

## **Bhagvad Gita and the Idea of One God: Aurobindo Ghosh and Shumei Okawa**

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### **Abstract**

This paper discusses the religio-philosophical views of Shumei Okawa, focusing firstly on his definition and understanding of the concept of religion and Supreme Being (至高の生命, Shikou No Seimei), and then on his views about Indian Philosophy, in particular on the concept of Brahman as understood by him. It then talks about his understanding of the Bhagvad Gita, the most sacred of all the Hindu texts, as a text dealing with morality and ethics but also talking about action and practical philosophy. It further introduces Okawa's views about Aurobindo Ghosh; an Indian philosopher for whom Okawa has very high regard, and explains the philosophy of Ghosh as seen through the eyes of Okawa. After discussing the monotheistic characteristics of the Gita, it examines the views of Ghosh based on the God of the Gita and the philosophy and the message behind the Gita. Finally, it compares Okawa's views with those of Ghosh and examines Okawa's understanding and interpretation of the latter.

### **Keywords**

Shumei Okawa, Aurobindo Ghosh, Bhagvad Gita, Supreme Being, idea, action

### **Introduction**

While researching the religio-philosophical ideas of Shumei Okawa; a well-known ideologist in 1930s and during WWII, one often comes across his favourite expression 梵我一如 (Bonga Ichinyo, Aham Brahma Asmi, I am Brahman). One could suppose this tendency should have had its origin in Confucian ideas, in particular 陰陽五行説 (Inyou Gogyou Setsu, The theory on Yin Yang and the five elements) which emphasizes the coordination of idea and action. At the same time, after the drastic change in Okawa's life

into political one, namely the result of his dramatic encounter with Henry Cotton's book at Kanda, he became involved very deeply in India and Indian people. This involvement, whether he was conscious of it or not, had obviously been embedded long before when he was a student of comparative religions at Tokyo Imperial University studying Buddhist philosophy [the title of his bachelor thesis was 「竜樹研究序説」(Ryujyu Kenkyu Jyosetsu) (An introduction to Nagarjuna research)].

Against this background a few points that need reflection are; a) the reason for Okawa's fondness of the expression 梵我一如(I am Brahman); an expression obviously of Indian origin, and b) the relation of this expression with Confucian ideas shared more or less by Japanese ruling elites or intellectuals in the Edo and Meiji era. One hypothesis that can be offered is that besides his natural character, his notion concerning the relationship between idea and action may have had its origin in his early Indian studies and then his direct involvement in Indian affairs might have enhanced and developed this notion to such an extent that it formed one of the pillars of his philosophical ideas. Despite this, thus far no serious attempt has been made concerning the influence of Indian philosophical thought in formulating Okawa's ideas. Particularly as is shown below, the fact that Okawa emphasizes the significance of Aurobindo Ghosh's ideas in the awakening of modern India has never been referred to.

### **Shumei Okawa and Indian Philosophy**

As already mentioned, Okawa completed his graduation from Tokyo Imperial University, where he studied Nagarjuna(竜樹), an Indian Buddhist philosopher. He claims that his aim was to continue with his research of Indian philosophy all his life. In fact, after his graduation, he continued following his wish without entering into any kind of service.<sup>1</sup> However, after his reading of the book '*New India or India in Transition*' by Sir Henry Cotton, his interest in Indian philosophy shifted to politics.<sup>2</sup> By this time he had read extensively on Indian Philosophy, especially Upanishads, as is evident from his knowledge of them, as well as through his various writings on religion and ethics.

To explain briefly his views on religion, one can see that he considered the difference between human beings and animals to be the basic difference of being governed by nature. Human beings are ashamed of being governed by nature, and try to live an ideal life. This, according to Okawa is moral or ethical living.<sup>3</sup> He defines morals or ethics as based on one's relationship with a) someone superior, b) someone equal and c) someone subordinate to oneself. The relationship one has with someone superior encompasses the feeling of reverence, a feeling which according to him is similar to the

respect a person has for one's parents.

此の感情は小児が其の父母に対して抱く心に其の最初の萌芽を見る…父母は小児にとりて神聖なるもの、自己よりも価値の上なるものと感ぜられるのである<sup>4</sup>。

This feeling (of reverence) is first observed in the infant in its feelings towards his parents... for a child, its parents are sacred, and a sense of value more than oneself is felt towards them.

However, according to Okawa, the feeling of reverence is not only towards one's parents but towards everything that has a Supreme Value(至高の価値).

…而して一切の価値ある者のうち、至高の価値を有するものは、万有之によつて存立し、且つこれによつて統一せらるる生命そのものである<sup>5</sup>。

...thus, amongst all the things that are valuable, the being which has the Supreme Value is the life itself on which everything depends, and through which all things are unified.

Okawa explains this feeling of reverence towards this Supreme in the following way.

もとより人間は当初より是くの如き至高の生命を認めるのではない。初めは此の生命の種々相を個別に認め、竟に全相を総合して最後の実在に到達する。此の生命を自身のうちに摂し、自身を此の生命に託せんとの願ひは、實に人生の至深處に發して、徐ろに全我を包み去る厳肅なる要求である。この要求並びに其の実現の経路が、人格的生活より抽象せられて、宗教と呼ばれる。従つて、宗教の基礎は言ふまでもなく人生に本具なる敬畏帰依の感情である<sup>6</sup>。

It is not that human beings are aware of the existence of this Supreme Being for the beginning. Initially human beings acknowledge the various forms of this Being, and then assemble all forms to realize this Reality (of the Supreme Being). And the desire of realizing this Supreme Being within the self, and merge the self within this Supreme Being is the most intrinsic and solemn desire of human beings. This desire, and the road for the actualization of this desire, when extracted from the ethical lives of human beings, is called religion. Therefore, needless to say, the base for religion is the feeling of reverence which is inherent in the human beings.

A person is not naturally aware of the existence of this Supreme Being(至高の生命), but he realizes its existence in various parts, until he becomes aware of the ultimate Reality. According to Okawa, it is the deepest desire of man to be completely united with this Being. The realization of this aim of uniting with the Supreme Being is the one part of ethical life called the path of religion. Therefore, to Okawa, the foundation of religion is nothing but the feeling of reverence inherent in every person.

Here we see that Okawa understands religion to be born of the feeling of reverence which begins with his parents and reaches to the Supreme Being. The aim of any person is to realize himself in that Being, and vice versa, in other words, to merge and become one with that Being.

This idea is very similar to the idea of Brahman found in the Upanishads. In his 『印度思想概説』(Indo Shisou Gaisetsu, Outlines of Indian Philosophy) Okawa elaborates further on this idea.

吠陀讃歌の哲学的考察、即ち吠陀の奥義を闡明せるものとして『奥義書』と呼ばれる。而してその思索の対象は常に『梵 Brahman』及び『我 Atman』である…ウパニシャドの根本思想は、実に『梵即我 Brahman=Atman』の一匁に尽きる。即ち、宇宙の一切、これより出でてこれに依つて存し、竟にまた之に還帰する獨一遍在の梵が、取りも直さず吾等の本我、吾等の不変の本質、我等の魂と同一不二なりとする思想である。而して此の思想こそ、ウパニシャドをして天地と共に不朽ならしむるものである<sup>7</sup>。

The philosophical treatises of the Vedic hymns which interpret and explain the inner meaning of the Vedas are called, “the book on the esoteric meanings” i.e., Upanishads. Thus, the object of these treatises is the Brahman or Atman...The fundamental thought of the Upanishads can be explained in one phrase ‘Brahman = Atman’. In other words, everything in the universe comes from this One and Universal Brahman, exists due to it and returns back to it, which in turn means that this thought ( Brahman= Atman) is our true self, our true unchanging nature, and one and indivisible with our souls. Along with the Heaven and the Earth, this very thought is something that makes the philosophy of the Upanishads imperishable and everlasting.

