progress that discovers new and new possibilities to design and perfect defense technologies;
- 2) raising the ecological crisis worldwide and its deepening because of the global financial downturn. Two aspects of human existence, as a part of nature and as an active creature transforming nature, come into a conflict. The previous paradigm considering nature as a limitless storage of resources for human activity turned out to be wrong. Man was formed inside biosphere which can't be introduced as the environment or as a field for man's transforming activity, but as a single organism including mankind like a specific subsystem. Human activity brings regular changes into biosphere dynamics. At the current stage of the anthropogenic civilization development the scope of man's nature expansion begins to destruct biosphere as a whole eco-system.

Threatening ecological catastrophe demonstrates the necessity of working out new strategies of scientific, technical and social development for the mankind. These strategies should provide the co-evolution of man and nature;

- 3) keeping a personal individuality as a biological and social structure while strengthening comprehensive processes of alienation. Man, sophisticating his world, calls such powers into being which he isn't able to control and which become alien to his nature. The more he transforms the world, the more he generates the unforeseen social factors. They start forming new structures which drastically change the human life and apparently worsen it. Fast development of the anthropogenic civilization makes the problem of forming and socializing

a personality rather complex. Human relations turn out to be sporadic. On the one hand, they tie all individuals, but, on the other hand, they isolate and atomize people.

The above concepts reflect some real contradictions between a man and the society and between modern technical and technological means. Current technologies require extremely responsible attitude to them and conscious discipline from their designers, producers and users.

## **Conclusion**

Making a conclusion, it is necessary to point out that the issue of creating noosphere is extremely vital. Its decision is connected with the unification of efforts by all the mankind without any exceptions, the introduction of new values for cooperation and establishing relationships among different nations worldwide. Democracy, culture preservation and recovery, development of science and public life, responsible attitude to nature management, deciding military conflicts and threats peacefully, spreading new principles of noosphere education can be considered as the main components of noosphere.

While developing technologies, man is becoming more and more technologically sophisticated. However, he doesn't stop to be sensible. He himself, his body and mind turn into integral parts of complex eco-systems, socio-cultural and socio-technical systems. Thus, the process of creating noosphere is very gradual and we might never be able to call a year or even a decade when it is supposed to be completed. The information society which the developed world is living in nowadays should be considered as the first step on the way to the noosphere society.

V.I. Vernadsky, noting undesirable and destructive consequences of human activity on the Earth, believed them to be some side effects. He trusted in the human mind, humanism of scientific activity, triumph of good and beauty. Some of his ideas were great predictions, but some of them were real mistakes. But undoubtedly, noosphere should be understood as a symbol of faith, as an ideal of human sensible intervention into biosphere processes under the influence of scientific and technological achievements.

## References

Feodorov N.F. (1982) *Works*. Moscow: Thought.

Florensky P. A. (1990) *At Watershed of Thought: Volume 2*. Moscow: Pravda.

Lektorsky V.A. (2012) *Philosophy, Cognition, Culture*. Moscow: Canon+, ROOI Rehabilitation.

Moiseev N.N. (2001) *Universum. Information. Society*. Moscow: Stable World.

Tsiolkovsky K.E. (2001) *Space Philosophy*. Moscow: Editorial URSS, 2001.

Ursul A.D. (1998) *Russia's Transition to Stable Development. Noosphere Strategy*. Moscow: Noosphere.

Vernadsky V.I. (1977) *Naturalist's Thoughts. Scientific Thought as Planetary Phenomenon*. Moscow: Science.

Vernadsky V.I. (1944) Some Words about Noosphere. *Successes of Modern Biology, Volume XVIII, Issue 2, 113-120*.

