

# Revivals of ancient religious traditions in modern India: Sāṃkhyayoga and Buddhism

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## Abstract

The article compares the early stages of the revivals of Sāṃkhyayoga and Buddhism in modern India. A similarity of Sāṃkhyayoga and Buddhism was that both had disappeared from India and were revived in the modern period, partly based on Orientalist discoveries and writings and on the availability of printed books and publishers. Printed books provided knowledge of ancient traditions and made re-establishment possible and printed books provided a vehicle for promoting the new teachings. The article argues that absence of communities in India identified with these traditions at the time meant that these traditions were available as identities to be claimed.

Keywords: *Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Hariharānanda Āraṇya, Navayana Buddhism, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar*

In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries both Sāṃkhyayoga and Indian Buddhism were revived in India. In this paper I compare and contrast these revivals, and suggest why they happened. Sāṃkhyayoga and Buddhism had mainly disappeared as living traditions from the central parts of India before the modern period and their absence opened them to the claims of various groups.

The only living Sāṃkhyayoga monastic tradition in India based on the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*, the Kāpil Maṭh tradition founded by Hariharānanda Āraṇya (1869–1947), was a late nineteenth-century re-establishment (Jacobsen 2018). There were no monastic institutions of Sāṃkhyayoga *saṃnyāsins* based on the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* in India in 1892, when Āraṇya became a *saṃnyāsin*, and his encounter with the teaching of Sāṃkhyayoga was primarily through a textual tradition (Jacobsen 2018). He never received instructions from another Sāṃkhyayoga guru or Sāṃkhyayoga *saṃnyāsin*. The Kāpil Maṭh, unlike Bengali Hindu movements such as Brāhmo Samāj, Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission, and Bhārat Sevāśram Saṅgha, was not a reform movement but a re-establishment of a perceived Sāṃkhyayoga orthodoxy. It

promoted Sāṃkhyayoga as found in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* and criticised both the contemporary yogī phenomenon and those yoga reform movements emphasising the improvement of the world, without naming any group. Re-establishments of ancient religious traditions have not been unusual in modern India. However, academic research has often been more interested in searching for and ‘discovering’ continuities of traditions than in re-establishments and new beginnings.<sup>1</sup> The quest for and construction of unbroken continuities with ancient yoga traditions is a well-known process in Indian religious culture. Where the phenomenon of yoga is concerned, Hindu yogīs living in the Himalayas have been seen as sources of ‘authenticity’, representing an unbroken continuity with past traditions and a lack of contamination by modernity. As Joseph Alter writes:

The sage lost to the world in the Himalayas is an extremely powerful reference point in the search for authentic Yoga, and it is a reference point that has played an important role in the development of modern Yoga (Alter 2004, 17).

Alter explains that this is not because the yogī isolated in the Himalayas has been found, but because countless yogīs and scholars have gone in search of this yogī (Alter 2004, 17). In a fictional autobiography, published under the pseudonym Śivadhyaṅ Brahmacārī in 1907, the Sāṃkhyayogin Hariharānanda Āraṇya, having dismissed the contemporary yogī phenomenon as composed of ‘idle, addicted, good for nothing fellows’ who ‘were after alms only’ but whom society nevertheless treated as ‘holy men’ (Āraṇya 2001: 10), stated that ‘there must be some truly religious and divine personalities living in this world. It is by posing after them that cheats are able to make their living’ (Āraṇya 2001, 12). Āraṇya showed with his own life that there were indeed truly religious personalities living in this world. Perhaps to prove this point, he spent the last twenty years of his life (from 1926 to 1947) locked in a building with no entry or exit, a building the Kāpil Māṭh tradition refers to as a cave (*guphā*). In the fictional autobiography Śivadhyaṅ Brahmacārī found religious truth not in a text but in a temple of Sāṃkhyayoga meditation in the Himalayas built in ancient times by the fictional saint, Aśvajit:

He had gained mastery of his senses and the gross elemental principles through practice of Yoga and built this temple to cleanse the earth of the

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<sup>1</sup> See Jacobsen 2018 for a discussion of some examples of such assumed ‘discoveries’ of Sāṃkhyayoga continuities.

prevailing superstitions, ignorance, wrong ideas, sins, sorrows and oppressions (Āraṇya 2001, 44).

