

CHAPTER 13

Essays on the Bhagwat Gita: Philosophic Defence of Counter- Revolution: Krishna and His Gita

The first page of 'Essays on the Bhagvat Gita' is autographed by Dr. Ambedkar, Next 42 pages consist of analytical notes on Viral Parva and Uddyog Parva including the table of contents on this subject. The table of contents is printed in the schemes. This file contains two typed copies of an essay entitled 'Philosophic Defence of Counter-Revolution—Krishna and His Gita'. The last sentence of this essay is left incomplete. The total number of typed pages of this essay is 40 only. The notes on Viral Parva & Udyog Parva are printed in the next chapters.—Editors.

What is the place of the Bhagwat Gita in the literature of ancient India? Is it a gospel of the Hindu Religion in the same way as the Bible is of the Christian Religion? The Hindus have come to regard it as their gospel. If it is a gospel, what does it really teach? What is the doctrine it stands for? The variety of answers given to this question by students competent to speak on the subject is really bewildering. Bohtlingk¹ says:

“The Gita contains by the side of many high and beautiful thoughts, not only a few weak points; contradictions (which the commentators have tried to pass over as excusable), repetitions, exaggerations, absurdities and loathsome points.”

“Hopkins² speaks of the Bhagvat Gita as a characteristic work of the Hindu Literature in its sublimity as in its puerilities, in its logic as in its want of it; an ill-assorted cabinet of primitive philosophical opinions.”

In his judgment:

¹ Quoted by Garbe in his Introduction to the Bhagvat Gita (Indian Antiquary 1918 Supplement).

². Religion of India pp. 390-400.

“Despite its occasional power and music exaltation, the Divine song in its present state as a poetical production is unsatisfactory. The same thing is said over again, and the contradictions in phraseology and in meaning are as numerous as the repetitions, so that one is not surprised to find it described as “the wonderful song, which causes the hair to stand on end.”

Holtzman¹ says:

“We have before us (in the Bhagvat Gita) a Vishnuite revision of a pantheistic poem.”

Garbe² observes:

“The whole character of the poem in its design and execution is preponderatingly theistic. A personal God Krishna stands forth in the form of a human hero, expounds his doctrine, enjoins, above all things, on his listener, along with the performance of his duties, loving faith in Him and self-surrender:..... And by the side of this God—who is) delineated as personally as possible, and who dominates the whole poem—stands out frequently the impersonal neutral Brahman, the Absolute, as the highest principle. At one time Krishna says that He is the sole Highest God who has created the world and all beings and rules over it all; at another time, he expounds the Vedantic doctrine of Brahman and *maya*—the Cosmic Illusion, and expounds as the highest goal of human being that he be freed from the World-Illusion and become Brahman. These two doctrines—the theistic and the pantheistic—are mixed up with each other, and follow each other, sometimes quite unconnected and sometimes loosely connected. And it is not the case that the one is represented as a lower, exoteric, (Text p. 9) and, (p.) as the higher esoteric doctrine. It is nowhere taught that the Theism is a preliminary step to the knowledge of the reality or that it is its symbol, and that the pantheism of the Vedanta is the (ultimate) reality itself; but the two beliefs are treated of almost throughout as though there was indeed no difference between them, either verbal or real.”

Mr. Telang says:³

“There are several passages in the Gita which it is not very easy to reconcile with one another; and no attempt is made to harmonise them. Thus, for example, in stanza 16 of Chapter VII, Krishna divides his devotees into four classes, one of which consists of ‘men of knowledge’, whom, Krishna says, he considers ‘as his own self. It would probably be difficult to imagine any expression which

¹ Quoted by Garbe.

² Introduction to Bhagvat Gita.

³ Bhagvat Gita (S.E.B.) Introduction p. II.

could indicate higher esteem. Yet in stanza 46 of chapter VI, we have it laid down, that the devotee is superior not only to the mere performer of penances, but even to the men of knowledge. The commentators betray their gnostic bias by interpreting 'men of knowledge' in this latter passage to mean those who have acquired erudition in the Shastras and their significations. This is not an interpretation to be necessarily rejected. But there is in it a certain twisting of words, which, under the circumstances here, I am not inclined to accept. And on the other hand, it must not be forgotten, that the implications fairly derivable from Chapter IV, stanza 39 (pp. 62, 63), would seem to be rather than knowledge is superior to devotion—is the higher stage to be reached by means of devotion as the stepping stone. In another passage again at Gita, Chapter XII, stanza 12, concentration is preferred to knowledge, which also seems to me to be irreconcilable with Chapter VII, stanza 16. Take still another instance. At Gita, Chapter B stanza 15, it is said, that 'Lord receives the sin or merit of none.' Yet at Chapter V, stanza 24 Krishna calls himself 'the Lord and enjoyer,' of all sacrifices and penances. How, it may be well asked, can the Supreme Being 'enjoy that which he does not even receive?' Once more at Chapter X, stanza 29, Krishna declares that 'none is hateful to me, none dear.' And yet the remarkable verse at the close of Chapter XII seem to stand in pointblank contradiction to that declaration. There through a most elaborate series of stanzas, the burden of Krishna's eloquent sermon is 'such a one is dear to me.' And again in those fine verses, where Krishna winds up his Divine Law, he similarly tells Arjuna, that he, Arjuna, is 'dear' to Krishna. And Krishna also speaks of that devotee as 'dear' to him, who may publish the mystery of the Gita among those who references Supreme Being.¹ And yet again, how are we to reconcile the same passage about none being 'hateful or dear' to Krishna, with his own words at Chapter XVI, stanza 18 and following stanzas? The language used in describing the 'demoniac' people there mentioned is not remarkable for sweetness towards them, while Krishna says positively, 'I hurl down such people into demoniac wombs, whereby they go down into misery and the vilest condition.' These persons are scarcely characterized with accuracy 'as neither hateful nor dear' to Krishna. It seems to me, that all these are real inconsistencies in the Gita, not such, perhaps, as might not be explained away, but such, I think, as indicate a mind making guesses at truth, as Professor Max Muller puts it, rather than a mind elaborating a complete and organized

¹And see, too, Chapter VII, stanza 17, where the man of knowledge is declared to be 'dear' to Krishna.

system of philosophy. There is not even a trace of consciousness on the part of the author that these inconsistencies exist. And the contexts of the various passages indicate, in my judgment, that a half-truth is struck out here and another half-truth there, with special reference to the special subject then under discussion; but no attempt is made to organize the various half-truths which are apparently incompatible, into a symmetrical whole, where the apparent inconsistencies might possibly vanish altogether in the higher synthesis."

