

# The Buddhist Concept of an Omniscient Being

— History of the Sarvajña Study and Its Significance—<sup>1</sup>

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The present author has spent his years in studying the Buddhist concept of Sarvajña, tracing its historical development in the old Indian texts, in the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit texts, and the later literature composed by the native Tibetans, in the Chinese Buddhist sources, and in the living tradition of Japanese Buddhism, analyzing its nature and content, and examining the significance that this concept of an omniscient being has in the history of human thought. He published the result of his investigation in book form in Japanese: *Issaichi Shisō no Kenkyū*.<sup>2</sup>

Being conscious of our own human limitations, when we have some one, some person or some thing, on which we would rely in every aspect of our judgments, we expect that person or that thing to be far beyond us in power and ability. We expect that he or that one to be always right and perfect, that he or it should be always infallible, viz. , be itself all-knowing and giving us exact and perfect knowledge about all other things and matters. He may be a god, or may be the founding father of our creed. In the modern world, it is possible that the position of that perfect one might be replaced by a computer machine, or in an occult creed, that one may be a crystal ball that could tell everything. Whatever form it may take, the general concept of omniscience is prominent in every system of the human thoughts. In the case of Buddhists, it is Śākyamuni the Buddha, their Founding Father, who is this perfect one. What they, or rather, we, as the present speaker himself a Buddhist, mean by the word “Buddha” produces another complicated issue. Anyhow, from the earliest stage of the history of Buddhism, the Buddha was acknowledged as the perfect one, the omniscient being

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1 The original draft of the present paper was read by Shinjō Kawasaki at the Oriental Institute, Oxford University, as an introduction to the series of his lectures entitled: “The Buddhist Concept of an Omniscient Being (sarvajña)” of the Numata Visiting Lectureship. The topics and the dates of the whole series of the lectures actually given are as follows:

Lecture 1 (April 24, 1995): Introduction: Outlines of a Study of the Buddhist Concept of an Omniscient Being (sarvajña)—History and Significance of the Study—

Lecture 2 (May 1, 1995): The Omniscient Being in the Brahmanic Sources—“One Who Knows This Whole” in the *Upaniṣads* and “the All-knowing One” in the *Yoga-sūtra*—

Lecture 3 (May 8, 1995): Sabbaññū in Pāli Literature—Omniscience and Attainment of Buddhahood; Buddhist References to the Omniscience of Mahāvīra—

Lecture 4 (May 15, 1995): The Omniscient Being in Abhidharma Literature—Instant Knowledge of All according to the Mahāsaṃghikas; Emergence from Immaculate Nescience of an Arhat—

Lecture 5 (May 22, 1995): The Omniscient Being in Two Mahāyāna Śāstras: the *Ta-chih-ta-lun*



In the world with its Devas  
No one equals me.  
For I am perfected in the world,  
A teacher supreme am I,  
I alone am all-awakened,  
Become cool am I, Nibbāna-attained.  
To turn the dhamma-wheel  
I go to Kāsi's city,  
Beating the drum of deathlessness  
In a world that's blind become.  
According to what you claim, your reverence, you ought to be victor of  
the unending.  
Like me, they are victors indeed  
Who have won destruction of the cankers;  
Vanquished by me are evil things,  
Therefore am I, Upaka, a victor.

When this had been said, monks, Upaka the Naked Ascetic, having said: 'May it be (so), your reverence,' having shaken his head, went off having taken a different road. (Huveyya p' āvuso' ti vatvā sisāṃ okampetvā ummaggaṃ gahetvā pakkāmi.)"<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted that Ājīvika Upaka's encounter with the Buddha preceded the Buddha's first sermon at Isipatana Migadāya in Sāraṅganātha. It is true that Upaka noticed some unusually excellent qualities in the Buddha. But he could not be persuaded to accept the Buddha as what the Buddha professed himself to be as an omniscient being.

Thus, even in the earliest stage of the development of Buddhism, the Buddha proclaimed himself as all-knowing, acknowledging omniscience as one of the vital

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- 2 Shinjō Kawasaki: *Issaichi Shisō no Kenkyū* (A Study of the Buddhist Concept of an Omniscient Being), (in Japanese), (Shunjūsha, Tokyo, 1992), 564p.; ditto: "Study of the Mīmāṃsā Chapter of Bhavya's *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya-kārikā*—Text and Translation—(1)pūrva-pakṣa", *Studies, the Institute of Philosophy, the University of Tsukuba*, No.2 (March 1977), pp.1-16; "Sanskrit and Tibetan Text—(2) uttara-pakṣa", *ibid.*, No.12 (March 1987), pp.1-23; "Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts—(3)uttara-pakṣa, with the Sarvajña Chapter—", *ibid.*, No.13 (March 1988), pp.1-42.
- 3 *Majjhima-Nikāya* I, pp.170-171; Horner tr.: *Middle Length Sayings* Vol.I, pp.214-215; *Vinaya*, I, 1, 6(Mahāvagga). Cf. *Dhammapada* 353; *Udāna*, 21, 1; *Suttanipāta* 211; *Itivuttaka* 112. See also *Mahāvastu*, III, p.326, ll.19-20; *Lalitavistara*, p.406, ll.6-7; *Catuḥpariṣat-sūtra*, 10, 8; Notes by Franz Bernhard: *Udānavarga, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, Dritte Folge, Nr.54* (Göttingen, 1965).

elements of being a Buddha. This Buddha's proclamation of his own excellency, however, even before his first sermon, was accompanied by its negation, by a presentation of doubt in acknowledging omniscience as an essential property of Buddhahood.

We might easily expect that every form of religion in any time and place, or every philosophical school, would regard omniscience (*sarvajñatva*) in the sphere of knowledge, together with omnipotence (*sarveśvaratva*) and omnipresence (*sarvagatatva*) in the sphere of power and potentiality, as an essential property of perfection in the ideal ultimacy. Betraying such an expectation of ours, however, we could find no reference to the word "sarvajña" in the *Ṛg-veda*.<sup>4</sup> There are only two to four cases of usage of its synonym "viśva-vid", applied to the Vedic deity, Agni (alias Soma).<sup>5</sup> Another synonym: *viśva-veda* is more frequently used.<sup>6</sup> Of course, it does not necessarily mean that the concept of omniscience was not found in the *Ṛg-veda*. *Varuṇa*, or *Varuṇa* associated with *Mitra*, *Varuṇa-Mitra*, is known to be all-knowing. He is "of wide vision (*urucakṣas*, *ṚV*. i, 25, 5,16)". "with a thousand eyes" (*sahasracakṣas*, *ibid.* vii, 34, 10; *sahasrākṣas*, *ibid.* i, 23, 3)". He is all-knowing and seeing through all that is between heaven and earth, all that is beyond. He observes all to punish every wrongful action of everyone. *Puruṣa*, the Cosmic Man, is also said to have a thousand eyes.<sup>7</sup> In perusing the passages from the ancient parts of Vedic literature which contain the word *sarva-* or compounds with *sarva-*, Prof. J. Gonda, of Utrecht, made remarkable comments, arguing that the words *sarva-* and *viśva-* are not necessarily tautological in character, and examining the etymological connection of *sarva-* with other Indo-Iranian equivalents, Prof. Gonda concludes that the word "sarva" denotes something or a state "intact, uninjured, entire, complete, free from decay, illness, and death."<sup>8</sup> We should keep in mind, for the moment, that the word: "sarvajña" is not familiar in the *Ṛg-veda*.