This description of the motivation of Aśvajit is probably also a commentary on contemporary Indian society. Śivadhyaṅ Brahmacārī gained access to the ancient Sāṃkhyayoga tradition in the ancient temple of meditation.

In Śivadhyaṅ Brahmacārī's fictional autobiography a magical meditation temple in the Himalayas was the source of entry into the Sāṃkhyayoga tradition, but in real life the source of Āraṇya's Sāṃkhyayoga was his access to publications of ancient Sāṃkhyayoga texts. Āraṇya's Sāṃkhyayoga is very much a product of the growing number of printers and printed books, and collections of these books in Oriental libraries, which exerted enormous influence on Hinduism and which probably also made possible the idea of Hinduism as one religion. The view of Kāpil Maṭh on the origin of Āraṇya's Sāṃkhyayoga is that expressed by Adinath Chatterjee, an old disciple of the Maṭh. He noted in the Preface to the *Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali and the Bhāsvati* how this encounter took place: 'It is difficult to explain the phenomenon that was Swāmī Hariharānanda Āraṇya. He met his Guru only briefly and after his initiation as a Saṃnyāsīn he chanced upon an old text of Sāṃkhyayoga in a library' (Chatterjee 2000, xviii). Chatterjee does not mention which book or library this was, but it is the unanimous view of the Kāpil Maṭh tradition that the Sāṃkhyayoga teaching of Āraṇya can be traced to texts. After Āraṇya saw the text in the library he received his own copy, which he took with him to the caves in the Barabar Hills in Bihar, where he stayed from 1892 to 1898, and he kept it for the rest of his life. Hariharānanda Āraṇya's copy of this book is still in Kāpil Maṭh in Madhupur in Jharkhand, in the cave (*guphā*) where he stayed from 1926 to 1947. The current guru of Kāpil Maṭh, Swāmī Bhāskara Āraṇya, still resides (2018) in the cave. The text is a Sanskrit book printed in Devanāgarī script entitled *Yogadarśanam* and containing four texts: the *Yogasūtra* and the three commentaries *Yogabhāṣya*, *Tattvavaiśārādī*, and Udāsina Bālarāma's *Ṭippana*.<sup>2</sup>

2 The full title of the book is: *Yogadarśanam: Bhāgavanmahāmuni-patañjalipraṇītam; Nikhila-tantrāparatantrapratibha; Vācaspati-mīśraviracitatattvavaiśāradyākhya-vyākhyābhūṣita- maharṣi-krṣṇadvai-pāyanapraṇītabhāsyā 'laṅkrtam; Śrīmadudāsina-svāmī-bālarāmeṇa viśama-sthalatīppanānir-māṇapurahṣaram susaṃskrtam*. Kalikātā: Vyāptiṣṭāmisānanayatra, 1891. This was probably a well-known book among Orientalists, and it is the same book that John Haughton Woods used for his famous translation of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* with the *Tattvavaiśārādī*, published in 1914 (Woods 1914, xi).

Udāsina Bālarāma was also the book's editor.<sup>3</sup> *Tattvavaiśārādī* is considered the most important philosophical commentary on the *Yogabhāṣya*. *Yogabhāṣya* can be considered the most important Sāṃkhyayoga text. Sāṃkhyayoga is a name of the Yoga teaching of the *Yogasūtra* and the *Yogabhāṣya*, also called the *Vyāsaḥāṣya*, the earliest commentary on the *Yogasūtra*, written around 325–425 CE. The *Yogabhāṣya* was probably written by the same author as the *Yogasūtra*, who called himself Patañjali. *Pātañjalayogaśāstra sām̐khyapracāra* is the full title of the combined *Yogasūtra* and *Yogabhāṣya* given in the colophon in the manuscripts (Maas 2013). *Pātañjalayogaśāstra sām̐khyapracāra* can be translated as 'the exposition of yoga of Patañjali, the doctrine of Sāṃkhya'. This title indicates that the author understood his text to represent the doctrine of Sāṃkhya philosophy. In the modern history of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* the *sūtrapāṭha* came to be treated as an independent text, and the *Yogasūtra* became the common title of the text, without reference to the *Sām̐khyapracāra*. *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* is a text of Sāṃkhya philosophy and provided Sāṃkhya with a meditation philosophy. Its teaching differed from *Sām̐khyakārikā*, which was the foundation text of the Sāṃkhya system of philosophy in that much of the vocabulary of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* was absent in the *Sām̐khyakārikā*. The vocabulary was perhaps borrowed from the Buddhist traditions of meditation such as those found in the *Abhidharmakośa*. The *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* probably blended the Sāṃkhya philosophy with the Buddhist teachings of meditation and thus provided Hinduism with a meditation philosophy. Many centuries later *Yogasūtra* came to be considered the foundation text of a separate system of philosophy called Yoga, Pātañjala Yoga, or Sāṃkhyayoga (Bronkhorst 1985). The Kāpil Maṭh tradition considers Sāṃkhya the theory part and Yoga the practice part of a single philosophical system, Sāṃkhyayoga. In the century before the origin of the Kāpil Maṭh tradition Sāṃkhya and Sāṃkhyayoga were not living monastic traditions. There were then probably no Sāṃkhyayogins in Bengal or probably the whole of India. Orientalists, both Western and Indian, were unable to find specialists in the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems to assist them with translations of the Sanskrit texts. J. N. Farquhar reported in 1920 that he had met only one Sāṃkhya *saṃnyāsin* in India, but not a single *saṃnyāsin* of Yoga. This Sāṃkhya *saṃnyāsin* was Hariharānanda Āraṇya (Farquhar 1920, 289).

