

The Concept of Personality in the Abhidhamma Schools

Sang-hwan Bae

In order to address the problem of Buddhist transmigration as it is understood in relation to modern psychology, it is necessary to consider a common response to the theory of personality. This requires a type of problematic investigation regarding the concept of personality so as to understand the philosophical depiction in the Buddhism. The task of this analysis must be a major area of consideration for all Buddhist schools, because the idea of personality is at odds with the early Buddhist theory of non-substantiality. In this paper I will give an account of the concept of 'personality' as it relates to the Buddhist notions in the Abhidharma tradition. There are several views of personality, as material and mental substance; notably that of the intermediary being and the aggregate being. These two views are not entirely incompatible as it is possible to assert that we can apprehend a personality, either partly or even entirely, in each of these two ways. Given the restrictions of space in this present work, I propose to simplify the material presented in three ways. First, I will provide a sketch of some of the features of personality as elucidated by Vatsīputrīyas. Second, I will make use of a concept, for the sake of brevity, which, although acceptable in a preliminary sketch, would be obviously objectionable in a fuller account of

Sang-hwan Bae is a Lecturer, Department of the Buddhist Studies, University of Dongguk.

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the subject: namely, the use of personality in the view of a karmic base for the theory of personality by Sāṃmitīyas. Third, I will employ the five aggregates as a convenient way of referring to personality, in line with the view of Sautrāntika. I am aiming to reach the conclusion that the specific personality must be defined as relative to non-substance.

I. Introduction

Contrary to some common conceptions, personality need neither be obvious nor incapable of being evidenced by something else. Certainly, personality as a modern concept cannot be adequately defined in the way of the pure material or mental substance as described in the early Buddhist Abhidhamma texts. In a general outline of our thinking about the theory of personality, the Theravādins (上座部) firmly held that the insubstantial being is the reality character of all dhammas, but the Mahāsāṅghikas (大衆部) presented the idea of personality as only a conventional reality. However both denied any personal entity regarding the self, and other orthodox Buddhists generally agree with the idea that impersonal events alone can constitute the actual state. Of course, the notion of personality in Buddhism is something quite unusual. It has nothing to do with the notion of personality used by ancient or modern philosophers. Obviously, the universe of the person is always the universe of mankind. In this sense, such as it is, Buddhist personality is not a system of thought, but more a particular interpretation which is not very far from the teaching of the Buddha. Nonetheless, its central affirmation is the existence of the person as a principle, which would explain the doctrine of insubstantiality without falling into nihilism.

It can also be understood in Buddhist terms in light of the theory of karma (業說). Of course, this understanding is generally made easy for us by the fact that in early Buddhist teachings we find the concept of the personality (pudgala, 補特伽羅) in terms of the theory of karma. This is based on the notion that resultant actions are connected and associated with a transformable reality. Thus it is possible to argue that,

as it applies to the concept of karma, an analysis of the concept of personality may be congruent with the concept of Buddhist transmigration (輪迴). Thus we discover that the theory of personality can apply to both the concept of transmigration and the theory of resultant actions, in which case both may be defensible. But we should not immediately take up this viewpoint as we shall see there is a more basic view of personality. Conze purports that the Pudgalavādins (holders of a view of personality) represented a reaction against dogmatic thoroughness with which the Abhidharmists pursued their depersonalizing tendencies (Conze, 1959:124). Even Warder questioned whether or not a person is more than a kind of pronoun, a demonstrative 'like this' used when referring to a particular collection of elements or principles which are combined in a living body having consciousness (Warder, 1991:241).

Here we come again to one of the most perplexing problems regarding the concept of personality in Abhidhamma schools.¹ We observe that from a philosophical viewpoint there are basically three schools in Abhidharmic philosophy which hold a particular view regarding the personality. In the view of Vatsīputrīyas (犢子部) and Sāṃmitīyas (正量部) the question of personality can be settled by an appeal to depersonalisation and an accepted thesis of 'pudgala.' In the second view of Sautrāntika (經量部), personality is the seed of emancipation, based on an indescribable criteria of personal identity.