What is more, as far as the actual usage of the word "sarvajña" is concerned, in the *Upaniṣads*, too, there are only sporadic occurrences. The word can be found only in the *Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad*,<sup>9</sup> the *Praśna-Upaniṣad*,<sup>10</sup> and some other *Upaniṣads* of somewhat later composition.<sup>11</sup> In the *Upaniṣads*, the knowledge of "All" was always

4 Hermann Grassmann: *Wörterbuch zum Rig-Veda*, (Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1964), p.1490.

5 *Ibid.*, pp.1301-1304.

6 *Ibid.*, p.1303.

7 Raffaele Pattazzone: *The All-Knowing God, Researches into Early Religion and Culture*, (authorised translation by H. J. Rose), (Methuen & Co. Ltd., London).

8 J. Gonda: "Reflections on Sarva- in Vedic Texts", *Indian Linguistics*, Vol.16 (Chatterji Jubilee Volume), (Linguistic Society of India, Madras, November 1955), p.69.

9 "kasmin nu bhagavo vijñāte sarvaṃ idam vijñātam bhavati", *Muṇḍaka-Up.* I, 1, 3; "yaḥ sarvajñaḥ sarva-vid yasya jñāna-mayaṃ tapaḥ," *ibid.* I,1,9; "yaḥ sarvajña sarva-vid yasyaiṣa mahimā bhūvi," *ibid.*, II, 2,7.

10 *Praśna-Up.* IV, 5; "sa sarvajñaḥ sarvaṃ evāviveṣeti," *ibid.* IV, 10 & 11.

11 "satyakāma-sarvajñatva-samyuktam," *Maitrī-Up.* VI, 38; "yogīśvaraḥ sarvajño 'magho...'", *ibid.*, VII,1; "eṣa sarveśvaraḥ, eṣa sarvajñaḥ, eṣo 'ntaryāmi, eṣa yonih'", *Māṇḍūkya-Up.*, 6.

preceded by the knowledge of “That One Thing”, that is to say, by the knowledge of the Ātman, or by the knowledge of Brahman. And a person who comes to know that pure, imperishable Absolute, could know “All”.

In the *Yoga-sūtra*, there is only two occurrences of the word; one in the form of sarvajña-bija<sup>12</sup> or the seed of all-knowing one, and the other in the form of sarvajñātrtva or the state of all-knowing person.<sup>13</sup> Here, “a man who is omniscient” is “he who has only the full discernment of the difference between the Sattva and the Self (ātman); Such a man has authority over all states of existence.”

With theistic tendencies strengthened, however, the word “sarvajña” comes to appear, with a great frequency, the later the more, in Hindu literature in general as well as in Buddhist and Jain literature.<sup>14</sup>

In the early Buddhist texts preserved in the Pāli Canon, we can find several references to the Theravādins’ claim for their Master’s all-knowing ability in comparison with that of Pūraṇa Kassapa and the Jain Master Mahāvīra.<sup>15</sup> It is true, however, that the early Buddhist scriptures are filled with hesitant or rather dubious expressions about the precise nature of the Buddha’s omniscience, as Prof. Padmanabha N. Jaini of Berkeley points out.<sup>16</sup> While the Jain claim for their Master Mahāvīra’s omniscience could be traced in the precise and somewhat uniform meaning of their technical term “kevala-jñā”, the definition of the Buddhist conception of their Master Buddha’s omniscience remains enigmatic or ambivalent. Anyway, the Jains and the Buddhists at the early stages of their history discussed with each other the differences in their respective claims of the Master’s omniscience, quite often, and were well acquainted with their opponents’ tenets.<sup>17</sup> In the *Milinda-panhā*, there are several sections, some

12 “tatra niratiśayaṃ sarvajña-bijam”, *Yoga-sūtra*, I, 25.

13 “sattva-puruṣānyatākhyāti-mātrasya sarva-bhāvādhiṣṭhātṛtvaṃ sarvajñātrtvaṃ ca”, *Yoga-sūtra* III, 48.

14 Hermann Jacobi: *Die Entwicklung der Gottesidee bei den Indern und deren Beweise für das Dasein Gottes*, (Bonn & Leipzig, 1923); Otto Böhtlingk & Rudolph Roth ed.: *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch*, Siebenter Teil (1872-1875, repr. Tokyo, 1976), p.816; Cf. “sarvajñaḥ sugato buddho dharmarājas tathāgataḥ, samantabhadro bhagavān mārājil lokajij jinaḥ, ṣaḍabhiṣṭo daśabalo ‘dvayavādī, vināyakaḥ, munīndraḥ śrīghanaḥ śāstā munīḥ”, in *Amarakoṣa*; “Śiva, Buddha, Parameśvara, Sarvajñānakartari, Durgā”, in T. Tarkavācaspati ed. *Vācaspatyam*, Vol. VI (Varanasi, 1962), p.5268.

15 *Majjhima-Nikāya* (Trenckner ed.), Vol. I, p.482; (II, 3,1: Tevijja-vacchagotta-suttam. 71); *ibid.* (Chalmers ed.), Vol. II, pp.127-128; (II, 4, 10: Kaṇṇakatthala-suttam 90), p. 132.

16 “... unlike the Jains, who understood the term *sarvajña* in a literal manner, the early Buddhists used that term in a secondary metaphorical sense, namely, the ‘knower of Truth’, equivalent to the exclusively Buddhist term *tathāgata*.” (p.76) of Padmanabh S. Jaini: “On the Sarvajñatva (Omniscience) of Mahāvīra and the Buddha”, in L. Cousins et al. ed.: *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I. B. Horner*, (D. Reidel, Dordrecht, 1974), pp.71-90.