The person who initiated Hariharānanda Āraṇya into the institution of *saṃnyāsa*, and who is sometimes referred to as Āraṇya's guru (Chatterjee

3 Udāsina Bālarāma was born in 1855 and was a Vedāntin. His commentary summarised Vācaspatiśra's *Tattvavaiśārādī* (Larson & Bhattacharya 2008, 366).

2000: xviii), is remembered by the Kāpil Maṭh tradition as Trilokī Āraṇya. However, Trilokī did not teach Sāṃkhyayoga to Hariharānanda and is not the source of Āraṇya's Sāṃkhyayoga teaching: according to this tradition Trilokī Āraṇya had taken a vow of silence and accordingly not a single word was exchanged between the two. The Kāpil Maṭh tradition is unanimous on this. The meeting between Hāriharānanda and Trilokī lasted only a few hours. Hardly anything is known about Trilokī Āraṇya.<sup>4</sup> The narrative about Hāriharānanda Āraṇya's initiation into *saṃnyāsa* confirms the view that his encounters with the Sāṃkhyayoga teaching seem to have been through books and university (see Jacobsen 2018).

Nineteenth-century India saw an increasing interest in Buddhism, with the foundation of the first Buddhist associations in the 1890s. It is therefore interesting that Sāṃkhyayoga was not alone in being revived in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries: around the same time the ancient religious tradition of Indian Buddhism and Sāṃkhyayoga were revived. A striking similarity of Sāṃkhyayoga and Buddhism is that they had both disappeared from India before and were revived in the modern period, partly based on Orientalist discoveries and writings about their supposed former dominance.<sup>5</sup> Āraṇya believed Sāṃkhya and Buddhism belonged to the same tradition and that the Buddha depended on the teaching of Kapila, the founder of Sāṃkhya. According to Āraṇya *Yogasūtra* preceded Buddhism, but Āraṇya argued that Buddhism and Sāṃkhya belonged to the same tradition, called *ārṣa dharma* (Āraṇya 1988, 0.14). Buddhism was a sect within *ārṣaism*. It was Kapila who first conceived and elaborated the theory of the self and *nivṛtti dharma* (the path of renunciation, and Buddha was a

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4 It seems the only mention of Trilokī by Āraṇya is in a (fictional) poem. For a discussion of this poem and Trilokī Āraṇya see Jacobsen 2018, 72–73, 82. The poem is not included in the collection of *stotras* recited by the followers of Kāpil Maṭh, and there is no iconographic representation of him. His only function seems to have been to initiate Āraṇya into *saṃnyāsa*.