Okawa deals with this topic at length in 『印度思想概説』(Outlines of Indian Philosophy) dwelling on the characteristics and the differences of Brahman and Atman. However, the conclusion is that the aim of an individual (atman) is to realize himself in the Brahman. Hence we can understand that the Brahman or the Supreme Being (至高の生命) is the same concept.

Now, to elaborate further on this topic, let us take a look at another section, 『亞細亞建設者－ガンディ出現』(Ajia Kensetsusha, Gandhi Shutsugen, The Builders of Asia: Emergence of Gandhi) where Okawa again explains the nature of Indian philosophy, particularly about Upanishadic thought.

固より印度文明の本質が精神的であると云ふことは、明白疑ひを容れざるところである。印度の社会組織に於て、宗教階級が最高地位に置かれたことが、既に何よりの実証である。印度人は既に吠陀時代に於て遙早く万象の背後に潜む一如を把握し、次で「Aham Brahma Asmi 我は梵なり」と云ふ金剛不壞の真理を証悟した。正統印度の精神的要求は、実にこの真理を現実の生活の上に実現すると云ふこと以外に無い。百花繚乱の印度哲学・印度宗教は、精緻なる論理と周到なる修行によつて、如法に人間の理智と意志とを鍛錬し、一切の不完全を脱却して自我を完成し、かくして梵に帰一するを究竟の目的とする点に於て、悉く其の向ふ所を一にする。換言すれば印度の教法は、数ふるに遑もなかるべき諸多の法門に分れて居るとは言へ、総じて解脱を理想と

せざるはない<sup>8</sup>。

In essence, it can be said without doubt that the nature of Indian civilization is very spiritual. This is evident from the fact that the religious class occupies the topmost position in the social structure of Indian society. Ever since the Vedic times, Indians were able to sense the existence of the One behind the tens of thousands of phenomena, and were awakened to the unbreakable truth of ‘Aham Brahma Asmi’. The spiritual thirst of orthodox Indians is to realize this truth in their daily lives. Blooming like hundreds of flowers, the varied Indian philosophies and religions lie in the oneness of the destination of merging with the Brahman in various ways ; that is, from sophisticated logic to deliberate training, or the training of the will and the intellect through the Law and to rid oneself of all the imperfections to attain perfection. In other words, generally speaking within the Indian teachings, although diverse religious schools exist, they are similar in the fact that all of them consider nirvana as the ultimate destination.

Indians have realized the existence of one universal principle behind everything, and hence the ultimate aim is to be one with the Brahman, the universal principle or Supreme Being.

Okawa explains that the nature of Indian philosophy to be essentially spiritual and the ultimate aim, in spite of its many schools of thought is to be one with the Ultimate Reality, to merge with the ‘Brahman’ or in other words, to attain nirvana.

However, he further adds that this explanation is not complete, and that Indians also have a realistic and practical outlook towards life.

さり乍ら、之が印度精神の全体ではなく、また全体であり得る道理がない…印度が精神的直感を重んじたことは印度人を没理性的なるかに誤解する原因の一つとなつて居る。而も世界に於て最も早く論理学と認識論との発達した国は印度であり、既に二千年の往昔に於て、実に三十二の学、六十四の術を学習して居た…加うるに印度は、異常なる実践的精力、滾滾不尽の創造力を有して居た…印度人に実行の能力なしなど言ふは、根も葉もなき放言である<sup>9</sup>。

However this is neither the complete spirituality of India, nor is there any reason for thinking that it is...that the Indians value spiritual intuition has caused a misunderstanding that the Indians are irrational and illogical in their outlook. But, India is the oldest country in the world where the sciences of logic and epistemology were developed. Even as far as two thousand years ago, they were studying 32 types of sciences and 64 types of arts...in addition to that, India had exceptionally practical energy and ever flowing creativity...to say that the Indians are not practical is an irresponsible remark with no foundation.

This practical outlook is most strikingly visible in the Bhagvad Gita. Okawa describes Bhagvad Gita as

印度の古典薄伽梵歌は、此のクリシュナとアルジュナの対話篇である。そは戦陣危急の間、端的に生死巔頭の問答なるが故に、動もすれば無用の長広舌に失する印度諸典とは似もやらず、雄渾透徹なる思想を、最も間接に要約せる点に於て、既に万緑叢中の紅一点である。宜なるかな、印度復興の諸先覚をして、其魂に莊嚴なる国民的理想を樹立し、加ふるに万難屈せざる気魄を養はしめたる上に於て、与かつて最も力ありしもの、此の薄伽梵歌の右に出づるは無い。げに薄伽梵歌は、何時の世、如何なる国とは言はず、正義に拠つて不義を討たんとする眞実なる戦士にとりて、珍重至極の聖典である<sup>10</sup>。

Indian classical text ; the Bhagvad Gita is a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. The Gita, described in the critical situation of warfare, discusses the issue of life and death very frankly, and does not resemble at all to the other Indian texts which have long discussions and commentaries, but is the one conspicuous text in the vast corpus of Indian literature which explains its sublime and crystal clear ideas in an indirectly abridged and simple way. The Bhagvad Gita ; second to none, would be helpful for the leaders engaged in revival of India to build a sacred national ideal, and no other text would surpass this powerful text in building and nurture a strong, unyielding Indian spirit. Truly, the Bhagvad Gita, going beyond the confines of time and country, is the most valued holy book of the true warrior who wants to fight injustice with righteousness.

We can clearly see that of all the Indian texts, Okawa places the most importance on the Bhagvad Gita. To him, the Bhagvad Gita is the most important text not limited only to the Indians, but applicable to any righteous warrior of any period, any generation or any country. He further describes the Gita as concise and easy to understand, unlike other Indian texts which are unending commentaries. But the point he has to make is that the Gita's importance lies in the fact that it lays stress on actively fighting the unrighteous with the help of righteousness. This is possibly the part of the Gita which Okawa liked the most.

To summarise, on one hand we can see the complete devotion of Indian thought to this Idea of 'Brahman' and the preoccupation with the spiritual and unworldly things. But on the other hand, the practical aspects of living and the worldly life are not neglected, thereby stressing not only the Idea but also giving equal importance to Action as is seen in the Bhagvad Gita.

There have been many attempts during the freedom movement of India to apply the concept of action in Bhagvad Gita in rousing the nationalist sentiment among the Indian youth, especially in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, by the leaders of political movements like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi. There was a definite attempt

to turn to all things Indian for inspiration in the effort to overthrow the British rule. Okawa too shares the same views, as is evident from his 『日本二千六百年史』(Nihon Nisen Roppyaku Nenshi, Japan : 2600 years of History) where he makes clear his aversion to unnecessary imitation of ideas or cultures of other countries, and emphasizes his firm opinion that imitation does not help in the betterment of one's own country.

