

經限制即難逃落於一邊之見、自我迷宮的絕路；而組織所生的權力無疑會腐蝕人類的心靈。甚且說這種控制信仰的宗教組織僅會以一己之見促成更大的分立與敵對，這如何能給此一分裂的世界帶來新的希望呢？吾人所迫切需要的乃是喚醒沉睡中的心靈，因為具有清淨無染的心靈才是實現吾人一切努力的最佳保證。然而哲學只能提示中觀思想在新世界文化中所扮演的角色，至於更進一步指出如何付諸實行，應該讓諸宗教的改革者。

最後著者提出一項建議，用以結束本文：由於吾人過分關心人類的未來，則可能高估學術界與理論的解析在重建世界文化中所應有的功能。事實上，歷史並不單是由一羣學者與思想家的心血結晶所組成的，人生舞台何其大，又何其複雜，書本實在無法提出完全解決世界之病的方案，因為人類這次所患的病不但沉重而且相當普遍；唯有像佛陀與耶穌基督這種偉大的心靈才能洞悉其中的癥結。不過話又說回來，就是僅在理論上瞭解中觀思想，吾人還是可以肯定它對重建世界所能提供的貢獻。

(全文完)



善」。僅靠信仰與世俗的權威絕對無法產生所謂的善，因為如果僅以此二者來指導吾人的心靈，將會導致悲慘的後果與使吾人成為偽君子。我們必須瞭解：全體之利益必然是個人之利益，而這是不容有絲毫自我的。

就此點而言，中觀思想與吠檀多對建立一新的世界文化將有莫大的價值。亦唯有絕對主義才能結合一切，同時又容許異己的存在。容許異己存在與寬闊的氣象正是此二種思想的共同特色；此二者亦皆堅持「真實」乃是具有普遍性而非「只此一家，別無分號」的獨斷心態。但是吠檀多乃是以印度古來的吠陀為依歸，則它只能在既定的範圍裏發展，而無法超越此一限度。中觀則不然，由於中觀本身所具備的批判性，使它成為一種動態的思想，只要經過合理的批判，則任何系統的思想都可與中觀同時並存，相互融攝。在中國（包括西藏、蒙古），日本皆可看到這種注入中觀思想而再生的宗教、社會結構，而這正是菩薩之大悲與空慧的具體表現。

東西方的思想家愈來愈感受到那日漸迫近的今日世界危機，並且試圖找尋新的出路以挽救人類於滅亡之途。問題並不在於資本主義與共產主義之爭，而是在如何結合世界人類的心靈，共同戮力於建立美麗的新世間。宗派式的宗教已經沒有存在的價值，因為宗派式的宗教必然以教條來限制人類的心靈，以組織來控制人類的信仰。而心靈一

很早就有人說過，解決之道乃在於合理的管理人類的資源與種種發明，而且要平等的重組吾人的社會結構，以便公平的分享有限的資源與人類努力的成果。法西斯主義與共產主義便是根據此種看法而提出的具體方案，不過此二種主義皆試圖以物質為唯一的價值，來開展一有利於人類的文明。

法西斯主義與共產主義或許能暫時的解決某些問題，但他們却無法提出究竟的解答。何以故？因為他們的思想根據——物質為唯一的價值根本是錯誤的。如果物質是善的，那麼吾人擁有最多的物質，是否就意味著最大的善。如果是肯定的，則吾人便可能不擇手段以獲取更多的物質，如此則善惡是非、公正卑鄙的分別即不再有何意義，因為此時衡量道德的標準已經讓諸擁有物質多寡來判定了。而要怎樣才能滿足那無底深淵般的佔有慾呢？當然，在以唯物為主的社會裏，可以用相互牽制與權力制衡的方法來防止佔有慾的擴張，但是如何防止統治階級的營私圖利呢？輿論或許能產生一些牽制作用，但是一個老謀深算、城府深沉的統治者即可很輕易的舞弊，把反對的力量消解無形；到了最後，統治階級即可不受任何外力的牽制而可為所欲為。尅實的說，統治者應該不受佔有慾的驅使，且僅能擁有少數的私產，這就好像柏拉圖在「共和國」所說的「治國階級」所應有的修養一樣。

