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耆那教梵行之理念與實踐(II-I)

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The idea and practice of Jaina *brahmacārya* (1)

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Abstract

This research is an attempt to evaluate Jaina contributions to Indian religious development. Using the lens of *brahmacārya*, this study explores fundamental religious configuration of this important śramaṇic tradition as compared with Buddhism. Jainism and Buddhism brought about an intellectual transformation in early Indian history—from the Vedic mytho-poetic age to the post-Upaniṣadic religio-ethical era, which offered no parallel. They are two main aspirations of Indian asceticism. However, unlike Buddhism, Jainism is still a living tradition in India. It is therefore immensely rewarding for us to explore Jaina idea and practice of *brahmacārya*. Using textual studies combined with fieldwork, this research seeks to understand Jainism diachronically as well as synchronically.

摘要：

此項研究主要想來對耆那教在早期印度宗教發展史上面的定位問題及其貢獻加以論評。在研究取向上，我想藉由對耆那教梵行觀的探討以及其與佛教相關思想的比較，具體地來突顯此一沙門傳統的宗教風貌。耆那教與佛教在印度早期宗教史上所帶來的沙門思想革命可說是無與倫比的。而印度宗教史經此思想運動之後，神話敘述與獻祭文化轉為對宗教與道德實踐之事的關懷與論辯。禁欲修行文化於焉成型。耆那教與佛教可說是印度禁欲思想的兩大精神淵源，彼此獨立卻又相互辯難。不過跟佛教有所區別的是：耆那教在印度的傳承一直不曾中斷過。因此研究耆那教梵行之理念與實踐，其在印度宗教史上的重大意義自不待言。我們經由經典上面的考察與實地之田野調查，乃能把耆那教宗教意義之併時性與歷時性同時展現出來。

Key words: Jainism, Jaina, *brahmacārīn*, *brahmacārya*

This project investigates the idea of *brahmacārīn* (*baṃbhacāri* in Prakrit) and practice of *brahmacārya* (*baṃbhacera* in Prakrit) in early Jainism. My objective in this study is to examine the ways in which Jainism distinguishes itself as an ascetic religious tradition in India. In particular, I will determine the extent to which Jainism is different, yet related, to Buddhism. As this project both develops from and supplements my doctoral research on the early social-intellectual history of India, it will enable me to make a significant

contribution to our understanding of one of the most crucial formative religious periods in Indian history.

1. Problematik

Before embarking on an exploration into the core of the matter, a critical review of conventional assumption on the meaning of *brahmacārín* and *brahmacārya* will help us to understand the complexity of these two ideas. Conventionally, *brahmacārín* is defined by scholars as “Vedic student” or “chaste (or celibate) student,” as if the two definitions were expressions of one and the same commitment.¹ However, as it is well-known, a Buddhist *brahmacārín* (monk) who lives a monastic life does not undergo Vedic training, and a Vedic student is definitely not a Buddhist mendicant: but they are both called “*brahmacārín*”. This does not necessarily mean that a “Vedic student” may not practice a life of continence, but in terms of their nature, learning the Vedas and practicing chastity are concerns not necessarily related to each other. In other words, members of different religious communities may employ the same term, “*brahmacārín*,” while yet having different phenomena in mind, since “*brahmacārín*” has never been a notion fixed once and for all. The problematic nature of the accepted definitions of this term is here apparent. Accordingly the conventional interchangeability of “Vedic student” and “chaste student” as two formal definitions of *brahmacārín* seems to smack of quasi-Brāhmaṇic hermeneutic inclusiveness and needs to be critically reviewed. As a further example for reference, Apte in his *Sanskrit Dictionary* defines *brahmacārín* as the following:

[As adjective]

1. Studying the Vedas.
2. Practising continence or chastity.

¹ "L'institutionnalisation de la chasteté est même beaucoup plus poussée dans l'Inde que chez nous. Avant d'être imposée au religieux, elle l'est au jeune «étudiant brahmanique» -- *brahmacārín*--pendant toute la période où il doit étudier le Veda. *Brahmacārín*, littéralement peut-être «celui qui pratique le brahman (=le Veda) », finit par signifier «voué à la chasteté », et c'est le titre que portent les religieux qui sont passés directement de l'état d'étudiant à celui de renonçant, demeurant chez leur guru au lieu de rentrer chez eux pour se marier" (Biardeau, 1981: 75-6).