II. Vatsīputrīyas' Basic View of Personality

There has been a great deal written in Buddhist philosophy about how we acquire knowledge of personality. So can we decide from this proliferation of ideas exactly what constitutes personality? In early history of Buddhist philosophy the traditional Vatsīputrīya school asked this question.² This school held the idea that 'the personal identity'

1 Obviously, sources about schools concerned with the theory of personality are extremely limited. Therefore, research undertaken on this subject by scholars such as Lamotte E, Dutt. N, T.R.V Murti and T.H. Stcherbatsky, is much appreciate

2 All direct or indirect sources indicate that Vatsīputrīyas is the main school of the

(pudgala) is innate. In this sense, G.P. Malalasekera, having understood the necessity for this notion, wrote in his book: "Vajjiputtakas held the conception of a person (puggala), which for all practical purposes may be regarded as an effective self." (Malalasekera, 24). In order to better understand the problem of personal identity it may be fruitful to list our consideration into two problem areas, in view of the Vatsīputrīya (hereafter, Pudgalavādins):

- (1) "the personality is the subject which receives [the suffering from] the results of all karma (由有補特伽羅故 能造諸業)." (T. 26.542b).
- (2) "the personality [as subject] is that which sees, hears etc. thus, recognizing from the phenomena (由有補特伽羅故 於所見聞覺知法中)." (T. 26.543b).

The first viewpoint about personality is based on an understanding that (1) we have a strong inductive reason for considering that the former personality is located in the natural being, and (2) the latter viewpoint of personality is the basis of our understanding about what constitutes a sentient being. On the basis of these two kinds of ascriptions from the Abhidharma-jñānakāyapāda-śāstra (阿毘達磨識身足論) (interpreted by Devasarman) we can see how Pudgalavādins regard the personality.

Further, we can find evidence about the theory of personality in the Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra (阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論). From this śāstra it must be concluded that the possibility of borderline cases of personality are logical. A summary of the Pudgalvādins' theory, endorsed by the Sarvāstivāda (說一切有部), may show that: (1) "as for the school of Vatsīputrīyas, their teachers hold that the five spiritual organs, i.e., faith, energy, memory, visionary meditation and wisdom are equal to their own nature [i.e., the five beings are to be observed as the

Pudgalavadin, derived from the Theravādins. The important treatise, Abhidharmakośa of Vasubandhu, which appeared in the 5th century, devotes its ninth chapter to criticizing the principle thesis of the 'pudgala' of the Vatsīputrīya as an independent school and not associated with the Sāṃmitīyas. Hence the Vatsīputrīyas were the strongest adversaries of the Theravādins as well as the Sautrāntikas, particularly in the doctrinal sphere.

personality] (此是犢子部宗 彼部師執 世第一法 信等五根以爲自性)." (T.27.8b). (2) "the personality is cognizant of all dharmas (補特伽羅 能了諸法) (T.27.42c)," and (3) "the Vatsīputrīyas said that they accept the notion of the personality if it contains the idea that the memory retains what it has done (如犢子部 彼作是說 我許有我能憶念本所作事)." (T.27.55b). A rather different approach is the explanation by Vasumitra in the text of *Samayabhedavyūhacakrapāda śāstra* (異部宗輪論, hereafter *Samaya-*), "the concept of personality is neither the same as aggregate nor different from aggregate; the name 'personality' is provisionally given to the aggregates (*skandhas*), bases (*āyatanas*) and elements (*dhātus*) respectively (謂補特伽羅 非即蘊離蘊依蘊處界假施設名. See also, Dutt, 1970:222)." (T.49.16c). We consider that the *Pudgalavādins* have not yet determined whether the personality is either incorrigible or *prima facie* justified, but we are somewhat clearer about what kind of possibility might be 'neither an aggregate nor different from an aggregate (非即蘊離蘊)'. The important thing is that the *Pudgalavādins* define their personality doctrine by way of insubstantiality. In defending their position, T.R.V Murti appeals to the notion of personality that:

"Universally condemned by all the other Buddhistic schools as heretical, the Vatsīputrīyas held tenaciously to the doctrine of the *pudgalātman* (the individual) as a quasi-permanent entity, neither completely identical with the mental states, nor different from the. However halting this conception may be, it is evidence of the awareness of the inadequacy of a stream of elements to account for the basic facts of experience, memory, moral responsibility, spiritual life etc. The Vatsīputrīyas showed the hollowness, at least the inadequacy, of the doctrine of elements; the states (*skandhas*) cannot completely substitute the *ātman*; a permanent synthetic unity must be accepted." (Murti, 1955:81).

Commonly, this is meant to imply that the insubstantiality in question needs no explanation or argument. Although the *Pudgalavādins* have possibly stated the essence of the doctrine of insubstantiality, they established the thesis of the '*pudgala*'. This doctrinal invention probably had an aim that: "The reason being that with all phenomenal changes

which are appearing for a short while, or the transient affairs of ceasing, if all dharma are detached from the personality, then it can be said not to transmigrate from past existence to the future existence (諸行有暫住 亦有剎那滅 諸法若離補 特伽羅無 從前 世轉至後世)." (T.49.16c). On this point we may curiously inquire how the Vatsīputrīyas developed their opinion on personality if based on the Buddha's teachings. Similarly, in the Saṃyutta nikāya, the Buddha reproached a monk for doubting the denial of an absolute self by saying:

"It is possible, monks, that someone senseless, sunk in ignorance, led astray by craving, thinks that he surpasses the teaching of the master thus: Since you say that the body is not the self, that feelings, perception, mental factors and consciousness are not the self, what, then is affected by the actions which the non-self has done." (SN. III, 147).

We cannot develop this line of questioning further here, but it is a promising beginning based on a reflection about how there could be a requisite kind of personal justification of a contingent proposition. Perhaps it gives us a more complete understanding of the meaning of Vatsīputrīya's view of personality. Now we will consider the exact rendition of the personality by studying a passage from the Abhidharmakośa (俱舍論) (T.29.156c):

[The Vatsīputrīyas] cited the Buddha's saying from a certain sutra [to defend their view] that: all living beings are covered by ignorance and enslaved by their own desire. Thus, there is a transmigration, and personality is possible. Again how this is possible by means of transmigration, that is by means of being propelled into a past-time aggregate and accepting the afterlife aggregate. From this understanding, the past-time being dispatches subtly just like a bonfire that is only the momentary ceasing as much as its succession in the transmigration. By this reason an aggregate takes a nominal being according to the cause in the 'self-desire', [whatever there is the self-desire that takes] the transmigration. If there is only an aggregate, what reason is there, the Buddha had said such as; This is a mundane teacher, who existed in the past, that is named as

Sunetra was I. [Vatsīputrīyas say that] what takes any error on this expression, i.e., an aggregate is the separately different? If it is agreeable that what is to be the substance, so to speak, that is the personality.

(然薄伽梵於契經中。說諸有情無明所霸貪愛所繫馳流生死。故應定有補特伽羅。此復如何有轉生死。由捨前蘊取後蘊故。如是義宗前已微遣。如燎原火雖剎那滅。而由相續說有流轉。如是蘊聚假說有情愛取為緣。流轉生死。若唯有蘊。何故世尊作如是說。今我於昔為世導師名為妙眼。次說何咎。蘊各異故。若爾是何物。謂補特伽羅。)

From the above, we see that in the physical sciences it is the combination of aggregates which can be explained by way of transmigration. These aggregates combine with others, in the same way as atoms are at a distance apart greater than their normal diameters. In the case of aggregates the transmigration of a personal being applies to a force of repulsion which occurs when the aggregates are forced very close together. Thus there will be a tendency for aggregates, because of their force of attraction, to draw together and stick. In other words, in the process of transmigration the aggregate of one substance combines with the aggregates of another. However, the problem is that if a belief about a physical-object appearance is construed in the process of transmigration, as we have argued that it must be construed, as merely a useful though oblique way of describing the non-conceptual content of sensory experience, then there can be no apparent reason to think that a single such belief could by itself have any direct or immediate bearing on the truth or likely truth of the corresponding physical claim. Let us consider a more detailed account of transmigration:

Supposing the past personality is the same as that with the present body, the present body is permanently still in existence. On that basis surely the present personality is based on a preceding prototype, because the present and past personality come from a direct-line of succession, just as fire exists as long as the fuel lasts. If substantial personality exists then only the Buddha can be regarded as all-knowing, this view already shows the firm attachment of personality. From this it follows that the

attachment of personality is the subject of personal being, for there is surely an arising 'I' and 'mine'.

(昔我即今體應常住。故說今我昔爲師言。顯昔如今是一相續。如言此火會燒彼事。若謂決定有真實我則應唯佛能明了觀。觀已應生堅故我執。從斯我執我所執生。從此應生我我所愛。)

The above-mentioned passages seem to provide a logical reason for ascribing the concept of personality. Vatsīputrīya's view of personality is possibly a theoretical work. Still it is not clear how adequately an understanding of personality might suffice to justify believing in it; but it is mysterious how such a theoretical understanding could suffice for knowing it experientially. From the Vatsīputrīyas' viewpoint we can see that the transmigration of personal being seemed inconceivable without a conceptual personality, because on the occasion of death, life ceases, and with it all the other constituents of an individual, which cannot therefore move on into the next life. We see that the Pudgalavādins concept of personality tends towards transmigration from past into future, according to which there is always a specific personal being. However, we cannot apprehend the real substance which is transmigrating from this to the next existence. This was not suitable to win them an assurance of orthodoxy; they developed a whole theory round this notion, declaring that the 'pudgala' was neither identical to the diverse constituent elements of an individual, which would have identified them as materialists, nor different from them, which would have assimilated them with spiritualists. It is Conze's view that "on death an individual changes into an 'intermediary being', which spontaneously generates and links the two consecutive lives." (T.29.156c).

However, the proposition that a personality exists which is easily assimilated is self-evident. For the individual, a personal expression of the idea that we exist is epistemically self-sufficient: such that with reflection and adequate understanding of it, there is justification for believing it. In this case one cannot help becoming self-aware or even seeing in an experiential way, that one exists. But there are some

problems with this view of Vatsīputrīyas, personality is "neither to be described as 'anitya', which is subdivided into past, present and future nor 'nitya', eternal." (Dutt, 1970:210). And so with reflection we must review our ideas about personality, as according to Dutt it is indeterminable or inexplicable (avaktavya) and it is not included in the list of constituencies of a being but is perceived only when all the constituents are present (Dutt, 1970:210). If we recall, the Puḍgalavādins believed that personality has a reality associated with material being. According to this premise the principle of personality is inapplicable, but it still may be possible to discover what is real substance. If the whole includes the person, as with some of the views expressed by the Puḍgalavādins, then we have a special category of contingent self-evidence. We prefer not to take this line, but it may be possible to accommodate it as a special case nonetheless. In this case we can accept that personality refers to only a continuity of aggregates (skandha-santāna) and not to anything else (Dutt, 1970:211). To defend this viewpoint, we must examine instrumental states more carefully, because the Vatsīputrīyas are of the opinion that there must be an agent, a doer, or a proprietor of memory (Dutt, 1970:213). Thus it is clear from this reasoning that personal concepts are contingent on the existence of memory. What is required is a complete account of the conditions, which is the memory to ascribe instrumental states to the personality.