These are the views of what might be called modern scholars. Turning to the view of the orthodox Pandits, we again find a variety of views. One view is that the Bhagvat is not a sectarian book, it pays equal respect to the three ways of salvation (1) Karma marga or the path of works (2) Bhakti marga or the path of devotion and (3) Jnana marga or the path of knowledge and preaches the efficacy of all three as means of salvation. In support of their contention that the Gita respects all the three ways of salvation and accepts the efficacy of each one of them, the Pandits point out that of the 18 Chapters of the Bhagvat Gita, Chapters 1 to 6 are devoted to the preaching of the Jnana marga, Chapters 7 to 12 to the preaching of Karma marga and Chapters 12 to 18 to the preaching of Bhakti marga and say that this equal distribution of its Chapters shows that the Gita upholds all the three modes of salvation.

Quite contrary to the view of the Pandits is the view of Shankaracharya and Mr. Tilak, both of whom must be classed amongst orthodox writers. Shankaracharya held the view that the Bhagvat Gita preached that the Jnana marga was the only true way of salvation. Mr. Tilak¹ does not agree with the views of any of the other scholars. He repudiates the view that the Gita is a bundle of inconsistencies. He does not agree with the Pandits who say that the Bhagvat Gita recognizes all the three ways of salvation. Like Shankaracharya he insists that the Bhagvat Gita has a definite doctrine to preach. But he differs from Shankaracharya and holds that the Gita teaches Karma Yoga and not Jnana Yoga.

It cannot but be a matter of great surprise to find such a variety of opinion as to the message which the Bhagvat Gita preaches. One is forced to ask why there should be such divergence of opinion among scholars? My answer to this question is that scholars have gone on a false errand. They have gone on a search for the message of the Bhagvat Gita on the assumption that it is a gospel as the Koran, the Bible or the Dhammapada is. In my opinion this assumption is quite

¹ See His Gita Rahasya 2nd editions vol. II. Chapter XIV. *passim*.

a false assumption. The Bhagvat Gita is not a gospel and it can therefore have no message and it is futile to search for one. The question will no doubt be asked: What is the Bhagvat Gita if it is not a gospel? My answer is that the Bhagvat Gita is neither a book of religion nor a treatise on philosophy. What the Bhagvat Gita does is to defend certain dogmas of religion on philosophic grounds. If on that account anybody wants to call it a book of religion or a book of philosophy he may please himself. But essentially it is neither. It uses philosophy to defend religion. My opponents will not be satisfied with a bare statement of view. They would insist on my proving my thesis by reference to specific instances. It is not at all difficult. Indeed it is the easiest task.

The first instance one comes across in reading the Bhagvat Gita is the justification of war. Arjuna had declared himself against the war, against killing people for the sake of property. Krishna offers a philosophic defence of war and killing in war. This philosophic defence of war will be found in Chapter II verses 11 to 28. The philosophic defence of war offered by the Bhagvat Gita proceeds along two lines of argument. One line of argument is that anyhow the world is perishable and man is mortal. Things are bound to come to an end. Man is bound to die. Why should it make any difference to the wise whether man dies a natural death or whether he is done to death as a result of violence? Life is unreal, why shed tears because it has ceased to be? Death is inevitable, why bother how it has resulted? The second line of argument in justification of war is that it is a mistake to think that the body and the soul are one. They are separate. Not only are the two quite distinct but they differ in-as-much as the body is perishable while the soul is eternal and imperishable. When death occurs it is the body that dies. The soul never dies. Not only does it never die but air cannot dry it, fire cannot burn it, and a weapon cannot cut it. It is therefore wrong to say that when a man is killed his soul is killed. What happens is that his body dies. His soul discards the dead body as a person discards his old clothes—wears a new ones and carries on. As the soul is never killed, killing a person can never be a matter of any movement. War and killing need therefore give no ground to remorse or to shame, so argues the Bhagvat Gita.

Another dogma to which the Bhagvat Gita comes forward to offer a philosophic defence is Chaturvarnya. The Bhagvat Gita, no doubt, mentions that the Chaturvarnya is created by God and therefore sacrosanct. But it does not make its validity dependent on it. It offers a philosophic basis to the theory of Chaturvarnya by linking it to the theory of innate, inborn qualities in men. The fixing of the Varna of

¹ And see, too, Chapter VII, stanza 17, where the man of knowledge is declared to be 'dear' to Krishna.

man is not an arbitrary act says the Bhagvat Gita. But it is fixed according to his innate, inborn qualities.¹

The third dogma for which the Bhagvat Gita offers a philosophic defence is the Karma marga. By Karma marga the Bhagvat Gita means the performance of the observances, such as Yajnas as a way to salvation. The Bhagvat Gita most stands out for the Karma marga throughout and is a great upholder of it. The line it takes to defend Karma yoga is by removing the excrescences which had grown upon it and which had made it appear quite ugly. The first excrescence was blind faith. The Gita tries to remove it by introducing the principle of Buddhi yoga² as a necessary condition for Karma yoga. Become Stihitaprajna i.e., 'Befitted with Buddhi' there is nothing wrong in the performance of Karma kanda. The second excrescence on the Karma kanda was the selfishness which was the motive behind the performance of the Karmas. The Bhagvat Gita attempts to remove it by introducing the principle of *Anasakti* i.e., performance of karma without any attachment for the fruits of the *Karma*.³ Founded in Buddhi yoga and dissociated from selfish attachment to the fruits of Karma what is wrong with the dogma of Karma kanda? this is how the Bhagvat Gita defends the Karma marga.⁴ It would be quite possible to continue in this strain, to pick up other dogmas and show how the Gita comes forward to offer a philosophic defence in their support where none existed before. But this could be done only if one were to write a treatise on the Bhagvat Gita. it is beyond the scope of a chapter the main purpose of which is to assign to the Bhagvat Gita its proper place in the ancient Indian literature. I have therefore selected the most important dogmas just to illustrate my thesis.

Two other questions are sure to be asked in relation to my thesis. Whose are the Dogmas for which the Bhagvat Gita offers this philosophical defence? Why did it become necessary for the Bhagvat Gita to defend these Dogmas?

To begin with the first question, the dogmas which the Gita defends are the dogmas of counter-revolution as put forth in the Bible of counter-revolution namely Jaimini's Purvamimamsa. There ought to be no difficulty in accepting this proposition. If there is any it is largely due to wrong meaning attached to the word Karma yoga. Most writers on the Bhagvat Gita translate the word Karma yoga as 'action' and the word Janga yoga, as 'knowledge' and proceed to discuss the Bhagvat Gita as though it was engaged in comparing and contrasting

¹ Bhagvat Gita IV. 13.

² Bhagvat Gita II. 39-53

³ Bhagvat Gita II. 47.

