

# **Mayavadi Philosophy: Analysis and Refutation**

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I. Introduction: This outline will deal with 4 topics

- A. What is Mayavada philosophy?
- B. How to defeat it with their own arguments.
- C. How to defeat it with Bhagavata arguments.
- D. The historical background of the rise of Sankara's Mayavadi Vedanta in India.

II. Mayavada philosophy is very old.

- A. Even the 4 Kumaras were impersonalists.
- B. Any person in Maya is naturally a Mayavadi.

- 1. If you want to defeat someone you should know his philosophy.
- 2. We should know Mayavadi philosophy
  - a. for preaching.
  - b. for our own benefit as well, because we also are contaminated by it.
  - c. jnanam-karmani-anavrtam:

i. jnana is of 3 kinds: knowledge of self, God and oneness.

ii. the knowledge of oneness is being rejected. Knowledge of self and God explains everything nicely, including the oneness too. No need of such a separate department of knowledge.

### III. Structure of Mayavada philosophy:

A. It is also called vivartavada (lit. "superimpositionism").

1. arthadhyasa - superimposition of one object on another.

2. jnanadhyasa - imposition of illusion upon oneself.

3. For this superimposition to happen, there must be:

a. Senses.

b. An abnormal situation (e.g. darkness).

c. Experience.

d. An example of above three components: seeing a rope as a snake in the darkness.

B. Philosophical proofs, and which philosophers accept them:

1. Direct perception (accepted by Carvakas).

2. Inference (anumana) + 1 is accepted by Buddhists.

- a. Hypothesis = There is fire on the mountain.
- b. Cause (hetu) = Because there is smoke there.
- c. Example = Where there is smoke, there is fire.
- d. Review of cause = The mountain has smoke...
- e. Conclusion = ...therefore the mountain has fire.

3. Sabda (spiritual sound) + 1 & 2 is accepted by Vaisnavas.

4. Arthavati (similarity) + 1-3 is accepted by logicians.

- a. "Have you seen a blue cow?"
- b. "No, but I would know one if I did" (cow + blue).

5. Arthapatti: "This fat man does not eat in the day -> he must eat at night."  
(logicians)

6. Abhava (nonexistence) + 1-5 is accepted by Mayavadis.

- a. Nonexistence means: "There is no cow here."
- b. It is a kind of knowledge based on the absence of knowledge or perception of something.

C. Four categories within M.P.:

1. Sat = existence (Brahman).
2. Asat = nonexistence (horns on rabbit).
3. Sat-asat = something that exists for a time,  
then ceases to exist.
4. Anirvacaniya = neither 1-3, i.e. Maya (which makes one think a rope is a snake. Inexplicable, illusory).

D. Levels of perception according to Sankaracarya:

1. Paramarthika - transcendental (Brahman).
2. Vyavaharika - "practical".
3. Pratibhasika - apparent, but illusory (like dreaming).
  - a. One must go from this stage to next higher.
  - b. When coming to second stage,  
individuality remains.
  - c. But at highest stage, individuality is erased.

E. Maya:

1. Maya is inexplicable; example - a dumb person cannot describe the taste of rasgulla, but still there is taste. Brahman is covered by Maya, but don't ask why.

2. Two stages of Maya:

a. Covering with illusion;

that's simply Maya.

b. Distorting with ignorance (avidya).

3. When Maya covers Brahman with illusion, Isvara consciousness appears. He is conditioned to be the Lord.

4. When Brahman is further distorted by avidya, jiva consciousness appears. Avidya makes the subtle body.

5. There is no transformation in this process, only imposition (of a false conception).

6. When illusion and ignorance are dispelled, no state of any describable existence remains.

7. Mayavadi story: Vyasadeva sent Sukadeva to learn from Janaka. Janaka said to Sukadeva, "Give me my dakshina before I teach you anything, because after you learn this teaching, you will reject everything, including me (the Guru)."