由上所述，增加生產與重組社會並不就必然能導出「

一直是有心之士所引以為憂的。中古世紀的世界雖三分為西方的基督教、中東的回教與東方及遠東的印度教（包括佛教），可是彼此之間那種四海之內皆兄弟的情懷與心靈的溝通，無疑使這些各別存在的世界和諧存在。可是在西方從文藝復興以後，基督教失去了固有的影響力，而環視今日的情況，基督教又無法再度結合西方的人心。東方的情況也好不到那裏，雖然沒有西方的惡劣，但是以往結合人心的精神力量，已經不再為人所重視了。

由於自然科學不斷的進展，與科學新知的運用，世界人類可說已經是結合為一體；地理、物理的界限早已被打破，真可謂「天涯若比鄰」、「四海一家」，但不幸的是人類的對立與差異却日益加深，鬥爭與痛苦普遍的存在每一角落，今日世界所缺乏的便是善意與心靈的合一。

當然，我們都很清楚這種「窘境」的成因。自從文藝復興以後，西方所發展出來的文明竟成為世界文明的規範，不幸的是，它所追求的是唯物主義的路線。「現代歐美很成功的控制了以物性為基礎的世界，可是却無法控制以靈性為基礎的世界」這種看法似已成通說。人類可說是幾乎征服了自然，可是却無法控制自己的心靈，其結果自是一連串的不幸。現代人就好像一部大機器中的小齒輪一樣，千篇一律的不斷運轉着，看起來雖然是相當的穩定、安全，但人畢竟不是齒輪，科學萬能的神話，終究會被拆穿的。人類得到世界却失去心靈，這是多麼的得不償失啊！

III 中觀思想作為世界文化基礎的價值

如實的說，中觀思想並不是一種學院式的思想，幾世紀以來，它深深的影響着印度的哲學與宗教及許多亞洲的思想。中觀是世界上第一個建立的「絕對主義」，而這應該歸功於中觀辯證法之運用。中觀思想流行以後，佛教思想為之一變，不管是形上學、倫理學或宗教思想都受到中觀的影響，「空」、大悲與「如來三身」後來成為大乘佛法的根本要義，而非佛教系統的思想，大多巧妙的借用中觀或唯識思想。絕對主義乃是印度文明最特出的一面，在這種思想裏，萬物合一與打消一切以自我為中心的一邊見乃是兩個主旋律，譜成了一闕令人嘆為觀止的生之組曲。空之概念運用於人類日常生活最大的效用就是統合一穩定現今的社會結構，這即是讓空的精神充滿於人類的每一角落——文學、美術、社會科學、宗教與哲學。事實上，幾世紀以來，印度、中國、日本、西藏及亞洲許多地區所發展出來的高度文明，都曾受中觀思想的影響。

中觀既有如此輝煌的過去，那對人類的將來更應該發揮它導引人類的使命。尤其是今天，許多的衝突及窮兵黷武的野心分子所鼓吹的戰爭意識型態，更加深了此一世界的分裂，吾人更應該強調結合全世界人類的心靈。中古世紀人類確曾享受過從未有的和平與穩定，但是那種維繫人心的傳統已經蕩然無存，而新的世界秩序又尚未形成，這