Flood's description of *brahmacārya* is more typical:

The celibate student stage of life (*brahmacārya*) (sic) refers to the traditional period after the high-caste initiation (*upanayana*) when a boy would go to the home of his teacher (*ācārya*, *guru*) to learn the *Veda* (italics mine). The student of the Veda or *brahmacārín*, 'one who moves with or applies himself to *brahman*', is known as early as the *Atharva Veda* ... Yet, unlike the contemporary idea of the student, the *brahmacārín* is in a holy condition in which he is identified with Prajāpati, the creator deity in the Brāhmaṇas, and is under a strict rule of celibacy. Indeed the term *brahmacārín* can mean 'one who is celibate' ... (Flood, 1996: 62-63)

[As substantive]

1. A religious student, a Brāhmaṇa in the first order of his life, who continues to live with his spiritual guide from the investiture with sacred thread and performs the duties pertaining to his order till he settles in life.
2. One who vows to lead the life of a celibate. (Apte, 1986: 1174 col. b)

It is obvious that there is a conflation of ideas in these definitions. For one thing, by discounting the historical evolution of the term and the different conceptual systems that utilize this same term, Apte's list of various definitions of the word in its adjectival and substantive forms gives the impression that they are synchronic and compatible ideas. Nonetheless, he seems to be aware that studying the Vedas and practicing continence are different. Still, he tries to mitigate this difference by not mentioning Vedic studies in his definition of the "religious student," as if that student were solely devoted to his spiritual cultivation with the help of his guru. As a result, in his explanation of the meaning of the substantive, the emphasis has been shifted to "religious" discipline and the originally all-important aspect of "Vedic" studentship is pushed to the background.

Moreover, in the definitions of the term as substantive, the virtue of chastity is more pertinent to the last life stage of the *āśrama* system—the *saṃnyāsīn*, a person who has renounced his worldly attachments, than to a *brahmacārīn*, who after concluding this stage of life is ready to get married and live as a householder (*gṛhastha*) in order to continue his family lineage. One who takes the vow of celibacy, therefore, is more likely to be a world renouncing figure than a future householder in this world. Here, it is apparent that "the world renouncer as the ideal *brahmacārīn*" has been inappropriately introduced into the Brāhmaṇic understanding of the *brahmacārīn*. Here again we find the supposed interchangeability as definitions of *brahmacārīn* of what are in fact two quite different ideals.

The problematic nature of the conventional definitions of *brahmacārīn* outlined above is also reflected by the more general scholarly attitude towards Indian religion. Many previous scholars (notably Gonda, 1965: 284-314; Kaelber, 1989: 109-124), seemingly preoccupied with the idea that the *brahmacārīn* is independent of time and social context, have created assumptions which disregard both the complex development undergone by the concept and parallel intellectual changes. The different historical layers in the conceptualization of the *brahmacārīn* are not clearly differentiated in scholarly research on the subject. Hence this research seeks to examine different notions of the *brahmacārīn* (as well as *brahmacārya*) historically, and to focus on the evolution of this term as it is attested in ancient Indian cultural history. Since neither *brahmacārīn* nor *brahmacārya* is a timeless term, it evolves—modifying in meaning—throughout its history and has considerable relevance for its socio-intellectual milieu. It is precisely this *historical*

dimension of the term *brahmacārín* and the connected *brahmacárya* that I explore in this thesis.