F. Example of Mayavadi logic:

1. Brahman "reflects" into Maya.

Q. But how? If it reflects

(e.g. moon on water) it must have a form.

2. A. First understand that Brahman is not a substance, so rules like that don't apply to it.

3. And apart from that, consider an object or a substance that has qualities. Form is one such quality. But does form have form?

4. Q. What are you saying, `Does form have form?'

5. A. When you see a shadow or reflection, what is being reflected - form or substance?

6. Q. Well - the form.

7. So the form is not the substance. Form is what is reflected, but that form is different from the substance.

G. Jayatirtha Muni gives this example of Mayavadi process: Just as when a person has a bad dream, the dream wakes him up; similarly, though the Mayavadi philosophy is still "maya", it can wake one up out of illusion.

H. Two schools of Mayavadi philosophy.

1. One accepts only Upanisads, Vedanta and Bhagavad-gita (prasthan-traya).

2. But the so-called Bhagavat-sampradaya (with acaryas like Citsukhacarya and Madhusudan Sarasvati) accept Puranas, Ramayana, etc. Just as Mayavadis in general are more dangerous than Buddhists, the Bhagavat-sampradaya is

most dangerous of all. They even accept Krishna's form is spiritual, but say that when He returns to the Paramvyoma, His form "dissolves" into Brahman. First school would argue Krishna's for

#### I. Bhag Tyag Laksana:

1. Bhag (person).
2. Tyag (give up)
3. I.e. Now you have this designation; give it up.
  - a. On wall of Vaishnava temple, a Mayavadi wrote "So'ham" (I am Him).
  - b. A devotee came later and added Da, "DaSo'ham" (I am His servant).
  - c. Mayavadi returned, added Sa for "SaDaSo'ham" (I am eternally Him).
  - d. Devotee returned again and added Da for "DaSaDaSo'ham" (I am the servant of His servant).

#### IV. Weaknesses of Mayavadi Philosophy.

##### A. Their "Brahman" and Vyasadeva's Brahman are not the same.

1. Their Brahman is the Brahmajyoti.
2. Vyasadeva's Brahman is Krishna, the Purusottama.
3. Because they have no interest in Krishna, their Brahman categorically has no reality (it is wrongly defined from the outset).

a. Vyasa used the word Brahman as we use the word "God."

b. It is a general term, used to create interest among as many people as possible (even those who are averse to Krishna).

B. They speak of "Savikalpa jnana" and "Nirvikalpa jnana", but these are actually the same thing.

1. Example of approaching a mountain from a distance - at each stage, the same entity is being viewed.

2. But Mayavadis say the far-off vision of a great shape on the horizon is of a different thing than the close-up view of the mountain.

C. They interpret Sanskrit words inaccurately to fit their own ideas.

1. Lord is "asarira." They say this means He has no sarira or body; but the root of the word sarira means "decay", so the word really refers to a body that decays, not simply a body.

2. Lord is "akarana." They say this means He has no senses; but this word really means that His senses are not energized by something else (e.g. as our material senses are energized by life energy) because He is without a source.

D. They interpret "He desired to become many" as meaning the progression from Brahman-Isvara-Jiva; but it is the Isvara who has the desire to become many. How the desireless Brahman desired to become the Isvara they do not explain.

E. If Brahman is all-pervading, where is Maya?

F. How is the Brahman cut into individual parcels of consciousness?



G. Mayavadis say, "By knowledge (jnana), one becomes Brahman."

1. But they also say that jnana and ajnana are Maya.
2. So you may remove your ajnana with jnana, but then with what will you remove the jnana?
3. To this they answer, "It is by the mercy of Brahman." (!)

H. They say Brahman is without energy (sakti). Then how does it exist? (No answer).

I. Snake and Rope:

1. In order for this example to have validity, the person must have prior knowledge of both "what is a rope" and "what is a snake." How can an undifferentiated Brahman have prior knowledge of Maya, which it then mistakes itself to be?

