

STIMW 2016

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Ethics *as* Metaphysics: Self and World in Classical Vaiśeṣika and Early Buddhism

Abstract

This article unpacks a primitive assumption at the heart of both Brahmanical and Buddhist philosophy that is exemplified in the metaphysics of Classical Vaiśeṣika and early Buddhism, respectively: the claim that ethics *is* metaphysics because being and truth, and the good itself, are inalienably bound together in ways that are constitutive of each. It elucidates the philosophical antecedents of this claim in two key Vedic intuitions, a generative conception of thought and a constructivist conception of self and world, before proceeding to show how these intuitions are articulated in Classical Vaiśeṣika's substantive metaphysics of the self, and the Buddhist conception of no-self and dependent co-arising.

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