如何なる世、如何なる国といはず、改造又は革新の必要は国民的生命の衰弱・頽廃から生まれる。故に之を改造するためには、国民的生命の裏に潜む偉大なるもの・高貴なるもの・堅実なるものを認識し、之を復興せしむることによつて、現に横行しつつある邪悪を打倒しなければならぬ。簡潔に言えれば、改造又は革新とは、自国の善を以て自国の惡を討つことでなければならぬ…建設の原理は、断じて之を他国に求むべきに非ず、實に吾が衷に求めねばならぬ。而して吾が衷に求むべき建設の原理は、唯だ自国の歴史を学ぶことによつてのみ、之を把握することが出来る<sup>11</sup>。

Irrespective of country or era, the necessity of reform and reconstruction arises from the collapse and decay of the nation's spirit. Therefore, to reform and reconstruct, one has to be conscious of something great, valuable and sound hidden in the nation's spirit. The present maladies have to be destroyed with the help of these values by rebuilding them in the nation's spirit. In simple words, reform or reconstruction is the fighting of the evil infecting one's nation with the good of the same nation... Therefore, the principles of reconstruction should not be sought from any other country, but should be searched from within one's own country. Hence the principle of reconstruction that we are seeking will be found only by studying the history of one's own country.

A point he re-emphasizes in the context of India in his 『亞細亞建設者－ガンディ出現』(Builders of Asia: Emergence of Gandhi )

このことは、印度復興を批判する上に、最も肝心なる公準の一である。否な独り印度と言はず、総じて国民運動の成敗をトすべき最後の準拠は、實に此の珍重すべき原則でなければならぬ。孰れの国の国民運動にせよ、若し夫れが模倣的であり、輸入的であり直訳的であるならば、仮令一時の成功を得るとしても、其の成功は竟に成功せる自殺たるに終るであろう。之に反して若し其の運動が、深く国民本来の精神に根ざし、運動の各部門に於て、躍如たる国民性の発露を認め得るに於ては、晚かれ早かれ、其の壯心烈志を実現せば止まぬ<sup>12</sup>。

In criticizing the restoration of India, this is also one of the most essential postulates. Not only just India, but for all countries, the foundation for success of all nationalistic movements is based on nothing but this valuable postulate. No matter which country's nationalistic movement it is, if it is an imitation, imported and literal, then, although it might see some success at some time, in the long run it will only be a suicidal success. On the contrary, if the movement is

firmly based in the indigenous spirit of the nation, if the national spirit is observed in various aspects of the movement, then sooner or later, the heroism and the bravery would come about in due course.

Therefore, like the views of the Indian leaders, Okawa too thinks that it is important for the Indians for the success of their nationalist movements to draw inspiration not from foreign philosophies, but from their own culture. Here he quotes from the Gita to justify not only his views, but also those of the Indian nationalist leaders.

さて此の希有の古典は、其の一節に於て下の如く説く — 『仮令劣機ならんとも、己れの本然(ダルマ)を尽すは、巧に他の本然に倣ふに優る。己れの本然に死するは可い、他の本然に倣ふは畏れねばならぬ』と。…個人にもあれ国民にもあれ、苟くも道義的生活を営む者に在りて、自己に忠にしてや艶ることは、却つて絶後に蘇る機縁ともなり得るが、他に追従して一時の功を挙ぐる如きは、所謂枯葉の秋風に捲かれて天上に舞ふと等しく、やがて浮ぶ瀬もなき死滅に終らざるを得ない<sup>13</sup>。

In one of its verses this rare classical text says as follows, “Far better to do one’s duty ill than do another’s duty well, in one’s own duty better die, in other’s duty harm will lie.”<sup>14</sup> ... At the individual level or at the national level, anyone who is living a moral life, knows that as long as you are truthful to yourself, even if you die, you can have a chance at resurrection by so doing, but even if one gains success by following somebody else’s truth, like a dried leaf which gets blown into the air by the autumn wind, they have no other way but to whether away and perish.

Hence we can say that Okawa was a strong advocate of knowing and understanding one’s own culture, and applying the indigenous concepts of that country for its development; a useful idea for a country fighting for its identity and independence; and also one which finds reflection in the verses of the Indian classical text, the Gita.

From the above discussion, we can summarise that Okawa understood Indian philosophy to be not only spiritual but practical, and that he was not only concerned with the ‘Idea’ but also with ‘Action.’ We saw that he gave special importance to the Bhagvad Gita because of its practical philosophy, which to use his words, transcends time and country. We also acquainted ourselves with his views about drawing inspiration from indigenous culture rather than indiscriminate imitation of foreign things. Let us now see how these views influence the understanding of Okawa with respect to Aurobindo Ghosh’s philosophy of the Gita.

### Aurobindo Ghosh and Shumei Okawa

Aurobindo Ghosh was born in India, but due to his father’s fascination with the West,

was sent to England to study in 1879 at the age of 7 and he stayed there till 1893. He returned to India, and initially worked in Baroda under Gaekwads, the rulers of Baroda, and then at Baroda College. In 1906 he shifted to Bengal to participate in the freedom movement and was very active till 1910. He wrote articles for journals like Jugantar, and also became the secret chief editor of the daily Bande Mataram. With an impending arrest by the British on charges of sedition, Ghosh left Bengal and settled in Pondicherry where he began his spiritual work. There he started a monthly journal called Arya in 1914. This paper quotes from his book '*Essays on the Gita*' which is a series of articles published in Arya.

Okawa came to know of Aurobindo Ghosh through his friend Paul Richard who was a personal acquaintance of Ghosh. We can only assume this by taking into consideration the circumstantial evidence found in 「第十一時」(Dai Jyuuichiji, The Eleventh Hour) which does not supply us with abundant information concerning Ghosh-Okawa relationship. Richard first met Ghosh in 1910 when he came to Pondicherry hoping to contest the elections from this French territory. He came back in 1914 this time with his wife Mirra, to run for the elections. Though he lost, the couple decided to stay in India and together with Aurobindo started the monthly journal *Arya*. The three developed close bonds, and Aurobindo and Richard came to see each other as brothers. Richard was considered a personal friend and a brother in Yoga by Aurobindo.<sup>15</sup> We can see that the same is true for Richard, who refers to Ghosh as 'my great Brother.'<sup>16</sup> In footnotes to chapter 4 of 『亞細亞建設者－ガンディ出現』(Builders of Asia : Emergence of Gandhi) too Okawa talks of this relationship between Richard and Ghosh.

アラビンダ・ゴーシュの哲学を知る最上の著作は彼が月刊「アーリヤ」に連載せる三大篇 *Essays on the Gita*, *Synthesis of Yoga*, *Life Divine* である。予が断金の友ポール・リシャル君はゴーシュと義兄弟の契りあり、君のゴーシュ論は載せて予の旧訳「第十一時」の中に在る<sup>17</sup>。

The finest means of knowing about the philosophy of Aurobindo Ghosh is the three series of articles, namely, *Essays on the Gita*, *Synthesis of Yoga*, *Life Divine*, which were published in his monthly magazine '*Arya*'. My best friend Mr. Paul Richard is very close to Ghosh, and they are almost like brothers. Richard's thoughts about Ghosh are published in 「第十一時」 previously translated by me.