⁴ This is well summed up in Bhagvat Gita II. 48.

knowledge versus action in a generalized form. This is quite wrong. The Bhagvat Gita is not concerned with any general, philosophical discussion of action versus knowledge. As a matter of fact, the Gita is concerned with the particular and not with the general. By Karma yoga or action Gita means the dogmas contained in Jaimini's Karma kanda and by Jnana yoga or knowledge it means the dogmas contained in Badarayana's Brahma Sutras. That the Gita in speaking of Karma is not speaking of activity or inactivity, quieticism or energism, in general terms but religious acts and observances cannot be denied by anyone who has read the Bhagvat Gita. It is to life the Gita from the position of a party pamphlet engaged in a controversy on small petty points and make it appear as though it was a general treatise on matters of high philosophy that this attempt is made to inflate the meaning of the words Karma and Jnana and make them words of general import. Mr. Tilak is largely to be blamed for this trick of patriotic Indians. The result has been that these false meanings have misled people into believing that the Bhagvat Gita is an independent self-contained book and has no relation to the literature that has preceded it. But if one were to keep to the meaning of the word Karma yoga as one finds it in the Bhagvat Gita itself one would be convinced that in speaking of Karma yoga the Bhagvat Gita is referring to nothing but the dogmas of Karma kanda as propounded by Jaimini which it tries to renovate and strengthen.

To take up the second question: Why did the Bhagvat Gita feel it necessary to defend the dogmas of counter-revolution? To my mind the answer is very clear. It was to save them from the attack of Buddhism that the Bhagvat Gita came into being. Buddha preached non-violence. He not only preached it but the people at large—except the Brahmins—had accepted it as the way of life. They had acquired a repugnance to violence. Buddha preached against Chaturvarnya. He used some of the most offensive similes in attacking the theory of Chaturvarnya. The frame work of Chaturvarnya had been broken. The order of Chaturvarnya had been turned upside down. Shudras and women could become sannyasis, a status which counter-revolution had denied them. Buddha had condemned the Karma kanda and the Yajnas. He condemned them on the ground of *Himsa* or violence. He condemned them also on the ground that the motive behind them was a selfish desire to obtain bonus. What was the reply of the counter-revolutionaries to this attack? Only this. These things were ordained by the Vedas, the Vedas were infallible, therefore the dogmas were not to be questioned. In the Buddhist age, which was the most enlightened and the most rationalistic age India has known, dogmas resting on

such silly, arbitrary, unrationalistic and fragile foundations could hardly stand. People who had come to believe in non-violence as a principle of life and had gone so far as to make it a rule of life—How could they be expected to accept the dogma that the Kshatriya may kill without sinning because the Vedas say that it is his duty to kill ? People who had accepted the gospel of social equality and who were remaking society on the basis of each one according to his merits—how could they accept the chaturvarnya theory of gradation, and separation of man based on birth simply because the Vedas say so ? People who had accepted the doctrine of Buddha that all misery in society is due to Tanha or what Tawny calls acquisitive instinct—how could they accept the religion which deliberately invited people to obtain boons by sacrifices merely because there is behind it the authority of the Vedas? There is no doubt that under the furious attack of Buddhism, Jaimini's counter-revolutionary dogmas were tottering and would have collapsed had they not received the support which the Bhagvat Gita gave them. The philosophic defence of the counter-revolutionary doctrines given by the Bhagvat Gita is by no means impregnable. The philosophic defence offered by the Bhagvat Gita of the Kshatriya's duty to kill is to say the least puerile. To say that killing is no killing because what is killed is the body and not the soul is an unheard of defence of murder. This is one of the doctrines which make some people say that the doctrines make one's hair stand on their end. If Krishna were to appear as a lawyer acting for a client who is being tried for murder and pleaded the defence set out by him in the Bhagvat Gita there is not the slightest doubt that he would be sent to the lunatic asylum. Similarly childish is the defence of the Bhagvat Gita of the dogma of chaturvarnya. Krishna defends it on the basis of the Guna theory of the Sankhya. But Krishna does not seem to have realized what a fool he has made of himself. In the chaturvarnya there are four Varnas. But the gunas according to the Sankhya are only three. How can a system of four varnas be defended on the basis of a philosophy which does not recognise more than three varnas? The whole attempt of the Bhagvat Gita to offer a philosophic defence of the dogmas of counterrevolution is childish—and does not deserve a moment's serious thought. None-the-less there is not the slightest doubt that without the, help of the Bhagvat Gita the counter-revolution would have died out, out of sheer stupidity of its dogmas. Mischievous as it may seem, to the revolutionaries the part played by the Bhagvat Gita, there is no doubt that it resuscitated counter-revolution and if the counterrevolution lives even today, it is entirely due to the plausibility of the philosophic defence which it received from the Bhagvat Gita— anti-

Veda and anti-Yajna. Nothing can be a greater mistake than this. As will appear from other portions of the Bhagvat Gita that it is not against the authority of the vedas and shastras (XVI, 23, 24; XVII, 11,13, 24). Nor is it against the sanctity of the yajnas (III. 9-15). It upholds the virtue of both. There is therefore no difference between Jaimini's Purva Mimansa and the Bhagvat Gita. If anything, the Bhagvat Gita is a more formidable supporter of counter-revolution than Jaimini's Purva Mimansa could have ever been. It is formidable because it seeks to give to the doctrines of counter-revolution that philosophic and therefore permanent basis which they never had before and without which they would never have survived. Particularly formidable than Jaimini's Purva Mimansa is the philosophic support which the Bhagvat Gita gives to the central doctrine of counter-revolution—namely Chaturvarnya. The soul of the Bhagvat Gita seems to be the defence of Chaturvarnya and securing its observance in practice, Krishna does not merely rest content with saying that Chaturvarnya is based on Guna-karma but he goes further and issues two positive injunctions. The first injunction is contained in Chapter III verse 26. In this Krishna says: that a wise man should not by counter propaganda create a doubt in the mind of an ignorant person who is follower of Karma kand which of course includes the observance of the rules of Chaturvarnya. In other words, you must not agitate or excite people to rise in rebellion against the theory of Karma kand and all that it includes. The second injunction is laid down in Chapter XVIII verses 41-48. In this Krishna tells that every one do the duty prescribed for his Varna and no other and warns those who worship him and are his devotees that they will not obtain salvation by mere devotion but by devotion accompanied by observance of duty laid down for his Varna. In short, a Shudra however great he may be as a devotee will not get salvation if he has transgressed the duty of the Shudra—namely to live and die in the service of the higher classes. The second part of my thesis is that the essential function of the Bhagvat gita to give new support to Jaimini at least those portions of it which offer philosophic defence of Jaimini's doctrines—has become to be written after Jaimini's Purva Mimansa had been promulgated. The third part of my thesis is that this philosophic defence of the Bhagvat Gita, of the doctrines of counter-revolution became necessary because of the attack to which they were subjected by the revolutionary and rationalistic thought of Buddhism.

I must now turn to the objections that are likely to be raised against the validity of my thesis. I see one looming large before me. I shall be told that I am assuming that the Bhagvat Gita is posterior in time to

Buddhism and to Jaimini's Purva Mimansa and that this assumption has no warrant behind it. I am aware of the fact that my thesis runs counter to the most cherished view of Indian scholars all of whom, seem to be more concerned in fixing a very ancient date to the composition of the Bhagvat Gita far anterior to Buddhism and to Jaimini than in finding out what is the message of the Bhagvat Gita and what value it has as a guide to man's life. This is particularly the case with Mr. Telang and Mr. Tilak. But as Garbe¹ observes "To Telang, as to every Hindu—how much so ever enlightened—it is an article of faith to believe in so high an antiquity of the Bhagvat Gita and where such necessities are powerful criticism indeed comes to an end."