III. Karmic Basis for the Theory of Personality

A similar reasoning may also be applied to the Sāṃmitīyas' theory, which is much closer to the view of the Vatsīputrīyas in the concept of personality.³ Like the Puḍgalavadins, the Sāṃmitīyas also believe in the existence of personality. The only authentic and extant text which

³ Its founder, according to Bhavya, was Arhat Sammita whose history is not known. According to Bareau, the meaning of this name is not clear since there are various spellings associated with it including: 1) Sammatīyas - those who live in accord, or those who should be respected; 2) Sammitīyas(Pāli) - those who are assembled or equal; 3) Sammitīyas - those who have a correct measure, or the equal. Bareau, p.121.

expressly mentions this in Chinese transliteration is the Sāṃmitīyāsāstra or Sāṃmitīyanikāya śāstra (hereafter we called as Sāṃmitīya-, 三彌底部論). First we must understand that the Samitīyas have already conceded a karmic base for the theory of personality. Here, 'karmic base' refers to 'self-action' (自作) or 'self-doing' (自業) as distinct from other concepts. If we have a correct sense of self-action from the above text, we can perceive the Sammitiyas' view.

From the above we might assume that the Sāṃmitīyas accept an intermediary being (中間有), which they consider to be personality. But an intermediary being is not possible with an individuality. Of course, 'intermediary being' may be understood in a common sense as a 'being' with a soul. This is usual when one encounters them in a natural formulation in the karmic worlds in which soul is a competent. But an intermediary being, which is made up of propositions, is sometimes confused with personality, which arises from experience. Complex characterization may of course, be tacitly known in the concept of personality. But the important point here is that a belief in the theory of personality should be understood as a belief in states which are self-evident. Conze said: their pudgala is certainly quite different either from the puruṣa of the Sāṃkhya, or the one universal ātman of the Vedānta. Both of these are inactive—the puruṣa, or spirit set free, is a mere witness and spectator, and both ātman and puruṣa are identified with consciousness, here reckoned among the skandhas distinguished from the pudgala (Conze, 1956:127).⁴ It is obvious that at least one personality exists, but this is not self-evident: that is, the 'pudgala' is not evident in itself. But if we consider its existence according to evidence of it in our common language, then there is ample ground for perceiving its truth. It is noteworthy that, according to the school's doctrine, the Sāṃmitīyas distinguished between the elements (dharma) of the person (pudgala). From the point of view of the elements, they

4 All the Indian systems except Buddhism admit the existence of a permanent entity variously called ātman, puruṣa or jīva. There are divergent views as to the exact nature of this soul. Thus while the Nyāya calls it absolutely characterless, an indeterminate unconscious entity. Sāṃkhya describes it as being of the nature of pure consciousness, and the Vedānta says that it is that fundamental point of unity implied in pure consciousness.

say that the origin of the cycle of birth and death is inconceivable, but that does not encompass the point of view of the personality. The 'puḍgala' is thus something separate from the elements, and then it is possible to say that the elements are impermanent, but it is impossible to say whether the personality is permanent or impermanent.

From the above, a major question arises as to whether a substantial being is in possession of conscious belief. If having conscious belief means that the subject believes in the personal substance, then having conscious belief requires the subject to also accept the notion of personal belief. Thus a personal character would be evident in appearance. Perhaps this line of reasoning may account for the Sāṃmitīyas view of personality. If we make a scholarly investigation, the theory of impersonality (無我) according to the Sāṃmitīyas, and other authentic Buddhist schools is as follows (T.32.462b-c):

- (1) Embodiment of law is actually the impersonal being
(法諦實說無我)
- (2) In as much as one sees his own body (自見其身) the fivefold aggregates and the self are identical (其身見五陰是其體).
- (3) Self and characteristics of self are not possible to apprehend
(我我所不可得)
- (4) It is not possible to refer to an impersonal being
(不可言有我)
- (5) it is not possible to refer to an impersonal nor a personal being (有無我不可說).