My research seeks to illuminate the extent to which different intellectual traditions in ancient India may employ the same term but with divergent interpretations because of their different focal points of interest. A central concern of this study is to point out that this term *brahmacārín* was originally employed by the R̥gvedic poet to convey a personification of the practice of poetic formulation in a mythological setting; and then later adopted by the Buddha to connote an ideal ethical personality for the Saṃgha. Using the lens of *brahmacārín*, this research will investigate the process and the implications of this intellectual transformation in early Indian history—from the realm of the mytho-poetic to the religio-ethical, to better understand the significant changes that took place in ancient India.²

This research is primarily an attempt to offer a contribution to the intellectual history of ancient India or, to be more specific, the history of the ideas of *brahmacārín* and *brahmacárya* in their early stages. However, the idea of *brahmacārín* (as well as that of *brahmacárya*) itself is not just pure

² This intellectual transformation, depicted in this study, is extremely significant in the history of ancient India. This process coincides with Karl Jaspers' vision of an Axial Age (*Achsenzeit*). Jaspers used the idea of an "Axial Age" in his *Von Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* to depict the most decisive epoch in human history:

Diese Achse der Weltgeschichte scheint nun rund um 500 vor Christus zu liegen, in dem zwischen 800 und 200 stattfindenen geistigen Prozess. Dort liegt der tiefste Einschnitt der Geschichte. Es entstand der Mensch, mit dem wir bis heute leben. Diese Zeit sei in Kürze die "Achsenzeit" genannt. (Jaspers, 1949. 19)

Jaspers refers to the change in the intellectual climate from the pre-Axial age to the era of the Axial age, as a process of spiritualization (*Vergeistigung*), and recapitulates this process in the following way:

Das *mythische Zeitalter* war in seiner Ruhe und Selbstverständlichkeit zu Ende. Die griechischen, indischen, chinesischen Philosophen und Buddha waren in ihren entscheidenden Einsichten, die Propheten in ihrem Gottesgedanken unmythisch. Es begann der Kampf gegen den Mythos von seiten der Rationalität und der rational geklärten Erfahrung (der Logos gegen Mythos), --weiter der Kampf... gegen die unwahren Göttergestalten aus *ethischer Empörung* (italics mine) gegen sie. Die Gottheit wurde gesteigert durch *Ethisierung der Religion*. (italics mine) (op. cit., 21)

In this research, I do not confine myself to considering the Axial Age only, but trace the ideas of *brahmacārín* and *brahmacárya* back to their origins and subsequent transformations. However, I shall argue that the Axial Age is the crucial era of intellectual change in ancient India.

philosophical musing or, as it were, a Platonic ideal form unfolding itself throughout history. Rather, it is a deliberately employed notion adopted in mythological narration, poetic expression, sacrificial ideology, philosophical contemplation, the elaboration of religious ideals, and other modes of thought—all of whose differing intellectual concerns make it that the same wording may mean different things according to its context of use.

In dealing with the history of *brahmacārīn*, the method of inquiry employed in this research is both philological and socio-intellectual. A philological investigation of the term *brahmacārīn* will provide a foundation from which to understand the meanings of the word in different periods of early Indian history. On the other hand, a study of the intellectual milieu will help us to discern the evolution of the meaning of *brahmacārīn* within a broader context.

2. Śramaṇic contributions: Buddhism and Jainism

This research project focuses on Jaina idea and practice of *brahmacārya* and *brahmacārīn*. However, as the two most important śramaṇic religious traditions in India, and the Buddha and Mahāvīra are generally considered to be roughly contemporary, intellectual interaction between these two śramaṇic traditions should be explored. Thus, Buddhism is an indispensable reference for us to understand Jainism. To be sure, the great intellectual transformation from the late Vedic to the early Buddhist and Jaina period also implies an immense shift in the interpretation of the term *brahmacārīn*. The different hermeneutic issues related to this change in intellectual climate can be approached by conducting a philological inquiry into *brahmacārīn* and *brahmacariya* in the early Buddhist and Jaina period.

In early Buddhist period, we persistently come across various *brahma*-compounds—such as *brahmacārīn*, *sabrahmacārīn*, *brahmacariya*, *abrahmacariya* and many others—but references to *brahman* itself are very rare. The scanty occurrence of *brahman* compels us to ponder a possible new semantic orientation of *brahma*- in the compounds *brahmacārīn* and *brahmacariya*. This semantic change in this śramaṇic age also implies the emergence of a new intellectual discourse which is “religio-ethically” orientated.

