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Autor(en): Hattori, Masaaki

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ON SEŚVARA-SĀMKHYA

Masaaki Hattori, Kyōto

In the *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* of Mādhava, the followers of the Yogadarśana propounded by Patañjali are called the Seśvara-sāmkhyas (theistic Sāmkhyas) in contradistinction to the Nirīśvara-sāmkhyas (atheistic Sāmkhyas), which name is applied to the followers of Kapila. Mādhava introduces the view of the Seśvara-sāmkhyas with the following words:

The same twenty-five principles (*tattva*), primordial matter (*pradhāna*) etc., mentioned previously [in the chapter dealing with the views of the followers of Kapila] are admitted [in this system, too]. But there is the twenty-sixth [principle], that is, *parameśvara* (supreme God). He is a *purusa*, not affected by defilements (*kleśa*), action (*karman*), its fruition (*vipāka*), and subliminal deposits [of actions] (*āśaya*). He assumes a transformation-body (*nirmāna-kāya*) at will and sets forth in motion the worldly and Vedic traditions (*sampradāya*). He is a giver of favours (*anugrāhaka*) to living beings who are suffering pains in the charcoal fires of transmigration.¹

In the section elucidating the 'action-yoga' (*kriyā-yoga*), which consists of *tapas* (austerity), *svādhyāya* (recitation of *mantras*) and *īśvarapraņidhāna* (devotion to God), Mādhava states that *īśvarapraņidhāna* is the consignment (*samarpaņa*) of all actions to the *īśvara* or the abandonment of [the desire for] fruits which actions may produce (*kriyāphalasaṃnyāsa*), and quotes the *Bhagavadgītā* II. 47, "On action alone be thy interest, never on its fruits; let not the fruits of action be thy motive, nor be thy attachment to inaction."²

As is well known the *Yogasūtra* (YS) admits the existence of God (isvara). He is a 'special kind of *puruṣa*' (*puruṣa-viśeṣa*), who is, as described by Mādhava, unaffected by defilements, etc. While an ordinary *yogin* is at first affected by defilements and later gets free from them through yogic practices, the *isvara* is ever liberated from them, and in this respect he is a model of *yogins* who are seeking to attain *samādhi*. He is not a benevolent god, who bestows favours to living beings, assuming a transformation-body and giving his merciful hands to those who are

¹ SDS 333.6-334.2

² *Ibid.* 371.2-11. For the translation of the *Bhagavadgītā*, cf. EDGERTON 1952.

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suffering pain and seeking for his help. Several times YS mentions *iśvarapraņidhāna* as a means to attain *samādhi*. In his commentary on YS, Vyāsa takes the term *praņidhāna* as meaning a special kind of devotion (*bhakti-viśeṣa*), and explains that the *iśvara* who is inclined [to a *yogin*] because of his *praņidhāna* bestows favours to him.³ He further states that *iśvarapraņidhāna* means the consignment of all actions to *paramaguru* (*sarvakriyānām paramagurāv arpaņam*), or the abandonment of [the desire for] fruits of actions (*tatphalasamnyāso vā*).⁴ Mādhava's characterization of *iśvarapraņidhāna* are obviously based on Vyāsa's commentary on YS.

That the *iśvara* plays only a minor role in the yoga system as presented in YS has been remarked by several scholars.⁵ In YS I. 2, the yoga is defined as the restraint of activities of the mind (*cittavrttinirodha*). As the means to realize it YS propounds the doctrine of eight-membered yoga (*astānga-yoga*), which describes the eight stages of yogic practice. In the final stage called *samādhi* (concentration), the activities of the mind are completely restrained, and the mind, which is as if it were empty of itself as consciousness, shines forth in the form of the contemplated object.⁶ Besides the eight-membered yoga, some other means to attain *samādhi* or the restraint of activities of the mind are mentioned in YS, and it is supposed that Patañjali incorporated in YS different yoga traditions that existed in his time. Perhaps among those who worship the *iśvara*, the devotion to the *iśvara* was regarded as a means to attain the goal of yogic practice. After the explanation of the activities of the mind to be restrained, YS I. 12 mentions repeated practice (*abhyāsa*) and detachment (*vairāgya*) as the

