The Soul (*ātman*) and Agency (*kartṛtva*):

—According to Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and his Followers—

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0. The omnipresence (*vibhūtvā*) and the agency are, according to Kumārila, the two properties attributed to the soul. They seem to be incompatible with each other. For it is impossible for the soul to be an agent of an action in that, being omnipresent, it has no physical activity. For Kumārila, exegete of the Vedic ritual, upon whom the task of reasonably interpreting its structure is imposed, it is unavoidable to give a solution for the difficulty that the soul has this sort of incompatibility. And the method he adopts to solve this difficulty is to look upon the soul as functioning as a causer (*prayojaka*) relative to the body function as a causee (*prayojya*) in which the physical activity is supposed to inhere. The aim of this paper is to disclose this causer-causee structure of the soul and the body.

1. Kumārila does not limit an action to a physical activity.¹⁾ He asserts that an action is whatever is denoted by a verbal root.²⁾ Therefore, as for the actions denoted by verbal roots, such as 'to exist' ($\sqrt{as}$) and 'to know' ($\sqrt{jñā}$), it is not problematic that the soul is the agent of these actions, for they inhere in the soul itself. In the case of physical activities, such as going (*gamana*), on the other hand, they inhere not in the soul but in the body.³⁾ If the agency were limited to the substratum of the physical activity, it would be difficult to regard the soul as the agent of the physical activity. In order to solve the difficulty, Kumārila says in his *Śloka-vārttika*, *Ātmavāda* k.82:

Just as in the case of the action of cutting (*chedana*) which inheres in a piece of wood, Devadatta is regarded as the agent of the action, in the case of the action of going which inheres in the body, we could hold the soul itself to be

its agent.

What Kumārila intends to imply by this *kārikā* is as follows: One cannot deny the agency of Devadatta because the action of cutting inheres in a piece of wood. Similarly, one cannot deny the agency of the soul because the action of going inheres in the body. Consequently, the agency of the soul cannot be denied even if the substratum of a physical activity can be found in something else.

2. Now, we have to inquire how to justify the agency of the soul in the case of the physical activity. On this point, Kumārila says in his *Ślokavārttika*, *Ātmavāda*, k. 83:

Objection: In the case of the [cutting], the agency [of Devadatta] is justified by other actions, [i.e., raising and throwing down of an axe, which inhere in Devadatta himself].

Answer: In this case [of going], too, [the agency of the soul is justified in the similar manner]. We regard the soul as a causer (*prayojaka*) [of an action] because the determination (*saṅkalpa*) and existence (*sattva*) inhere in the soul itself.

The verbal root $\sqrt{chid}$ ('to cut') denotes 'becoming twofold' or 'separation into two parts' (*dvaidhibhāva*), which inheres in a piece of wood, and manipulating an axe, which inheres in Devadatta himself. This can be explained as follows: Devadatta causes a piece of wood to be separated into two parts by his action of manipulating the axe. The same structure is applied to the case of going. The action of going inheres in the body and the soul plays a role of causing it to perform the action of going. No action can be performed without existence of the soul which alone is of the nature of consciousness. Moreover, before the actual performance of going, the soul should have determination to do such an action.⁴⁾

In this connection, we must consider the meaning of the word *saṅkalpa*. According to Jayamiśra, author of the *Śarkarikā*, there is no difference between the meaning of *saṅkalpa*, such as "I shall do it" (*idam ahaṃ karomi*), and that of *uddeśa*.⁵⁾ Since the word *uddeśa* means 'to aim at

something' here, we may say that *saṅkalpa* is a mental activity of determining to perform an action, aiming at something. In addition, Someśvara, author of the *Nyāyasudhā*, explains the word *saṅkalpa* as 'mental effort' (*prayatna*) which is considered as the cause of a physical activity.⁶⁾ It might be safe enough to be assumed that the *saṅkalpa* is a mental activity which brings about the physical activity.

Of course, the soul cannot be a direct agent of a physical activity. The soul, however, can cause the body to perform a physical activity by his mental activity. In this sense, Kumārila thinks of the soul as the agent of the physical activity.