In an address to the "Students Asiatic Union" on May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1919, at Waseda University in Tokyo, Richard says that the Japanese youth should prepare themselves for the magnificent tomorrow...for the great things, events, great men, the divine men of Asia.<sup>18</sup> Richard further says that

For there are already these men, these divine men – in Asia. ...it is in Asia that I have found the greatest among them, the leader, the hero of tomorrow. His name is Aurobindo Ghose.<sup>19</sup>

Five years in the course of which, at my request he has exposed in five volumes of a monthly publication, the most masterly, the most magnificent teaching of philosophy, of human and divine wisdom that men have ever received...the saviour of India, he will become in the full light of the day the Guru of Asia, the teacher of the world. ...Today for the first time I proclaim in public his name. For it is without doubt you who should hear it the first. Let this name be henceforth to you, to your association, to the youth of Asia—to Asia, a symbol, a rallying cry, a programme. For this name signifies Asia free and one – Asia resurgent. Asia in her glory!<sup>20</sup>

Okawa, in the last section titled 「亞細亞の真人アラビンダ・ゴーシュ」(Ajia no Shinjin : Aurobindo Ghosh, The True Asian: Aurobindo Ghosh) in 「第十一時」(The Eleventh Hour) translates it as<sup>21</sup>

亜細亞の神人の時は来りつつある…而して私は此等神人の最も偉大なる者、来る可き世界の英雄を、亜細亞に於て見出した。彼は印度人にして、其の名はアラビンダ・ゴーシュと云ふ<sup>22</sup>。

此の五年間彼は私の求めに応じて月刊雑誌を発行し、最も莊厳なる哲学、人間が未だ知らざりし神と人との智慧を此に発表し、今五巻に達している。今や此の印度の救済者が…亜細亞の師となり、世界の教師となるべき時が来た…私が公会の席に於て彼の名を発表するは今日を以て始とする。何となれば之を最初に聴くべきものは、実は諸君であらねばならぬからである。希くば彼の名が、今後諸君に対し、諸君の会に対し、亜細亞の青年に対し、亜細亞に対して、一のシンボルたり、標榜たり、旗幟たらんことを。何となれば彼の名は新亜細亞、自由の亜細亞、統一の亜細亞、光榮の亜細亞を意味するからである<sup>23</sup>。

Okawa was a very good friend of Richard and even shared lodgings with the Richards for a period of time.<sup>24</sup> Hence it is quite probable that he might be influenced by Richard's fascination with Ghosh. It would be but natural for him to share the same fascination for this person who was so highly regarded by his closest friend. Therefore, although Okawa personally never met Ghosh it is not surprising that he developed great respect for him and his philosophy and came to regard the *Essays on the Gita*<sup>25</sup> as one of the best works to understand it. Reflecting Richard's views, Okawa too evaluates Ghosh to be the first real philosopher of modern India.

さて、翻つて哲学的方面を見れば、アラビンダ・ゴーシュの出現によつて、印度は初めて真個の国民哲学者を得た。彼の哲学は、二十年に亘る欧羅巴留学の間に得たる西洋哲学の驚くべき蘊蓄と、豊富深刻なる自己の精神的経験とを以て薄伽梵歌の思想

を闡明し開展して、周匝なる体系をへたるもの<sup>26</sup>。

Well now looking at the philosophical trends, one can say that India got her first nationalist philosopher with the emergence of Aurobindo Ghosh. His philosophy, which is the product of the lessons in Western thinking during the overseas education that he received for 20 years that he was in Europe, as well as the deep and rich spiritual experiences led him develop and clarify the essence of the Bhagvad Gita and give it a systematic, wide spread appeal.

According to Okawa, Ghosh's philosophy is rich not only because of his twenty year contact with the West that enriched his understanding of the Western culture, but also because of his deep spiritual experiences, the combination of which is reflected in his discussions and interpretations of the Gita. It is therefore that Okawa holds Ghosh in high esteem.

However, it is not just the spiritual side of Ghosh which was appealing to Okawa, but also the practical nature. For example, while talking about the situation in India and Indian freedom struggle, Okawa quotes the following words of Ghosh.

彼はまた下の如く教えた — 『第十九世紀の印度は、政治的解放、社会的改革、宗教的復興を求めた。而も此等の努力は、印度民族の精神と歴史と使命とを無視して、徒に西欧の動機と方法とを学び、欧羅巴の教育、その器械、その制度を輸入しさえすれば、以て能く印度のために欧羅巴的なる繁栄と勢力と進歩とを招来し得ると考へた。それ故に一切の努力は竟に失敗に終つた。第二十世紀の印度は此の悲惨なる経験に鑑み、英吉利化せる第十九世紀印度の目的と理想と方法とを悉く棄て去らねばならぬ。印度堅確に自己の路を歩みて、独立する生命と文化とを実現し、世界の面前に於て、欧羅巴がつひに解決し得ざりし政治的・社会的・経済的・道徳的問題を解決せねばならぬ。此の目的遂行する方法と力とは、之を印度自身の魂の衷に求めねばならぬ』と<sup>27</sup>。

He said the following, "the India of the nineteenth century sought political freedom, social reform and revival of its religion. However their efforts ignored the spirit of India, its history and its calling. In vain did they learn from the western systems and directs, western education, technology, and its bureaucratic system, thinking that importing western ideas would lead to the same prosperity, vigour, and progress as seen in Europe. Hence, all their efforts ended in failure. The India of the twentieth century must learn its lesson from this bitter experience and should throw away the western aims and goals and ideals afflicting the India of nineteenth century. India should resolutely walk its own path, realize its own spirit and culture, and in front of the whole world solve its political, social, economic and moral problems which Europe has not yet been able to do. And the way and the strength to pursue that goal should be sought nowhere else but within India's soul itself.

Okawa quotes Ghosh who says that although the Indians tried to model themselves

on the English pattern, the attempt failed, and hence in the twentieth century the Indians need to walk their own path, for which they need to look within themselves rather than imitating England. This quote is strikingly similar to the views of Okawa on mere imitation of the west.

Further, Okawa says that revolutionary movements in many areas helped the awaking of the Indian youth to the idea of “Indian spirit.” However, he is of the opinion that there was none other than Ghosh who could so influence the youth through the print media.

印度青年の魂に、正しき国民的自覚を喚起こし、従つて革命的精神を奮興せしめたる点に於て、彼れの人格並に言論の如く深刻強大なりしはない。すでに述べたる如く、宗教・文学・芸術の諸方面に於ける運動が、印度復活の拒み難き実証であり、且つ間接に国民主義的自覚を促したことは事実である。また言論文章によつて印度の国民主義を力説したる幾多の思想家ありしことも事実である。さり乍ら、未だ曾て何人も吾がゴーシュの如く直截明確に、而も深奥なる根拠に立ちて、印度国民の自覚を促したもののは無かつた<sup>28</sup>。

There is nothing deeper and stronger than Aurobindo Ghosh's personality and his speeches to call out to the souls of Indian youth and awaken in them the right sense of nationalism, and revolution. As already stated, the various movements related to religion, culture and arts are an undeniable proof of the revival of things Indian, and it is a fact that they indirectly encouraged the awakening of the nationalist spirit. It is also a fact that there have been many philosophers who have strongly advocated Indian nationalism through their speeches and their writings. However none of them as yet had been able to encourage the awakening of the Indian spirit as decisively and as clearly with a stand based upon deep foundations as our own Aurobindo Ghosh.