17 *Majjhima-Nikāya*, Vol. I, pp.92-95: (1,2,4: Cūladukkakkhandha-suttam 14); *ibid.*, Vol. II, p.31: (II, 3, 9: Cūlasakulūdāyisuttam 79); *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* (Warder rev. ed.) Vol. I, pp.220-222: (III, 74: Ānanda-vagga); *ibid.* (Hardy ed.), Vol. IV, p.428.

old and some later additions, where discussions on the Buddha's omniscience are dealt with.<sup>18</sup> There, it is clearly stated that the Buddha has perfect knowledge of any matter only when he wants to know and concentrates himself (āvajjana) on that matter. Here again, constant and continuous knowledge of all things of all times simultaneously is clearly denied by the Buddha himself.

In his *Abhidharmakośa*, Vasubandhu (circa 400A.D.) discussed the Buddha's omniscience in the opening verse and spoke of the differences in knowledge between the one acquired by the Buddha and the other gained by an Arhat like Śāriputra.<sup>19</sup> In the last chapter: Pudgala-viniścaya, of the *Abhidharmakośa*, Vasubandhu again introduced the discussions held by the Vaibhāṣikas and the Mahāsaṃghikas on the nature of the Buddha's knowledge. Vasubandhu seems to be loyal enough to his Vaibhāṣika tenet that the Buddha could get knowledge of all only by the elapse of two moments (kṣaṇa-s), knowledge of all except the knowing subject in the first moment, and knowledge of the knowing subject in the succeeding moment, denying the possibility of knowledge of all simultaneously at one moment.<sup>20</sup>

In the Buddhist scriptures, we can observe another conspicuous pattern of criticism of the Buddha's omniscience. The Buddha is criticized on the grounds that his lack of omniscience would be evident from his deeds in his life-history which would indicate his failure to anticipate future events. For instance, he entered an empty village at the time of a great festivity and failed to receive any alms. He met the fierce elephant Dhanapāla released purposely by King Ajātasattu. He failed to anticipate Devadatta's intrigue of rock-dropping. He could not save the life of Sundarī, a poor Brāhmaṇā girl killed and foresaken. He had to ask the names of people, of villages to find his way. Ten such cases to prove the Buddha's lack of knowledge, the original version of which we can find in such a Pāli text as the *Majjhīma-Nikāya*<sup>21</sup> and the *Milinda-pañhā*,<sup>22</sup> are repeatedly enumerated as "the Buddha's Ten Acts of Insufficiency" in the Chinese version of the Mahāyāna *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* corpus. Just before he left Japan, the present speaker had a chance to read the article written by Prof. Paul Harrison of the University of Canterbury, New Zealand, titled "Some Reflections on the Personality of the Buddha", published from Otani University, Kyoto.<sup>23</sup> In this

18 V. Trenckner ed.: *The Milinda-pañho, being Dialogues between King Milinda and the Buddhist Sage Nāgasena*, (London, 1880; 1962, PTS repr.), p.74; pp.102-107; p.108; p.135; p.210; p.217; p.232; p.267; p.272.

19 P. Pradhan ed.: *Abhidharma-Kośa-bhāṣya of Vasubandhu, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, VIII* (Patna, 1967), p.1.

20 *Ibid.*, p.467; p.99; p.404; p.412; p.471; p.474; p.478.

21 *Majjhīma-Nikāya*, I, 519; *Jātaka* I, p.66; II, pp.415-417; V, p.331.

22 *Milinda-pañhā*, p.135.

23 Paul Harrison: "Some reflections on the Personality of the Buddha", *Ōtani Gakuhō* Vol.74, No.4 (Kyoto, March 1995), pp.1-28.

article, Prof. Harrison discussed the issue of the Buddha's Ten Bad Karma (daśa-karma-ploti/pluti) in the *Lokānuvartana-sūtra* and mentioned his indebtedness to the doctoral dissertation of Dr. Sally Mellick-Cutler of Oxford for drawing this issue in the entire Apadāna collection to his attention.<sup>24</sup> And the present speaker would like to add another remark that the same pattern of criticism could also be found in the discussions found in two Mahāyāna Śāstras preserved only in Chinese translation: the *Ta-chih-tu-lun* (*Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa-śāstra*) and the *Shih-chu-p'i-p'o-sha-lun* (*Daśa-bhūmi-vibhāṣā-śāstra*). The former Śāstra, (which is translated into French by Monseigneur Étienne Lamotte,<sup>25</sup> is important because of its popularity and of its great influence in the Chinese and the Japanese Buddhism, while the latter Śāstra is noteworthy as it is the only extant Buddhist scripture, which has an independent chapter named: "Chapter of Criticism of an Omniscient Person."<sup>26</sup>

### The Buddha's Omniscience in the Mahāyāna Texts

In the Prajñāpāramitā literature of Mahāyāna Buddhism, which developed in India as early as the second century of the Christian Era, there are frequent references to the Buddha's omniscience. In the case of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra of 25,000 Verses* (*Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-Pr.*), the frequency of reference is so high that we could find the word: "issai-chi (sarvajña)", two or three times on every page, applied to the knowledge of the Buddha.<sup>27</sup> Of course, what is meant by the word: "buddha", has been changed from the straightforward designation of Gautama the Buddha in the early Buddhist scriptures to the advanced notion of Buddhahood as an embodiment of transcendental principle in the Mahāyāna scriptures. In the *Abhisamayālamkāra* commentary tradition of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, there developed the three kinds of perfection in sacred knowledge: Mārga-jñāna for a Śrāvaka, Sarva-jñāna for a Pratyekabuddha, and Sarvākāra-jñāna as a specific compound term applied to the most exalted form of omniscience monopolized by the Samyaksambuddha. In some classical Yogācāra texts, Sarvākārajñatā is understood to pertain to the general

24 Sally Mellick-Cutler: "The Pāli Apadāna Collection", *Journal of the Pāli Text Society*, Vol. XX(1994), pp.1-42; Jonathan S. Walters: "The Buddha's Bad Karma: A Problem in the History of Theravāda Buddhism", *Numen*, XXXVII, 1 (1990), pp.70-95.

25 Étienne Lamotte: *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna (Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra)*, Tome I (Louvain, 1949; 1966); Tome II (1949; 1967); Tome III (1970); Tome IV (1976); Tome V (1980).

26 See Chapter 6: "Avyākṛta, Sarvajña-Criticism, and the Mādhyamaka", in Shōson Miyamoto: *Chūdō Shisō oyobi sono Hattatsu* (The Mādhyamaka Thought and its Development), (in Japanese)", (Hōzōkan, 1944). Present author is preparing an annotated English translation of "Chapter of Criticism of an Omniscient Person" of the Śāstra from the Chinese version with a study.