**Contact email:** vend22@yandex.ru

## ***Philosophy of India - Dravidology***

H.V.Visweswaran, Independent Scholar, India

The Asian Conference on Ethics, Religion & Philosophy 2021  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

This article traces the roots of Indian Philosophy from ancient Peninsular India. So far it is the Sanskrit literature, which described Indian Thought, is being discussed. We attempt here that the roots of Indian thought are in ancient Tamil works. This actually is an introduction to the influence of various Tamil works which deal with materialism. Vedas, purusha suktha. Buddha, Sankhya. (எண்ணியம்- e\_nN-nNi\_yam), Upanishads, gita, and thirukkural. This is a survey article. Readers are encouraged to read books dealing with these topics. Among these Sankhya is the oldest.

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

This paper does not discuss any particular topic elaborately. Instead we discuss many related topics, which were hitherto not discussed in the way we discuss here. In that sense this paper is a survey article on the Philosophy of India.

So far the Indian Philosophy, also referred to as INDOLOGY, concentrated on Sanskrit literature with mostly religious in contents. Here, we discuss topics which originated from Tamilnadu, Land of Tamil people, which are materialistic in approach. In the initial stages materialism was known. Spiritualism was unknown. Man learnt from nature.

Spiritualism started with yajurveda, dealing with mantras and rituals.

Coming to the TAMIL LAND we make the following observations: Thousands of years back in writing an introductory remark for the Tamil classic, a first grammar of Tamil, Tholkappiyam, Panamparanar, a scholar wrote:

"வடவேங்கடம் முதல் தென்குமரிஆயிடைத் தமிழ்கூறு நல்லுலகத்து. "

It means, " the land bounded in the north by the Vindhya to the land south of kanyakumari, the Peninsular India, spoke the language of Tamil."

The recent excavations in Keezhadi, near Madurai, Tamil Nadu, confirms the existence of fully developed writing system for Tamil language in the 6th century BCE. Based on these facts, we discuss the writings of Tamil scholars, in a chronological order. We don't discuss the dates of the works we deal with in the coming pages. Their relative chronology will suffice to our needs.

We start our discussion with a now lost, book enN\_nNiyam (எண்ணியம்), also known as Sankhya philosophy, known as Sankhya karika by Iswara krishna, in Sanskrit. Sankhya doctrine was earlier to Gotama Buddha. We outline how Gotama Buddha's teachings rely on Sankhya. Next to Buddha we consider the Upanishads, and show how it relies on Sankhya doctrine. Next we take Bhagavad-Gita which is called an epitome of Upanishads.

Finally, we conclude with a discussion on THIRUKKURAL, a Tamil classic. A recognised recent Tamil scholar, Bharatidasan, has asserted that THIRUKKURAL is a work based on enN\_nNiyam, (எண்ணியம்) aka Sankhya. We discuss thirukkural and compare it with Bhagavad-Gita.

As all topics are linked to எண்ணியம், we call this discussion as Dravidology.

**Sankhya** [எண்ணியம் aka Sankhya karika. (Colebrooke)]

THE VERY FIRST VERSE of Sankhya karika outlines the scope of the work.

"The inquiry is into the means of precluding the three sorts of pain; for pain is embarrassment: (nor is the inquiry superfluous because obvious means of alleviation exist,) for absolute and final relief is not thereby accomplished." Sutra 01.

This is expressed in thirukkural verse.

இலக்கம் உடம்பு இடும்பைக்கு என்ற கலக்கத்தைக்  
 ஸொள்ளாதாம் மேல். 627

The learned people will not get disturbed by the fact that this life is but a target of pain and sorrow.

The view expressed in the portion of the verse in paranthesis is not found in the thirukkural, quoted here. This part of the verse will lead to vedic view of moksha.

"Nature, the root (of all), is no production. Seven principles, the Great or intellectual one etc., are productions and productive. Sixteen are productions (unproductive). [Soul is neither production nor pro-ductive.]" Sutra 03.

In this Sutra the author of Karika introduces the idea of a soul. It is supposed to be eternal, as per Vedas. It will attain moksha at some stage when all the pains of life ceases. Tamil thinking does not believe in moksha. A study of thirukkural will explain this conclusion. But Tamil classics treats the Soul as just 'uyir (உயிர்), the life-force, which has a beginning and an end.