5 Buddhism's revival required that it first be created as an object. See Philip C. Almond, *The British discovery of Buddhism*, for this creation of Buddhism 'as an entity that "exists" over against the various cultures which can now be perceived as instancing it, manifesting it' (Almond 1980, 12). Almond writes that the creation of Buddhism took place in two phases, the first in the first half of the nineteenth century as something out there in the Orient, 'in a spatial location geographically, culturally, and therefore imaginatively *other*' (Almond 1980, 12). In the second half of the nineteenth century 'Buddhism came to be determined as an object the primarily location of which was the West, through the progressive collection, translation, and publication of its textual *past*' (Almond 1980, 13). The essence of Buddhism came to be identified as its textual past, and this opened the way for revivals based on these texts.

follower of this teaching of Kapila, according to Āraṇya.<sup>6</sup> Āraṇya defined the practice of Sāṃkhyayoga as 'what Buddha did' (Āraṇya 1981, xxiv). Āraṇya published a Sanskrit translation of the *Dhammapāda* (Āraṇya 1988) and a Bengali translation of the *Bodhicāryavatāra* of Śāntideva.

The absence of Sāṃkhyayogīs and Buddhists in India made it possible for various groups to claim these traditions,<sup>7</sup> but the revivals in India of Sāṃkhyayoga and Buddhism differed markedly. Buddhism had spread to large parts of Asia before it disappeared from India and it continued to flourish with great cultural and scholastic variety. Some of this plurality of Buddhist traditions and cultural forms returned to India in the twentieth century. Tibetan Buddhism arrived in the 1950s with the Dalai Lama and thousands of his followers from Tibet in 1959. A Buddhist meditation tradition arrived in 1969, when S. N. Goenka moved from Burma to India and started teaching *vipassanā* meditation. However, the most significant revival of Buddhism in India in terms of converts was a new Indian interpretation of Buddhism by Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the greatest leader of the Dalits (formerly untouchables) and the architect of the Indian constitution. Ambedkar formulated what he believed was the original teaching of the Buddha and revived Buddhism in India. Ambedkar converted with several hundred thousand people of his own Mahar caste at a great ceremony in Nagpur in October 1956. Before Ambedkar there had already been several attempts to revive Buddhism in India, but none had been as successful. The identification of the archaeological remains of ancient Buddhism by British archaeologists and Orientalists in the nineteenth century encouraged this revival. In 1891 the Sinhalese Buddhist revivalist Anagārika Dharmapāla had founded the Mahabodhi society in Colombo with the goal of gaining Buddhist control of the ancient Indian Buddhist monuments. A year later an office in Kolkata was opened. Kripāśaraṇ Mahāsthavir (1865–1926), a Barua Buddhist from Chittagong (in today's Bangladesh), had founded Bauddha Dhramankur Sabha in Kolkata in 1892 'to revive the lost glory of Buddhism and to place it on its glorious status' (Chowdhury 1993, 5).

The identification of ancient Buddhist archaeological remains in India combined with the absence of Buddhist communities there and the view,

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6 The relationship between Kapila, the founder of Sāṃkhya and the Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, has been much discussed and will not be dealt with in this paper. For a discussion see Jacobsen 2018, 36–51 and Jacobsen 2017.

7 The presence of Buddhism in Ladakh and among the Baruas in Chittagong was too peripheral to have much impact. The absence of the Buddhist sangha meant that there was no Buddhist group to claim the orthodoxy of certain ideas, practices, and texts.

promoted by Western scholars, that the essence of Buddhism was available only in the texts of early Buddhism and was a rational philosophy different from its contemporary cultural forms, inspired the revival. Oppressed groups in India saw Buddhism as a possible ideology for liberation from the caste system. In Tamil Nadu Pandit Iyothee Thass (1845–1914) had by 1890 ‘become convinced, through studies of his own of the truth and significance of Buddhism’ (Omvedt 2003, 237), and in 1898 he converted to Buddhism, was initiated by the Sinhalese Buddhist monk Bikkhu Sumangala Nayake, and established the Sakya Buddhist Society (the Indian Buddhist Association) in Madras. Thass had introduced the idea that the Dalits (the most oppressed groups in Indian society, regarded as untouchables in the caste ideology) were the original Buddhists of India. He argued that Buddhism was the original religion of those belonging to the untouchable Paraiyar caste of Tamil Nadu, that the Aryan invaders had taken the land from them, and that they should now convert to Buddhism, their original religion (see Bergunder 2004).