27 Tenshō Kimura: *The Sanskrit Text of the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* (Sankibō, Tokyo, 1988), 4vols.

characteristics of things, while Sarvajñatā to every specific existent.<sup>28</sup>

In this connection, Prof. Paul J. Griffiths of Chicago Divinity School recently contributed an article on the Buddhist idea of omniscience in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*.<sup>29</sup> It is a study which is limited in scope to a single, but very important Yogācāra text, with the intention to examine how ideas about omniscience fit into Yogācāra epistemology and soteriology.

One typical Mahāyāna Sūtra, the *Avatamsaka-sūtra*, which was originated in India, developed its full-fledged system more in China as Hua-yan, and finally in Japan as Kegon. This Sūtra<sup>30</sup> evokes the cosmic vision of a universe where everything freely interpenetrates everything else. It introduces to us an image of the Jewel Net of Indra (indrajāla). viz., a vast web-network consisting of perfect spherical mirror-gems, each of which reflects every other, and which also reflects the reflections in every other, including its own reflection,---and so on ad infinitum. Here, the totality of the universe could be contemplated even in the tiniest speck of dust, as realization of the ultimate truth. All in one, and one in all. Thus, the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* shares a cosmic vision and interpretation with some Buddhist Tantras of a later development which is fully displayed in the form of Maṇḍalas.

We can tell from the Sanskrit fragments collected from the *Bhāvanā-krama*, that there used to be in the opening chapter of the *Mahāvairocanaḥhisambodhi-sūtreन्द्रa* a passage which reads: “That which is the knowledge of the Omniscient Being has benevolence for its basis, the Bodhicitta for its cause, and expedient means for its ultimacy. (tad etad sarvajña-jñānaṃ karuṇā-mūlaṃ bodhicitta-hetukam upāya-par-yavasānam)”.<sup>31</sup> This would serve as a starting point of investigation of the concept of an omniscient being in the later development of Tāntric Buddhism.

### Controversies on Omniscience among Jains, Buddhists and Mimāṃsakas

It was after the discovery, and publication of the Sanskrit manuscript of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* of Śāntaraḥṣita with its commentary, the *Tattvasaṃgraha-pañjikā* of Kamalaśīla, that the issue of omniscience came to be noticed for the first time in

28 Seitetsu Moriyama: “Kamalaśīla and Haribhadra—on their Justifications of the Knowledge of an Omniscient Being—(in Japanese)”, in the *Journal of the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, Vol.35, No.1, (Tokyo, December 1986), pp.115-119; ditto: “The Yogācāra-Madhyamika Refutation of the Position of the Satyākāra- and Alikākāra-vādins of the Yogācāra School—A Translation of Portions of Haribhadra’s *Abhisamayālaṅkāra-loka Prajñāpāramitāvyaḥhyā*—”, in the *Proceedings of the Graduate School of Bukkyō University*, Part I (March 1984), pp. 1-58; Part II(October 1984), pp.1-35; Part III (December 1984), pp.1-28.

29 Paul J. Griffiths: “Omniscience in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* and Its Commentaries”, in *Indo-Iranian Journal*, Vol. 33 (Dordrecht, 1990), pp.85-120.

30 *Gaṇḍavyūha* (P. L. Vaidya ed.), p.6.

31 *Giuseppe Tucci: Minor Buddhist Texts*, Part II (IsMEO, Roma, 1958), p.196.

modern studies of Buddhism. In 1873, in a Jain monastery in Jaisalmer in the western India, Dr. Georg Bühler found a manuscript consisting of 183 palm-leaves which bore on the corner, the title "*Kamalaśīla-tarka*". Some years later, Paṇḍit C. D. Dalal was deputed by the order of the Mahārāja of Baroda, His Highness Sir Sayaji Rao Gaekwad, to Jaisalmer. He, with undaunted efforts, succeeded in securing a loan of the manuscripts from the Vādi Parśvanātha Bhandar in Pattan with the objective of publishing the work in the Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda. As a result, Paṇḍit Embar Krishnamacharya of Vadatal edited the text and published it in two volumes in 1926 on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the Mahārāja with an elaborate English foreword composed by the General Editor of the series, B. Bhattacaryya.<sup>32</sup> And in 1937-39, Mahāmahopādhyāya Ganganātha Jhā made its English translation and published it in two volumes in the same series.<sup>33</sup> This is the story of how the Sanskrit text of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* is now in our hands. Its last chapter named: Atīndriyārthadarśi-puruṣa-parikṣā, or "the Chapter of Examination of the Person of Super-Normal Vision" is a big chapter, consisting of as many as 522 verses, (Nos.3124-3646), wholly dedicated to an examination of the Buddhist idea of an omniscient being (sarvajña).

In connection with this publication of the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, we cannot overlook the contributions of Prof. K. B. Pathak of Deccan College to the studies of Buddhist and Jain concepts of an omniscient being. As early as 1889, and up-to his death which came out in 1932, Prof. Pathak made strenuous efforts in checking and comparing the passages in the Jain works such as Pātrakesarin's *Āṣṭasāhasrī* and Prabhācandra's *Prameyakamalamārtanḍa*, the Buddhist works such as the above-mentioned Śāntarākṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha*, Kamalaśīla's *Tattvasaṃgraha-pañjikā*, and Mīmāṃsaka Kumārila's *Śloka-vārttika*, and some later compendium works like Sāyaṇa-Mādhava's *Sarva-darśana-saṃgraha*.<sup>34</sup> He proved the existence of repeated and heated controversies among the Jains, the Buddhists, and the Mīmāṃsakas of the Brahmanical orthodox philosophical system, on their respective concepts of Sarvajña in India in the sixth to the eighth centuries, down to the eleventh century or even later.

32 Embar Krishnamacharya ed.: *Tattvasaṃgraha of Śāntarākṣita*, with the Commentary of Kamalaśīla, *Gaekwad's Oriental Series*, Nos. 30 & 31 (Baroda, 1926).

33 Gaṅganātha Jhā tr.: *The Tattvasaṃgraha of Śāntarākṣita* with the Commentary of Kamalaśīla, *Gaekwad's Oriental Series*, Vol. LXXX (Baroda, 1937), & Vol. LXXXIII (Baroda, 1939)

34 K. B. Pathak: "Kumārila's Verses Attacking the Jain Buddhist Notions of an Omniscient Beings", in *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. XII, Pt.2 (Poona, 1931), pp.123-131; Ditto.: "The Position of Kumārila in Digambara Jaina Literature", in *The Transactions of the Ninth International Orientalists Congress* (London, 1892), pp.186-214; Ditto.: "Śāntarākṣita's Reference to Kumārila's Attacks on Samantabhadra and Akalaṅkadeva", in *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. XI (Poona, 1930), pp.155-164; Ditto.: "Śāntarākṣita, Kamalaśīla and Prabhācandra", in *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. XII (Poona, 1931), pp.81-83.