- 3 Ybh I. 23: praņidhānād bhaktivišesād āvarjita īśvaras tam anugrhnāti ... Cf. also I. 25.
- 4 Ybh II. 1. Cf. also II. 32: *īśvarapraņidhānam tasmin paramagurau sarva-karmārpaņam*; II. 45: *īśvarārpitasarvabhāvasya samādhisiddhir*...
- J. W. HAUER, who propounds the view that the yoga has its origin in the tradition of Rudra-Śiva worship, disapproved of GARBE's remark that God was "nur lose" introduced into the "Yogasystem" (HAUER 1958, 293-294). However, several scholars do not attach much importance to the *iśvara* in YS, cf. ELIADE 1958, 74: "... iśvara's role is comparatively small."; FRAUWALLNER 1953, 425: "... so zeigt ..., wie äusserlich sie (viz., die Lehre von Gott) hier eingefügt ist."; OBERHAMMER 1977, 164: "Die theistische Form yogischer Meditation hat in den Yogasūtren eine untergeordnete Bedeutung."
- 6 YS III. 3: tad (= dhyānam) evārthamātranirbhāsam svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhih.

means to restrain them, and as an alternative to these two means, isvarapranidhana is introduced in YS I. 23: "Or [the restraint of activities of the mind is attained] through the devotion to God" (isvarapranidhanad va).⁷ In YS II. 1ff. the action-yoga, which includes isvarapranidhana, is described as the means for the realization of samadhi (samadhibhavana) and the attenuation of defilements (klesatanukarana). The action-yoga is incorporated into the eight-membered yoga and forms part of *niyama* (observance), which constitutes, along with *yama* (abstention), the preliminary stage of the yogic practice. It is thus understood that isvarapranidhana is recognized as a subordinate means for the attainment of the restraint of activities of the mind in YS.

The meaning of the term *īśvarapraņidhāna* is not quite clear. Vyāsa's interpretation that it means the consignment of all actions to the *īśvara* or the complete submission to the benevolent God does not seem appropriate, because it does not match with the instruction for *prāņāyāma*, etc., which are to be practiced by a *yogin* with a will for self-mastery. It seems likely that the *īśvara* was introduced into the yoga system of Patañjali from the religious circle worshipping Rudra-Śiva,⁸ but the term *praņidhāna* is not found in relevant literature.⁹ This term is often used in Buddhist literature in the sense of 'fixation of mind' or 'taking a vow'.¹⁰ A *bodhisattva* takes a vow or declares his earnest wish before starting his practice for the attainment of enlightenment. Since many Buddhist technical terms are

- 7 For the interpretation of this *sūtra*, see HAUER 1958, 241; 465, n. 1; OBERHAMMER 1977, 162.
- 8 HAUER 1958, 294: "Sein Ursprung und seine ganze Entwicklung vor dem YS war ... aufs engste verknüpft mit dem Ur- und Grossgott Vāyu-Rudra-Śiva, der schon sehr früh den Titel *iśvara*, der Mächtige, Herr, Herrscher erhielt, ..." HARA 1961 clarifies that the name *Śvetāśvatara* and some technical terms in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* VI-21 reflect the existence of a group of ascetics, who, neglecting the orthodox Brahmanical *āśrama* (*atyāśrama*), perform austerities (*tapas*), recite sacred formulae (*brahman = mantra*), and worship Śiva in accordance with Pāśupata rules. It is noteworthy that the three factors constituting the action-yoga, viz., austerity (*tapas*), recitation of *mantras* (*svādhyāya*) and devotion to God (*īśvarapranidhāna*) are included in this early Śaiva (Pāśupata) practice, cf. TAKAGI 1966, 443.
- 9 The expression '*pranidhāya kāyam*' occurs in the *Bhagavadgītā* XI. 44: *tasmāt pranamya pranidhāya kāyam prasādye tvām aham īśam īdyam* (Therefore, bowing and prostrating my body, I beg grace of Thee, the Lord to be revered).
- 10 Cf. EDGERTON, F., Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary.