Ambedkar’s Navayana (‘new vehicle’) Buddhism built on these precursors, especially the discovery of Buddhist monuments and India’s ancient Buddhist past, the idea that the essence of Buddhism was a textual reality distinct from its cultural forms, and the interpretation of Buddhism as primarily a tradition of rational thinking. Since there were no Buddhist communities in India to claim the tradition and no Indian Buddhist cultural forms at the time, he could claim the Buddhist religion for the Dalits. Ambedkar’s interpretations were shaped by the new interest in Buddhism in India and by the Western Orientalists’ creation of a homogeneous Buddhism found in texts. As a young man, in 1908, Ambedkar was given a copy of K. A. Keluskar’s *Buddha Caritra* (‘Life of Buddha’) in Marathi. He was later much influenced by P. Lakshmi Narasu’s book *The Essence of Buddhism* (originally published in 1907),<sup>8</sup> which he republished with a new preface in 1948, and which gave him an interpretative key for reviving Buddhism.<sup>9</sup> In the preface Ambedkar recommended the book as ‘the best book on Buddhism that has appeared so far’. Narasu was involved in the South Indian Buddhist Association. Narasu defined true Buddhism as that which was in accordance with reason. Narasu argued that

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8 P. Lakshmi Narasu (also spelled Laxmi Narasu) was ‘a writer and missionary in the cause of Buddhism’ and D. L. Ramteke considered him ‘the most conspicuous figure’ in the revival of Buddhism in South India (Ramteke 1983, 57).

9 Gail Omvedt notes ‘Ambedkar’s choice of Buddhism and his positing it as an alternative to Brahmanism had its basis in Indian history, but his understanding of Buddhism and his reinterpretation of it owed much to Iyothee Thass and to Laxmi Narasu, another leader of this Sakya Buddhism of the early twentieth century’ (Omvedt 2003, 2).

the dictum accepted in all schools of Buddhism as the sole regulative principle is that nothing can be the teaching of the Master, which is not in strict accord with reason, or with what is known to be true (Narasu 1907, vii).

Narasu refers to Buddhism's great number of schools and cultural forms, asking how one identify true Buddhism among them and answering that true Buddhism is only that which conforms 'to reason and experience' (Narasu 1907: 25). According to Narasu this was also the dictum in early Buddhism, when at the meeting in Vaisali the monks had to determine the true teaching of the Buddha from different views.

The most striking feature of Buddhism is that it eschews all hypotheses regarding the unknown, and concerns itself wholly with the facts of life in the present work-a-day world (Narasu 1907, 21).

It is the only religion which is a priori not in contradiction with the discoveries of science. No divorce between science and religion will ever be possible in Buddhism as in other religions. Though the Buddha had not the same detail of scientific information at his disposal as we possess today, he was still familiar with the essential problems of psychology, philosophy and religion. He saw in broad outline the correct solution of the problem of religion. He taught a religion based upon facts to replace a religion based upon the assumptions of dogmatic belief (Narasu 1907, 24).

Narasu frequently mentions the 'principle of the brotherhood of man', which also became key in Ambedkar's interpretation of Buddhism.<sup>10</sup> Narasu wrote:

Buddhism put reason in the place of authority; it discarded metaphysical speculation to make room for the practical realities of life; it raised the self-perfected sage to the position of the gods of theology; it set up a spiritual brotherhood in place of hereditary priesthood; it replaced scholasticism by a popular doctrine of righteousness; it introduced a communal life in the place of isolated anchorite life; it infused a cosmopolitan spirit against national exclusiveness (Narasu 1907, 37).

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<sup>10</sup> Ambedkar writes in *The Buddha and His Dhamma*: 'What is fraternity? It is nothing but another name for brotherhood of men which is another name for morality' (Ambedkar 1992, 325).

Among the religions only Buddhism 'teaches that there is hope for man only in man' (Narasu 1907, 38). An entire chapter of the book was devoted to 'Buddhism and caste' (70–88). Narasu writes that 'Whatever may be the origin of the system of caste, there can be no doubt that its development is largely due to the ambition and selfishness of those who profited by it' (Narasu 1907, 78). Furthermore:

A Brahman's sense of pleasure and pain is not different from that of a Chandala. Both are born in the same way, both sustain life in the same manner, and both suffer death from the same causes. They differ neither in intellectual faculties nor in their actions, nor in the aims they pursue, nor in their subjection to fear and hope. Accordingly the talk of four castes is fatuous. All men are of one caste (Narasu 1907, 82).