Now, in trying to explain the doctrine of Ghosh's philosophy, Okawa says that it is based on the Karmayoga or the Yoga of Works of the Gita. To explain this, however, Okawa takes the help of Wang Yangming (王陽明, Ouyoumei) school of thought, stating that the philosophy of Wang Yangming and Ghosh are exactly the same.

彼の教義は、カルマヨガ — 行による実現である。其根本精神は、王陽明が「知は行の始、行は知の成るもの、聖学は唯是れ一個の工夫のみ」と唱へたると、全く同一轍である<sup>29</sup>。

His principle is based on Karmayoga, the path of Action. The idea is the same as the neo-Confucian thought of Wang Yangming which states that, “thought is the root of action, action is thought in expression, wisdom is nothing but this one idea.”

Okawa strongly states that it is this Karmayoga doctrine of the Gita emphasized by

Ghosh which taught Indians who believed that quiet life and virtuous thoughts were the basis of a meritorious life that only virtuous thoughts were useless without putting them into action, and that action itself is the expression and completion of spiritual thinking. It is Ghosh's doctrine that stressed that the key to a virtuous life is not the way of retiring to the mountains and leading the hermit life of a recluse, but living in this world and overcoming all attachments by performing virtuous actions.

So far we have discussed Okawa's views on Indian philosophy with respect to idea and action, and his understanding of Ghosh's philosophy regarding the same concepts. This discussion in due course also necessitates the investigation of Ghosh's ideas. Therefore, let us now take a look at the philosophy of Ghosh and his understanding of the Gita, and then compare it with Okawa's understanding.

### **Aurobindo Ghosh and Bhagvad Gita**

In the 'Essays on the Gita' Ghosh says that of any ancient Scripture, what is important is the spirit in which it is approached and what exactly can be derived from it is of value to humanity and its future.<sup>30</sup> Particularly towards the Gita, Ghosh explains his approach at the end of the first chapter where he makes clear that Gita must be approached to distinguish its essential and living message to help man towards his spiritual welfare,<sup>31</sup> for to Ghosh; Gita is not a book of practical ethics but of the spiritual life.<sup>32</sup>

He further says that modern mind has exiled from its practical motive-power the two essential things, God or the Eternal and spirituality or the God-state,<sup>33</sup> and that is exactly what Gita can teach. Although Gita is usually quoted for its advocacy of disinterested performance of duty, that is not its aim in the least. It does not ask that duties be performed dispassionately. What Gita advocates is that one must refrain from what one abhors even if a thousand duties were shattered to pieces.<sup>34</sup> In other words, the Gita advocates the following of the call of God, or one's true nature. In this way, according to Ghosh even the abandonment of his family by Buddha is justified because he followed his true nature, without being obstructed by duties. Therefore, he says, what Gita teaches is the following of divine life, the abandonment of all dharmas, *sarvadharman*, and to take refuge in Supreme alone.<sup>35</sup>

### **Ghosh and the idea of one God of the Gita**

While explaining the core of the teachings of the Gita, Ghosh talks about the various

ways in which the Gita has been interpreted by different people, laying stress on the aspect which they find important.<sup>36</sup> There he says,

Others again speak of the Gita as if the doctrine of devotion were its whole teaching and put in the background its monistic elements and the high place it gives to quietistic immvergence in the one self of all.<sup>37</sup> And undoubtedly its emphasis on devotion, its insistence on the aspect of the Divine as Lord and Purusha and its doctrine of the Purushottama, the Supreme Being who is superior both to the mutable Being and to the Immutable and who is what in His relation to the world we know as God, are the most striking and among the most vital elements of the Gita.<sup>38</sup>

The above quote throws light on the idea of God of Gita as understood by Ghosh. To him, the Divine, Purusha or Supreme Being is all synonymous to what we know as God. He points this out as one of the most striking and vital elements of the Gita.

Let us evaluate Ghosh's view based on the framework provided by some scholars who elaborate the issue of monotheistic characteristics of the Bhagvad Gita.

Proposing the monotheistic character of the Gita, Garbe says of Krishna that,

In the epoch in which the Kshatriyas took a prominent share in the re-formation of the spiritual life of ancient India— in my opinion they took the leading part in it— there was founded by the fighting warrior Krishna the son of Vasudeva and Devaki a monotheistic religion which spread first among his tribesmen the Yadavas, Satvatas or Vrishnis and subsequently beyond the limits of his tribe. This idea was first propounded only conjecturally by R G Bhandarkar in connection with his description of the Ramanuja system and its fore runners; but it can be well established.<sup>39</sup>

Akamatsu completely accepts Garbe's view that Gita is about one God. He summarizes Garbe's discussion in the following way.

本来の『バガヴァッド・ギーター』は、一神教的な詩であり、部族宗教である「クリシュナ教」の宗教的・哲学的教理 — その基盤にはサンーキャ・ヨーガ的な思想をもつ — を広めるために作られたものと考えたのであった<sup>40</sup>。

ガルベが注目したように、『バガヴァッド・ギーター』には一般にインドの宗教は多神教といわれる中で、一神教的側面が非常に強く表れており、これもまた『ギーター』のもつ特異な点であることを認めておきたい。もっとも、『ギーター』は、もっぱらアルジュナとクリシュナの間の対話から成り立っており、その一方が「神」となるのであるから、一神教的になるのは当然ともいえるのである<sup>41</sup>。

Originally the Bhagvad Gita was a monotheistic poem; the basis of which was the idea of Sankhya Yoga; thought to be written to disseminate the tribal beliefs of Krishna-ism and its religious and philosophical doctrines.

As Garbe points out, the Gita shows a very strong monotheistic aspect in the whole corpus of

Indian polytheistic literature, which in turn acknowledges and emphasizes the peculiarity of the Gita. Basically, the Gita is a dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna, the latter being God, it is but natural that it would turn out to be a monotheistic text.

Another reason why Gita can be regarded as monotheistic is because of the concept of devotion which is predominantly associated with another monotheistic tradition like Christianity. Akamatsu continues

バクティの観念は、個人の神を前提とし、唯一の神に対する専一で不斷の信仰を要求する観念であることから、一九世紀には、これをキリスト教起源と考えた研究者もいたほどであった。しかし、その成立はキリスト教よりも明らかに早いもので、『バガヴァッド・ギーター』に対するキリスト教の影響を仮定する説とともに、今ではこの考えは完全に否定されている。逆にキリスト教への影響の可能性を問う研究者がいてもよさそうなものであるが、さすがに当時はいなかったようである。ともかく、初期のヨーロッパの研究者が、キリスト教の影響を考えざるを得ないほどに、『ギーター』に見える信仰の様態は一神教的であったことができるであろう<sup>42</sup>。

The concept of ‘Bhakti’ (devotion) presumes a personal God, an unshakable faith in one God, and hence researchers in the nineteenth century came out with the hypothesis that Gita had its roots in Christianity. However it is now clear that the Gita was compiled much before the origin of Christianity, and the hypothesis of Christian influences on the Gita have been completely disproved. In fact, in the present times it is possible that there are researchers, who wonder if the opposite is possible, but certainly there was no one during that time who thought about this. At the very least, we can say that the early researchers of Europe, given that the nature of faith as seen in the Gita was monotheistic, were compelled to consider the influences of Christianity on the Gita.