或相異之處，既然強調之處有所不同，則這種綜合還是會產生差異（如此則有各種不同的綜合），這還是免不了我們前面所說的論證上的困難。

中觀派便是以負面的、否定的方法以避免這些困難，綜合不同的特殊見解並無法得到普遍的智識，而是必須剷除滌盡一切的一邊之見；獨斷的教條無法得到確定性的知識，而是必須通過批判反省的心靈。中觀思想無非是要找出吾人無法認識「真實」的根源，因為吾人總是受「概念」——一邊之見的影響，這種影響力在許多意識型態及哲學皆可發現。依佛法來講，這就是無明或是世俗之見，而中觀這一副解毒劑就是要除去把「真實」概念化的不良影響，不管是肯定或是否定的一邊之見俱在評破之列。一旦這些一邊之見滌盡無遺，即可證得一種不被煩惱所障礙的「無垢清淨智慧」亦即是般若波羅蜜——直覺悟性所開顯出來的智慧。不過般若乃是形容吾人除去所有一邊之見後的境界，而不是真的有一種名之為「般若」的智慧可得。

總之，中觀派或許可視為一種令人難以應付的思想，因為它否定了所有的一邊之見。可是從另一方面來說，中觀派的思想方式恰足以賦予各種不同思想新的意義與除去他們的思想死角。「空」不是反對世俗的知識，而是要對世俗的知識予以批判的反省，除去誇大理性作用的不當思考方式，龍樹在中論便說得很明白：「以有空義故，一切法得成；以無空義故，一切法不成。」

物能使吾人正確的批判吾人對「真實」的瞭解是否正確，在許多可能使吾人認識「真實」的方法中，我們沒有一種先驗的或是其他的方法來判定那一種方法較好，而這種判定的方法絕不可能像在科學中以感覺經驗作為判定的依據，因為哲學的命題乃是超感覺的無為實在。用一種合理而且巧妙的特殊哲學模式來解釋，並不就意味它就合乎「真實」，那至多只能證明了想像力的效用。如果內在的合理與巧妙的安排即可做為判定真理的標準，那麼許多思想都可滿足這種要求。在這些相互衝突的思想系統中（那怕只有二個），吾人實在無法承認它們都是正確的。譬如「有我」與「無我」的印度兩大傳統思想，就本身的理論架構而言，二者皆是顯得相當合理，可是彼此的見解却又尖銳的對立著。

那麼是否可通過綜合種種可能的方法以求取所謂的普遍性與確定性呢？因為把這些綜合起來即可除去範圍的限制與不確定性。印度的耆那教與德國的黑格爾可說是朝這方向努力的代表，不過前者是一種「選言的綜合」，後者是一種「連接的綜合」。然而綜合所有的見解還是一種見解，因為它必須根據一個預設的模型來安立這些不同的見解，那怕是本質上相反的見解亦必須予以調理。而且由於這些見解在本質上既有不同（甚至是相反的！），持綜合見解的人為了使這個綜合的架構沒有漏洞，必然會做不同的強調，而且他們所強調的見解可能是這些見解的相同點。

證法的目的就是要使吾人瞭解這些前提到底是什麼，所以我們或許可以說：中觀的辯證法乃是評估、瞭解每一哲學思想的「正義之壇」。唯有通過合理的分析與深刻的批判，吾人才能瞭解一種思想的內在涵義。中觀派的辯證法正是指引吾人認識理性之限度的明燈，把理性本質上的死角——各種依理性而建立的思想間的衝突打通殆盡。所以吾人如把中觀當作亦只是諸種理論的一種，無疑會使它失去原有的功能。

哲學乃是在探索一種普遍與確定的知識，這即是要求哲學不可排斥任何一物於其理解之外（普遍性）與當下即不容絲毫的懷疑（確定性）。而科學與思辯形上學是無法滿足這種要求的。科學所得的知識往往是片斷而且是不斷累積而來的，但是科學新知的發現乃是永無止境，那麼在什麼時候才能滿足吾人對哲學的要求呢？還有科學透過感覺經驗所得的假設與證驗來解釋事物，亦使科學所得的知識僅限於經驗世界而已！

思辯形上學固然沒有上述科學的限度，而且它不依賴經驗的論證，所以它似可使吾人得到普遍與最終的智慧。但是，它却有兩個嚴重的缺點，使它落於一種獨斷的哲學。首先，每一種哲學思想必都擇取一特有的思想模式，這一特有的模式或許相當的迷人與具有說服力，但它畢竟還是一種特有的模式——一邊之見，而有所見即有所不見，有所不見即無法給予吾人全體的認識。其次，沒有一種事