The Mīmāṃsaka Kumārila claimed that knowledge of Dharma and Adharma, which is super-sensory, is not possible through perception (pratyakṣa) or inference (anumāna), but it can be obtained only through revelation by the eternal Vedas, which are understood to be not made by a human hand (apauruṣeya). And the words of the Vedas are neither revealed by an omniscient God, nor pronounced by any human being claiming himself to be omniscient. For the Buddhist logicians, it is their category of a Yogin's super-sensory perception (yogi-jñāna or yogi-pratyakṣa) that goes with the Buddha's transcendent capacity of knowing all (sarvajñatva). Kumārila vigorously rejected the possibility of such a super-sensory perception in any human being, in the Buddha as well as in Mahāvīra. In the last part of this chapter, there are fifteen verses attacking the Buddhist concept of omniscience attributed Sāmaṭa and Yajñata, (two Mīmāṃsakas whose names may sound faked in association with the *Sāma-veda* and *Yajur-veda*). Their discussions are concerned to the cognition with form or the modes of appearance (sākāra-jñāna) and one without any such form or modes of appearance (nirākāra-jñāna).<sup>35</sup>

Thus, we have come to know from the works of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, who were active in the latter half of the eighth century, that their excellent predecessors, the founders of Buddhist logic, (who preceded them in date by one and a half centuries), Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, were the main target of Mīmāṃsaka Kumārila's attack, (not to mention the Jain attacks). It can be said that on the basis of Prof. Pathak's contributions, remarkable works have been achieved in the field of Jain studies of their Master's omniscience and comparison with the Buddhist parallel concept. To mention some of the achievements; K. N. Jayatilleke's gigantic work: *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*,<sup>36</sup> E. A. Solomon: "The Problem of Omniscience (sarvajñatva)"<sup>37</sup>, and Padmanabha Jaini's comparative analysis of Buddhist and Jain ideas about omniscience,<sup>38</sup> Chitrarekha Kher: "Some Aspects of the Concept of

35 There is a big lacuna in the this part of the Sanskrit text of the Pañjikā of Kamaśīla in the Baroda Sanskrit text of the *Tattvasamgraha*, and in Baudha Bharati edition. See Dwarikadas Shastri ed.: *Tattvasamgraha of Ācārya Shāntarakṣita*, with the Commentary 'Pañjikā' of Shri Kamalashīla, Baudha Bharati Series No.1 (Varanasi, 1968), 2 vols. So the content of the discussions held in the section could be known only through the Tibetan translation. Strangely enough the discussion on the cognition with (or without) form (ākāra) does not fit to the genuine tenets of the Mīmāṃsakas. Cf. "Any discussion regarding formlessness and the rest is of no use in regard to the omniscient person. (nirākārādi-cintā tu sarvajñe nopayujyate)." (*TS* v.3646); "The discussion that we carried on earlier, regarding the cognition being formless, etc., from the idealistic point of view, ---can serve no useful purpose on the present occasion, as against you Mīmāṃsakas who are wedded to the external world, when we are proving the existence of the omniscient person on the understanding for the sake of argument that the external world exists." in Jhā's tr. of *TSP* v.3646, p.1579.

36 K. N. Jayatilleke: *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, (Allen & Unwin, London, 1963).

37 E. A. Solomon: "The Problem of Omniscience (Sarvajñatva)", in *Adyar Library Bulletin* No.26 (Adyar, 1962), pp.36-77.

Omniscience (sarvajñatā) in Buddhism”,<sup>39</sup> N. Ram Jee Singh: *The Jaina Concept of Omniscience*<sup>40</sup>, H. M. Bhattacharyya: “Omniscience (sarvajñatā) and Metaphysics of Knowledge (adhigama) in Jainism”.<sup>41</sup> Thus, except for Th. Stcherbatsky, Gaṅganātha Jhā, and S. C. Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Prof. Pathak must be the first to be remembered for his contributions to the study of logical and epistemological aspects of the Sarvajña concept.

In 1982, Prof. Erich Frauwallner of Vienna, added one more valuable piece of information that it was not Kumārila’s *Ślokavārttika*, but, his *Bṛhaṭṭikā*, which is now lost and only available from fragments, that bore the brunt of the attacks from the Jain and the Buddhist logicians in the above-mentioned controversies.<sup>42</sup>

Here is a riddle the present author would like to propose to you, rather in jest. Could the almighty, omnipotent God deign to have hiccups? One possible answer may be as follows: Being almighty, of course, God could have hiccups as any ordinary person, with all of his human defects and limitations, can have. But, when we come to know that hiccups are caused involuntarily by some spasmodic contractions of the diaphragm, that answer may lead to a dilemma. Does God allow something to arise involuntarily in himself? Of course, not. And, then, if there were something, anything whatsoever, that God could not do, then God would not be omnipotent. Or, it may be possible for God to have hiccups in His unique way, quite different from the human way of involuntary contractions of the diaphragm. In that case, however, could the hiccups of God, which are not caused by involuntary contractions of diaphragm, be entitled to be called, and defined, as hiccups at all? Or you may answer from an existential standpoint, saying that man was made by God in such a way that he can have hiccups, while God cannot. All that is a display of divine omnipotence, divine providence. Anyway, you are living in a more sophisticated tradition in Oxford and through many years have prepared yourselves for such questions of Theodicy.

The Indian Buddhist logicians like Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, tried to solve similar problems of Theodicy. Could the Buddha know things by an epistemological process, analogous to that of human knowledge? Is it right for us to consider the structure of the Buddha’s all-knowing knowledge through the same procedure of research as that which we use to study for human brain composition? Thus we come to the boundary

38 Padmanabh S. Jain, *op. cit.* (1974); ditto.: “On the Ignorance of the Arhat”, in Buswell & Gimello ed.: *Paths to Liberation*, (Kuroda Institute, Honolulu, 1992), pp.135-145.

39 Chitrarekha Kher: “Some Aspects of the Concept of Omniscience (sarvajñatā) in Buddhism, in *Annals of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol.LIII (1973), pp. 175-182.

40 Ram Jee Singh: *The Jaina Concept of Omniscience* (L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, 1974).

41 H. M. Bhattacharyya: “Omniscience (sarvajñatā) and Metaphysic of Knowledge (adhigama) in Jainism”, in *Kaviraj Abhināndana Grantha*, (Lakhnau, 1967).