Human activities can be explained with the help of just 24 basic principles of nature. Nature is the basis of the universe. It is not created by anything.

"Nature, the root (of all), is no production. Seven principles, the Great or intellectual one etc., are productions and productive. Sixteen are productions

(unproductive)."

sutra 3

We make further observations on எண்ணியம் as we discuss thirukkural later, in this essay.

## Caravaka

"In Indian philosophy the name 'Caravaka' means a materialist. The caravakas hold that perception is the only valid source of knowledge. They point out that all non- perceptual or indirect source of knowledge, like inference, the testimony of other persons, etc., are unreliable and often prove misleading. We should not, therefore, believe in anything except what is immediately known through perception."

## Buddhism

We quote below the teachings of Gotama Buddha from the Book: [What Buddha taught by Rahula Walpola].

"What we call life, as we have so often repeated, is the combination of the Five Aggregates, a combination of physical and mental energies. These are constantly changing; they do not remain the same for two consecutive moments. Every moment they are born and they die. 'When the Aggregates arise, decay and die, O bhikkhu, every moment you are born, decay and die.' Thus, even now during this life time, every moment we are born and die, but we continue. If we can understand that in this life we can continue without a permanent, unchanging substance (see Thirukkural verse 340) like Self or Soul, why can't we understand

that those forces themselves can continue without a Self or a Soul behind them after the non functioning of the body?" page 33

"When this physical body is no more capable of functioning, energies do not die with it, but continue to take some other shape or form, which we call another life. In a child all the physical, mental and intellectual faculties are tender and weak but they have within them the potentiality of producing a full grown man. Physical and mental energies which constitute the so called being have within themselves the power to take a new form, and grow gradually and gather force to the full.

As there is no permanent, unchanging substance, nothing passes from one moment to the next. So quite obviously, nothing permanent or unchanging can pass or transmigrate from one life to the next. It is a series that continues unbroken, but changes every moment. The series is, really speaking, nothing but movement. It is like a flame that burns through the night: it is not the same flame nor is it another. A child grows up to be a man of sixty. Certainly the man of sixty is not the same as the child of sixty years ago, nor is he another person. Similarly, a person who dies here and is reborn elsewhere is neither the same person, nor another (na ca so na ca anno). It is the continuity of the same series." PAGE 34.

ALL the above ideas stem from the basic principles of எண்ணியம், aka Sankhya. The preachings of Buddha awakened the people. They started to think about the efficacy of the Vedic rituals. They understood the rituals were just a way of stealing their money and materials. They stopped going to the Bhramins for sponsoring rituals and get the blessings of the Gods. Bhramins lost their livelihood.

### **Plight of Bhramins**

WE GIVE quotes from the Book by RICHARD GARBE.

"I cannot regard it as my task here to give a complete list of the Brahmins sins; I intended only to cite enough to leave no doubt in the mind of the reader of these pages regarding the way in which the Indian priest scared for the happiness of their people." garbe page 68

Bhramma as god of creations. The creation was divisive. The human kind was divided into four divisions. They are brahmins, Kshatriyas, vaishya, shudra and the panchamas, who do not deserve to be classified. (Purusha suktha). Brahmins were the only class to be educated. They lived on performing rituals for others to ward off evil. They got paid, in money or in kind like food grains etc.

"And yet this is not the climax of priestly greed, which to use a fitting expression of Professor Webers indulges in veritable orgies in these texts. When one has worked his way through the endless description of a ceremony one may read at the close the remark that the whole sacrifice is of no avail unless the fee is paid to the satisfaction of the priests. And "lest perchance to use a modern phrase the price be forced down by competition, the market beared, it was a rule that no one might accept a fee refused by another. &quot; (Weber, p.54.)" Garbe. Page 61

" while the non-Aryan, subjected aborigines, known as Sudras, or servants, without civil or religious rights, had to fulfil the divine purpose by serving the Aryan castes, especially the

Brahmans. " The sudra is the servant of the others, and may be cast out and killed at pleasure "; that is the humane view applied by the Brahmans to the native population."...garbe page 63

In course of time, these rituals were found to be ineffective.