Garbe has argued this point in lot more detail in *An introduction to the Bhagavadgita* where he says that there is no proof that the idea of *bhakti* (devotion) is borrowed from Christianity. He further strengthens his argument by saying that *bhakti* is also an indigenous concept of Indian people, the traits of which were visible even in the times of the Rig Veda and that the love of God and the seeking after the Divine developed gradually, not only in the monotheistic religions, but even outside the monotheistic circle of ideas.<sup>43</sup>

From the above discussion, we can accept Bhagavad Gita to be monotheistic on the following grounds:

- (a) The dialogue is between Arjuna and Krishna, Krishna revealed to be the Supreme Teacher and God
- (b) Krishna is originally a personal god who must have established a monotheistic

religion which subsequently spread amongst other tribes

- (c) Bhagvad Gita is about absolute devotion to God, a characteristic trait of monotheism

Evaluating Ghosh's writings, it is not seen that he explicitly refers to the Gita a monotheistic text. Naturally so, as we can see that it is not his concern ; and hence not dwelling on the issue at all. But as seen above, we find several evidences where he relates Krishna, the God of the Gita, to the Supreme Being, the Brahman, effectively stating that Gita is about one God and that the One is none other than Brahman. This God, this Supreme Being descends on the earth in the form of an Avatar with specific functions. In fact, Ghosh does not even concern himself with the historicity of Krishna, only dwelling on Krishna as a Supreme Being or the Divine Teacher and incarnation of God, an Avatar who has descended on earth to fulfill two-fold functions of a) upholding the Law, Dharma, and b) enabling the human beings to attain the divine state.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore we can say that although Ghosh believes Gita to be about One God, his reference to the monotheistic elements of the Gita is somewhat indirect, and understandably so as this is not what Ghosh wants to explain here in the *Essays on the Gita*. His aim lies in explaining the unity of man with the Divine, the idea of God in man, and ways to realize this existence within man's own self.

### **Ghosh, the Gita and the idea of God in man**

As we have already seen, Ghosh considers the God of Gita to be one God, referred to by various names like Krishna, Vasudeva, Brahman, Purusha, Parameshwara, Ishwara, or Purushottama. This Supreme is the creator of the universe and all creatures and all objects are becomings of the one divine Being; manifestation of the one Infinite.<sup>45</sup>

There is an utmost supreme Self, Lord and Brahman, one who is both the impersonal and the personal, but other and greater than either of them and other and greater than both of them together.... Each soul is a partial being of this self-existent One, an eternal soul of this All-Soul, a partial manifestation of this supreme Lord and his universal Nature. All here is this Divine, this Godhead, Vasudeva; for by Nature and the soul in Nature he becomes all that is and everything proceeds from him and lives in or by him, though he himself is greater than any widest manifestation, any deepest spirit, any cosmic figure<sup>46</sup>

Here we can see one of the oldest concepts in Indian philosophy, that 'all creatures and all objects are becomings of the one divine Being.' We all have Divinity inside us. This Divinity sometimes known as the Vasudeva is all that is, says the Gita.<sup>47</sup>

This Godhead is one in all things that are, the self who lives in all and the self in whom all

live and move ; therefore man has to discover his spiritual unity with all creatures, to see all in the self and the self in all beings, even to see all things and creatures as himself, and accordingly think, feel and act in all his mind, will and living. This Godhead is the origin of all that is here or elsewhere and by his Nature he has become all these innumerable existences ; therefore man has to see and adore the One in all things animate and inanimate, to worship the manifestation in sun and star and flower, in man and every living creature, in the forms and forces, qualities and powers of Nature, *vasudevah sarvam iti*. He has to make himself by divine vision and divine sympathy and finally by a strong inner identity one universality with the universe.<sup>48</sup>

Vasudeva is present in all things animate and inanimate, and the nature of man is to worship the manifestation of this divine, this self in all things. He has to see all in the Self and the Self in all beings. This is the true calling, and the true nature of man is then to realise the existence of this Divinity within himself. This is the idea which reoccurs throughout the Gita. According to Ghosh, this is the supreme secret of the Gita, the fullness of Spiritual Action.

Therefore, says Ghosh, to attain unity with the Godhead, that being his ultimate aim, man has to a) awake to the Godhead within himself, b) to know the divinity he houses, c) to rise out of all that veils and obscures it and d) to become united with this inmost Self of his self. He has to e) discover his spiritual unity with all creatures, to see all in the self and the self in all beings, even to see all things and creatures as himself, and accordingly think, feel and act in all his mind, will and living g) therefore man has to see and adore the One in all things animate and inanimate and h) has to make himself by divine vision and divine sympathy and finally by a strong inner identity one universality with the universe.<sup>49</sup>

Returning to initial section of this paper, we can say that these thoughts of Ghosh find a striking reflection in what Okawa considers to be that part of ethical life called religion, the feeling of reverence starting with one's parents and ending with uniting oneself with the Supreme Being and realising the same within oneself.

In conclusion we can say that the concurrent thought running in Ghosh's *Essays on the Gita* is about the Avatar who descends on the earth to fulfil the two-fold functions of upholding the Dharma and teaching humanity the ways to attain and merge with the Divine Supreme, the Eternal. He considers the God of the Gita to be One, Divine, Eternal and Supreme Being, thoughts which are strikingly similar to Okawa's views of 至高の生命.

Now that we have clarified the object of Ghosh and Okawa's religio-philosophical speculations, our next concern is what Ghosh says about faith and action.

## Ghosh on Faith and Action

The aim of the Gita on the spiritual level is to enlighten the soul about its true nature, and urge it on its path of union with the Divine. According to Ghosh, the union with the Divine Supreme can be achieved by ‘three great steps,’ this being the answer to the problems posed in the Gita.<sup>50</sup>

The first step is Karmayoga, the selfless sacrifice of works and here Gita’s insistence is on action. The second is Jnanayoga, the self-realization and knowledge of the true nature of the self and the world, and here the insistence is on knowledge; but the sacrifice of works continues and the path of Works becomes one with but does not disappear into the path of Knowledge. The last step is Bhaktiyoga, adoration and seeking of the supreme Self as the Divine Being, and here the insistence is on devotion; but the knowledge is not subordinated, only raised vitalized and fulfilled, and still the sacrifice of works continues; the double path becomes the triune way of knowledge, works and devotion.<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, to Ghosh, there is no insistence on only one aspect, like the Karmayoga that was emphasized by many in that period,<sup>52</sup> but that the message of the Gita is the combination of all three ways to attain the Divine Supreme. Ghosh explains that

The Gita does not teach the disinterested performance of duties but the following of the divine life, the abandonment of all dharmas, *sarvadharman*, to take refuge in the Supreme alone ...although Gita prefers action to inaction, it does not rule out the renunciation of works, but accepts it as one of the ways to the Divine. If that can only be attained by renouncing works and life and all duties and the call is strong within us, then into the bonfire they must go, and there is no help for it. The call of God is imperative and cannot be weighed against any other considerations.<sup>53</sup>

Therefore, according to Ghosh, Gita does not advocate renunciation or giving up of action. Rather it strongly teaches a person to follow his true nature. Of course, if his true nature is to renounce life, then at that time he would be in perfect harmony with the teachings of the Gita. However, according to the Gita, renunciation of works is not the only way to achieve God. What is important is to follow the call of God, one’s true nature, and any path which is in adherence to that call is the right path to attain union with the Divine. What Gita teaches is to be not attached to the fruits of one’s action. The solution it offers is for man to rise above the three natures or gunas of his being; Tamas (inertia, ignorance) Rajas (passion, action, emotion) and Sattva (poise, knowledge, satisfaction) which lead man to perform action. Any action performed after conquering these three natures is not an action which generates fruits, says the Gita, but an action as a sacrifice to God.