In the words of Prof. Garbe:

"The task of assigning a date to the Gita has been recognized by every one who has earnestly tried to solve the problem, as being very difficult; and the difficulties grow (all the more) if the problem is presented two fold, viz., to determine as well the age of the original Gita as also of its revision. I am afraid that generally speaking, we shall succeed in arriving, not at any certainties, but only at probabilities in this matter."

What are the probabilities? I have no doubt that the probabilities are in favour of my thesis. Indeed so far as I can see there is nothing against it. In examining this question, I propose first to advance direct evidence from the Gita itself showing that it has been composed after Jaimini's Purva Mimansa and after Buddhism.

Chapter III verses 9-13 of the Bhagvat Gita have a special significance. In this connection it is true that the Bhagvat Gita does not refer to Jaimini by name: nor does it mention Mimansa by name. But is there any doubt that in Chapter III verses 9-18 the Bhagvat Gita is dealing with the doctrines formulated by Jaimini in his Purva Mimansa? Even Mr. Tilak² who believes in the antiquity of the Bhagvat Gita has to admit that here the Gita is engaged in the examination of the Purva Mimansa doctrines. There is another way of presenting this argument. Jaimini preaches pure and simple Karma yoga. The Bhagvat Gita on the other hand preaches *anasakti* karma. Thus the Gita preaches a doctrine which is fundamentally modified. Not only the Bhagvat Gita modifies the Karma yoga but attacks the upholders of pure and simple Karma yoga in somewhat severe terms.³ If the Gita is prior to Jaimini one would expect Jaimini to take note of this attack of the Bhagvat Gita and reply to it. But we do not find any; reference in Jaimini to this *anasakti* karma yoga of the Bhagvat Gita.

¹ Introduction (Indian Antiquary Supplement) p. 30.

² Gita Rahasya Vol. II. 916-922.

³ Bhagvat Gita II. 42-16 and XVIII 66.

Why? The only answer is that this modification came after Jaimini and not before—which is simply another way of saying that the Bhagvat Gita was composed after Jaimini's Purva Mimansa.

If the Bhagvat Gita does not mention Purva Mimansa it does mention by name the Brahma Sutras¹ of Badarayana. This reference to Brahma Sutras is a matter of great significance for it furnishes direct evidence for the conclusion that the Gita is later than the Brahma Sutras.

Mr. Tilak² admits that the reference to the Brahma Sutras is a clear and definite reference to the treatise of that name which we now have. It may be pointed out that Mr. Telang³ discusses the subject in a somewhat cavalier fashion by saying that the treatise "Brahma Sutras" referred to in the Bhagvat Gita is different from the present treatise which goes by that name. He gives no evidence for so extraordinary a proposition but relies on the Conjectural statement of Mr. Weber⁴—given in a foot-note of his Treatise in Indian Literature, again without any evidence—that the mention of Brhma Sutras in the Bhagvat Gita "may be taken as an appellative rather than as a proper name." It would not be fair to attribute any particular motives to Mr. Telang for the view he has taken on this point. But there is nothing unfair in saying that Mr. Telang³ shied at admitting the reference to Brahma Sutra because he saw that Weber had on the authority of Winternitz assigned 500 A.D. to the composition of the Brahma Sutras, which would have destroyed his cherished theory regarding the antiquity of the Bhagvat Gita. There is thus ample internal evidence to support the conclusion that the Gita was composed after Jaimini's Purva Mimansa and Badarayana's Brahma Sutras.

Is the Bhagvat Gita anterior to Buddhism ? the question was raised by Mr. Telang:

"We come now to another point. What is the position of the Gita in regard to the great reform of Sakya Muni? The question is one of much interest, having regard particularly to the remarkable coincidences between Buddhistic doctrines and the doctrines of the Gita to which we have drawn attention in the footnotes to our translation. But the materials for deciding the question are unhappily not forth coming. Professor Wilson, indeed, thought that there was

¹ Bhagvat Gita XIII. 4

² Gita Rahasya II. p. 749.

³ Bhagvat Gita (S.B.E.) Introduction p. 31.

⁴ History of Indian Literature p. 242 f.n.

⁵ On the other hand, it may be said that Mr. Tilak readily admitted the reference because it was his opinion that Brahma Sutras were a very ancient treatise—see Gita Rahasya Vol. II.

an allusion to Buddhism in the Gita.¹ But his idea was based on a confusion between the Buddhists and the Charvakas or materialists.² Failing that allusion, we have nothing very tangible but the unsatisfactory 'negative argument' based on mere non-mention of Buddhism in the Gita. That argument is not quite satisfactory to my own mind, although, as I have elsewhere pointed out,³ some of the ground occupied by the Gita is common to it with Buddhism, and although various previous thinkers are alluded to directly or indirectly in the Gita. There is, however, one view of the facts of this question, which appears to me to corroborate the conclusion deducible by means of the negative argument here referred to. The main points on which Buddha's protest against Brahmanism rests, seem to be the true authority of the Vedas and the true view of the differences of caste. On most points of doctrinal speculation. Buddhism is still but one aspect of the older Brahmanism⁴. The various coincidences to which we have drawn attention show that, if there is need to show it. Well now, on both these points, the Gita, while it does not go the whole length which Buddha goes, itself embodies a protest against the views current about the time of its composition. The Gita does not, like Buddhism, absolutely reject the Vedas, but it shelves them. The Gita does not totally root out caste. It places caste on a less untenable basis. One of two hypothesis therefore presents itself as a rational theory of these facts. Either the Gita and Buddhism were alike the outward manifestation of one and the same spiritual upheaval which shook to its centre the current religion, the Gita being the earlier and less thorough going form of it; or Buddhism having already begun to tell on Brahmanism, the Gita was an attempt to bolster it up, so to say, at its least weak points, the weaker ones being altogether abandoned. I do not accept the latter alternative, because I cannot see any indication in the Gita of an attempt to compromise with a powerful attack on the old Hindu system while the fact that, though strictly orthodox, the author of the Gita still undermines the authority, as unwisely venerated, of the Vedic revelation; and the further fact, that in doing this, he is doing what others also had done before him or about his time; go, in my opinion, a considerable way towards fortifying the results of the negative argument already set forth. To me Buddhism is perfectly intelligible as one outcome of that play of thought on high

¹ Essays on Sanskrit Literature. Vo. III p. 150.

² See our remarks on this point in the Introductory Essay to our Gita in verse p. II seq.

³ Introduction to Gita in English verse p. v. seq.

⁴ Cr. Max Muller's Hibbert Lectures, p. 137 Webet's Indian Literature, pp. 288, 289: and Rhys Davids' excellent little volume on Buddhism, p. 151; and see also p. 83 of Mr. Davids' book.

spiritual topics, which in its other, and as we may say, less thorough going, manifestation we see in the Upanishads and the Gita¹.”