2. Besides that, in this example, the rope and snake are both real things, and that's why the illusion is effective. And since the illusion is effective, it is also true, i.e. the consequences of that illusion are no less effective than if the rope was really a snake (I'm scared, I scream, run away, etc.).

J. They say Maya is like a dream, but there's no continuity in our dreams from one night to the next. In the waking state we find day-to-day continuity. So to compare this life to a mere dream is facile.

K. Why is this illusion so consistent, if it is just hallucination? Why doesn't illusion come to us in other ways, e.g. instead of Brahman is the world (rope is a snake), why not the world is Brahman (snake is rope)?

L. Mayavadis say one can only achieve liberation after death. Then his individuality ceases forever.

1. But how does this relate to their favorite rope/snake analogy? One man lights a lamp and sees that the snake is really just a rope; another man runs off, frightened, never knowing it was an illusion. How are these two men different in their essential existence?

M. Who suffers in hell - soul or body?

1. Mayavadi may answer, "The body suffers only."

2. But the body is matter, is it not?

3. Yes.

4. How can dead matter suffer?

5. Then it must be the soul that suffers.

6. Then you are saying Brahman suffers? But your philosophy says there's no suffering in Brahman.

N. Sankara writes of the "vyavaharika" platform of existence, but nowhere is this word found in any scripture. Yet it is a fundamental component of his philosophy.

O. Upanisads say that nothing can attach itself to Brahman and it cannot be described in words. Sankara says these statements form the complete description of Brahman.

1. Sankara says - Take these descriptions literally.

2. How? By hearing these words, don't the Mayavadis become attached to Brahman?

P. Katha Upanisad 3.11: Above the jagat is avyakta, above avyakta is Purusa, and beyond Him is nothing else.

V. A look at Jiva Gosvami's refutations of Mayavadi Philosophy:

A. He established the Srimad Bhagavatam as the sastric reference par excellence.

1. Brhad Aranyaka Upanisad 2.41 - 4 Vedas, Itihasa and Puranas have come from the breath of Narayana.

2. Chandogya Upanisad 3.15.7 - 4 Vedas, Itihisas and Puranas are 5th Veda.

a. 4 cows and 1 buffalo are never grouped as a herd of 5 cows, because a buffalo is not a cow.

b. 5 cows means 5 cows.

3. Mahabharata says "Puranas make Vedas complete."

4. Sankaracarya's guru's guru wrote a commentary on a book that cited slokas from the Srimad Bhagavatam.

5. Garuda Purana says "artho 'yam brahma sutranam": Bhagavat Purana gives meaning of Vedanta-sutra, Gayatri and the 4 Vedas.

6. Srimad Bhagavatam is the ripened fruit of the tree of the Vedic scriptures.

7. Srimad Bhagavatam is Veda: "It is compiled by the Lord Himself."

8. Sukadeva Goswami was a Brahmajnani who became a devotee. Vyasadeva compiled the Bhagavatam only for Sukadeva, because only he could understand it (his other disciples were not qualified).

a. Sukadeva ran away as soon as he was born. Vyasa told his other disciples to chant 3 verses from the Srimad Bhagavatam in order to attract him back to the ashram (they were to chant these verses out loud when entering the forest to gather firewood or fetch water).

b. Thus Sukadeva was attracted and returned to learn Srimad Bhagavatam at the feet of his father. He cannot be attracted by anything material. Therefore S.B. has something higher than even Brahman realization (atmarama verse).

B. Srimad Bhagavatam establishes Krishna as the Param Brahman.

1. Hiranyakasipu used the "neti neti" process to negate any possible chance of his being killed by an enemy when he requested a boon from Lord Brahma.

a. He left no chance that any type of entity within the material world could harm him.

b. Practically he left only the Brahman. And that Brahman came as Narasingha and destroyed him; thus Lord Narsinghadeva is the Supreme Brahman.

