

On the Īśvara-vāda

—Its Assertion and Criticism—

Shozen Kumoi

The Īśvara-vāda or the theory of the Lord (Issaranimmāna-hetu-vāda) means, needless to say, a theory that recognizes Īśvara as the original cause of the universe, from which all of the phenomenal world is created. Since all deed and retribution of man are therefore determined by Īśvara, it is maintained that to have homage to Īśvara and to have faith in Him is the supreme salvation, in which the grace of Īśvara is also found.

As for a theme dividing the Indian thought into two, the problem of *ātman* and *anātman* is, first of all, taken up,⁽¹⁾ and such a system of classification, simultaneously, relates to the problem of the Seśvara-theory or theism and the Nirīśvara-theory or atheism, which will offer us a most valuable problem, in case we make a study of the relation between the Brahmanical philosophy and Buddhism in particular.

Dr. Hermann Jacobi has once discussed the conception of Īśvara and its development in detail in his work, in which he has particularly dealt with the problem of Īśvara found in the materials of the Nyāya and in addition, published the German translation of the relevant materials with critical notes. He has mainly argued the existence of Īśvara and its demonstration, expounding particularly the problem of Īśvara elucidated in the *Nyāya-sūtra* IV, 1. 19–21 with its modification and development in the *Nyāyabhāṣya*, *Nyāyavārttika* and *Nyāyavārttikatātparyāṭika*. The works on Buddhist logic by Ratnakīrti, Jñānaśrimitra and Prajñākaragupta⁽³⁾ and the

(1) 中村元編集『自我と無我』京都 1963.

(2) Hermann Jacobi; *Die Entwicklung der Gottesidee bei den Indern*, Bonn und Leiptig 1923.

(3) *Ratnakīrtinibandhavalī* (Īśvarasādhana-dūṣaṇam), *Jñānaśrimitranibandhavalī* (Īśvaravādaḥ), Prajñākaragupta's *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣyam* (Īśvaradūṣaṇam).

like offer important materials concerning the very subject and as for materials found in Buddhist texts, the Chinese *Āgama* and the *Pāli Nikāya*⁽⁴⁾ as well as the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* by Śāntideva and its commentary, the *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā*, by Prajñākaramati should be mentioned. Further, Dr. Yūshō Miyasaka has recently reported the Sanskrit materials on atheism in the Tibetan Tripiṭaka.⁽⁵⁾

My intention in this article is, first of all, to take up the central point of a general contention made by the adherents of the Īśvara-vāda and the criticism against them, that is to say, atheism and finally to express my own view on the religious grounds on which its assertion and criticism are based.

I

The assertion of the Īśvara-vāda is summarized as follows. A ground that Īśvara is the original cause and the creative cause is stated in the following way.

- a) Īśvara is a controller of man's destiny.
- b) Īśvara is a special kind of Self (puruṣaviśeṣa).⁽⁶⁾
- c) Īśvara is a special kind of Soul provided with the supreme perfection (viśiṣṭagaṇātmanāntaraḥ).⁽⁷⁾
- d) Īśvara is a creator (kartṛ) and a being consciousness (buddhimat, sacetanā) with wisdom, hope and will, and so on.

It is quite natural that the adherents of the Īśvara-vāda furthermore took a great interest in proving the existence of Īśvara.⁽⁸⁾

On the contrary, how was the standpoint of the opponent or the critic against the Īśvara-vāda? Generally speaking, they contended in the following way in opposition to Īśvara-vāda. If Īśvara is the original

(4) DN. 1, p. 18; MN. 1, p. 326-7; SN. 111, p. 66-7; *Vibhaṅga* p. 367.

(5) 宮坂宥勝「チベット藏經に傳える破神論の梵文資料」(『中野教授古稀記念論文集』) p. 281 高野山大學 1960.

(6) *Yoga-sūtra* 1, 24.

(7) *Nyāyabhaṣya* IV. 1. 21.

(8) Udayana: *Nyāyakusumañjaliḥ* (Īśvarabādhakakhaṇḍaram).

cause of all beings, since deed and retribution of man have not footing on the side of man but on the side of Īśvara only, it will not cause one to endeavour or devote oneself to anything. If everything is due to the creative cause of Īśvara (Issaranimmāna-hetu), evil deed such as destruction of life and the like will be also caused by Īśvara.