I have quoted this passage in full because it is typical of all Hindu scholars. Everyone of them is most reluctant to admit that the Bhagvat Gita is anyway influenced by Buddhism and is ever ready to deny that the Gita has borrowed anything from Buddhism. It is the attitude of Prof. Radhakrishnan and also of Tilak. Where there is any similarity in thought between the Bhagvat Gita and Buddhism too strong and too close to be denied, the argument is that it is borrowed from the Upanishads. It is typical of the mean mentality of the counterrevolutionaries not to allow any credit to Buddhism on any account.

The absurdity of these views must shock all those who have made a comparative study of the Bhagvat Gita and the Buddhist Suttas. For if it is true to say that Gita is saturated with Sankhya philosophy it is far more true to say that the Gita is full of Buddhist ideas.² The similarity between the two is not merely in ideas but also in language. A few illustrations will show how true it is.

The Bhagvat Gita discusses Bramha-Nirvana.³ The steps by which one reaches Bramha. Nirvana are stated by the Bhagvat Gita to be (1) Shraddha (Faith in oneself); (2) Vyavasaya (Firm determination); (3) Smriti (Remembrance of the goal); (4) Samadhi (Earnest contemplation) and (5) Prajna (Insight or True Knowledge). From where has the Gita borrowed this Nirvana theory? Surely it is not borrowed from the Upanishads. For no Upanishad even mentions the word Nirvana. The whole idea is peculiarly Buddhist and is borrowed from Buddhism. Anyone who has any doubt on the point may compare this Bramha-Nirvana of the Bhagvat Gita with the Buddhist conception of Nirvana as set out in the Mahapari-nibbana Sutta. It will be found that they are the same which the Gita has laid down for Bramha-Nirvana. Is it not a fact that the Bhagvat Gita has borrowed the entire conception of Brmhma Nirvana instead of Nirvana for no other reason except to conceal the fact of its having stolen it from Buddhism ?

Take another illustration. In Chapter VII verses 13-20 there is a discussion as to who is dear to Krishna; one who has knowledge, or one who performs karma or one who is a devotee. Krishna says that the Devotees is dear to him but adds that he must have the true marks

¹ Cr. Weber's History of Indian Literature, p. 285. In Mr. Davids' Buddhism, p. 94 we have a noteworthy extract from a standard Buddhistic work, touching the existence of the soul. Compare that with the corresponding doctrine in the Gita. It will be found that the two are at one in rejecting the identity of the soul with the senses &c. The Gita then goes on to admit a soul separate from these. Buddhism rejects that also, and sees nothing but the senses.

² On this point compare Bhagvat Gita by S. D. Budhiraja M.A.. L.L.B.. Chief Judge, Kashmere. At every point the author has attempted to draw attention to textual similarities between the Gita and Buddhism.

³ Max Muller Mahapari-Nibbana Sutta p. 63.

of a Devotee. What is the charcter of a true Devotee ? According to Krishna the true devotee is one who practices (1) Maitri; (loving Kindness); (2) Karuna (compassion); (3) Mudita (sympathizing joy) and (4) Upeksha (unconcernedness). From where has the Bhagvate Gita borrowed these qualifications of a perfect Devotee ? Here again, the source is Buddhism. Those who want proof may compare the Mahapadana Sutta,¹ and the Tevijja Sutta² where Buddha has preached what Bhavanas (mental attitude) are necessary for one to cherish for the training of the heart. This comparison will show that the whole ideology is borrowed from Buddhism and that too word for word.

Take a third illustration. In chapter XIII the Bhagvat Gita descusses the subject of Kshetra-Kshetrajna. In verses 7-11 Krishna points out what is knowledge and what is ignorance in the following language:

“Pridelessness (Humility), Unpretentiousness, Non-injury or Harmlessness, Forgiveness, Straight-forwardness, (uprightness), Devotion to Preceptor, Purity, Steadiness, Self-restraint, Desirelessness towards objects of sense, absence of Egoism, Reflection on the suffering and evil of Birth, Death, decrepitude and disease, Non-attachment, Non-identification of oneself with regard to son, wife and home and the rest, Constant even-mindedness on approach of both (what is) agreeable and (what is) disagreeable unswerving devotion to Me with undivided meditation of Me, Resort to sequestered spots (contemplation, concentration, in solitude), Distaste for the society of worldly men, Incessant application to the knowledge relating to self, Perception or realisation of the true purport of the knowledge of the Tattvas (Samkhya Philosophy), all this is called ‘knowledge’; what is Ajnana (Ignorance) which is the reverse thereof.”

Can anyone who knows anything of the Gospel of Buddha deny that the Bhagvat Gita has not in these stanzas reproduced word for word the main doctrines of Buddhism?

In chapter XIII verses 5, 6, 18, 19, the Bhagvat Gita gives a new metaphorical interpretation of karmas under various heads (1) Yajnas (sacrifices); (2) Dana (Gifts); (3) Tapas (penances); (4) Food and (5) Svadhyaya (Vedic study). What is the source of this new interpretation of old ideas ? Compare with this what Buddha is reported to have said in the Majjhina Nikaya I, 286 Sutta XVI. Can anyone doubt that what Krishna says in verses 5, 6, 18, 19 of chapter XVII is a verbatim reproduction of the words of Buddha?

¹ See Mahapadana Sutta p.

² Tevijja Sutta p.

These are only a few illustrations I have selected those of major doctrinal importance. Those who are interested in pursuing the subject, may take up the reference to similarities between Gita and Buddhism given by Telang in the footnotes to his edition of the Bhagvat Gita and satisfy their curiosity. But the illustrations I have given will be enough to show how greatly the Bhagvat Gita is permeated by Buddhistic ideology and how much the Gita has borrowed from Buddhism. To sum up the Bhagvat Gita seems to be deliberately modelled on Buddhists Suttas. The Buddhists Suttas are dialogues. So is the Bhagvat Gita. Buddha's religion offered salvation to women and Shudras. Krishna also comes forward to offer salvation to women and Shudras. Buddhists say, "I surrender to Buddha, to Dhamma and to Sangha." So Krishna says, "Give up all religions and surrender unto Me." No parallel can be closer than what exists between Buddhism and Bhagvat Gita.

