

# BUDDHIST COSMOLOGY

[THAC-DUC]

In the time of the Buddha, the question of the first principle of all things held a very important place in the intellectual life of India. The Brahmajāla Sutta records as many as sixty-two different explanations offered by the Indian philosophical schools of that age. Broadly speaking, we can see three principal tendencies:

**1. The tendency of fatalism** (*Pubba-kata-hetu*)

The schools belonging to this tendency held that the whole natural world and the human world are arranged by predestination. Everything proceeds according to fixed natural laws already laid down. The value of human effort and material means is not acknowledged here.

**2. The tendency of theism, or divine will** (*Issara-nimmāna-hetu*)

The schools belonging to this tendency held that all things exist through the will of a divine being. This divine being is Brahmā, and the center of the schools of this tendency is Brahmanism.

**3. The tendency of chance** (*Ahetu-apaccaya*)

The schools belonging to this tendency did not admit the principle of causation. All phenomena arise and continue by chance, without following any law or principle at all.

The first and second tendencies assign all responsibility to a supernatural power. Personal responsibility therefore does not become a real question; blessing and misfortune alike are things that human beings cannot determine.