Conclusion

We have observed that the speculation on person took place quite early in the history of India. The philosophically significant sūktas that appeared in the late Rgvedic period offer us a good picture of the philosophical milieu of that time. Among them the well-known Puruṣa-sūkta (Hymn of Man, RV X 90) indicates the historical starting point of so-called anthropocentric speculation. It shows how the nature was observed as related to the Ultimate Reality on the basis of ritualistic speculation, which is the corollary of the earlier sacrificial culture where much weight is given to the natural phenomena and the gods who govern them. It is interesting to see that the Puruṣa (person) is described here as the Ultimate Reality. In this sūkta, its transcendence and immanence are expressed; the detailed aspect of immanence is explained through the idea of macrocosm and microcosm.

We could see that this sūkta had influenced the trend of the speculation significantly thereafter. However, it should be borne in mind that the Puruṣa of PS is not directly related to the concept of ‘individual person’ which requires subject-centered observation. It went through gradual development to reach that stage. The first sign of subject-centered observation appears in the AV where we meet the first case of identification of Ātman and Brahman. We have to admit that this is not the same pattern of identification as we see in early Upaniṣads; and the date of the AV is not so early as we expect from the fact of it being included in the Saṃhitā. It could be as late as the late Brāhmaṇic period, which could be the date very close to or contemporary with
the early Upaniṣads. The hallmark of early Upaniṣads is no doubt the identity of Ātman and Brahman. It is the outcome of the long process of introspection on the basis of the unity of macrocosm and microcosm of the earlier age. As we have seen, it occupies an important position in respect to the influence on early Buddhism regardless of certain aspect of modification in the mid Upaniṣads.

Apprehending the doctrine of anātman seems to be the core of understanding Buddhism. The model example of anātman is seen in the Dhammacakkappavattanassutta, which deals with the first sermon of the Buddha. Here, as we have seen in chapter III, the rūpa (form) etc. of the five aggregates, which appear to be conventionally accepted as identical with Ātman – this Ātman as referring to the Upaniṣadic Ātman is also seen – are proclaimed to be anātman. Accordingly, some scholars argued that ‘not-self’ is the real intended meaning of anātman in early Buddhism. There are substantial evidences for this assertion. One of them is that, as we see here, the Buddha only denied the identification of rūpa etc. with ātman, and did not show his clear position of denying the ‘existence of ātman’. However, we have counter argued that the Buddha was ready to utilize the ‘non-existence of ātman’ as the meaning of anātman, provided that the listener does not fall into the trap of the two extremes of dogmatism. In support of this, we have quoted the sūtra, which uses of the word sūnya (P. suñña) to express the ‘absence of ātman’. We have seen that the ‘non-existence of ātman’, or the ‘non-self’, which is the broadly understood meaning of the ātman in Buddhist tradition in general, is merely another way of understanding the same anātman.
In chapter III, we have brought to notice the underlying problem of the doctrine of *anātman*, i.e. the problem of personal identity. The problem seems to be related to the fundamental philosophical inquiry: Who and What. It also seems to touch the philosophical barrier where the breakthrough is required. The breakthrough, in fact, is mentioned in the *sūtra*, but the problem is who is there to apply it in true sense and explain it. Thus, it can be foreseen that the attempt to answer the problem can neither be made in simple manner nor with satisfying result.

We have seen in chapter IV how the two influential and controversial Buddhist schools of Abhidharma Buddhism, i.e. the Sarvāstivādin and the Pudgalavādin, tried to overcome the discrepancies they had from the beginning which turned out to be futile. The Pudgalavādin concentrated on the problem of personal identity to overcome the apparent contradiction shown in relation to the doctrine of *anātman*, especially concerning the agent of transmigration. They have added various features to the existing concept *pudgala* (person) to cope with the problem of personal identity. They have even invented a new category that can fit for that concept. All these have caused debate among the Buddhist schools. According to the Pudgalavādin, *pudgala* is an individual person as a provisional designation (*prajñāpti*). It is neither identical with nor different from the *rūpa* etc. It is the one that transmigrates and the one that enters into the *nirvāṇa*. It is unknowable to common people and at the same time ineffable like the *nirvāṇa*. Pudgalavādins follow the doctrine of middle path of the Buddha to achieve the *nirvāṇa*. They believe that the continuity of

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416 See Chapter III, footnotes 202 and 203.
a person stops only when the thirst (tr̥ṣṇā) has ceased. We can see that it is mainly the feature of pudgala, which is meant to solve the problem of personal identity, that deviates from the tenets of early Buddhism.