As expected, early Jainism shares many common phrases with early Buddhism, as has been pointed out by Schubring (Schubring, 1910), Nakamura (Nakamura 1983, 1991), and others (e.g. Matsunami, 1961; Bollée, 1980; Tanigawa, 1981; Watanabe, 1995). Given the intellectual climate that frames both religious traditions, the common denominator that these two *samaṇa* traditions share is not surprising. We therefore find that the expressions *brahmacārīn*, *brahmacārya* (Prakrit *baṃbhārii*, *baṃbhacera*) and *dhamma* as found in Jaina texts are comparable in meaning and significance to their parallels in the Buddhist texts (cf. Ratanchandra, 1923, 3: 237-42). It is true that the Jaina interpretations of these expressions diverge from those of the Buddhists because of their different religious premises. However, early

Jainism, with its own understanding of *baṃbhacāri* and *baṃbhacera*, offers a complementary yet critical point of view to that of early Buddhism, one which helps us understand more comprehensively the religious transformations of the period in question.

In this research, I have to conduct an extensive investigation of Jaina *baṃbhacāri* and *baṃbhacera* here. For the most part, I will examine relevant passage in the *Ācārāṅgasūtra*, *Isibhāsiyāiṃ*, *Dasaveyāliyasutta*, *Sūtrakṛtāṅgasutta*, *Uttarādhyayanāsūtra* and other Jaina texts when it is necessary to better understand the religio-ethical ethos of Jainism. However, as this is the first part of my three-year project, I am still struggling with difficult yet tedious Jaina texts. In spite of all difficulties, the reading is well progressed. I also got help from the scholars in Jain Vishva Bharati when I did my field work there from August 24 to September 9, 2002. Personally, I hope, through interviewing mendicants on their practice of *brahmacārya*, Jainism as a living śramaṇic tradition can be better appreciated.

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研究成果自評

本研究計劃為期三年，今年為第一年，到目前為止進行順利。我已於二二年的八月二十四日到九月九日前往印度拉賈斯坦省 Jain Vishva Bharati 耆那教修道院與研究中心做實地研究。不但在那裡的圖書館蒐集到了梵行的相關資料，也和當地的學者討論有關梵行在耆那教教義意涵上面的問題；同時更訪問了當地的出家眾，請他們自己談對於耆那教梵行之宗教經驗。由於當地學者專家與僧眾的幫忙，這一次的印度行，讓我在對耆那教在教義及具體宗教實踐的了解上面，有了一個好的開始。

在回到台灣之後，我開始比較有系統地研讀重要的耆那教經典。從 *Ācārāṅga-Sūtra* 以及 *Sūyagaḍa* 二本重要的早期經典裏面，我們看到梵行不但事關不邪淫的宗教戒律，更廣泛地指涉到一位理想的修行者之生活規範。於此，我們看到梵行當為一個修行上面的理想是被佛陀和大雄 (Mahāvīra) 所共同奉為圭臬的，不過如何來完成這個理想的方式是有所不同的。假使我們把梵行視為一種修行文化的公約數來看，則佛教跟耆那教二個宗教傳統都始於「作用論者」或「所作論者」(*kriyāvādin*)。不過二者對於什麼是「作用」(*kriyā*)的看法卻不一致。兩個沙門傳統在這個前題上面的分歧，由於事關雙方對於修行及解脫的不同認知，當然是值得進一步加以探究的重要課題。中村元先生在這方面的著作 (Nakamura, 1991) 給了我不少的幫助。

展望未來，除了繼續考察耆那教基本教義之宗教意涵外，主要的工作也還是放在經典的研讀上面。對 *Isibhāsiyāim*, *Dasaveyāliyasutta*, *Uttarādhyayanasūtra* 及其他重要經典的深入探討，乃是理解耆那教梵行觀的不二門法。我得時時鞭策自己，多加努力，期能達到預定目標。