Just what is necessary before us, is whether we can truly say of personality that Sāṃmitīyas have learned the concept of 'puḍgala' as a certain kind of substantial thing (法諦實說). In short, the 'puḍgala' is something more than the reunion of its constituent elements. It is the essential factor which unifies the process of the life of a person, the longest and most eventful. In other words, it is the 'puḍgala' which assumes and supports a body for a certain time and which constitutes the same person, from conception in the womb until death, and even spreads across other lives. So the 'puḍgala' is certainly an autonomous

personality underlying phenomenal investments in the view of Sāṃmitīyas. They regarded that the continuity of a person indicates the link between cause and effect which exists between the consecutive states of a life. There is continuity, there is therefore a possessor of continuity. According to the Sāṃmitīyas, to deny the possessor of continuity is to deny continuity of personality.

On the other hand we can give some detail about the personality (有我) as understood by the Sāṃmitīyas, but we are unable to pin down the exact meaning of their idea of personality from the Sāṃmitīya text because some of the text is missing. If we give the statement of the Sāṃmitīyas rather than speak directly, it seems to us inescapable that the meaning of the personality is determined in their other justifications. The Vātsīputrīya-Saṃmatīyas, who considered the 'puḍgala' as a real entity (dravya), although indefinable in its relationship with the aggregates, remained consistent in extolling a kind of nirvāṇa-existence in which the 'nirvāṇized' dwells in some way (Lamotte, 1988:611). Although this seems too obvious us, their other justifications may not seem obvious to those steeped in a tradition of analytic philosophy. On this basis we will endeavor to give a detailed account in order to establish how the Sāṃmitīyas establish their view, as follows (T. 32.463a):

- (1) Due to right view there is personality (正見故 是故有我)
- (2) The Buddha spoke of the fourfold objective of thought, which is the personality (佛說四念故 是故有我). - This fourfold objective of thought, is for stimulating the mind in ethical wisdom. It consists of contemplating: (i) the body (身) as impure and utterly filthy; (ii) sensation (受), or consciousness, as always resulting in suffering; (iii) mind (心) as impermanent, merely one sensation after another; (iv) things in general (法) as being dependent and without a nature of their own (觀見身受心法) (DCBT, 175).
- (3) The Buddha said that a sentient being is a view of the personality (佛說有人 是故見有我). - We consider that a sentient being is the body, because it is possible for a sentient being to burn (or feel) his own body in the matter of fire (有人事火自炙基身).

- (4) One person takes birth, so there is evidence of personality (一人生故。是故有我), and that one person takes all meritorious virtue in world in the present (一切功德人生在世間).

Now let us take these views one step further. Supposing that, although we understand the idea of 'self in transmigration', and its resultant karmic effects, yet we cannot actually carry it out because of the difficulties involved with observation of personality as it passes from one existence to another (Dutt, 1970:205). This view would seem not to be in conflict with the Sāṃmitīyas view of personality in connection with their ideas about neither existence nor nonexistence. All the preceding arguments concerning the position of the 'puḍgala' explain why the personality does not pertain to either compounded things or the un-compounded. With regard to knowledge, according to the Sāṃmitīyas, there must be a constant subject in cognitive actions which undergoes and accumulates experiences. So we come to what is basically a side issue dependent on the existence of personality, but this has been discussed so much in the text of Sāṃmitīya- that it has become important to us. Perhaps the Sāṃmitīyas' concept of personality in view is that 'the cycle of existence has no beginning' (anamataggo' yaṃ saṃsāro, 人本無) (Dutt, 1970:206). In defence of this view they cited the Buddha, that "the wheel of birth-and-death has no beginning so that when ordinary people transmigrate, there is no knowing about the original base of birth and death (如佛所說 生死無本衆生輪轉 生死源本不可知)." (T.32.463c). As these words suggest, an intermediary personality need not be compelling: the Sāṃmitīyas must produce evidence of existence in the moment. Candrakīrti, in the Mādhyamakavṛtti, also comments on the 'puḍgala':

"they (the Sāṃmitīyas) maintain (that there is) a puḍgala which migrates (out of one existence into another). It escapes definition (avācya). It is neither eternal nor momentary (anitya). Its coming and going dependent every time on a changing substratum (upādānam āśritya). It then evolves obeying the law of causality. This very (principle) which evolves on the basis of

changing elements, when the time comes for it to assume no new substratum, its evolution stops, it is said (to have entered) *nirvāṇa*." (TH. Stcherbatsky, 1923:197).