At that time Buddha came. He preached against the unknown gods and the rituals for such Gods. People responded in large numbers that Bhramins lost their livelihood.

Buddha was a king. The alternative thinking, alternate to vedas, was with the kings.

The Bhramins surrendered to the kings. They discussed and learned with them.

### **The Upanishads, Surrender of Bhramins**

Having lost their livelihood, as outlined above, the Bhramins tried to present an alternate Philosophy so that they can gain the lost popularity and the respect of the masses. That is the starting point of the Upanishads.

S. Radhakrinan, renowned Indian Philosopher has this to say about Vedic philosophy and the commentators of the Philosophy.: The Upanisads, though in one sense a continuation of the Vedic religion, are in another sense a strong philosophical protest against the religion of the Brahmanas.

Brahadaranyaka Upanishad, the oldest of the Upanishads, starts with the comparison of the sacrificial horse to that of nature.

The Brihadaranyaka, for instance, is composed of three divisions, each of which is concluded, as if it were a complete whole, by vamsa or genealogy of the doctrine (that is, a list of teachers through whom the doctrine was taught had originally been received from Brahma and handed down to the time of writing).

The first section, entitled 'The Honey Section,' contains a dialogue between Vajnavalkya and Maitreyi which is almost verbally repeated in the second section, called 'The Yajnavalkya Section. ' It seems quite evident that these two pieces could not have been parts of one continuous writing, but that they were parts of those sparate works which were mechanically united and then connected with the third section, whose title, 'Supplementary Section' is in accord with the heterogeneous nature of its contents,..... Page 7 Hume

Then they started discussing water, earth, fire, mind etc.

At the end of the first chapter we see them saying:

" 1.6.3. Now of works, that which is called the Body (atman) is their hymn of praise (uktha), for from it arise(ut-tha) all actions. It is their Saman (chant), for it is the same (sama) as all works. It is their prayer (brahman), for it supports all works. "

They have to accept the word Soul stands for body.

They continue the discussion in the second chapter.

Not getting a wholesome picture they go to the king Ajathasatru.

".....Gargya became silent.

2.1.14. Ajatasatru said: "is that all?"

Gargya said: 'That is all.'

'Ajatasatru said: 'With that much [only] it is not known.

'Gargya said: 'Let me come to you as a pupil'

2.1.15. Ajatasatru said: 'Verily, it is contrary to the course of things that a Brahman should come to a Kshatriya, thinking "He will tell me Brahma" However, I shall cause you to know him clearly."

2.3.1. There are, assuredly, two forms of Brahma: the formed (murta) and the formless

"With truly startling frankness the Brahmans put forth their claims in these works. Innumerable passages to begin with the most important feature they proclaim themselves to be gods walking the earth in bodily form 'There are two sorts of gods'; they say 'the real gods and the learned Brahmans who repeat the Veda; ' the Brahman represents all the divinities, 'indeed' he is the god of gods' probably a unique case of its kind where clerical presumption has gone to the point of making such claims Garbe Page 59.

After this we can no longer feel surprised that the Brahmans, as terrestrial gods, fancied themselves elevated far above royalty and nobility; but it might well seem surprising that kings and warriors yielded to the Brahmans the first rank in the State." Garbe Page 59

With this last statement, the discussion is closed and they declared that it is the Upanishad arrived at after discussion by more than 50 generations of teachers, GuruParampara.

Subsequently not satisfied with the development of ideas they started again.

In the later portions we find that they dominated the kings and reestablished their supremacy.

4.2.4. But the Soul (Atman) is not this, it is not that (neti, neti). It is unseizable, for it cannot be seized. It is indestructible, for it cannot be destroyed. It is unattached, for it does not attach itself. It is unbound. It does not tremble. It is not injured. Page 125

Verily, Janaka, you have reached fearlessness' Thus spake Yajnavalkya.

4.2.4. Janaka, [king] of Videha, said: 'May fearlessness come unto you, noble Sir, you who make us to know fearlessness. Adoration to you! Here are the Videhas, here am I [as your servants].'