2. Even Sridhar Swami has commented on "krishna 'stu bhagavan svayam".

3. In the wrestling arena, everyone saw Krishna differently. The yogis saw Him as the Tattva Paramam

(Supreme Truth).

4. The pastime of Lord Damodar shows how the Supreme is unlimited, yet has a body.

5. Devaki said, "That Brahman, jyoti...etc. that all the impersonalists (jnanis and yogis) are seeking is You."

## VI. Vadiraja's Refutations of Key Tenets of Mayavadi Philosophy.

A. Vadiraja comes in the line of Madhvacarya. He lived in the 16th century. He is said to have lived for 120 years.

B. How Vadiraja exposed Mayavadi misinterpretations:

1. Vadiraja showed how Mayavadis have taken the "neti-neti" statement out of context.

a. They say "not this, not this" means "not jiva, not jada" (Brahman is neither the individual soul, nor matter - therefore, since only Brahman exists, jiva and jada must be unreal).

b. But they've derived "neti-neti" from Brhad-aranyaka Upanisad 4.4.22, which states: "For the desire for sons is the desire for wealth and the desire for wealth the desire for worlds; both these are, indeed, desires only. This Self is not this, not this."

c. This verse is stating that the Self (atman) is not to be had by desiring wealth or worlds. The direct meaning is sufficient; the "jada-jiva" interpretation is without foundation.

## 2. The meaning of "advaita":

a. Mayavadis take "advaita" (not dual) to mean that Brahman has no difference. Therefore undifferentiated oneness is the only truth.

b. But the context is found in Chandogya Upanisad 6.2.1-2: "In the beginning, my dear, this was Being, one only, without a second."

c. Vadiraja showed that "one without a second" means, according to grammar and logic, "one Being without a second Being", or "He has no second", i.e. there is only one God. But this does not mean that some thing or things below God can't be distinguished from Him.

i. If the word "advitiam" as it appears in this verse actually means that nothing except undifferentiated Brahman exists, then the very text from which the word comes would be unreal, as it is a feature of the realm of difference.

ii. Thus the validity of the text would be destroyed by the very philosophy the Mayavadis ascribe to it.

iii. He proved his point further with this example - if one says "The lotus is blue", he does not mean to say that "lotus" and "blue" are exact synonyms. He means that blueness is a quality of the lotus. Similarly, when sastra says "Brahman is everything", "everything" and "Brahman" are not exact synonyms from Brahman (but as Brahman has qualities we don't have, still there is distinction in this inseparability).

3. Vadiraja points out that Mayavadis say that both practical life and the scriptures are on the vyavaharika platform - which means both are ultimately unreal. Yet they honor the scriptures and honor sattvik life as dispellers of illusion.

a. In practical life, what is "true" is what works, i.e. what brings good results. What is "untrue" breeds bad results. But a Mayavadi cannot distinguish between these two categories of action. Thus even on their so-called vyavaharika platform, they have no ultimate reference for deciding what is auspicious and what is inauspicious.

b. For example, using a Mayavadi analogy, the Mayavadis are not able to explain the difference between a man who sees that there is no silver in a silvery shell and the man who thinks that silver is there.

i. They will say the man who discovered his error is conventionally correct (vyavaharika), and the man who did not is under pratibhasika illusion.

ii. But the main thing is, both are in ultimate illusion. Now, the silvery shell analogy is used by them to illustrate how one comes out of ULTIMATE illusion and attains the truth (paramarthika). Yet, using their own doctrine as the test, this example proves itself invalid. So what are we left with?