The Sarvāstivādins were concerned with analyzing of the dharmas more than any other school, which has led them to be scrupulous on details of the psychological aspect of a person as well as the objective world. It seems that they were not directly involved with the problem of personal identity in the early stage. However, since their doctrine did not reveal any sign of application of the breakthrough – rather, it exposed inconsistency with the doctrine of anātman – it was bound to face the problem, which is also related to that of personal identity. It became explicit when they tried to solve the problem theoretically within their doctrinal structure. According to the Sarvāstivādin, a person cannot be endowed with two different kinds of mind, i.e. good (kuśala) and bad (akuśala), at the same moment. Then, how can the two heterogeneous and incompatible qualities of a person be explained to be linked together to form an identity of a person? A dharma called prāpti (attainment), which is unassociated with mind (viprayukta), is introduced for this. It co-exists with other dharmas at the present moment and causes the arising of different kinds of dharmas in the following phase. Being not satisfied with it, Vasubandhu adopted the seed theory from the Sautrāntika and established the theory of the specific transformation of continuum (saṃtati-parināmaviśeṣa). This seed is like a receptacle of potentials which keeps on changing differently. The problem is how the seed theory can be compatible with the doctrine of momentariness? The seed theory may explain
diachronic identity, i.e. the continuity / similarity of a person in temporal sequence, but not the synchronic identity, i.e. the unity / particularity of a person at a discrete moment when the mind (citta) and the function of mind (caitta) are simultaneously linked. It seems that the Sarvástivādin is in a better position regarding this. The prāpti offers more convincing explanation, because the concept itself is an invention intended to overcome the problem related to momentary observation. The seed theory appears more effective when the arising and transmission of thought is considered.

It seems that Vasubandhu was aware of the problems the two schools had. Vasubandhu, as an eminent scholastic monk at the time of composing the AKbh, tried to solve out the problems in his own way. Vasubandhu was not an exception to others in trying to follow the theories of early Buddhism as faithfully as possible in establishing his interpretation of various Buddhist doctrines. He tried to challenge the basic doctrine of the Sarvástivādin, i.e. the theory of the three time-periods. He tried to refute certain problematic opinions related to the pudgala of the Pudgalavādin from all possible angles. These are two of the main examples of Vasubandhu’s attempt to go back to the genuine teaching of the Buddha through the refinement of the contemporary views, shown in AKbh. We cannot say he was successful in it, for in spite of his great effort to offer satisfying answers to the problems related to the personal identity, the seed theory which is to be developed intoālayavijñāna of the Vijñānavāda turned out to be just another pseudo-self. Nor can we say that he was unsuccessful, since we have to see the importance of the text in Buddhist tradition in terms of content, which cannot be underestimated by the
fact of it offering all the details of Buddhist doctrines and debating points of
the age, and also in terms of historical context, which has to be emphasized for
its interim position between the late Abhidharma Buddhism and the
Vijñānavāda of Mahāyāna.

The present study allowed us to reconfirm one important point in the
history of Buddhism. The original teaching of the Buddha, like any other
worldly things, is bound to get changed, whether developed or deteriorated. It
is extremely difficult, or rather impossible, to maintain it as it is. It would be
natural for things to go through ups and downs, and thus the one that has gone
up to the summit inevitably comes down. However, we cannot, and should not,
depend on the generally observed historical aspect, and form a criterion
accordingly in dealing with the related matters. The point to be emphasized
here is that we, living in the present world, should not put aside the attempt to
recapture the original teaching of the Buddha, which can work as an insight in
forming our own perspective that fits to our world just as Vasubandhu did
more than one thousand and five hundred years ago in India. The attempt itself
seems to be meaningful, which may also bear an unexpected fruit.