The contention of the opponent mentioned above shows, in fact, the critical attitude against the Īśvara-vāda in the Āgama and the Nikāya, and it was succeeded to posterity in the following way.

- a) If Īśvara is the original cause, by what motive and intention was the universe created?
- b) Since beings in the present world are not common, is Īśvara really a compassionate one (kāruṇika), or not?
- c) Is Īśvara personal God, or the spiritual Being?
- d) How is the relation between Īśvara, the Creator of the all and man?
- e) If Īśvara is not a material cause (upādāna-kāraṇa) of the world, but a efficient cause (nimitta-kāraṇa), how do you consider a inherent cause (samavāya-kāraṇa) or a auxiliary cause in the wake of the latter?

Particularly the contention of the opponent laid stress on the relation between Īśvara, the Creator and man. In other words, it will be stated as follows.

- 1) Whether is the destiny of man within his own power, or not?
- 2) Whether can Īśvara bear the responsibility of man's deed and retribution, or not?
- 3) Whether is the final relation between Īśvara and man the unification of Īśvara and man, or the coexistence of Īśvara and man?

It is supposed that the problem of Īśvara and *karman* bears the brunt of the opponents including the Buddhists and the philosophers of other schools who rebut the existence of Īśvara, and the arguments on this problem imply the fundamental attitudes of theism and atheism.

II

In the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* IX, 119-126, the subject of *karman* and Īśvara is discussed with interesting problems. First of all, it proposes to propound the definition of the character attributed to Īśvara.

- 1) The multiformity of the world does not exist apart from a cause (kārantareṇa vicitraṃ na upapadyate).
- 2) Īśvara is versed in creating all beings (nirmāṇa-pravīṇaḥ).
- 3) The beginner of the whole world (sakalajagadādhībhūtaḥ).
- 4) He is at all times not to be damaged (sarvadā anupahataśakti-prabhāvaḥ).
- 5) He knows the relation of causality of all beings (sarvabhāvānām kāryakāraṇabhāvāditattvavedī).

The following objection is raised subsequent to this definition.

If Īśvara is the compassionate, what did such a compassionate Īśvara induce to create beings suffering in hell?

In reply the adherents of the Īśvara-vāda states:

Since Īśvara tries to remove the retribution of vicious deeds made by man himself, how can you contend that Īśvara is not merciful?

Consequently it means to say that Īśvara created man (the phenomenal world) and on the other hand, *karman* such as vicious actions absolutely belongs to man himself. The opponents continue to argue.

There is no reason why Īśvara, the merciful God, creates *karman* which causes to bring the undesirable retribution to man. It is a duty of Īśvara to stop maturing vicious *karma*.

On this very ground, questions give arise.

- 1) Does Īśvara participate in (vyāpriyate) *karman*?
- 2) Does not Īśvara participate in (avyāpriyate) *karman*?

The opponents begin to consider the problem from these two points.

(9) Prajñākaramati; *Bodhicaryāvatāra* IX, 119-126 cf. 金倉圓照: 悟りへの道 p. 196~ 京都 1958, Susumu Yamaguchi: *Criticism of the Madhyamika School on Theism* (Religious Studies in Japan pp. 329-335).

On the first case, man, having no will in pleasure and pain, will be caused by Īśvara to go to heaven or hell.

On the second occasion, the ground that Īśvara tries to remove the retribution of vicious action of man is not be established.

Therefore the opponents object that the both is illegitimate.

Or, since *karman*, ever made, does not perish, as for the first occasion, that is to say, Īśvara participates in *karman*, the following will be stated.

If Īśvara participates in the retribution of *karman*, even though man made *karman*, how must man get the retribution of his *karman*?

It is natural that Īśvara who can operates at will must not cause one to get the undesirable retribution.

On the second occasion, it runs.

If Īśvara does not participate in *karman*, Īśvara will be regarded as the merciless.

From the two points just mentioned, the both suppositions, i. e. Īśvara prticipates in *karman* and not, are liable to be stated that Īśvara is the merciless and consequently Īśvara is not qualified to be called as Īśvara.