中觀思想的評價(下)

穆 帝原著
郭忠生譯中

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II 中觀派特有的思想

常有人批評中觀的破壞性太強，而中觀之辯證法或許可以辯駁他人的邏輯根據，但是中觀之惡意的傾向好像使中觀學者無法看到他人的長處，所以中觀派稱得上是哲學的虐待狂。這種批評或許言之成理，然而實在的說，中觀派是一種完全沒有獨斷性教條的思想，中觀派的辯證法並不是為攻擊他人而設，其目的在於自我批評——一種哲學的自我反省，而中觀之所以有這種反省，乃是源於各種形上學之間的對立、衝突而來。總之，獨斷性的形上學與中觀思想之差異是在：前者試圖以一教條式的主張來統合、涵攝事物，而後者乃是將各種不同的形上學予以合理的消解。

在建立某種理論之初，吾人必須利用一定的假設或前提，可是却沒有給這些前提或假設做一合理的解釋，而辯

Mādhyamika." Professor Radhakrishnan correctly interprets "Śūnyatā as a positive principle"; "To call it being is wrong, only concrete things are. To call it non-being is equally wrong. It is best to avoid all descriptions of it." I.P. Vol. I. pp. 663-4.

8. MK. XVIII, 5.
9. Cf. svabhāvād yadi bhāvānām sadbhāvam anupaśyasi;
ahetupratyayān bhāvāms tvam evam sati paśyasi.
sarva-samvyavahārāms ca laukikān pratibādhas;
yat pratīyasamutpāda-śūnyatām pratibādhas. MK. XXIV,
16, 36.
10. See Chaps. V and IX.
11. This is the celebrated upāyakaūśalya of the Buddhas.
12. sarvam ca yujyate tasya, śūnyatā yasya yujyate;
sarvam na yujyate tasya śūnyam yasya na yujyate. MK. XXIV,
14.

13. In his numerous works, especially in *The Idealist View of Life and Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, the great Eastern Philosopher, Professor Radhakrishnan, advocates the necessity for the revival of the deeply spiritual mystical experience which is the basis of all religions and which is expressed in a pure form in Hinduism. He says: "In spite of all appearances to the contrary, we discern in the present unrest the gradual dawning of a great light, a converging life-endavour, a growing realisation that there is a secret spirit in which we are all one, and of which humanity is the highest vehicle on earth, and an increasing desire to live out this knowledge and establish a kingdom of spirit on earth." (*Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, pp. 33). "The different religions have now come together, and if they are not to continue in a state of conflict or competition, they must develop a spirit of comprehension which will break down prejudice and misunderstanding and bind them together as varied expressions of a single truth. Such a spirit characterised the development of Hinduism, which has not been interrupted for nearly fifty centuries." (ibid. p. 308). "We must recognise humbly the partial and defective character of our isolated traditions and seek their source in the generic tradition from which they all have sprung." (ibid. p. 347).

To take an example from the West M. Guénon has made a commendable effort to interpret the true spirit of Hindu culture to the West in his many works, notably in *An Introduction to the Study of Hindu Doctrines*, *Man and His Becoming according to the Vedānta*, *East and West*, *The Crisis in the Modern World*, etc. The form of regeneration consists, for M. Guénon, not in a fusion or synthesis of the two cultures, but in the West regaining, as the result of a dynamic turn in its present trend, those springs of true spirituality through the help of the East. It would be hazardous to forecast the time of the change or the precise manner in which it would be brought about.

understanding of the Mādhyamika absolutism should prove of value by way of preparing the back-ground for the spiritual regeneration of the world.

(The End)

Footnotes:

1. The Jaina and the Madhyamika positions are antipodal to each other: for the Jaina, all views are true, and the real is a conspectus of view-points; for the Mādhyamika, no view is true and the Real transcends thought.