IV

I have shown that Gita is later than Purva Mimansa and also later than Buddhism. I could well stop here. But I feel I cannot. For there still remains one argument against my thesis which requires to be answered. It is the argument of Mr. Tilak. It is an ingenious argument. Mr. Tilak realizes that there are many similarities in ideas and in words between the Bhagvat Gita and Buddhism. Buddhism being earlier than the Bhagvat Gita, the obvious conclusion is that the Bhagvat Gita is the debtor and Buddhism is the creditor. This obvious conclusion is not palatable to Mr. Tilak or for the matter of that to all upholders of counter-revolution. With them it is a question of honour that counter-revolution should not be shown to be indebted to Revolution. To get over this difficulty Mr. Tilak has struck a new line. He points out the distinction between Hinayana Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism and say, that Mahayana Buddhism was later than Bhagvat Gita and if there are any similarities between the Buddhism and Bhagvat Gita it is due to the borrowing by the Mahayanist from the Bhagvat Gita. This raises two questions. What is the date of the origin of the Mahayana Buddhism ? What is the date of the composition of the Bhagvat Gita ? The argument of Mr. Tilak is ingenious and clever. But it has no substance. In the first place, it is not original. It is based on certain casual remarks made by Winternitz¹ and by Kern² in foot-notes that there are certain similarties between

¹ History of Indian Literature (English Translation) Vol. II, p. 229 foot-note.

² Manual of Indian Buddhism p. 122 foot-note.

the Bhagvat Gita and the Mahayan Buddhism and that there similarities are the result of Mahayana Buddhism borrowing its ideas from the Bhagvat Gita. Behind these remarks there is no evidence of special research either on the part of Winternitz, Kern or Mr. Tilak. All of them seem to be led away by the assumption that the Bhagvat Gita is earlier than Mahayana Buddhism.

This leads me to examine the question of the date of the Bhagvat Gita particularly with reference to the theory as put forth by Mr. Tilak. Mr. Tilak¹ is of opinion that the Gita is part of the Mahabharata and that both have been written by one and the same author named Vyasa and consequently the date of the Mahabharata must be the date of the Bhagvat Gita. The Mahabharata, Mr. Tilak argues, must have been written at least 500 years before the Shaka Era on the ground that the stories contained in the Mahabharata were known to Megasthenes who was in India about 300 B.C. as a Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya. The Shaka Era began in 78 A.D. On this basis it follows that the Bhagvat Gita must have been composed before 422 B.C. This is his view about the date of the composition of the present Gita. According to him, the original Gita must have been some centuries older than Mahabharata. If reliance be placed on the tradition referred to in the Bhagvat Gita that the religion of the Bhagvat Gita was taught by Nara to Narayan in very ancient times. Mr. Tilak's theory as to the date of the composition of the Mahabharata is untenable. In the first place, it assumes that the whole of the Bhagvat Gita and the whole of Mahabharat have been written at one stretch, at one time and by one hand. There is no warrant for such an assumption, either in tradition, or in the internal evidence of these two treatises. Confining the discussion to the Mahabharata the assumption made by Mr. Tilak is quite opposed to well-known Indian traditions. This tradition divides the composition of the Mahabharata into three stages; (1) Jaya (2) Bharata and (3) Mahabharata and assigns to each part a different author. According to this tradition Vyasa was the author of the 1st edition so to say of the Mahabharata called 'Jaya'. Of the Second Edition called 'Bharata' tradition assigns the authorship to Vaishampayana and that of the Third Edition called Mahabharata to 'Sauti'. That this tradition is well-founded has been confirmed by the researches of Prof. Hopkins based on the examination of internal evidence furnished by the Mahabharata. According to Prof. Hopkins² there have been several stages in the composition of the Mahabharata. As has been pointed

¹ Gita Rahasya Vol. II p. 791-800.

² The Great Epic of India p. 398.

out by Prof. Hopkins¹ in the first stage it was just a Pandu Epic consisting of plays and legends about heroes who took part in the Mahabharata war without the masses of didactic material. Such a Mahabharata, says Prof. Hopkins, may have come into existence between 400-200 B.C. The second stage was the remaking of the epic by the inclusion of didactic matter and the addition of Puranic material. This was between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. The third stage is marked when (1) the last books were added to the composition as it stood at the end of the second stage with the introduction of the first book and (2) the swollen Anushasana Parva was separated from Shanti Parva and recognized as a separate book. This happened between 200 to 400 A.D. To these three stages Prof. Hopkins adds a fourth or a final stage of occasional amplification which started from 400 A.D. onwards. In coming to this conclusion Prof. Hopkins has anticipated and dealt with all the arguments advanced by Mr. Tilak such as the mention of Mahabharata in Panini² and in the Grihyasutras.³ The only new pieces of evidence produced by Mr. Tilak which has not been considered by Prof. Hopkins are two. One such piece of evidence consists of the statements which are reported to have been recorded by Megasthenes,⁴ the Greek Ambassador to the court of Chandra Gupta Maurya, and the other is the astronomical evidence⁵, in the Adi Parva which refers to the Uttarayana starting with the Shravana constellation. The facts adduced by Mr. Tilak as coming from Megasthenes may not be denied and may go to prove that at the time of Megasthenes i.e., about 300 B.C. a cult of Krishna worship had come into existence among the Sauraseni community. But how can this prove that the Mahabharata had then come into existence ? It cannot. Nor can it prove that the legends and stories mentioned by Megasthenes were taken by him from the Mahabharata. For there is nothing to militate against the view that these legends and stories were a floating mass of Saga and that it served as a reservoir both to the writer of the Mahabharata as well as to Greek Ambassador.

Mr. Tilak's astronomical evidence may be quite sound. He is right insaying⁶ that "it is stated in the Anugita that Visvamitra started the enumeration of the constellation with Shravana (Ma.Bha. Asva.44.2, and Adi.71.34). That has been interpreted by commentators as showing that the Uttarayana then started with the Shravana constellation, and no other interpretation is proper. At the date of the

¹ The Great Epic of India p. 398.

² The Great Epic of India p. 395.

³ Ibid p. 390.

⁴ Gita Rahasya II p. 79.

⁵ Gita Rahasya II p. 789.

⁶ Ibid p. 789.

Vedanga-Jyotisa, the Uttarayana used to start with the Sun in the Dhanistha constellation. According to astronomical calculations, the date when the Uttarayana should start with the Sun in the Dhanistha constellation to about 1,500 years before the Saka era; and according to astronomical calculations, it takes about a thousand years for the Uttarayana to start one constellation earlier. According to this calculation, the date when the Uttarayana ought to start with the Sun in the Shravana constellation comes to about 500 years before the Saka era. This conclusion would have been proper if it was true that the Mahabharata was one whole piece, written at one time by one author. It has, however, been shown that there is no warrant for such an assumption. In view of this Mr. Tilak's astronomical evidence cannot be used to determine the date of the Mahabharata. It can be used only to determine the date of that part of the Mahabharata which is affected by it—in this case the Adi Parva of the Mahabharata. For these reasons Mr. Tilak's theory as to the date of the composition of the Mahabharata must fall to the ground. Indeed any attempt to fix a single date for a work like the Mahabharata which is a serial story produced in parts at long intervals must be regarded as futile. All that one can say is that the Mahabharata was composed between 400B.C. to 400A.D. a conclusion too broad to be used for the purpose which Mr. Tilak has in view. Even this span seems to some scholars to be too narrow. It is contended¹ that the reference to *Edukas* in the 190th Adhyaya of the Vanaparva has been wrongly interpreted to mean. Buddhist Stupas when, as a matter of fact, it refers to the *Idgahas* created by the Muslim invaders for Muslim converts. If this interpretation is correct it would show that parts of the Mahabharata were written about or after the invasions of Mohammed Ghori.