adopted in YS,¹¹ it may well be assumed that this term also was taken into YS from the Buddhist tradition. As a matter of fact, the existence of *iśvara* is not accepted in Buddhism. However, the *iśvara* has changed his character in YS. Unlike the God in theistic Hindu religions, the *iśvara* in YS is not a ruler of the world and has nothing to do with creation and destruction of the world. He is simply regarded as a means to attain samādhi by those who practice yoga. The attitude towards the *iśvara* of this nature is not to be characterized as devotion (bhakti). The Budddhist term pranidhāna may be more appropriate to express the *vogin*'s attitude towards the *iśvara*. A *vogin* takes a vow or declares his firm resolution for the perfection of his vogic practice. His vow is addressed to the *iśvara*, and the *iśvara* assists him by being the witness of his vow or by being the object on which he concentrates his mind. It seems inappropriate to apply the name Sesvarasāmkhya to the yoga system as presented in YS, in which the *iśvara* plays only a minor role and is not related to Sāmkhya doctrine, excepting that he is called a special kind of purusa. The application of the name Seśvarasāmkhya to the yoga system of Patañjali is nowhere attested before SDS.

In his article titled "God in Sāmkhya" (Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens 27), J. BRONKHORST proved with sufficient evidence that the Sāmkhyas of the commentators of the Sāmkhyakārikā, who are called Nirīśvara-sāmkhyas in SDS, also admitted the existence of God, not a ruler of all the worlds but God as an aid to yogic practices. Why, then, are the followers of Pātañjala-yoga alone called Seśvara-sāmkhyas, while the follower of Kapila are called Nirīśvara-sāmkhyas? On this point BRONKHORST states that the names Niriśvara- and Seśvara-sāmkhyas originally meant respectively the Sāmkhyas who denied the existence of 'Creator God' and those who accepted the existence of 'Creator God'. His view is based on the following statement in the Tattvasamgraha (TS) of Śāntaraksita and Kamalaśīla's *pañjikā* on it (TSP), both dating from the 8^{th} century, A.D. Śāntaraksita states: "Out of the primordial matter alone, provided with all potencies, the several effects come forth; they are by their nature nothing but the primordial matter" (TS I: Prakrtiparīksā, k. 7: aśesa-śaktipracitāt pradhānād eva kevalāt / kāryabhedāh pravartante tadrūpā eva bhāvatah //). Kamalaśīla comments "The followers of Kapila [think] that ... these several effects, mahat etc., come forth out of the primordial matter. ... The word 'alone' (kevala-) is [used] to exclude God

who is assumed [to take part in the creation] in addition to [the *pradhāna*] by the Seśvara-sāmkhyas."¹² We learn, BRONKHORST remarks, from this that those who think that the world comes forth out of *pradhāna* alone are not Seśvara-sāmkhyas irrespectively of their opinions regarding God's existence.¹³