2. Śamkara too complains that, Brahman, the Absolute, may appear to the ignorant as nothing, Sūnya: digdeśagunagatiphalabhedasūnyam hi paramārthasādhayam Brahman mandabuddhinām asād iva pratibhāti. *Bhāṣya on Chh. Up.* (beginning of VIII Chap.)

3. Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti answer these and similar objections in the MK. XXIV — (*Ārya Satyā Parikṣā*). For a discussion of these points and textual citations, reference may be made to the chapter on *Absolute & Phenomena*.

4. BCA. IX, 2; MKV. p. 492.

5. Some of the Cārvākas, like Jayarāśi, have also adopted the negative method of the Mādhyamika. In his *Tattvopaplava Simha*, Jayarāśi subjects the various conceptions of Pramāṇa to a searching analysis and condemns them as untenable. Without the pramāṇas there can be no determination of the real. But empirical activity is possible, because things appear as attractive and real superficially. He concludes: tad evam upaplutesv eva tattvesu avacaritaramanīyah sarve vyavahārāḥ ghatante. *Tattvopaplava* p. 125.

6. Cf. MKV. pp. 273 ff & 368 ff. atraikḥ paricodayanti: nāstikāvisistā Mādhyamikāḥ yasmāt kuśalākuśalam karma kartāram ca phalam ca sarvam ca lokam bhāvasvabhāva-sūnyam iti bruvate, nāstikā api hyetan nāstīti bruvate. tasmān nāstikāvisista Mādhyamikā itī-naivam. pratītyasamutpādvādino hi Madhyamikāḥ etc. p. 368.

7. Hiriyanna thinks that the Mādhyamika Śūnyatā is Nothing; he relies entirely on the superficial characterisation of it by the orthodox Hindu systems (*Outlines of Ind. Phil.* p. 221). This is a bare statement without much argument or textual support. The professor, however, has the candour to say: "Our object here being chiefly to present later Buddhism as it was understood by Hindu thinkers and is found set forth in their works, it is easy to answer the question, for they all alike agree in holding that the void is the only truth according to the

gion (the church) succeeds only in antagonising other religious groups and creating schisms and heresies within its own fold. What we need is the realisation of the spiritual which is the bed-rock of all our endeavour. Only mystical religion, which eminently combines the unity of Ultimate Being with the freedom of different paths for realising it, can hope to unite the world.

The student of philosophy can only suggest that the Mādhyamika Absolutism can serve as the basis for a possible world-culture. It is not his province to show how best this could be implemented, what practical shape this would assume and at which point and time in the affairs of the world this could be introduced. These are questions which the religious reformer might answer, and even he has to depend upon the spiritual guidance and direction from above.

We must end with a note of warning. It is possible, in our enthusiasm, to over-rate the part played by scholarship and the theoretical understanding of things in the task of regeneration. It is good to remember that history does not record of a single instance of a spiritual revolution of global dimensions brought out by a band of scholars or skilful thinkers. The malady of the world is far too universal and deep-seated for remedies to be prescribed direct from books. A spiritual genius of the order of Buddha or Christ alone knows how to strike at the thing. But even a theoretic

world-culture can be built. It is only absolutism that can make for the fundamental unity of existence and at the same time allow for differences. Catholicity of outlook and tolerance of differences are their very soul; both insist on the universality of the Real and transcendence of the ego-centric standpoint. The Vedānta, however, is traditional in outlook and is bound to the authority of the Veda, and perhaps it presupposes a specific milieu in which alone it can thrive. The Mahāyāna is quite liberal, and it has proved its capacity to accommodate itself to various religious and social structures, to revitalise and absorb them; this is seen in Tibet, Mongolia, China and Japan. It has further the concrete expression of Śūnyatā and Mahākarunā in the exalted Bondhisattva ideal.