4. Vadiraja compares the Mayavadis with Paundraka. He asks, "If Mayavadi philosophy is so pregnant with Truth, why did Krishna and His associates in Dvaraka laugh derisively when they heard Paundraka's letter, which simply made the same claims as the Mayavadi philosophers? Why did Sukadeva Goswami, when reciting this event to Maharaja Pariksit before the learned assembly of great saints and sages, did not come to the rescue of this doctrine?" Especially since the Mayavadis would hold that Krishna, His court, Sukadeva, Pariksit, the assembly of sages and Vyasa were actually all Mayavadis too.

5. How Mayavadis explain the perception of this world:

a. Brahman is the only reality.

b. When we see an object (e.g. a silvery shell), it is nothing other than the Brahman-consciousness itself appearing in that way.

c. But Brahman appears like a shell because of upadhi (designation) that is superimposed upon it.

d. Still, Pure Consciousness shines through the upadhi, making the object perceivable to our minds and senses.

e. This phenomenon of appearance is happening because Brahman is obscured by avidya.

f. Before avidya can be removed, a vritti (modification) of the viewer's mind must destroy the avidya surrounding the silvery shell when the senses make contact with it. This vritti is compared to a canal through which pure consciousness flows to envelop the object in right understanding.

g. When that happens, Brahman is mirrored in the vritti which then lights up the object, revealing its true identity with Brahman. Note: in this philosophy, the senses do not perceive the object. Nor even the mind. Nor the vritti, for the vritti is but a key that unlocks the door behind which is the floodlight of Brahman, which is the only reality.

i. Who perceives the object? The Mayavadi answers that the jiva (individual soul) does.

ii. But the jiva is verily Brahman, who thinks himself an individual due to avidya.

iii. By seeing the object in its true light, the jiva knows its oneness with Brahman.

#### 6. Vadiraja probes the Mayavadi explanation of perception:

a. If in the example of the silvery shell, only the Brahman-consciousness is perceiving, then how can the shell be seen in two ways?

i. If the origin of the phenomenon "silvery shell" is one and only one, why is it sometimes seen as a shell, and sometimes as silver?

ii. The only "real" mechanism available to explain this (since shell, avidya, jiva, senses, mind, and even vritti are illusory) is that Brahman is "shining forth." For this, Sankara has quoted a verse that appears in three Upanisads (Katha 2.2.15, Mundaka 2.2.15, Svetasvatara 6.14): "The shell? is lighted."



b. Still, there is no reason for the silver shell illusion in the statement, "Brahman shines forth", nor in the quotes given to support the statement.

c. Mayavadis say maya has two powers - veiling and projecting. When it obscures Brahman, it exercises the first potency, and when it projects an object (the shell) onto consciousness, the second potency is exercised. But what about the illusion of silver in the shell? That is not explained.

d. Vadiraja asks another question: Mayavadis say out of the avidya came the covering of the whole. So how does the one "part" get transferred to the other (the object to the perceiving consciousness)? Because, in Mayavadi philosophy, these two "parts" are dealt with as being two separate manifestations of Brahman, i.e. Mayavadis do not say the object and perceiver are identical with each other, but that both are separate.

e. Mayavadis have an answer: the object is imposed upon the perceiver by means of the vritti (mental adjustment). But then Vadiraja is quick to point out that the vritti was first postulated as the means of illumination. Now it is being used as the cause for an illusory perception of an object as well. So what is the need of saying the object...

f. The Mayavadis give material objects too much reality by identifying them with Brahman; on the other hand, they give them too little reality by saying they are illusions.

g. Mayavadis say there is a sakti of avidya called jadatmika avidyasaktih, and this potency transforms itself into the visible material manifestations of objects. But this avidya is said to be destroyed upon enlightenment (i.e. when the vritti illuminates the object). So, when ignorance is destroyed, then the jadatmika sakti must also be destroyed, the object itself would be destroyed.

i. One Mayavadi commentator, Bharatitirtha, has an answer of sorts to this penetration of their philosophy. He says there are two kinds of ignorance: one which is covering the jiva and another which covers the Lord. The jiva-ignorance (pratibhasika) is removable when an object shines forth, but the Lord-ignorance (vyavaharika) is removed only at the time of liberation (or death).