Let me now turn to examine Mr. Tilak's theory as to the date of the composition of the Bhagvat Gita, There are really two propositions underlying his theory. First is that the Gita is part of the Mahabharata, both are written at one time and are the handiwork of one man. His second proposition is that the Bhagvat Gita has been the same what it is today from the very beginning when it first came to be written. To avoid confusion I propose to take them separately.

Mr. Tilak's object in linking the Gita with the Mahabharata in the matter of its composition is quite obvious. It is to have the date of the Mahabharata which he thinks is known to determine the date of the Bhagvat Gita which is unknown. The basis on which Mr. Tilak has tried to establish an integral connection between the Mahabharata and the Bhagvat Gita is unfortunately the weakest part of his theory. To

¹ Dharmanand Kausambi — Hindi Sanskriti ani Ahimsa (Marathi) p. 156.

accept that the Gita is a part of the Mahabharata because the author of both is Vyasa—and this is the argument of Mr. Tilak—is to accept a fiction for a fact. It assumes that Vyasa is the name of some particular individual capable of being identified. This is evident from the fact that we have Vyasa as the author of the Mahabharata, Vyasa as the author of the Puranas, Vyasa as the author of Bhagvat Gita and Vyasa as the author of the Bramha Sutras. It cannot therefore be accepted as true that the same Vyasa is the author of all these works separated as they are by a long span of time extending to several centuries. It is well-known how orthodox writers wishing to hide their identity get better authority for their works by the use of a revered name were in the habit of using Vyasa as a nom-de-plume or pen name. If the author of the Gita is a Vyasa he must be a different Vyasa. There is another argument which seems to militate against Mr. Tilak's theory of synchronicity between the composition of the Bhagvat Gita and the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata consists of 18 Parvas. There are also 18 Puranas. It is curious to find that Bhagvat Gita has also 18 Adhyayas. The question is: Why should there be this parallelism? The answer is that the ancient Indian writers regarded certain names and certain numbers as invested with great sanctity. The name Vyasa and the number 18 are illustrations of this fact. But there is more in the fixation of 18 as the chapters of the Bhagvat Gita than is apparent on the face of it. Who set 18 as the sacred number, the Mahabharata or the Gita ? If the Mahabharata, then Gita must have been written after the Mahabharata. If it is the Bhagvat Gita, then the Mahabharata must have been written after the Gita. In any case, the two could not have been written at one and the same time.

These considerations may not be accepted as decisive against Mr. Tilak's first proposition. But there is one which I think is decisive. I refer to the relative position of Krishna in the Mahabharata and in the Bhagvat Gita. In the Mahabharata, Krishna is nowhere represented as a God accepted by all. The Mahabharata itself shows the people were not prepared even to give him the first place. When at the time of the Rajasuya Yajna, Dharma offered to give Krishna priority in the matter of honouring the guest, Shishupala—the near relation of Krishna—protested and abused Krishna. He not only charged him with low origin, but also with loose morals, an intriguer who violated rules of war for the sake of victory. So abhorrent but so true was this record of Krishna's foul deeds that when Duryodhan flung them in the face of Krishna, the Mahabharata itself in the Gada Parva records that the Gods in heaven came out to listen to the charges made by Duryodhan against Krishna and after listening showered flowers as

a token of their view that the charges contained the whole truth and nothing but the truth. On the other hand, the Bhagvat Gita presented Krishna as God omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, pure, loving, essence of goodness. Two such works containing two quite contradictory estimates about one and the same personality could not have been written at one and the same time by one and the same author. It is a pity that Mr. Tilak in his anxiety to give a pre-Buddhist date to the composition of the Bhagvat Gita should have completely failed to take note of these important considerations.

The second proposition of Mr. Tilak is equally unsound. The attempt to fix a date for the composition of the Bhagvat Gita is nothing but the pursuit of a mirage. It is doomed to failure. The reason is that the Bhagvat Gita is not a single book written by a single author. It consists of different parts written at different times by different authors.

Prof. Garbe is the only scholar who has seen the necessity of following this line of inquiry. Prof. Garbe hold that there are two parts of the Bhagvat Gita one original and one added. I am not satisfied with this statement. My reading of the Bhagvat Gita leads me to the conclusion that there have been four separate parts of Bhagvat Gita. They are so distinct that taking even the present treatise as it stands they can be easily marked off.

(i) The original Gita was nothing more than a heroic tale told or a ballad recited by the bards of how Arjuna was not prepared to fight and how Krishna forced him to engage in battle, how Arjuna yielded and so on. It may have been a romantic story but there was nothing religious or philosophical in it.

This original Gita will be found embedded in Chapter I, Chapter II, verses.... and Chapter XI verses 32-33 in which Krishna is reported to have ended the argument:

“Be my tool, carry out my will, don’t worry about sin and evil resulting from fighting, do as I tell you, don’t be impudent.”

This is the argument which Krishna used to compel Arjuna to fight. And this argument of coercion and compulsion made Arjuna yield. Krishna probably threatened Arjuna with brute force if he did not actually use it. The assumption of Vishva-rupa by Krishna is only different way of describing the use of brute force. On that theory it is possible that the chapter in the present Bhagvat Gita dealing with Vishva-rupa is also a part of the original Bhagvat Gita.

(ii) The first patch on the original Bhagvat Gita is the part in which Krishna is spoken of as Ishvara, the God of the Bhagvat religion. This part of the Gita is embedded in those verses of the present Bhagvat Gita which are devoted to Bhakti Yoga.

(iii) The second patch on the original Bhagvat Gita is the part which introduces the Sankhya and the Vedanta philosophy as a defence to the doctrines of Purva Mimansa which they did not have before. The Gita was originally only a historical Saga with the cult of Krishna came to be interwoven. The Philosophy portion of the Bhagvat Gita was a later intrusion can be proved quite easily from the nature of the original dialogue and the sequence of it.

In chapter I verses 20-47 Arjuna mentions those difficulties. In chapter II Krishna attempts to meet the difficulties mentioned by Arjuna. There are arguments and counter arguments. Krishna's first argument is contained in verse 2 and 3 in which Krishna tells Arjuna that his conduct is infamous, unbecoming an Arya and that he should not play the part of an effeminate which was unworthy of him. To this, Arjuna gives a reply which is embodied in verses 4 to 8. In verses 4 to 5 he says, "how can I kill Bhishma and Drona who are entitled to highest reverence: it would be better to live by begging than kill them. I do not wish to live to enjoy a kingdom won by killing old revered elders." In verses 6 to 8 Arjuna says: "I do not know which of the two is more meritorious, whether we should vanquish the Kauravas or whether we should be vanquished by them." Krishna's reply to this is contained in verses 11 to 39 in which he propounds (i) that grief is unjustified because things are imperishable, (ii) that it is a false view that a man is killed when the atman is eternal and (iii) that he must fight because it is the duty of the Kshatriya to fight.