42 Erich Frauwallner: “Kumārila’s Bṛhaṭṭikā”, in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd- und Ostasiens*, Bd. VI (Wien, 1962), pp.78-90.

between Buddhism as a positive science of epistemology and Buddhism as a religion of transcendental value.

Here, on the one hand, we can recall the half-resignatory sigh of Dharmakīrti in his *Pramāṇavārttika* on being faced with the profundity of transcendental value:

“The realm of Yogins is unfathomable.  
(acintyā yogināṃ gatiḥ)”<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, the following Maṅgala-verse of Dignāga in his *Pramāṇa-samuccaya* exhibited an typical attitude of the Buddhist logicians of the sixth century of the Christian Era and later, toward the spiritual place or position that the all-knowing existence of authority could hold in their positive science of epistemology.

“Saluting him, who has become a means of valid cognition (pramāṇa-bhūta), who seeks the benefit of all living beings (jagad-dhitaṣin), who is the teacher (śāstr), the Sugata, the protector (tāyin), I shall, for the purpose of establishing the means of valid cognition, compose the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, uniting here under one head my theories scattered in many treatises.”

pramāṇa-bhūtāya jagad-dhitaṣiṇe  
praṇāmya śāstre sugatāya tāyine  
pramāṇa-siddhyai sva-matāt samuccayaḥ  
karīṣyate viprasṛtād ihaikataḥ/

(*Pramāṇasamuccaya*, quoted in *Vibhūticandra*.)<sup>44</sup>

For the Buddhists, the Buddha offers a goal and guidance for human activity that cannot be derived from ordinary means of cognition, i.e., perception and inference. However, it should be necessary to prove that he is an authority for this, for faith alone is an insufficient motive for being a Buddhist. The statement that the Buddha is a means of valid cognition is proven through reference to the means by which he has become one (pramāṇa-bhūta).<sup>45</sup>

Prof. Ernst Steinkellner's study of what can be reconstructed of Jñānaśrīmitra's *Sarvajñāsiddhi* and his study of the Tibetan equivalent word to Pramāṇa-bhūta,<sup>45</sup> and

43 *Pramāṇavārttika*, II, 532d.

44 Masaaki Hattori: *Dignāga, On Perception*, being the Pratyakṣapariccheda of Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* from the Sanskrit fragments and the Tibetan versions, translated and annotated, (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), p.518.

45 Ernst Steinkellner: “Jñānaśrīmitra's *Sarvajñāsiddhiḥ*”, in I. Lancaster ed: *Prajñāpāramitā and Related Systems, Studies in honor of Edward Conze*, (Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1977), pp. 383-393; ditto.: “Yogische Erkenntnis als Problem im Buddhismus”, in G. Oberhammer ed.: *Transzendenzforschung, Vollzugshorizont des Heils*, (Wien, 1978), pp.121-134; ditto.: “Tshad ma'i skyes bu; Meaning and Historical Significance of the Term”, in *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, Heft 11 (Wien, 1983), pp.274-284; ditto.: “The Spiritual Place of the Epistemological Tradition in Buddhism”, in *Nanto Bukkyō*, No.49 (Nara, December 1982), pp.1-18.

Prof. Tilmann Vetter's study of Dharmakīrti's epistemological theory in the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika*,<sup>46</sup> and Prof. Gudrun Bühnemann's translation and study of Ratnakīrti's *Sarvajñāsiddhi*<sup>47</sup> offer very important materials for analysis of the Indian Buddhist logicians' position on omniscience after Dignāga. Prof. David S. Ruegg's examination of the words: *pramāṇa-bhūta*, or *pramāṇa-(bhūta)-puruṣa*, *sākṣātkṛta-dharman* may also be mentioned as one of the most recent contributions.<sup>48</sup> Some names of the Japanese scholars like Hideomi Yaita,<sup>49</sup> Yushō Wakahara,<sup>50</sup> and Shigeaki Watanabe<sup>51</sup>, together with Vittorio A. van Bijlert,<sup>52</sup> and others can be mentioned here, too.

### Omniscient Being in the *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya*

Now, we come to the last, but not the least important topic. The last two chapters of the *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya* of Bhavya, junior contemporary of Dignāga. The study of the Buddhist concept of an omniscient being by the present speaker started with a Buddhist logician's work, the last chapter of the *Tattvasamgraha*: *Atindriyārthadarśi-puruṣa-parikṣā*, and then he proceeded to examinations of the last two chapters of Bhavya or Bhavaviveka's *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya-kārikā* available in Sanskrit manuscript and its (so-assumed) auto-commentary, *Tarkajvālā*, which is extant only in Tibetan translation.<sup>53</sup>

46 Tilmann Vetter: "Erkenntnisprobleme bei Dharmakīrti", in *Sitzungsberichte, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, 245-2 (Wien, 1964); ditto.: *Der Buddha und seine Lehre in Dharmakīrtis Pramāṇavārttika*, in *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, Heft 12 (Wien, 1984).

47 Gudrun Bühnemann: *Der Allwissende Buddha, ein Beweis und seine Probleme; Ratnakīrtis Sarvajñāsiddhi, übersetzt und kommentiert*, in *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, Heft 4 (Wien, 1980).

48 David Seyfort Ruegg: "Pramāṇabhūta, \*Pramāṇa(bhūta)-puruṣa, Pratyakṣadharman and Sākṣātkṛtadharman as Epithets of the Ṛṣi, Ācārya and Tathāgata in Grammatical, Epistemological and Madhyamaka Texts", in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol. LVII (London, 1994), pp.303-320.

49 Hideomi Yaita: "Dharmakīrti on the Person Free from Faults, Annotated Translation of the *Pramāṇavārttikavavṛttiḥ* ad v.218-223", in *Proceedings of the Naritasan Institute of Buddhist Studies*, No.11 (Narita, 1988), pp.433-445.

50 Yushō Wakahara: "Dharmakīrti and Śubhagupta—on the *Śruti-parikṣā* and the *Sarvajña-siddhi* —(in Japanese)", in the *Journal of the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 37, No.2, (Tokyo, March 1989), pp.187-190.

51 Shigeaki Watanabe: "Śubhagupta's *Sarvajñāsiddhikārikā*", in *Proceedings of the Naritasan Institute of Buddhist Studies*, No.10 (Narita, 1986), pp.55-74.

52 Vittorio A. van Bijlert: *Epistemology and Spiritual Authority*, in *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, Heft 20 (Wien, 1989).