Betai, commenting on Ghosh's doctrine of Karmayoga, explains that the solution that the Gita offers to rise above the three gunas is the dissolution of ego. This can be achieved by an act of faith, surrendering oneself to God and sacrificing all action to Him by giving up the idea of being the doer of any action. Therefore, once the ego is dissolved (aham) through faith or devotion towards the Supreme Being, one can rise above the three gunas, and be free from the fruits of one's actions.<sup>54</sup>

Ghosh, when he explains about action and the fruits of action, says

Nature is the universal worker ; his works are hers, even as the fruits of her works in him are part of the grand sum of result guided by a greater Power than his own. If he can do these two things spiritually, then the tangle and bondage of his works will fall far away from him, for the whole knot of that bondage lay in his egoistic demand and participation...Action will produce no subjective reaction and will leave no stain nor any mark on his spirit's purity and peace...<sup>55</sup>

If a person can always be aware that he is not the doer of his actions, but that they are performed by nature through him, guided by the Supreme Being, then with this spiritual outlook he is freed from all the bondage that the result of the actions done by him might incur. A person who has attained this knowledge is thus freed from the fruits of his actions. He works for God, for the Soul of the world, for the universal welfare, and as a divine agent.<sup>56</sup> He will have attained union with the Supreme. Therefore the solution is not the renunciation of action, but by a complete act of faith or devotion, the surrendering of all actions to the Will of the Divine.

To summarize, Ghosh reads Gita as teaching that one should sacrifice all actions to the Divine through an act of complete faith and allow the Supreme to guide and lead him. He is then freed of the fruits of his actions.

Okawa understands Ghosh to have taught the path of action to the Indians who hitherto were in a state of dispassionate, passive acceptance.

この行の哲学は、寂靜無為を以て高尚なるかに考へたる印度人に向つて、単なる思索瞑想の無価値なること、行為こそ思索の実現且つ完成なることを教へた。彼は森林に退く隠遁独善の生活を斥け、人は一切の成敗を超越して、神聖なる英雄的行動に終始すべきことを説いた。而して此の思想は、多数の印度青年に強烈なる実行的意志を鼓吹した<sup>57</sup>。

This philosophy of Action, taught the Indians who believed that wisdom was contemplation and the quietly sitting in meditation that Action and only Action was the expression and completion of the contemplation. He refuted the necessity of retreating to the forests and mountains, and preached the rising above of all the successes or failures, and to engage

ceaselessly in sacred and heroic actions. Therefore, this idea encouraged a strong realistic desire in the Indian youth.

Therefore, according to Okawa, the greatest contribution of Ghosh is the philosophical awakening of the ‘Indian Spirit’ amongst the Indians, his call to them to give up passive acceptance and rise to action, the idea which became the foundation for revival of India.

彼は青年に向かつて告げた — 『眞個の印度人にして、初めてよく一切を信じ、一切を断行し、一切を犠牲にし得る。故に汝等は先づ印度人とならねばならぬ。アーリヤの思想、アーリヤの鍛錬、アーリヤの性格、アーリヤの生命を再び掴得せよ。汝等の知識又は感情を以てにあらず、驀地に之を汝等の生命に掴得せよ』と<sup>58</sup>。

He told the youth, “As true Indians, the first thing is to be able to believe all, to carry out all, and to sacrifice all. Therefore, it is firstly very important for you to be Indians in the true sense. Acquire once more the thinking of the Aryans, the discipline of the Aryans, their personality and their spirit. Not in your intellect or in your feelings, but gallop and let this permeate in your spirits themselves.”

## Conclusion

In this paper we discussed the relationship between idea and action as understood by Okawa through Indian philosophical thought. The crux of this discussion is that Okawa interpreted it to be not only spiritual but also very practical; the best example of which is the Bhagavad Gita. We also discussed the views of Aurobindo Ghosh on the same subject and the God of Gita as understood by him so that this investigation might support the afore-mentioned argument on Okawa’s interpretation of Indian philosophy.

Now, the ideas of Okawa and Ghosh can be compared based on the following points-

- a) idea of one God
- b) spiritual aim of existence
- c) aim of the Bhagavad Gita
- d) looking inwards rather than outwards
- e) the relationship between idea and action

This paper first dealt with Okawa’s definition of religion, which he defines as that part of ethical life which deals with reverence. He then acknowledges the existence of one Supreme Being which he calls as 至高の生命, and states that the most intrinsic and solemn desire of human beings is to realize this Supreme Being within the self and vice versa, an idea similar to Aham Brahma Asmi (I am Brahman) found in the Indian texts.

Ghosh too is of the same view where he refers to the God of the Gita as the Supreme

Being; or the Brahman, although using various names like Krishna, Vasudeva or Purushottama, to denote the same God. Ghosh, like Okawa, believes that this Supreme Being is present in all things animate and inanimate, and the nature of man is to worship the manifestation of this Divine in all things. Man has to see all in the Self and the Self in all beings. We can see that Okawa and Ghosh are in agreement on the concept of Supreme Being and the basic desire of man to see itself in this Supreme Being and vice versa. In understanding this similarity, their conception of unity with one universal principle (Brahman, 至高の生命, Supreme Being) is of the utmost significance.

As to their views on the Bhagvad Gita, Okawa looks towards it as a text which lays emphasis on action, rather than passive acceptance. He also says that Indian leaders, especially Ghosh, have expounded its philosophy based on action to rouse the nationalist sentiments in the Indian youth. However, Ghosh does not only lay emphasis on the practical aspect, but says that the spirit of the Gita is to help man towards his spiritual welfare, and that Gita is not only a book of practical ethics but of the spiritual life.

Also, in the interpretation of the Gita, we can see that Okawa and Ghosh are in complete agreement when it comes to looking inwards for inspiration or for solutions to problems pertaining to one's country rather than imitating other countries. Both are of the opinion that imitation, although providing temporary progress, cannot in the long term be beneficial for the country. This is very clearly written in the Gita,<sup>59</sup> in the often quoted verse by Okawa. Despite this, as compared with Ghosh, Okawa seemingly concentrates more on the practical aspect of Gita and of Ghosh's philosophy, the latter of which as mentioned earlier, is more about looking within oneself rather than outside for betterment and development.

Okawa's understanding of Ghosh's philosophy emphasizes his doctrine of Karmayoga, the path of Action, but Ghosh in Essays on the Gita, does not insist on only one aspect of Action, but gives equal importance to the path of Knowledge (Jnyanayoga) and path of Devotion (Bhaktiyoga) as well. The aim of these three paths is to help the individual rise above his ego, by surrendering himself to the Will of the Supreme Being, and merge oneself in that Being.