Then during Sankara's period they killed buddhists. Bhramins infiltrated into Buddhism and converted Buddha as the 10th incarnation of Vishnu.

## **Bhagavad-Gita Inspired by Thirukkural**

Bhagavad-Gita is supposed to be an epitome of Upanishads.

The concept of metempsychosis is given in Bhagvadgita for the first time.

"It is noteworthy that in the Rig-Veda there is no trace of metempsychosis. This fact is interestingly confirmed in the Upanishad at Chand.5.3, where neither Svetaketu (who, according to Chand.6.1.2, had spent twelve years in studying the Vedas) nor his father and instructor, Gautama, had heard of the doctrine; and when they are instructed in it 'it is expressly stated that the doctrine had always belonged to the Kshatriyas, the military class,' and was then for the first time divulged to one of the Brahman class.... Page 54. " Hume

In the book BRAHMINISM AND HINDUISM this view is expressed. Sir Monier Moier-Williams: "The doctrine of metempsychosis or transmigration of souls, which became an essential characteristic of Brahmanism and Hinduism in later times, is scarcely hinted at in the religion of the Veda....15"

Without the doctrine of metempsychosis, there is no concept of Moksha. Without Moksha the individual is born again in a good or bad family, depending upon the past karma. All the sufferings of this life is due to past sins of the previous births. So the priest gives him protection from the sufferings. This gives the priest a regular income. This view was rejected by Buddha.

Bhagvadgita resolve the problem of individuals, by introducing metempsychosis. Atman is replica of Bhramman. It is tainted by the sins of the individual, in whose body it resides, in his lifetime. Based upon the quantum of sins the Atman takes a rebirth. This cycle of births will end when Atman is free of sins, when it merges with the Lord, the super Soul. This is Moksha.

This revival of Bhramin superiority defeats Buddhism totally. Sankara was instrumental in the revival. He caused the massacre of Buddhists and changed Buddhism as a branch of Hinduism/ Brahminism. Bhramins infiltrated into Buddhist religion and destroyed the teachings of Gotama Buddha. They wrote a different Book on Buddhism making Buddha a God, tenth incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

Thus Bhagvadgita resurrected the priestly rituals. With the kings accepting the Bhramins, the masses followed. The hold of the Bhramin priests continues even today. Having said that the Bhavadgita restored the Brahmin's power in the society, let us look at the way the ideas of Bhavadgita developed.

Every new idea develops from an existing concepts. Such concepts are mutilated to convey the new idea. The attempt to revive BHRAMINISM met with a partial success with the development of Upanishads. The kings were subjugated. That was made possible by mutilating the ideas of எண்ணியம் aka Sankhya.

Now such an inspiration came from THIRUKKURAL in developing Bhagavadgita. We discuss it presently.

Thirukkural uses the word 'ulahu = உலகு' in many verses. The meaning of the word is, the world, the society. World also denotes the nature surrounding us.

The meeting point of Thirukkural and Bhavadgita is chapter 11, Viswarupa darsn of Bhavadgita. The real image of The lord: only very few persons had the privilege of seeing his real image. Such an image is now shown to Arjuna, as he is dearest to the Lord. In that image Arjuna saw the whole world. All living beings, past and present. In short, the Lord stood there as a personification of Nature and its creations. This effectively means that praying the Lord is just accepting and nurturing environment and nature.

The Lord gives the option of praying either of his manifestations.

One, the Lord God, the unmanifested.

Two, the Nature as manifested by the Lord. A view expressed in எண்ணியம் aka Sankhya.

The unmanifested Lord is the unknowable Brahman.

This type of worship will empower the Bhramins.

Worshipping the manifested Lord, The Nature surrounding and supporting us, will not be beneficial to Bhramins. They cannot spin Puranas (myths), Ithikasas (epics), and perpetuate their dominance in the society.

Sankara called the manifested Lord as Maya, illusion. It will not lead to the salvation of the devotees.