The distinction betweeen Nirīśvara- and Seśvara-sāmkhyas is recorded in some Jaina texts. In the Saddarsanasamuccaya of Haribhadra (8th century) we read: "Some Sāmkhyas are nirīśvaras, while other Sāmkhyas have the *iśvara* as their deity" (sāmkhyā nirīśvarāh kecit kecid iśvara*devatāh*).¹⁴ In his commentary Gunaratna explains that "for those who are nirīśvarāh, Nārāyana is their deity."¹⁵ Here the difference between the two schools of Sāmkhyas is not whether they are theistic or atheistic, but whether their deity is the *iśvara* or someone else, i.e., Nārāyana. As proponents of this view Gunaratna mentions Kapila, Āsuri, Pañcaśikha, etc.¹⁶ As remarked by F. O. SCHRADER, a Jaina scholar Abhayadeva (10th century?) states in his commentary on Aupapātika-sūtra that the Kāpilas (kāvilā), viz., those who have Kapila as their deity, are Nirīśvara-sāmkhyas, while the Sāmkhya-yogas (samkhā yogī) admit primordial matter and īśvara as the causes of the world.¹⁷ It is thus understood that in the Jaina tradition the appellation Nirīśvara-sāmkhya is applied to the followers of Kapila, who is recognized by Gunaratna as a proponent of the Nirīśvara-sāmkhya doctrine and by Abhayadeva as deity. The Seśvara-sāmkhyas as distinguished from them admit the existence of God, who, according to Abhayadeva, is a cause of the world.

A reference to Nirīśvara- and Seśvara-sāmkhyas is made also by Rāmānuja (11-12th century) in his commentary on the *Brahmasūtra*, viz., the *Śrībhāsya*. The *Brahmasūtra* I.4.1ff. are meant for the refutation of the

12 TSP 21.2-4: ... pradhānam, tata evaite mahadādayah kāryabhedāh pravartante iti kāpilāh. ... kevalād iti vacanam seśvarasāmkhyopakalpiteśvaranirāsārtham.

- 13 BRONKHORST 1983, 158.
- 14 SadDS k. 34ab.
- 15 TRD 96.2: ye ca nirīśvarās tesām nārāyaņo devah.
- 16 *Ibid.* 96.3-4: *teşām matavaktārah kapilāsuripañcaśikhabhārgavolūkādayah*.
- 17 SCHRADER 1914, 102, n. 1: kapilo devatā yesām: sāmkhyā eva nirīśvarā ity arthah. n. 3: ... prakrtīśvarayor jagatkāraņatvam abhyupagatāh. It is worthy of note that Vācaspatimiśra admits that Kapila is an avatāra of Viṣṇu, cf. Tattvavaiśāradī, I. 25: kapilo nāma viṣnor avatāraviśesah prasiddhah.

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Sāmkhya view that *pradhāna* is the material cause of the world. In Srībhāsya I.4.23, Rāmānuja introduces the argument set forth by the Seśvara-sāmkhyas against the Vedāntins that the omniscient God cannot create the world unless there is *pradhāna* as the material cause of the world. He states:

The Nirīśvara-sāmkhyas being thus refuted [in I.4.1-22], the Seśvara-sāmkhyas raise the following objection: –Although the Upaniṣads propound that the omniscient *īśvara* is the cause of the world on account of his association with attributes, such as *īkṣaṇa*, ¹⁸ etc., still it is apprehended that by the same Upaniṣads *pradhāna* is propounded as the material cause ($up\bar{a}d\bar{a}na$) of the world. Not indeed do the Upaniṣads teach that the *īśvara*, who is omniscient, not subject to transformation (*apariṇāmin*), and the supervisor (*adhiṣthātr*), is the cause of the world without *pradhāna*, which is the supervised (*adhiṣtheya*), non-sentient (*acetana*) and subject to transformation.

Then he quotes some passages from the Upanisads as testimony of this Seśvara-sāmkhya argument. From this information supplied by Rāmānuja it is known that the Seśvara-sāmkhyas admitted the existence of 'Creator God'.