Narasu considered that 'Buddha broke down the barriers of caste and preached the equality of all mankind' (Narasu 1907, 84). He predicted that low and high castes might conceivably change places in the social hierarchy in the future:

In the 'lower' form the tendency is to rise to this typical form. Hence it would seem possible that the descendants of those who are now thought low and base might, if time and opportunity are given them, rise to the typical form of the species, and even go beyond it, while it is not impossible that the successors of those who are now regarded as representing a higher type might revert to the typical form of the species, and even degenerate to a lower condition. Of this history furnishes ample proof (Narasu 1907, 87).

Ambedkar argued that Navayana Buddhism followed the principles of early Buddhism. Buddha's teaching was defined as rational and logical, and what was not rational and logical could not be the teaching of the Buddha (Omvedt 2003, 7). This principle provided a method for determining Buddha's original teaching, to be found in the texts. Ambedkar argued that his Navayana represented a recovery of original Buddhism and he understood the difference between historical Buddhism, the contemporary forms of Buddhism, and the Buddhism to which he himself had converted. However, while the term for the kind of Buddhism he founded was 'new vehicle' (Nayayana), he understood this to be a return to the real teaching of early Buddhism. It was conceived of as a revival in India of the ancient tradition.

Ambedkar saw Buddha as a social reformer and rationalist philosopher. For Ambedkar Buddhism was fundamentally oriented around building a just and happy society.<sup>11</sup> Suffering was caused by poverty and caste, not ignorance, and the message of the Buddha concerned the eradication of poverty, caste, and the injustice done to the marginalised. The supernatural attributes of the Buddha, meditation, ideas of karma, and rebirth, were not part of Ambedkar's Buddhism. Ambedkar maintained that the ritualism of Buddhism's contemporary cultural forms was not real Buddhism (Ambedkar 1957). Ambedkar claimed a number of unusual interpretations of the teaching of the Buddha. He claimed that the notion of rebirth did not entail reincarnation but transformation. He denied that the four noble truths belonged to Buddhism. Far from arguing that suffering was inherent to worldly existence, the Buddha's point was that it was possible to create a world free from suffering. The message was that humans were able to create a society based on righteousness through their own effort. He did not accept the common interpretation of karma and rebirth, since it seemed to be based on an idea of the self. The idea of karma was contradicted by the doctrine of *anattā* (non-self, Sanskrit: *anātman*) and it seemed also to legitimate untouchability. The cause of the Buddha's renunciation was not the sight of the sick, the elderly, or the dead, but a clash between the Sakyas and the Koliyas. Ambedkar seems to have excluded those parts of Buddhism that did not support his own egalitarian social democratic philosophy: in his interpretations Buddhism became a political philosophy focusing on a critique of the Indian caste system. Ambedkar argued that Buddhism was the religion of the ancestors of today's Dalits. It was Brāhmanism that transformed these Buddhists into untouchables, argued Ambedkar. Untouchability was a punishment for not becoming Hindu. Ambedkar wrote that when the Hindus came to power, those Buddhists who were unwilling to convert were segregated and had to live in separate quarters outside the villages, becoming untouchables (Ambedkar 1990 [1948]). That the Dalits were the original Buddhists, as Ambedkar argued, meant that when the Dalits converted to Buddhism they were not really converting, but returning to their original religion. 'The function of religion,' wrote Ambedkar, 'is to reconstruct the world and to make it happy and not to explain its origin and end' (Ambedkar 1945, 7).<sup>12</sup> Ambedkar understood the Buddha as a

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11 Some of the interpretations of this paragraph have previously been presented in Jacobsen 2010.

12 This statement is obviously inspired by Karl Marx and his well known thesis (in *Theses on Feuerbach*) that the point of philosophy is not to interpret the world but to change it.

social reformer and the teaching of the Buddha to be about the necessity of transforming society. 'Dhamma is not concerned with life after death, nor with rituals and ceremonies; but its centre is man and relation of man to man,' wrote Ambedkar in *The Buddha and His Dhamma* (Ambedkar 1957, 83). The salvific goal of Buddhism, *nirvāṇa*, was reinterpreted to mean a just society. Ambedkar considered Buddhism a religion in the Durkheimian sense, with a focus on the sacred as a binding force for social relationships (Omvedt 2003). 'Religion,' wrote Ambedkar, 'means the rules imposed for the maintenance of society' (Ambedkar 2004, 12). Without sacredness there would be no morality. Buddha, argued Ambedkar, taught that 'Dhamma is morality and as Dhamma is sacred so is morality' (Ambedkar, quoted in Omvedt 2003, 260). Ambedkar's understanding of Buddhism was quite different from most other non-Indian interpretations.