This way of development of Bhraminical thought stems from the influence of both எண்ணியம் aka Sankhya and Thirukkural. Also the influence of THIRUKKURAL is also found in the development.

For demonstrating the influence, we take two THIRUKKURAL verses. We explain how these verses are mutilated and given as Verse in Bhavadgita.

470. எள்ளாத எண்ணிைச் செயல் வேண்டும் தம்மோடு  
ொள்ளாது உலகு.

Let a man reflect, and do things which bring no reproach; the world will not approve, with him, of things, which do not become of his position to adopt Lazarus.

World is the Manifested-Brahman. So in the above verse 470, replace the word "world" with the Lord God.

Man must do things which bring no reproach from Lord God. If this rule is broken the Lord God will interfere. The lord God will not approve of him who acts against the wishes of God. They will be annihilated.

This view is expressed in the following 2 verses in Bhavadgita.

Gita verses:

[4.7]. Whenever there is a decline of righteousness, O Arjuna, and rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest Myself!

COMMENTARY: That which elevates a man and helps him to reach the goal of life and attain knowledge is Dharma (righteousness); that which drags him into worldliness is unrighteousness. That which helps a man to attain liberation is Dharma; that which makes him irreligious is Adharma or unrighteousness.

[4.8]. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of righteousness, I am born in every age.

[4.9.] He who thus knows in true light My divine birth and action, after having abandoned the body is not born again; he comes to Me, O Arjuna!

உலகத்தோடு ஒட்ட ஒழுகல் பலகற்றும்  
கல்லார் அறிவிலா தார்..... 140

Those who know not how to act agreeably to the world, though they have learnt many things, are still ignorant.

3.30. Renouncing all actions in Me, with the mind centred in the Self, free from hope and egoism, and from (mental) fever, do thou fight.

3.31. Those men who constantly practise this teaching of Mine with faith and without cavilling, they too are freed from actions.

3.32. But those who carp at My teaching and do not practise it, deluded in all knowledge and devoid of discrimination.

Thirukkural is based on எண்ணியம் aka Sankhya, a materialistic Philosophy.  
It does not accept that the God has created life.

The view of Thirukkural is given in the following verse:

80. அனபின் வழியது உயிர்நிலை அஃதிலார்க்கு  
ஔர்த்த உடம்பு.

அனபின் வழியில் இயங்கும் உடம்பே உயிர் நின்ற உடம்பாகும்; அன்பு இல்லாதவர்க்கு ஔர்த்த வெற்றுடம்பே ஆகும்.

That body alone which is inspired with love, contains a living soul; if devoid of it, (the body) is bone overlaid with skin... Lazarus.

This verse explains how a life formed. It is love between a man and woman, whose love make each other unite. Not every man unites with every woman. If there is no emotional feeling of love, then they will not sexually unite.

So love is the basis of the start of life.

Next, Man discharges millions of sperms floating.

Only one of them unite with the egg in the womb.

The egg allows that sperm to unite because it carries the emotion of love with it.

The uniting sperm also has that emotion. The rest of the sperms do not carry the love of the man.

Thus a foetus is formed.

Now the foetus contain the egg, sperm and the sense/emotion of love.

As the foetus grows into a child, life, the feelings of love also grow.

Thus the sense, emotion of love, is congenital.

As the child grows into an adult, due different social impacts, family circumstances the benevolence/love evolve differently with different people.

Life is not a God's creation.

A commentary on THIRUKKURAL is given in my book.

Philosophy of peninsular India. - Kindle Edition.

### **Sanskrit Is It Indian?**

When the Aryans entered India, they talked Persian. We give below the origin of the word 'Brahman' From Griswald:

### **Griswald BRAHMAN**

For we must bear in mind that the Vedic gods are rarely if ever thought of quite apart from the natural forces and phenomena of which they are in most cases mere personifications.....  
Page

It will, of course, be possible to deal only with the main out-lines of the doctrine of Brahman. For, as Professor Flint truly says, to explain in detail the how and why of the development of the doctrine of Brahman would be to write the longest chapter in the history of Hindu civilization  
Page iv

Another equation suggested by Dr. Haug in 1868, and lately championed by Wackernagel is that Brahman=Baresman, the bunch of sacred twigs used in the Zend ritual. If this be correct, then the root represented by brah is barh {brh}= Zend barz, from which baresman (=bares-fman) is derived. Before this can be accepted, the change from bark-to brah-must be explained.