In his introduction to TS III: *Ubhaya-parīkṣā*,²⁰ Kamalaśīla makes reference to the view held by some Sāmkhyas:

On this point (= regarding the cause of the world) some Sāmkhyas (*kecit* $s\bar{a}mkhy\bar{a}h$) assert as follows: These various effects do not come forth from *pradhāna* alone, because it (= *pradhāna*) is insentient (*acetana*). No insentient entity is found to produce its own effect without a controller (*adhiṣthāyaka*). And the *puruṣa* cannot be the controller, because at that time he is unconscious (*ajña*). The *puruṣa* cognizes only that object which is apprehended by *buddhi*, and prior to the association with *buddhi*, he is absolutely unconscious: he cognizes nothing at all. Since no one can create anything that has not been known, he is not a creator (*kartr*). Therefore, the *īśvara*, only when he is in dependence on *pradhāna*, is the

¹⁸ Cf. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.1: sad eva somyedam agra āsīd, ekam evādvitīyam. tad aikṣata bahu syām prajāyeyeti.

¹⁹ Śrībh I.4.23: evam nirīšvarasāmkhye niraste sešvarasāmkhyah pratyavatisthate. yady apīkşanādigunayogāt sarvajñam īšvaram jagatkāranatvena vedāntāh pratipādayanti tathāpi vedāntair eva jagadupādānatayā pradhānam eva pratipādyata iti pratīyate. na hi vedāntāh sarvajñasyāparināmino 'dhisthātur īšvarasyādhistheyenācetanena parināminā pradhānena vinā jagatah kāranatvam avagamayanti.

²⁰ Ubhaya means prakrti and iśvara examined in the foregoing chapters.

creator of the various effect. Not indeed does someone, say Devadatta, give birth to a son by himself, nor does a potter alone make a pot.²¹

Here we find that the reason why they admitted the existence of 'Creator God' is clearly stated, and we may identify them with those whom Kamalaśīla called Seśvara-sāmkhyas in the first chapter of TSP.

Against the Seśvara-sāmkhyas, Śāntarakṣita raises the following objection. –The view that the *īśvara*, in cooperation with *pradhāna*, produce the various effects is to be accepted only under the assumption that (1) an eminent quality (*atiśaya*) is newly given to each of them, which by itself cannot produce the effects, or that (2) they jointly serve a common purpose (*ekārtha-kārin*). But there follows absurdity in both cases. (1) In the first case, the *īśvara* and the *pradhāna* would not be admitted to be eternal, since they undergo modification. (2) In the second case, all effects would be produced simultaneously, since the two causes are in constant conjunction as they both are eternal. In the answer given by the Seśvara-sāmkhyas to this objection, it is clearly noticed that the *īśvara* is closely related to the doctrine of the three *gunas*, which is characteristic of the Sāmkhya system of thought:

Even though these two causes, [isvara and pradhana,] are constantly present together, yet the various effects come forth only successively, because the three gunas, viz., sattva, rajas and tamas, of pradhana are cooperators of the isvara. Since these gunas function only successively, there is succession in the effects. When the isvara is in conjunction with rajas of which the function is manifested (udbhūta-vrtti) then he is the cause of the creation of the world, because rajas has procreation as its effect. When, on the other hand, the isvara is in conjunction with sattva or tamas, then he is the cause of the duration or the destruction of the world.²²

- 21 TSP 74.12-18: tatra kecit sāņkhyā āhuḥ na pradhānād eva kevalād amī kāryabhedāḥ pravartante, tasyācetanatvāt. na hy acetano 'dhiṣṭāyakam antareṇa svakāryam ārabhamāņo drṣṭaḥ. na ca puruṣo 'dhiṣṭhāyako yuktaḥ, tasya tadānīm ajñatvāt. tathā hi – buddhyadhyavasitam evārtham puruṣas cetayate, buddhisamsargāc ca pūrvam asāv ajña eva, na jātu kimcid artham vijānāti. na cāvijñātam artham śaktaḥ kaścit kartum iti nāsau kartā. tasmād īśvara eva pradhānāpekṣaḥ kāryabhedānām kartā, na kevalaḥ. na hi devadattādiḥ kevalaḥ putram janayati, nāpi kevalaḥ kulālo ghaṭam karotīti.
- 22 TSP 75.18-24 (ad TS kk. 97-100): yady api kāraņadvayam etan nityasamnihitam tathāpi krameņaivāmī kāryabhedāh pravartante, yata īśvarasya pradhānagatās trayo guņāh sattvādayah sahakāriņah, teşām ca kramavrttitvāt tatkāryeşv api kramo bhavati. tathā hi yadodbhūtavrttinā rajasā yukto bhavati maheśvarah tadā

