

# The relationship between Bhava, Sunyata and the development of this concept in Buddhism History in India

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## Abstract

The notion of existence (bhàva) and the voidness of identity (sùnyatà) are two great points of view of Indian Buddhism. Bhàva, meaning all things are real, is an opinion of the Sarvāstivādin School. Sùnyatà, which assumes the voidness of identity of all things, is a doctrine of the Prajñāpāramitā and Mādhyamaka Schools in the Mahāyāna Buddhism. Therefore, the cause and process of the accomplishment of these two thinking systems (bhàva and sùnyatà) have their own practical histories.

If we depend on the thinking history of Indian Buddhism to find out the origins in which these two systems of thinking derived, we will recognize that the appearance of bhàva was a process of the thinking movement of the Sarvāstivādin School to oppose the Vātsāputrāya School's point of view of the pudgala. It also condemned the Mahisāsaka School's opinion, which states that the past and future are not real. At the same time, the philosopher of the Srvastivada relies on the explanation methodology and dharma from the Agam-Nikaya such as Pannca-skandha, Dvadasa-ayatana, Pratitya-samutpada, and the concept of time in order to establish the school of thoughts: Existence of Time is real. identity of all things is real. This point of view is a factor to establish the doctrine of sùnyatà of the Mahayana Buddhism.

According to Buddhist researchers, the first scripture of the Mahāyāna Buddhism belonged to the system of Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtras, which states that the nature of all things is unreal. It also condemned

the Sarvāstivādin School's thought process. How can people understand deeply the voidness of identity of all things? According to the explanation of Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtras, people who want to understand fully the concept of identitylessness must be in the position of Bhodhisattva because by perfect wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā), Bhodhisattva can observe the nature of all things to be voidness. However, the acknowledgement of human beings and the saint Listeners (Śrāvaka) can not recognize the voidness of identity of all things. Because it was so difficult for most people to understand this explanation, Nāgārjuna changed the explanation method, which states that all things existed through many conditions (pratiya-samutpāda); therefore, all things are voidness (śūnyatā). That is Nāgārjuna's explanation method.

I hope that my explanation from this research paper will give you a more thorough understanding about the two different schools of thought of the bhāva and the śūnyatā in Indian Buddhism.

Key Words: all things are real, voidness of identity of all things  
pratiya-samutpāda, Sarvāstivādin School

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