Thinkers¹³ in the West and the East are becoming increasingly alive to the impending crisis in our civilisation and are suggesting the ways of saving it. The issue is not between Capitalism and Communism, although their quarrel tends to cloud the real nature of the malady. The need is for the spiritual regeneration of the world. Denominational religions with their dogmas and organisational sanctions deservedly stand discredited. There is something inherently secular and unspiritual in any organisation. It tends to create vested interests and to breed corruption. In stifling freedom of expression and setting up a norm of dogmas to which the votaries are required to conform, organised reli-

done, in a materialistic society, by checks and counter-checks and by the balancing of forces in the society. But what prevents the guardians of such a society, the ruling class, from appropriating more to themselves. Fear of public opinion may prove somewhat of a check, but a skilful determined man can easily manipulate the cards. In the last resort, there must be some considerable body of men who cannot be compelled to behave by external pressure, but who are intrinsically convinced of the worth-lessness of material goods. They should have transcended the instinct of possession and must have risen above class and property, like the guardians of state in Plato's *Republic*.

Increased production and organisation cannot *per se* result in good. Goodwill must be there. And goodwill can be born of inner spiritual conviction alone; it cannot be commanded into existence by faith or secular authority. For that would fail miserably and can succeed in making us hypocritical. We have to realise that the good of all is the good of onself, and that there can be no room for the ego. In the last analysis, the transcending of the standpoint of the ego, or more positively, the attainment of the Universal is the essence of the spiritual. And only the spiritual can provide the basis for the society and can be conducive to the realisation of other values.

In this regard, Mahāyāna absolutism and the Advaita Vedānta are valuable as providing the basis on which a

beings and the forces mental forces" is too evident to need elaboration. Man has conquered Nature or is very near doing that; but he has not the rudimentary control over himself. The consequences are disastrous. Organised life with any pretence to stability and security has become precarious. We have gained the world, but have lost our soul.

It has been suggested that the remedy lies in increased production by the harnessing of all our ingenuity and resources, and by a more equitable distribution by concentration on the reorganisation of the social structure on a classless basis. Fascism and Communism are the concrete forms of this urge. Accepting the material as the *only* value, these try to work out a civilisation to the best advantage. The experiment needs to be tried, if only as a matter of dialectical necessity. We have to be convinced of the utter futility of the material norm before we could give it up.

It may bring about temporary and even partial relief, but it is bound to fail as a final solution. The basic principles underlying it are vicious. If material goods, earthly life, were the only good, how can one have too much of these. One would try to secure them as much as possible and by every means; fair and foul can have no moral signification, but can be judged by the measure of material success they bring about. How can the possessive instinct be conquered, or even kept under control? This is

well-defined blocks, the Christian zone in the West, the Moslem in the Middle East and the Hindu (including Buddhist) in the East and Far East. Feeling of brotherhood and unity of man were vital forces. These traditional influences are no longer at work. The Christian world has been disintegrating for centuries, since the Renaissance. There is little hope that it could regain the lost ground and reassert itself. The East is hardly better, though the disintegration has not proceeded to such an extent; but the spiritual is no longer an active force.

Owing to the phenomenal discoveries in science and their practical application, the peoples of the world have been brought together; the geographical and physical oneness of the world has been brought home to us. But our differences and divergences have increased tremendously; strife and bitterness are rampant. War has become chronic and global in its proportions. The present-day world lacks unity and goodwill; it has no soul or spirit to animate and unify it.

The causes are not hidden. Western civilisation, which has become the norm for all, has developed, since the Renaissance, along materialistic lines. "The contrast between the success of modern European minds in controlling almost any situation in which the elements are physical bodies and the forces physical forces, and their inability to control situations in which the elements are human

hism, in the entire range of its metaphysics, ethics and religion. Śūnyatā, mahākarunā and the Tathāgata's Trikāya became the fundamental ideas for all subsequent philosophy and religion. The non-Buddhist systems may not have borrowed the tenets of the Mādhyamika or Vijñānavāda; but they were conceivably profited by their technique. Advaitism came to be established as the most dominant feature of the spiritual culture of India. The essence of this consists in the inner realisation of the unity of all being and the utter negation of all egoity. The great measure of unity and stability of social structure which still persists is the reflection of the Śūnyatā (Absolutist) conception in the practical affairs of men. It permeated every walk of life—literature, fine art, social sciences, religion and philosophy. A stable and exalted civilisation was built up and sustained for centuries in the greater part of Asia, in India, China, Japan, Tibet and other countries.