Any one who reads the dialogue will notice the following points:

(1) The questions put by Arjuna are *not* philosophical questions. They are natural questions put by a worldly man faced with worldly problems.

(2) Upto a point Krishna treats them as natural questions and returns to them quite natural replies.

(3) The dialogue takes a new turn. Arjuna after having informed Krishna positively and definitely that he will not fight, suddenly takes a new turn and expresses a doubt whether it is a good to kill the Kauravas or be killed by them. This is a deliberate departure designed to give Krishna a philosophical defence of war, uncalled for by anything said by Arjuna.

(4) Again there is a drop in the tone of Krishna from verses 31 to 38. He treats the question as natural and tells him to fight because it is the duty of the Kshatriya to fight.

Anyone can see from this that the introduction of the Vedanta philosophy is quite unnatural and therefore a later intrusion. With regard to the introduction of the Sankhya philosophy the case is quite

obvious. Often it is expounded without any question by Arjuna and whenever it has been propounded in answer to a question that question has nothing to do with the war. This shows that the philosophic parts of the Bhagvat Gita are not parts of the original Gita but have been added later on and in order to find a place for them, new, appropriate and leading questions have been put in the mouth of Arjuna which have nothing to do with the mundane problems of war.

(iv) The third patch on the oriinal Bhagvat Gita consists of verses in which Krishna is elevated from the position of Ishwara to that of Parmeshwara. This patch can be easily detected as being chapters X and XV where Krishna says:

(Quotation not mentioned)

As I said, to go in for a precise date for the composition of the Bhagvat Gita is to go on a fool's errand and that if an attempt in that direction is to be of any value, effort must be directed to determine the date of each patch separately. Proceeding in this way it is possible that what I have called the original unphilosophic Bhagvat Gita was part of the first edition of the Mahabharata called Jaya. The first patch on the original Bhagvat Gita in which Krishna is depicted as Ishwara must be placed in point of date sometimes later than Megasthenes when Krishna was only a tribal God,¹ How much later it is not possible to say. But it must be considerably later. For it must be remembered that the Brahmins were not friendly to Krishnaism in the beginning. In fact they were opposed to it.² It must have taken some time before the Brahmins could have become reconciled to Krishna worship.³

The second patch on the original Bhagvat Gita having reference to Sankhya and Vedanta must for reason already given be placed later than the Sutras of Jaimini and Badarayana. The question of the date of these Sutras has carefully been examined by Prof. Jacobi⁴. His conclusion is that these Sutras were composed sometime between 200 and 450 A.D.

The third patch on the original Bhagvat Gita in which Krishna is raised into Parmeshvara must be placed during the reign of the Gupta Kings. The reason is obvious. Gupta kings made Krishna-Vasudev their family deity as their opponents the Shaka kings had made

¹ Dr. Bhandarkar in his 'Saivism and Vaishnavism' says, "If the Vasudeva Krishna worship prevailed in the time of the first Maurya it must have originated long before the establishment of the Maurya dynasty." This is an unexceptionable statement. But it seems to me that a distinction must be made between Krishna as a tribal God and Krishna as an universalized Ishwara. The date for the first may be what Dr. Bhandarkar suggests but the same cannot be the date for the second. In the Gita we are concerned with the second.

² See Shamshastri Memorial Volume.

³ The opposition to Krishnaism has been expressed by so late a person as Shankaracharya.

⁴ The dates of the Philosophical Sutras or the Brahmins—in the journal of the American Oriental Society—Vol. XXXI 1911.

Mahadeo their family deity. The Brahmins to whom religion has been a trade, who were never devoted to one God but came forward to worship the deity of the ruling race thought of pleasing their masters by making their family deity into a high and mighty Parmeshvar. If this is correct explanation then this patch on the original Bhagvat Gita must be placed between 400 and 464 A.D.

All this goes to confirm the view that the attempt to place the Bhagvat Gita prior in point of time to Buddhism cannot succeed. It is the result of wishful thinking on the part of those who have inherited a positive dislike to Buddha and his revolutionary gospel. History does not support it. History proves quite abnormally that at any rate those portions of the Bhagvat Gita which have any doctrinal value are considerably later in point of time to the Buddhist canon and the Sutras of Jaimini and Badarayana.

The discussion of the dates not only proves that the Bhagvat Gita is later than Hinayana Buddhism but is also later than Mahayana Buddhism. The impression prevails that Mahayana Buddhism is later in origin. It is supposed to have come into being after A.D. 100 when Kanishka held the third Buddhist Council to settle the dissension in the Buddhist Church. This is absolutely a mistake.¹ It is not true that after the Council a new creed of Buddhism came into existence. What happened is that new names of abuse came into existence for parties which were very old. As Mr. Kimura has shown the Mahayanist is simply another name for the sect of Buddhists known as Mahasanghikas. The sect of Mahasanghikas had come into being very much earlier than is supposed to be the case. If tradition be believed the sect had come into being at the time of the First Buddhist Council held at Pataliputra 236 years after the death of Buddha i.e., 307 B.C.² for settling the Buddhist canon and is said to have led the opposition to the Theravad sect of Buddhism which later on came to be stigmatized as Hinayana (which means those holding to the low path). There could hardly be any trace of Bhagvat Gita when the Mahasanghikas later known as Mahayanists came into being.

Apart from this what have the Mahayanists borrowed from the Bhagvat Gita? Indeed what can they borrow from the Bhagvat Gita? As Mr. Kimura points out the doctrine of every school of Buddhism is mainly concerned at least with three doctrines: (1) Those which deal with cosmic existence; (2) Those which deal with Buddhology; and (3) Those which deal with conception of human life. Mahayana is no

¹ On the whole subject see—A Historical study of the terms Hinayana and Mahayana and the origin of Mahayana Buddhism—by Ryukan Kimura, Cal. University 1927.

² This is if the date of Buddha's death is taken to be 543 B.C. and would be 217 B.C. if the date of his death is taken to be 453 B.C.

exception to this. Except probably on Buddhology the Mahayanists could hardly use the Bhagvat Gita to draw upon. So different is the approach of the two on the other doctrines and even this possibility is excluded by the factor of time.

The foregoing discussion completely destroys the only argument that could be urged against my thesis—namely that the Bhagvat Gita is very ancient, pre-Buddhistic in origin and therefore could not be related to Jaimini's Purva Mimansa and treated as an attempt to give a philosophic defence of his counter-revolutionary doctrines.

To sum up, my thesis is three-fold. In other words it has three parts. First is that the Bhagvat Gita is fundamentally a counter-revolutionary treatise of the same class as Jamini's Purva Mimansa—the official Bible of counter-revolution. Some writers relying on verses 40-46 of Chapter II hold the view that the Bhagvat Gita is

(In all the copies available with us, the essay has been left here incomplete, as is seen from the above sentence—Editors.)