To conclude, one can see that the views of Ghosh to a great extent support Okawa's point of view. Keeping aside for the time being the question of whether Ghosh had a decisive influence in Okawa's life, or Okawa was emphasizing the points made by Ghosh to support his own opinions, one thing we can clearly state is that Okawa derived an unshakable inspiration from this distinguished Indian philosopher.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> 大川周明「印度思想概説」『大川周明全集』第三巻、大川周明全集刊行会、1962年、113頁  
Okawa Shumei, *Indo Shisou Gaisetsu*, Okawa Shumei Zenshu, Dai 3 Kan, Okawa Shumei Zenshu Kankoukai, 1962, 113

(Shumei Okawa, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Publishing Committee of Complete Works of Shumei Okawa, Complete Works of Shumei Okawa, Vol. 3, 1962, 113)

More information about Shumei Okawa's life and career can be obtained from the book 大塚健洋『大川周明－ある復古革新主義者の思想』、中央公論社、1995年、講談社、2009年 (Otsuka Takehiro, *Okawa Shumei: Aru Fukko Kakushinshugisha No Shisou*, Chuou Kouronsha, 1995, Koudansha, 2009). Also, the last few pages of 酒田市立図書館、酒田市立光丘文庫編『大川周明旧蔵書目録－酒田市立光丘文庫所蔵』、1994年 (Sakata Shiritsu Toshokan, Sakata Shiritsu Koukyu Bunko Hen, *Okawa Shumei Kyuzoshou Mokuroku: Sakata Shiritsu Koukyu Bunko Shozo*, Sakata Shiritsu Toshokan, 1994) can be useful in knowing the details about his life.

<sup>2</sup> 大川周明「復興亜細亜の諸問題」『全集』第二巻、1962年、4頁

Okawa Shumei, *Fukko Ajia no Shomondai*, Zenshu, Dai 2 Kan, 1962, 4

(Shumei Okawa, *The Problems of A Reviving Asia*, Complete Works of Shumei Okawa, Vol. 2, 1962, 4)

<sup>3</sup> 大川周明「宗教論」『全集』第三巻、1962年、192頁

Okawa Shumei, *Shukyouron*, Zenshu, Dai 3 Kan, 1962, 192

(Shumei Okawa, *The Theory of Religion*, Complete Works of Shumei Okawa, Vol. 3, 1962, 192)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 202

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 202-3

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 203

<sup>7</sup> Okawa, *Indo Shisou No Gaisetsu (Outlines of Indian Philosophy)*, 136

<sup>8</sup> 大川周明「亜細亜建設者－ガンディ出現」『全集』第二巻、1962年、416頁

Okawa Shumei, *Ajia Kensetsusha: Gandhi Shutsugen*, Okawa Shumei Zenshu, Dai 2 Kan, 1962, 416

(Shumei Okawa, *Builders of Asia: Emergence of Gandhi*, Complete Works of Shumei Okawa, Vol. 2, 1962, 416)

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 417-8

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 411

<sup>11</sup> 大川周明「日本二千六百年史」『全集』第一巻、1961年、484頁

Okawa Shumei, *Nihon Nisen Roppyaku Nenshi*, Zenshu, Dai 1 Kan, 1961, 484

(Shumei Okawa, *Japan: 2600 years of History*, Complete Works of Shumei Okawa, Vol. 1, 1961, 484)

<sup>12</sup> Okawa, *Ajia Kensetsusha-Gandhi Shutsugen (Builders of Asia: Emergence of Gandhi)*, 412

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 411-2

<sup>14</sup> Geoffrey Parrinder, *The Bhagvad Gita A Verse Translation*, Research Press, New Delhi, 1999,

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reprint 2001, Chapter 3, Verse 35, 27

<sup>15</sup> Peter Heehs, *the Lives of Sri Aurobindo*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2008, 258

<sup>16</sup> Paul Richard (Translation by Aurobindo Ghosh), “Aurobindo Ghosh,” *Shraddha*, Vol.3, No.1, (August 2011) 12, retrieved 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011

URL :

[http://sriaurobindoashram.info/Content.aspx?ContentURL=\\_staticcontent/sriaurobindoashram/-09%20E-Library/-05%20Magazines/Sraddha/August%202011.pdf](http://sriaurobindoashram.info/Content.aspx?ContentURL=_staticcontent/sriaurobindoashram/-09%20E-Library/-05%20Magazines/Sraddha/August%202011.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Okawa, *Ajia Kensetsusha: Gandhi Shutsugen (Builders of Asia: Emergence of Gandhi)*, 434

<sup>18</sup> Richard, *op. cit.*, 12-14

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 13

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 14

<sup>21</sup> The author compared the two texts and found that the Japanese translation which Richard mentions, is the one done by Okawa and printed in 「第十一時」(The Eleventh Hour)

<sup>22</sup> 大川周明「第十一時」『全集』第一卷、1961年、991頁

Okawa Shumei, *Daijyuichiji*, Zenshu, Dai 1 Kan, 1961, 991

(Shumei Okawa, *The Eleventh Hour*, Complete Works of Shumei Okawa, Vol. 1, 1961, 991)

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 992-3

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 882

<sup>25</sup> A visit to Yamagata, Sakata city library, Koukyubunko (光丘文庫) revealed that Okawa owned *Essays on the Gita*. However I could not find any clue if he had actually read the one in his possession. At the same time I also found in the same library a copy of Bhagavad Gita by Annie Besant which had obviously remained untouched. So, I can not say which version of *Essays on the Gita* or Bhagavad Gita Okawa actually read.

<sup>26</sup> Okawa, *Ajia Kensetsusha: Gandhi Shutsugen (Builders of Asia : Emergence of Gandhi)* 432

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 433

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 432-3

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 433

<sup>30</sup> Aurobindo Ghosh, *Essays on the Gita*, Lotus Press USA, 1995, reprint 2003, 4

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 11

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 30

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 32

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 34

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 33

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-32

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 30

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 30

<sup>39</sup> Richard Garbe, *An introduction to Bhagavadgita*, University of Bombay, Bombay, 1918, 12

<sup>40</sup> 赤松明彦『バガヴァッド・ギーター』岩波書店、2008年、80頁

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Akamatsu Akihiko, *Bagawaddo Geetaa*, Iwanami Shoten, 2008, 80

(Akihiko Akamatsu, *Bhagvad Gita*, Iwanami Shoten, 2008, 80)

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 81

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-6

<sup>43</sup> Garbe, *op. cit.*, 23-4

<sup>44</sup> Ghosh, *op. cit.*, 17, 148-9

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 343

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 445-6

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 308

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 343-4

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 343-4

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 37

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 38, also refer 30

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 30

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 33

<sup>54</sup> Ramesh S. Betai, ‘*Gita and Gandhiji*,’ Gujrat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, 1970, 69

<sup>55</sup> Ghosh, *op. cit.*, 304

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 458

<sup>57</sup> Okawa, *Ajia Kensetsusha-Gandhi Shutsugen* (*Builders of Asia: Emergence of Gandhi*) 433-4

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 433

<sup>59</sup> Chapter 3 verse 35