53 Shinjō Kawasaki: "Criticism of the Buddhist Idea of Sarvajña as Found in the *Tattvasamgraha* (in Japanese)", in the *Journal of the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, Vol.11, No.

The following is a short history of the discovery of this precious Kārikā section of the *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya* manuscript and how it was made accessible to us.<sup>54</sup>

In summer 1936, the Indian Paṇḍit Rev. Rāhula Sāṃkrtyāyana visited Sha lu ri phug Monastery, about one mile away from the road Shigartse-to-Gyantse, and found some important Sanskrit manuscripts including Manorathanandin's commentary of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, and the *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, the *Kṣaṇabhāṅgādhyāya*, and the *Tarkajvālā*.<sup>55</sup> As he could not wait for the arrival of photo-film enough to copy all of them before the coming of snow, he began to copy the manuscript of the *Tarkajvālā* in his own hand-writing.

The Sanskrit text of the *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya* thus copied by Rev. Sāṃkrtyāyana is kept in Patna. Prof. V. V. Gokhale in Poona copied Rāhula's text in his own hand-writing<sup>56</sup> and offered it to us, together with the photos of the same Sanskrit manuscript taken by Dr. Giuseppe Tucci of IsMEO during the latter's last journey to Tibet. This material was studied by a group of scholars under the leadership of Prof. Gokhale until he passed away in December 1993. The scholars concerned in the project are Dr. Hajime Nakamura, Dr. Jikidō Takasaki, and Dr. Yasunori Ejima, Dr. Naomichi Nakada, Prof. A. F. Thurman, and others<sup>57</sup>. The present writer had a chance to read the text under Prof. Gokhale's guidance in Poona, India, in 1970, and he is now a member of that group, taking charge of the Ninth Chapter: Mīmāṃsā-tattva-nirṇaya-avatāra and the Tenth Chapter: Sarvajña-siddhi-nirdeśa of this text.

According to what Rev. Sāṃkrtyāyana reported, "The manuscript was worn out, the page numbers are gone, and ascribed to <Bhagavadviveka>. It was written in Raṃjana(?) script, with 5 or 6 lines on each leaf consisting of 24 leaves of the size 22.5×2 inches, and considered complete(?)." <sup>58</sup> Now this original manuscript was moved from Sha lu Monastery in Tibet to Beijing, and is kept with great care in the Min-zu-tu-shu-guan in Beijing. Photo-copies, newly taken from the original and arranged

2 (Tokyo, March 1963), pp.548-549; ditto: "Quotations in the Mīmāṃsā Chapter of Bhavya's *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya-kārikā*", in the *Journal of the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, Vol.22, No.2 (Tokyo, March 1974), pp.1120-1127.

54 Rāhula Sāṃkrtyāyana: "Second Search of Sanskrit Palm-leaf Mss. in Tibet (with plates)", in *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol.XXIII, Pt. 1, (Patna, 1937), pp.1-57.

55 Rev. Sāṃkrtyāyana preferred to call the manuscript as the *Tarkajvālā*, and not the *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya-kārikā*. In the colophon of the Sha lu Monastery Manuscript, it reads "*Tarkajvālā nāma sūtram samāptam*" (25a). It would suggest that, contrary to our common usage, there might be a possible tradition to designate by the title: "*the Tarkajvālā*" the *Kārikā* section of the work, and not necessarily its commentary.

56 Shrikant S. Bahulkar: "The *Madhyamaka-Hṛdaya-Kārikā* of Bhāvaiviveka: A Photographic Reproduction of Prof. V. V. Gokhale's Copy", in *Sambhāṣā: Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism*, No.15 (University of Nagoya, 1994), pp.i-iv+1-49.

57 See Bahulkar, *ibid.*, pp. ii-iii, for the list of the temporary reports by the respective collaborators.

58 Sāṃkrtyāyana, *op. cit.*, p.15; p.48.

with a short introduction, are made available by Dr. Jiang-zhong-xin.<sup>59</sup>

In the Ninth Chapter of the *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya*, Bhavya introduces some opponent's view represented by the Mīmāṃsakas. The Mīmāṃsakas put a stress on the importance of the Three Vedas (trayī) as the ultimate source of knowledge, whereas Bhavya emphasizes the role of reasoning (anumāna). Through examinations of the probans such as “puruṣatvāt” and “kṛtakatvāt”, Bhavya establishes the authority of the Buddha as the infallible source of knowledge, denying authority to the Vedas. This is one of the earliest examples of testimony of the Buddha's omniscience that preceded Dharmakīrti's argumentation.

In the Tenth Chapter, dealing with the opponent's view presented by the Nagnas or Jains, Bhavya examines the cases in the life-history of the Buddha which are often quoted as evidences for the Buddha's ignorance and imperfection. Bhavya states clearly that this discussion is based on the *Upāya-kauśalya-sūtra*<sup>60</sup> and, as we have seen above,<sup>61</sup> it presents us with a noteworthy parallel with the pattern of Sarvajña-criticism in the early Buddhist texts of the Apadāna corpus and in the Chinese Buddhist sources.

Well, this is the text which the present speaker would like to read with you on Wednesday for the forth-coming eight weeks. To read this text of Bhavya kept in Sanskrit fragments compared with the Tibetan translation could provide us with much knowledge of the Buddhist, the Jain, and the Mīmāṃsaka ideas of omniscience which preceded, in date, Dignāga and Kumārila. (When compared with the Tibetan editions kept in the Tibetan Tripiṭaka of the sDe dge edition, the sNar thang edition and the Peking edition, the Sanskrit text of the Ninth Chapter of the *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya-kārikā*, which counts 148 verses as a whole, differs in several parts.)<sup>62</sup> It can be expected to be a valuable contribution to clarification of the ideological situation of pre-Dharmakīrtian Indian epistemology.

For years after the establishment of modern Indological and Buddhological studies first initiated by Prof. Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900) and others here in Oxford,

59 Jiang Zhong-xin: “Sanskrit Tarkajvālā-Sūtra Manuscript Copy (in Chinese)”, in *Papers in Honour of Dr. Ji Xian-lin on the Occasion of his 80th Birthday*, (Jiang-xi, China, 1991), pp.212-217, with 12 pages of photo-reproduction.

60 The Tibetan version of the *Tarkajvālā* quotes the Sūtra to tell the story of the Buddha's needle wound in a Khadira thorn-forest at great length (sDe-dge edition, 325a7-325b1). The Buddha suffered the injury in his leg as the retribution of his killing of a villain menacing the lives of five hundred passengers in his past life of the ship captain. The story is noteworthy as it tells the Buddha's positive crime of murder in his past life and its retribution.