ii. But Bharatitirtha says this distinction between illusions is vyavaharika (or illusory).

h. Since ignorance is destroyed, but the object remains even after enlightenment, then it follows that the object is the supreme Brahman; in other words, Brahman is maya. There is no need for Mayavadis to postulate their elaborate theories of how Brahman is covered by ignorance, etc. The bottom line is: Brahman is maya - which runs directly against all sastra.

i. Another evidence of this is - the vritti is the cause of enlightenment as well as ignorance. This vritti is also maya. So maya gives both illusion and knowledge.

j. The Mayavadis have two theories regarding world-appearance: 1) superimposition and 2) the material causality of ignorance (the aforementioned jadatmika avidyasaktih). These theories are mutually exclusive: one demands that ignorance be destroyed (by the vritti) for objects to appear; the other demands that ignorance be present for objects to exist.

k. Vadiraja says, "unintelligibility is not only the trademark of your ignorance, it is also the trademark of your methodology." He's spoofing the Mayavadi Vimuktatman (13th century) who wrote: "Unintelligibility is the trademark of ignorance, not an objection to it"; i.e., you can't hold our philosophy accountable for being unintelligible because it is describing unintelligible.

## 7. Other arguments:

a. The Mayavadis attribute no qualities or powers to Brahman. Avidya creates an illusion of separate identity from Brahman; their example is that Brahman is like space, and avidya is like a pot. Vadiraja asks, "Then from where do activities arise? Does the space in a pot exhibit activities?"

b. Since Mayavadis have no answer for this, it would appear that they are postulating a completely different consciousness for each embodied being, consciousnesses which in turn are different from the impersonal Brahman. Then what good for is their adherence to oneness of consciousness of all beings?

VII. A historical comparison of Vaisnava-vedanta, Mayavadi-vedanta and Buddhism.

A. Many uninformed people think "Vedanta" is synonymous with Sankaracarya's Mayavadi Advaita-Vedanta. But originally Vedanta meant Vaisnava-vedanta. The Vedanta-sutras were compiled by Vyasadeva, a Vaisnava. The Srimad Bhagavatam is the natural commentary on the Vedanta-sutra, written by Vyasadeva himself 5000 years ago.

1. The philosophy of Sankaracarya (born about 600 AD), is really just Buddhism in disguise, as explained by Padma Purana (mayavada-asac-chastram pracchanam bauddham ucyate).

2. This can be demonstrated by the chronology of key Mayavadi philosophical explanations, which appear first in Buddhist scriptures and later show up in the philosophy of Sankara and his followers.

B. With the advent of the Age of Quarrel (Kali-yuga), the six systems of Vedic philosophy (i.e. Nyaya, Vaishesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Karma Mimamsa and Brahma Mimamsa) which were originally the different departments of Vedic study like the departments of study at a university, began to compete with one another.

C. By the time of the Buddha (500 BC), philosophical disputation between the six schools had become rampant all over India. The philosophy of the Buddha spin-offs of the quarrels of the six systems.

1. Both Buddhism and Jainism combine different aspects of the six systems, and both reject the authority of the Vedic scriptures, because the constant bickering of the Vedic philosophers had already undermined the force of Vedic authority among the people.

2. Buddha descended to lead people away from Vedic scholarship and ritualism, which atheistic-minded brahmanas had turned into dry mental speculation and animal slaughter. In reaction against these brahmanas, the

Buddhist philosophical conclusion is Sunyavada (voidism), and the ritualistic conclusion is Ahimsa (nonviolence).