The opponents will contend again.

If we grant the contention that Īśvara is impelled (*saṁcoditas*) by *karman* of man, one who is impelled by *karman* of man is not entitled to be Īśvara. If so, *karman* is more powerful than Īśvara (*īśvaratas karmaṇa eva mahat samārthyam*) and thus *karman* should be rather worshiped (*varam karmaiva parīyupāsyam*).

III

The subject as to how Īśvara has a bearing upon man's deeds and retribution of deeds has been discussed originally in the *Nyāyasūtra* and the origin of the problem was always concentrated on this very subject. Especially the relevant subject is set forth in detail in the commentary by Vātsyāyana and the subcommentary by Uddyotakara on the *Nyāyasūtra* IV. 1. 21.

The *Bodhicaryāvatāra* IX, 119A examines the relevant subject

all over again. It runs.

Because pain originates from passion and the like, is Īśvara a dispassionate one (vītarāgaḥ) or a passionate one (sarāgaḥ) ?

The existence of Īśvara is proved to apply to neither a dispassionate one nor a passionate one. What caused the great controversy was started from the fundamental ground that Īśvara is the Creator. The problem of intention and motive of the creation was derived from this very ground. The reason why the adherents of the Īśvara-vāda do not regard time (kāla), the Originator (pradhāṇa, prakṛiti), an atom (aṇu) as the original cause, is, after all, based on the fact that Īśvara was recognized as a being having consciousness, that is to say, Īśvara is a being with will and intention, different from time, the Originator, an atom and so on. The reason why the intention and motive of the creation should be solved and expounded existed on this very fact, and this point stands for the fundamental problem connected with the Īśvara-vāda.

It is supposed that there were two lineages of theism in Indian thought. One is a view that deems Brahmadeva, male personal God, as Īśvara, as mentioned in the *Nikāya*, and the other is a standpoint, as found in the *Yogasūtra* 1. 24, which regards the Lord as a special kind of Self. Among these, the Ātman-worship, in which Puruṣa and a particular Ātman are recognized in the sense of the Lord, traces back to the principle of neutral Brahman.

As is commonly known, there were two types of Brahman (i. e. the neuter principle and male personal God) in the *Upaniṣad*. The criticism against theism taken up in the *Nikāya* shows an example of rebutting theistic religion of the Brahmanical philosophy, replacing Īśvara with Brahmadeva, personal God. In connection with the principle of *sat* (that which really is) found in the thought of Uddālaka⁽¹⁰⁾, its philosophical ground was

(10) *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* VI.

(11) *Brahma-sūtra* II. 1, 32-34; and its commentary by Śaṅkara. 中村元『ブラフマ・スートラの哲學』pp. 195-6.

discussed in the Vedānta and the Sāṃkhya, and the controversy on Brahman (as to whether the spiritual principle is or the material principle) of the both schools is found in the *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya*.⁽¹¹⁾

The *Bhagavadgīta*, the representative of monotheism says,

Puruṣa is not the seer to Prakṛiti and is the Supreme Lord (Īśvara, Maheśvara) abiding in all perishable world,⁽¹²⁾

and tried to go beyond the thought of Puruṣa of the Sāṃkhya.

The arguments exchanged between the adherents of the Īśvara-vāda and the opponents finally will revert to the religious ground as to whether an abyss laid between Īśvara and man is removed. Because in the philosophy and religion of India, emancipation is regarded as one of the four aims of life, this problem is of great importance. A ground which admits the existence of Īśvara aims at the recognition of the Absolute and faith in Him, and on the other hand, a standpoint of the Buddhists who rebut Īśvara is based on the original ground of man's existence expounded as anitya, duḥkha and anātman (that is to say, the Causal Law) and it is therefore stated that there was the fundamental difference between the both grounds, which can also found in the explanation of *karman*.⁽¹³⁾

(昭和年39度文部省科學研究費による各個研究の研究成果の一部)

(12) *Bhagavadgīta* XIII. 22; cf. IV. 6; V. 29; IX. 11; X. 3; XIII. 27.

(13) karmajaṃ lokavicitryaṃ / Cetanā tatkr̥tam ca tat / *Abhidharmakośa* IV. 1 v.

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