Āraṇya and Ambedkar are undoubtedly contrasting figures in the revival of ancient religious tradition in modern India. However, it is remarkable that both discovered and learned many of the details of the religious traditions they revived from printed books. Both also attempted to summarise their religious traditions in a single volume. Āraṇya learned many of the details of Sāṃkhyayoga from the Sanskrit Sāṃkhyayoga texts collected in the book *Yogadarśanam*; Ambedkar's understanding of Buddhism was much influenced by texts such as K. A. Keluskar's *Buddha Charitra* and Narasu's book *The Essence of Buddhism*. Āraṇya summarised his Sāṃkhyayoga teaching in *The Sāṃkhyā Catechism*, Ambedkar in *The Buddha and His Dhamma*. Ambedkar's *The Buddha and His Dhamma* was an attempt to create for Buddhism a single volume, giving people easy access to the teaching. *The Sāṃkhyā Catechism* was a book of Sāṃkhyayoga, perhaps modelled on the *Buddhist Catechism* to present the Sāṃkhyayoga tradition in an accessible one-volume book. Both claimed to go back to the original teaching, which was only available in texts and which was different from the tradition's contemporary cultural forms. Printed books made the re-establishment of the traditions possible and printed books provided a vehicle for promoting the new teachings. One was a *bhadralok* (educated upper class and caste) from Kolkata who revived the Yoga of the *Yogasūtra* as the real Yoga in contrast to the yoga of the contemporary yogis of India. The other was a Dalit from Maharashtra and a Western-educated politician who revived Buddhism as the original religion of the Dalits, distinct from Buddhism's contemporary cultural forms. They both claimed to revive ancient traditions in their true form. Both revivals were helped by Orientalist discoveries and interpretations. Āraṇya decided that the guru should live permanently enclosed in a

cave. There was no tradition of this in classical Sāṃkhyayoga. The purpose may have been to illustrate Sāṃkhyayoga's teaching of the goal of isolation of the self from materiality and other selves. It might also be a statement of perceived orthodoxy of real yogīs living isolated in caves. For Ambedkar Buddha was a politician who provided models for his own political visions. One major difference between Āraṇya's Sāṃkhyayoga and Ambedkar's Buddhism is that Ambedkar did not attempt to appear orthodox. He called his revival Navayana, the new vehicle, to indicate this. He nevertheless claimed that his Buddhism was in fact identical to the original teaching of the Buddha.

For Āraṇya the Buddha had been a follower of Sāṃkhyayoga, and he understood himself as the follower of both the teaching of Kapila and the Buddha. Their teaching was about *duḥkha* (pain and sorrow) as the main characteristic of existence, and the possibility of attaining *kaivalya*, which entailed the isolation of *puruṣa* from matter and other *puruṣas* and the end of rebirth. Ambedkar understood Buddhism to be about creating a just society free from suffering. Their lifestyles and teachings illustrate two strikingly different revivals of ancient traditions of asceticism in modern India.

In the nineteenth century, when European and Indian Indologists were looking for Sāṃkhyayogins to help them with detecting the meaning of the texts of the *Yoga darśana*, Sāṃkhyayoga, they could find no one. The situation for those looking for assistance with Sāṃkhya texts was reported to be much the same. They found no *saṃnyāsins* or *paṇḍits* who specialised in the texts. Buddhism had also disappeared from most of India during the medieval period, and when the British discovered the monuments of ancient Buddhism, there were no living Buddhist communities in India apart from some remote parts of the Indian Himalayas and in Chittagong in East Bengal. The absence of communities and persons identified with Sāṃkhyayoga as well as with Buddhism meant that these traditions were available as identities to be claimed. This was one reason Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar could claim Buddhism as the religious identity of the Dalit communities of India, and Āraṇya could select Sāṃkhyayoga as a proper yoga identity for *bhadraloks* in Bengal. Of course, there was one major difference. Buddhist traditions had spread early outside India and had become a world religion. Yoga was yet to gain a worldwide presence; when it did in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it was not as Sāṃkhyayoga.

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