We have been discussing how we can know what is the nature of the wheel of births-and-deaths where we might find a personality. In order to confirm their position, the *Sāṃmitīyas* draw attention to the Buddha's saying that: "from the once becoming to the endless becoming in the past, the aggregate is destroyed, but the personality is not destroyed through the transmigration (憶一生乃至憶過去無數劫生 陰壞雖流轉生死而人不壞)." (T.32.463c). *Sāṃmitīyas* also deals with the confirmation of the intermediate existence that: According to the discourse, the intermediate existence certainly exists. It is the Buddha who, with his divine eye, sees living beings who come and go with their actions in the cycle of birth and death. And leaving the human destiny, after death, one is reborn in other destinies (T.32.471b). Now let us suppose that the *Sāṃmitīyas* cite extensively from passages directly from the Buddha's own intimation, in order to support their ideas for the existence of personality. In this case their idea about the Buddha's reticence should not be taken as denial of the existence of a personality as they conceived it (Dutt, 1970:207).

IV. Personality in the View of *Sautrāntika*

Sautrāntika's views are similar to the *Sarvātivāda* (說一切有部), as they are an offshoot school from the *Sarvātivāda*. We do not get any substantial idea of personality from the *Sarvātivādins*, but the *Sautrāntikans* conceded the personality, a view which is doubtlessly influenced by the *Vastīputrīyas*. Thus, they are also called as the *Samkrāntika* (說轉部) in the text of *Samaya-*, because they agreed on 'the existence of temporal substance (剎那相續)' which was also adopted by the *Sarvātivādins* and they subtly introduce the idea of 'an inscrutable personality (勝義補特伽羅)', which they divide into two aggregates which are 'the tributary aggregate (根邊蘊)' joined with 'the original aggregate (一味蘊)' (T.49.17b). Therefore, we consider that the

Sautrāntikas have accepted a temporal personality that is, a being with signs of a sensibility, at the transmigration stage, but it is the real being that corresponds to reactions and this being can convey the impermanent subjective being through several kinds of existence. Despite the limitations of temporal substance that a non-transitive existence imposes on a priori justification and a priori knowledge, there can still be a kind of understanding of the corresponding conditions required to prove a temporal personality. The Sautrāntika's position has been fairly stated by Stcherbatsky as follows:

"they did not deny the influence of past facts upon present and remote future ones, but they explained it by gradual change in an uninterrupted sequence of moments, this sequence having a starting point is a conspicuous or strong impinging fact; it was for them one of the laws of interconnection between separate elements." (TH. Stcherbatsky, 1923:41).

Here we assume an uninterrupted sequence of moments, which is an idea rooted in early Sautrāntika. It is not an expression of a subjective time, nor is it connected with any other metaphysical supposition; it is a statement of fact which it is possible to describe at length based on the notion of personality. According to the Samaya text, the early Sautrāntikas were of the opinion that: "the five aggregates, [which continue through all the vicissitudes of transmigration] proceed and follow after life (謂說諸蘊有從前世轉至後世) (T.49.17b). So the laws related to their ideal transitional personality are about the conditional being, expressed in terms of instantaneous states, even more, that a single instant or moment without any duration (asmṅkranti) which occurs in the past is denied as a series of momentary facts (T.29.104c-105a). Therefore the Sautrāntika only recognized the present as a set of temporal sequences and the present moment only in its basic relation to temporal sequence or causality. It may if we clarify outline temporal as it compares to an inscrutable existence construed in the idea of personality.