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The source materials for the study of the Seśvara-sāmkhya are unfortunately very limited. Although there are references to the Sāmkhya ideas in Chinese translation of some Buddhist treatises, the Seśvarasāmkhya is nowhere mentioned. This is perhaps because the Seśvarasāmkhya doctrine was maintained by a minor group among the Sāmkhyas. Since the Sāmkhya system came to be represented by the *Ṣaṣṭitantra* and Iśvarakṛṣṇa's summary of its contents, viz., the *Sāmkhyakārikā*, the Seśvara-sāmkhya was scarcely referred to in opponents' literature.

In the *Mokṣadharma-parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*, Book XII, there are many sections in which the Sāmkhya ideas are expressed. In some of them, mention is made of the twenty-sixth principle (*tattva*) besides the twenty-five that are enumerated in the classical Sāmkhya system. In the Upaniṣads, the Sāmkhya ideas first appear in those which were composed in the second period among the old Upaniṣads, and some of them are tinged with theistic colour.

It is known that there existed many branches of the Sāmkhyas, maintaining different doctrines. Among them a certain group admitted the existence of the *iśvara* as the creator of the world, and formed the theory that explains the process of creation and destruction of the world by the cooperation of the *iśvara* with the three gunas of pradhāna. They were called the Seśvara-sāmkhyas. In the course of time, the Sāmkhya came to be represented by the Sāmkhyakārikā, and the doctrines maintained by the Seśvara-sāmkhya, which were known to Śāntaraksita and Kamalaśīla in the eighth century, were gradually forgotten. In the Sāmkhyadarśana maintained by the followers of Kapila, the *iśvara*, who played not so important role from the beginning, came to be neglected, while in the Yogadarśana maintained by the followers of Patañjali, the *iśvara* is clearly mentioned in several sūtras, and moreover, the religious atttude towards God in *bhakti*-religion was introduced into the system. Thus by the time of Mādhava the appellation Seśvara-sāmkhya came to be applied to the Yogadarśana.

sargahetuh prajānām bhavati, prasavakāryatvād rajasah. yadā tu sattvam samudbhūtavrtti samśrayate tadā lokānām sthitikāraņam bhavati, sattvasya sthitihetutvāt. yadā tu tamasodbhūtaśaktinā samāyukto bhavati tadā pralayam nāśam sarvajagatah karoti, tamasah pralaya (Text: pratyaya) hetutvāt.

ABBREVIATIONS

TRD: Tarkarahasyadīpikā. See ŞadDS.

- TS: *Tattvasamgraha* of Śāntaraksita. Bauddha Bharati Ser. 1. Vārānasī 1968.
- TSP: Tattvasamgrahapañjikā of Kamalaśīla. Bauddha Bharati Ser. 1. Vārānasī 1968.
- YS: *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali. Ānandāśrama Skt. Ser., 47. Poona 1932.
- Ybh: Yogabhāşya of Vyāsa. Ānandāśrama Skt. Ser., 47. Poona 1932.
- Śrībh: Śrībhāṣya of Rāmānuja. Ubhaya Vedānta Granthamālā. Madras 1963.
- SadDS: *Saddarśanasamuccaya* of Haribhadra, with *Tarkarahasyadīpikā* of Guņaratna. Bibliotheca Indica. Calcutta 1905-1914.
- SDS: *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* of Sāyana-Mādhava. Ed. by V. S. ABHYANKAR. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Inst., 1951 (2nd ed.).

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