We may take it as fairly well settled, then, that brahman is the same word etymologically, both as regards root and suffix, as the Zend baresman? page 11

From the above quote we find that for such a central idea as ' Brahman' they derived it from 'baresmen'. So they brought Sanskrit with them cannot be true. To say that they developed their vedic hymns, mantras in Sanskrit must be taken with a pinch of salt. At the best they might have learnt the local language, Prakrit,/ Pali mixed it with Persian.

The history of Sanskrit makes less sense the less we understand its relationship to local forms of culture and power. So the Vernacular evolution in the second millennium South Asia makes less sense the less we understand the shaping role played by Sanskrit Pollock page ix.

## Conclusion

- 1) Having established that Sankhya is a book of Tamil principles, we link the the first 3 slokas of Karika to a verse of Thirukkural. This way we propose that Thirukkural verses explain Sankhya slokas.
- 2) Gotama Buddha starts his teachings with five aggregates. This is a Sankhya thinking.
- 3) The teachings of Buddha destroyed the livelihood of Bhramins. They surrendered to the kings.
- 4) The concept of Upanishads, vedanta , takes shape. Upanishads start with the elements of nature, a Sankhya concept.
- 5) Bhramins not satisfied with the initial arguments of the vedhas, they digress and developed the idea of Bhraman, good and bad deeds of men. Thus they introduced the unending cycle of birth and death as explained in Upanishads.
- 6) Bhagavad-Gita settles the unending cycle of birth and death, by introducing atman, sins of individuals attach with the atman that determine the nature of next birth and moksha, the final release.
- 7) We find parallels with Gita slokas and Thirukkural verses.

Thirukkural influence Bhagavad-Gita.

Thus oldest principles of Sankhya explains every stage of Indian thinking, culminating in Bhagavad-Gita.

In both Sankhya and Gita we show the influence of Thirukkural. Thirukkural is a book which substantiate the Indian Philosophy.

## References

Colebrooke, Henry Thomas: The Sankhya karika

GARBE ,RICHARD: The Philosophy of Ancient India

Griswald: Brahman: A Study in the History of Inndian Philosophy

Hume, Robert ernest: Thirteen principal Upanishada

Lazarus: The Kural of Thiruvalluvar Tr.

Monier Moier-Williams: hinduim bhraminism

Pollock, Sheldon: The language of Gods in the world of Men

Radhakrishnan and Charles Moore: A Source book in Indian Philosophy

Rahula Walpola: What Buddha taught

Sivananda, Swami: Bhagavad Gita

Visweswaran: Philosophy of Peninsular India, Thirukkural Aram Kindle and print version available from Amazon

## Additional References

Bronkhorst, Johannes: How the Brahmins won: From Alexander to the Guptas

Chattopadhyaya, Debiprasd : Lokayata, A study in Indian materialism

Deussen, Paul, Dr.: Outlines of Indian Philosophy.

Goreh, Nehemiah...: Rational reutation of the hindu philosophical systems. Tr. Hall Fitz-Edward

Gough, Edward: The philosophy of Upanishads

jonathan dickstein : Richard Garbe and Sāṃkhya

Lodge, Oliver, sir: The Immortality of the soul.

Schopenhauer, Arthur: Two essays.

The above books can be downloaded from [www.archieve.org](http://www.archieve.org)

கணியன் பாலன் மூலச் சிறப்புடைய தமிழ்ச் சிந்தனை மரபு தமிழினி பதிப்பகம், சென்னை.







©The International Academic Forum 2021  
The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)  
Sakae 1-16-26-201  
Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi  
Japan 460-0008  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)