It may also help if we better understand the term 'inscrutable personality' as it relates to aggregates (skandhas). This term is neither

identical with, nor different form, the aggregates (Dutt, 1970:187). But we already know that The Sautrāntikas do not allow the momentary existence, viz., an aggregate disintegrates every moment to give rise to another, because they deny past or future existence. The Sautrāntikas do say that every thing is non-eternal; all things arise into being from time to time and then are destroyed. They express this as transcendental idealization of what is represented in the present value, that is, a mere representation, which is nothing in itself, but is that which we see only as it arises out of existence. However there can be no further evidence for it, since existence of such evidence would move it upwards from the lowest possible foundational level. Therefore we observe that permanence in reality is appearance, a view which is not consistent with the Sautrāntikas' view. Furthermore, Dutt correctly observed that the Sautrāntikas, in deference to their theory of transitory moment, add that the aggregates in their gross form do not pass from one existence to another; the original or the subtlest form of aggregates, all five of which are of one nature, in other words, which are in reality on substance and not five different substances passing from one existence to another (Dutt, 1970:187). If, on the other hand, the mental act of immediate apprehension or direct acquaintance is construed as non-cognitive and non-conceptual in character, as not involving any propositional claim about the character of the personality.

While no further issue of justification is raised in defense of the aggregate of five substances, it becomes difficult to see any reason for thinking that the aggregates of five substances are true. According to the Sautrāntikas, the aggregates of five substances are the smallest compound and each one does not touch another in any way, in fact there is an intervening space between them. This kind of knowledge is normally considered to be inferential; but it does not imply whether personality is inferential. Even this idea comes to the fore because of the Samaya text-, i.e., "that is an unenlightened being (*bālapṛthagjana*) that also has the holy law (異生位中亦有聖法 執有勝義補特伽羅)." (T. 49.17b). Thus, it is possible to say that the Sautrāntika widely apply an

inscrutable personality to living beings where the personal characteristics are dependent on appearance as sensible things.

V. Conclusion

Now we may better understand how the personality can be consistent with the way in which personality plays a crucial part in Buddhist historical Buddhists texts. There are two strong views about these ideas. One view which mirrors the view of the Vatsīputrīyas and Sāmmītiyas, is the notion of personality in terms of non-substantiality. A second, rival view held by the Sautrāntikas is that a notion of personality itself cannot be elucidated without reference to a consciousness of what is expressed. Each of these competing views is consistent with the idea that if we are to accept the notion of personal identity, we must also accept that there are many beliefs present in conscious thought in the personal form. Each of these attitudes is also consistent with acceptance of a possessive condition for rebirth, as long as the prospective rebirth is based on the notion that personal being and consciousness can be explained without presuming a subject possessing personality. A common response to the above observations is that it is a trivial tautology if we recall the Buddha's teachings about non-substantiality, but we would argue that this has epistemological relevance to questions of personal identity. This would seem to be the way in which we learn to trace reports which are puzzling and try to make sense of historical records on the theory of personality, so as to satisfy investigations which are concerned with conceding personal being as a tenet of Buddhist doctrine. And we may also note in this connection that we endeavor to refer back to Buddhist logic to ascertain possibilities, rather than try to understand 'personality' in the sense of being able to recognize its occurrence from certain factual conditions in the light of general laws.

Glossary of Chinese Terms

Abhidharma-jñānakāyapāda-śāstra	阿毘達磨識身足論
Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra	阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論
Samayabheda-vyūha-cakra-pāda-śāstra	異部宗輪論
Devaśarman	提婆設摩
karma	業
Mahāsāṅghikas	大眾部
pudgala	補特伽羅
Saṃkrāntika	說轉部
Sāṃmitīyanikāya-śāstra	三彌底部論
Sarvāstivāda	說一切有部
Sāṃmitīyas	正量部
Sautrāntikas	經量部
Theravādins	上座部
Vatsīputrīyas	犢子部

Abbreviation

T	Taisho-Shinshu-Daizo-Kyo (大正新脩大藏經), Ed. J. Takakusu and K. Matanabe, 55 Vols., Tokyo, 1924-1929.
DCBT	A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms.
SN	Samyuttanikāya, PTS, London.

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- 阿毘達磨識身足論 (Abhidharma-jñānakāyapāda-śāstra), by Devaśarman, T. 26, No. 1539. Tr., into Chinese by Hsüan-Tsang.
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