3. One may notice that the relation between the soul and the body is quite similar to that between the causer and the causee found in the *bhāvanā* theory. According to Kumārila, the *bhāvanā* means 'the activity to cause something to come about'. For example, Kumārila paraphrases the sentence *devadatta odanaṃ pacati* ("Devadatta cooks rice-gruel") into *devadattaḥ pākenaudanaṃ bhāvayati* ("Devadatta causes rice-gruel to come about by means of cooking").⁷⁾ It will be clear from this paraphrasing that the verbal form '*pacati*' denotes the action of cooking (*pāka*) as well as that of inciting rice-gruel to come about. Thus, the *bhāvanā* means 'the activity to cause something to come about' which is denoted by a verbal affix '-ti' and which is expressed by the verbal root $\sqrt{bhāvi}$ in the paraphrasing. In any verbal form, therefore, we understand both the *bhāvanā* denoted by a verbal affix and the meanings of a verbal root (*dhātvartha*) which is considered as the qualifier (*viśeṣaṇa*) of the *bhāvanā*. And further, Kumārila defines the *bhāvanā* as the activity of a causer (*prayojakavyāpāra*).⁸⁾ In the case of the sentence mentioned above, Devadatta is the causer and the rice-gruel is the causee. Therefore, one may say that Devadatta causes rice-gruel to come about by his action of cooking.

It must be noted that Kumārila and Someśvara explain the *bhāvanā* as the mental effort.⁹⁾ Kumārila asserts that human beings, because of their intelligence, do not perform any action without aiming at certain

results.¹⁰⁾ Therefore, a causer can make a causee perform an action because he has mental activities, such as mental effort. This is how, we can justify the agency of the soul on the ground that the soul alone can have a mental activity according to the *bhāvanā* theory also.

4. Kumārila solves the problem of incompatibility between the agency and the omnipresence, which arises with reference to the soul, by applying the causer-causee relation to the soul and the body. In the light of the *bhāvanā* theory also, it is reasonably said that the soul which is the substratum of the *bhāvanā* can be the agent of an action. We can think of the soul as the indirect agent of a physical activity since it is caused by the soul.

Kumārila establishes the agency of the soul so that he explains the soul as the performer of a sacrifice. The action of sacrificing (*yāga*) consists of many physical activities, such as separating a cake into two parts (*dvyavadāna*) and throwing it into the fire (*prakṣepa*). In order to accomplish the sacrifice, the soul performs the physical activities by his determination to perform to do so, aiming at heaven (*svarga*).

For the abbreviation, see my paper "A Debate on the Ātman between Buddhists and Mīmāṃsakas" (in Japanese), *The Journal of the Nippon Buddhist Research Association*, Vol.LXII, pp. 13-26, 1997.

Abbreviation (add.)

MM: *Mānameyodaya* of Nārāyaṇa. Edited by C. Kunhan Raja and S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri, The Adyar Library Series Vol. 105, Madras: The Adyar Library and Research Centre, 1975².

NSu: *Nyāyasudhā* of Someśvara. Edited by Pt. Mukunda Sastri, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series No. 45-133, Benares: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Book Depot, 1902ff.

Ś: *Śarkarikā* of Jayamiśra. Manuscript belonging to the Sarasvati Bhavan Library, Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi (No. 93591).

ṬṬ: *Tupṭikā* of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. See TV.

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As for the text of the *Ślokavārttika*, *Ātmavāda*, I am planning to provide its critical edition including the *Kāśikā* and the *Śāṅkarikā* which have never been published up to the present.

- 1) See ŚV, *Ātmavāda*, k. 74cd.
- 2) See Ibid., k. 75cd.
- 3) See Ibid., k. 76ab. Cf. K on *Ātmavāda*, k. 76: *astyādiṣu svasamavetāyām eva kriyāyām kartṛtvam, evaṃ jñānādyāsv api, jñānasyātmani samavāyāt/*
- 4) Cf. Ibid. on k. 78: *yāvad dhi puruṣo mamedam kartavyam iti na saṅkalpayati na tāvat bhūtāni pravartante/*
- 5) Ś on *Ātmavāda*, k. 77: *yadi vā yadā hy ātmoddiśati saṅkalpayatīdam ahaṃ karomīti tadā bhūtāni vyāpriyante nānyadā tena bhūtavyāpāre prādhānyam uddēśa-dvārenātmana eva dṛśyate/*
- 6) See NSu on Apūrvādhikaraṇa, p. 604³²⁻³⁴ and MM, p. 258⁶.
- 7) See TV, Bhāvārthādhikaraṇa, Vol. 2, p. 352¹⁴⁻¹⁵.
- 8) See Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 344⁴⁻⁵; TṬ on JS 11. 1. 10, Vol. 7, p. 13²³.
- 9) TV, Indriyakāmādhikaraṇa, Vol. 3, p. 112: *puruṣaprayatnaś ca vidhyupetā bhāvanocyate/*(See note 4).
- 10) See TV, Bhāvārthādhikaraṇa, Vol. 2, p. 350¹⁸⁻¹⁹.

〈Key words〉 *ātman*, *kartr*, *saṅkalpa*, *prayojaka*

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