D. Vedanta according to early Buddhist records.

1. It is clear from Buddhist scriptures that "Vedanta" was originally synonymous with Vaishnava-vedanta.

a. Certain pre-Sankara Buddhist scriptures contain descriptions of the teachings of philosophers who used to argue against the Buddhists. These scriptures were originally in Sanskrit, but now only exist in Chinese and Tibetan translations.

b. The Abhidharma-mahavibhasa-sastra (written around 150 A.D.) and the Satyasiddhisastra (250 A.D.) say that the followers of the Vedas and Upanisads believe in the Mahapurusa, who existed before the world began and exists within the heart of all creatures with a form of the size of a thumb. The Abhidharma-mahavibhasa-sastra says that the followers of the Vedas believe that, "All that exists is nothing but Purusa. All that happens is caused by the transformation of the self-existent Isvara."

c. In a work called Sastra by Aryadeva, Vedantists are portrayed as those who believe that the world was created by Brahma, who appeared from the navel of Vishnu.

d. In the Tattvasamgraha, the Buddhist writer Kamalasila equates "Vedavadin" with "Purusavadin."

e. The Buddhist writer Bhavya in the Madhyamika-hrdaya-karika describes the Vedanta philosophy as "Bhedabheda" ("one-and-different") philosophy [Gaudiya Vaisnavas call their own philosophy Acintya Bhedabheda-tattva].

f. Conclusion: Pre-Sankara Vedantism was personal (aimed at knowing Vishnu) and did not hold to a doctrine of "all-is-illusion-only".

2. In Buddhist scriptures like the Mahaparinirvana-sutra and the Lankavatara sutra the seeds of Sankara's Mayavadi philosophy are found.

a. There are four main schools of Buddhist philosophical thought, which appeared one after the other before Sankara's Mayavadi philosophy.

- i. Vaibhasika, or direct realism.
- ii. Sautrantika, or representationalism.
- iii. Vijnanavada, or subjective idealism.
- iv. Sunyavada, or voidism.

b. Sri Yamunacarya, writing in Siddhitraya, and Ramanujacarya in his Sribhasya, have both pointed out the similarities between Sankara's Mayavada and Vijnanavada. Vallabhacarya also mentioned the same point.

c. The Sunyavada philosophy teaches that sunya (void) is an inexpressible and transcendent truth (a concept echoed in Sankara's explanation of Brahman). The Vijnanavada school teaches that consciousness is the only truth and that the world we perceive is illusion. Mayavada says the same.

i. Moreover, in the Lankavatara-sutra, Sunyavada is expressed in terms that resemble Upanisadic language: nisthabhava param brahma ("the Supreme Brahman is the ultimate state of existence"). This work also asserts that the words Brahman, Vishnu and Isvara are other names for the Buddha-consciousness.

ii. Sunyavada had an influence on the members of the Brahminical community who were atheistic at heart. Gradually this began to influence Vedanta scholarship. Mayavada began to appear in Vedanta commentaries even before Sankaracarya; for example, in the writings of Gaudapada.

3. That Mayavada had stolen the salient features of sunyavada was not unnoticed by the Buddhists themselves.

a. In a Chinese version of the Mahaparinirvana-sutra, written after Buddhism was driven out of India, we find the following note regarding the state of affairs of Buddhist philosophy in India of that time: "Nowadays there are some remaining teachings of Buddha that were stolen by Brahmins and written into their own commentaries."

b. A Buddhist writer by the name of Bhartrhari, who lived about the same time as Sankaracarya, wrote that Sankara had similar ideas as did he and other Buddhist philosophers of that time.

4. Furthermore, we find in the writings of early Mayavadis a self-conscious defense against the charge that their philosophy is simply Buddhism in new dress.

a. One, Sriharsa, in a work called Khandanakhan dakhadya, says that while Buddhism says the world of multiplicity is false, we Mayavadis say the world of multiplicity is non-dual, or advaita.

b. But that's a poor defense, because Mayavadis also say Brahma satya, jagan mithya ("Brahman is truth, the world is illusion"). And Buddhists say enlightenment means understanding pratitya-samutpada, or "conditioned co-production", which is a monistic theory of the world.