Its influence cannot be confined to the past. What could be done once can be done once again. And there is all the greater need to emphasise the spiritual unity of the world, torn as it is by ever so many conflicts and warring ideologies that threaten to engulf the entire world in speedy ruin. Everywhere the hold of tradition has loosened. During the Middle Ages the civilised world enjoyed, with a few exceptions, a period of peace and stability never known before. No doubt the known world was divided into three

spiritual realisation; it is not just a matter of logical skill and imaginative manipulation. For, each device must serve the purpose of reaching us to the Absolute by the path most suited to the person concerned. Only one who has trodden the path before can lead others to it.

In one sense, the Mādhyamika may seem one of the most intolerant of systems, as it negates all possible views without exception. In another sense, in the manner shown above, it can accommodate and give significance to all systems and shades of views. As pointed out before Śūnyatā does not militate against vyavahāra. Justly can Nāgārjuna claim:

All is concord indeed for him who to Śūnyatā conforms;¹²

All is not concordant for him who conforms not to Śūnyatā.

III THE VALUE OF THE MADHYAMIKA SYSTEM AS BASIS FOR WORLD CULTURE

The Mādhyamika is not an academic system. It profoundly influenced the philosophy and religion of India and a good part of Asia for several centuries. It is the first Absolutist system (advayavāda) to be formulated in India or elsewhere. To the Mādhyamika should also belong the honour of establishing advayāvda through the Dialectic. This ushered in a revolution, as we have traced, in Budd-

That is Prajñāpāramitā—Intuition or Non-Dual knowledge, free from the concepts of 'is' and 'not-is'. We do not acquire the absolute or Prajñā; we only remove the impediments.

Strange as it may appear, the Mādhyamika Śūnyatā (Absolute) can serve as the basis for a synthesis of philosophical systems. Because of its rigorous eschewing of all thought-content from the Real (Śūnya), it is no doubt transcendent to thought. But on that very score, it can be 'freely' phenomenalisised, and one need not restrict oneself to any *particular mode* of synthesis to serve for all time and for all people. In the Hegelian synthesis, there is emphasis on unity and the differences are subordinated to it. The opposite may well be the case: difference can be made the prius and identity subordinated to it. The order of the synthesised categories may be varied. In Hegel, the synthesis is a blocked series; it cannot be replaced without replacing his conception of the Absolute too. In the Mādhyamika, one mode of synthesis may be replaced by another without necessitating any change in the Absolute. This may be called a loose dynamic synthesis. It must, however, be borne in mind that all these modes of phenomenalisation are merely 'devices' (upāya): ultimately false, but eminently useful, both for the empirical world and as means for reaching the absolute. That they are false does not make them less useful; even the false can work. Secondly, such syntheses¹¹ can be formulated only by those that have

Hegel a conjunctive or integrating synthesis.¹⁰ Combination of views is another view. For, we have to marshal all views according to a pre-arranged plan; there would be shifting of emphasis with regard to the constituents of the synthesis. And, owing to the emphasis placed on identity or difference, the synthesis too would become different. Syntheses become many and varied and are subject to the predicaments already adduced.