61 See Harrison, *op. cit.*, the Section of the *Upāya-kauśalya-sūtra* in the Chinese version.

62 Shinjō Kawasaki: “Discrepancies in the Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts of Bhavya's *Madhyamaka-hṛdaya-Tarkajvālā* (the IXth and Xth Chapters)”, *Tibetan Studies, Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* (Narita, 1992), pp.131-143.

various fields of study such as the Early Buddhism, the Abhidharma Literature, the *Saddharmapundarika-sūtra*, the Pure Land Thought, the Mādhyamaka, the Vijñānavāda-Yogācāra, the Tathāgata-garbhā Theory, Tāntric Buddhism, and the Buddhist Epistemology and Logic, have been explored energetically by many ardent and diligent scholars in the world. In Japan, too, where Buddhism has enjoyed a long historical and religious tradition, we could gain an important advantage from a combination of cultural traditions and scholarly achievements. The notion of an omniscient being (sarvajña), however, has as yet been paid rather little attention in Japan and remains unexplored. No systematic or historical study in a modern scholarly way has ever been undertaken to explore terms for and ideas about omniscience as an essential property of Buddhahood. A clear-sighted consideration of the idea of an omniscient being with a thorough examination following valid philological procedures, and with frequent textual references, can be expected to be a significant addition and creative contribution to the study of the history of human ideas.

Of course, this subject has so vast a scope that it may be inevitable that an attempt like ours would elicit some further systematization and elaboration in the future. When we inquire into the nature and characteristics of the Buddha's knowledge, and when we compare this with Aristotelian concept of the Infinite and Totality,<sup>63</sup> with the similar ideas of the philosophers such as Philon in Alexandria, with the theological discussions of the Mediaeval Period in Europe, or with the mathematical treatments by modern logical positivists,<sup>64</sup> the universal importance attached to investigate the concept of omniscience may be clearly observed. In this way, we can hope for future developments in the comparative study of similar important philosophical ideas.

In this connection, a paper by Prof. Roy W. Perrett of Massey University, New Zealand: "Omniscience in Indian Philosophy of Religion" can be mentioned as a new attempt to offer a general characterization of the concept of omniscience in both Western and Indian philosophy of religion.<sup>65</sup> It is filled with valuable suggestions referring to the recent works of Peter Geach,<sup>66</sup> Richard Swineburne,<sup>67</sup> and Jonathan L.

63 "The infinite turns out to be the contrary of what it is said to be. It is not what has nothing outside it that is infinite, but what always has something outside it. ... Thus something is infinite if, taking it quantity by quantity, we can always take something outside. On the other hand, what has nothing outside it is complete and whole. For thus we define the whole—that from which nothing is wanting, as a whole man or box. ", Aristotle : *Physics 206b34-207a10* (Jonathan Barnes tr.): *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Vol. 1 (Princeton, 1984), p.352.

64 Roland Puccetti: "Is Omniscience Possible?", *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, Vol.41, (1963), pp. 92-93; Norman Kretzmann: "Omniscience and Immutability", in *The Journal of Philosophy*, No. 63 (1966); Hector-Neri Castañeda: "Omniscience and Indexical Reference", in *The Journal of Philosophy*, (1962).

65 Roy W. Perrett: "Omniscience in Indian Philosophy of Religion", in Roy W. Perrett ed.: *Indian Philosophy of Religion* (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1989), pp.125-142.

66 Peter Geach: *Providence and Evil* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977).

Kvanvig,<sup>68</sup> although the author's Asian sources for the time being are limited to the works translated into English.

Just a few words on the significance of a study of omniscience for present-day society.

Modern society in the world, with its full-fledged development and progress, including Japan, does not require anymore the existence of an omniscient being in any form. On the contrary, so-called modernity has evolved from the negation of an Absolute Being or God that claims Itself to be omniscient or omnipotent. Being secular, demystifying the sacred, excluding any pre-suppositions concerning the all-knowing or almighty, but rather, being agnostic and always holding a standpoint of evaluating things and matters with a notion that all values are subjective and relative, man disposes of cases, one by one, when necessary, realistically and scientifically. Keeping to this procedure, the present-day civilization of science and modernity has reached high achievements in the recent four hundred years since René Descartes. By so doing, we expect this procedure of modern scientificism to last forever; that although we have no omniscient being to rely upon, we may come to know everything at the end of this procedure. There is nothing left unknown by this process of scientific treatment. Thus, with this easy toying with progressive gnosticism, abandoning a dogmatic attitude, we come to assume another dogmatic attitude, that is, a unilateral propensity for simple scientificism.

But now, on the eve of the twenty-first century, mankind could no longer expect much from scientificism. A simple faith in scientific progress could no longer generate such an optimism about the future of mankind as it hitherto succeeded in generating. Already we have lost sight of the Great God with all his mighty attributes. At the same time, with the end of the Cold War, we could no longer hold aloft the banner of ideology. Then, on what could we rely as our support, to order our values and goals? Losing the balance between the mind and the body, the mental and the physical, this troubled and alienated mankind is confronted with some recent upheavals of religious revivalism, that is, radical and fanatical fundamentalism in one area of the world or another, and an apocalyptic occultism, with its anti-social isolationism, out of despair, pushed it to the dangerous extreme of spewing a nerve-suffocating gas into the centre of Tokyo.

We must proceed beyond the time-worn dichotomy between science and religion. Examining the characteristics of all-knowing ability that transcends the category of knowledge, we come to ponder deeply on the most fundamental aspect of human wisdom. What for, and how?

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67 Richard Swinburne: *The Coherence of Theism*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977).

68 Jonathan L. Kvanvig: *The Possibility of an All-Knowing God*, (Macmillan, London, 1986).

The present speaker would like to close his speech with a famous phrase from Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*:

“That which is longed for as the valid authority of knowledge  
is not the one who knows all indiscriminately;  
Rather, we wish to have the one who tells us  
the truth of properly discerning things to be forsaken,  
together with the means of relinquishment  
and things to be cultivated.”

/heyopadeya-tattvasya hāny-upāyasya vedakaḥ/

/yaḥ pramāṇam asaḥ iṣṭo na tu sarvasya vedakaḥ//<sup>69</sup>

The Buddha is always perfect in his intention not to teach anything wrong or deceitful. He is perfect in his attainments of his own objectives as well as of those of other beings, that is, he remains always alert to the needs of all other living beings. That is his omniscience, the quality of his perfection in knowledge.<sup>70</sup>

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69 *Pramāṇavārttika*, I, 32.

70 *Udānavarga*, I, 2.