The Mādhyamika dialectic avoids all this by its negative method, as pointed out before. Universality is attained not by a combination of particular viewpoints, but by abolishing viewpoints. Certitude is gained, not by dogmatic assertion, but by critical reflection (bhūta-pratyaveksā). We do not advance theories, but we become *aware of* theories. The Mādhyamika goes to the tendency which is the root-cause of our inability to know the real in itself—conceptual construction, drsti; this concretely expressed in the various ideologies and philosophical systems. It is avidyā or samvrti. The antidote is to void the mind of this tendency to conceptualise the real; to resolve the drstis, both of the affirmative and the negative kind. As special standpoints and particular positions are abolished, the knowing Intellect becomes transparent (bhāsvara, amala), free from obscuration (āvarana-prahāna). The Real is no longer looked at through the categories of thought, mediately, wrongly; the Intellect is not different from the Real.

point, and therefore necessarily *restricts* our vision. A view is one-sided (*ekāntavāda*) and cannot give us the whole reality. The second drawback is that there is nothing that can *validate our* picture of reality. Among a number of possible ways of conceiving the real, we have no *a priori* or other means of deciding in favour of one. We cannot appeal to empirical experience as we do in science; for the propositions of philosophy are of the super-sensible, the unconditionally real. Consistent and elaborate working out of a particular philosophical pattern does not mean that it conforms to the real; it just evidences our powers of imagination and logical attention. If internal consistency and elaboration were the criterion of the truth of any philosophy, this would be satisfied by many systems. We cannot admit that all or even any two of them are true as they contradict each other. For example, the systems of the ātma and the anātma tradition are internally consistent and elaborate; but they are diametrically opposed to each other in their standpoints. This throws doubt on philosophy, on every system. Certitude and finality have eluded us.

Can universality and certitude be attained by synthesising all possible views, thus obviating restriction of scope and uncertainty. The Jain system in India and Hegel in the West can be cited as examples of this attempt; the Jaina attempts a disjunctive synthesis of possible views and

analyse it and subject it to a penetrating criticism. The Mādhyamika dialectic is the search-light that illumines the darkest recesses of reason. If it had been a theory, one among others, it would singularly fail in its high office as the Norm of all philosophy.

Philosophy is the quest for knowledge that is universal in scope and absolutely certain in its quality. The demand is to possess knowledge that does not leave anything out of its comprehension and which is at once free from the possibility of doubt. This demand, however, cannot be satisfied by science or speculative metaphysics. Knowledge gained by science is piecemeal in character and is progressively accumulative; there can possibly be no conceivable limit to the acquisition of information. The scientific method of explanation, through hypothesis and verification by appeal to sense-experience, necessarily restricts the scope of science to the empirical.

Speculative metaphysics has certainly freed itself of this limitation; as it does not depend on empirical verification, it can *claim* to give us universal (unrestricted) and final knowledge of the entire reality. But there are two fatal drawbacks which vitiate dogmatic philosophy. Each philosophical system selects a particular pattern and views reality from that standpoint; it becomes a view (a *drsti*), a standpoint or position. The position selected may be attractive and advantageous; but it is *one* view, a particular stand

II SOME UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE MADHYAMIKA SYSTEM

Very often the criticism is made that the Mādhyamika system is destructive in its function. The dialectic may be efficient as a logical weapon, but it savours of ill-will symptomatic of a disposition that sees no good in others. How does it escape being a species of philosophical sadism? Rightly understood, the Mādhyamika, however, is the one system that is completely free from every trace of dogmatism. The dialectic is not condemnation of others, but is self-criticism. It is the self-consciousness of philosophy. This self-consciousness is born of the necessary conflict in dogmatic metaphysics. The contrast implied is between the dogmatic procedure of reason that is intent on weaving theories about things and the self-conscious awareness of the weaving of theories. Through dogmatism and the necessary conflict of Reason, philosophical consciousness comes into its own.

In theorising, we make use of assumptions and pre-suppositions that are unnoticed at the time. Dialectic makes us aware of the pre-suppositions, the foundations on which our edifice rests. It may be claimed for the Mādhyamika Dialectic that it is the impartial tribunal which alone can assess the true nature of every philosophical system. We know the inside of a system only as we



THE
MADHYAMIKA SYSTEM
—AN ESTIMATE

(I)

by T. R. V. Murti

Translated into Chinese
by Chung-sheng Kuo

(**Editor's note:** *This is the 14th chapter of T. R. V. Murti's "The Central Philosophy of Buddhism".*)