

Jainism and Unification Thought

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I. Jainism

Jainism is an old religion of India, established by *Mahavira* in the Present State of Bihar, around the time when Buddha established Buddhism there. They were active rivals, sometimes around the 6-5th centuries B.C. Buddha was the original founder of Buddhism, whereas *Mhavira* was the reformer of what was taught by *Parsva* or *Parsvanatha*, who is said to have lived 250 years before *Mahavira*.

Mahavira said, "Don't harm any living beings, then you will attain liberation." He taught us *ahimsa* or non-violence to all beings, that is, love of all living things. Later, when the eradication of karma came to be established as the sole method of freedom from rebirth in the context of karma theory, the role of *ahimsa* was then reduced to a minimal. Nevertheless, *Mahavira's* teaching that *ahimsa* is the way of salvation has remained in essence unchanged until today, as shown in the vigorous of *ahimsa* is the essential feature that distinguishes Jaina school from the rest of the religious schools in India. Therefore, I would like to take up *Mahavira's* teaching centered around *ahimsa*, and make an appraisal of Jainism in the context of our Unification Thought.

Before getting into the subject matter, let us glance at the position of Jainas in India. There are at present less than 3 million Jainas, that is no more than 0.5% of the total Indian population.¹⁾ Lay Jainas mostly belong to the merchant class. They are economically stable and well educated in general. Historically speaking, Jainas prospered together with Buddhists in the ancient commercial cities.

After the decline of Buddhism, Jainas had to get along with Hindus. After the reign of Islam, the British came to India, and Jainas went with the tides of change when industries arose. From the cultural viewpoint, Jaina literature, in Mysore, flourished as the center of medieval literature in Southern India. In the 12th century, Jainism became the State religion of Gujarat. *Mahatma Gandhi* who is known by his *ahimsa* and satyagraha movement was born in Gujarat.

Now, *Mahavira* (meaning a great hero) became 'Jina', the Victor, by overcoming all the earthly desires and passions. The word 'Janis' was derived from his title. He was born into a ksatriya family from a small village in the present State of Bihar. He was, then, called Vardhamana. He married and has a daughter. His parents were, it was told, *Parsva's* followers. After their death, *Mahavira* obtained his elder brother's permission, and renounced the world at the age of 30. After 12 years of rigorous asceticism, he became Jina. And after 30 years of teaching, he died at the age of 72. Buddha is said to have outlived him. Since *Mahavira* reformed the teachings of *Parsva*, let us begin our subject matter with a brief view of *Parsva's* teachings.

1. *Parsva's* Thoughts

It is difficult to know exactly what *Parsva's* thoughts were. However, when we separate the thoughts that seem older than *Mahavira's* in the Jaina canon, we come to know *Parsva* having a primitive animist view of the world. It was something like this. The world is packed with visible and invisible living beings. The living being is called 'jiva' in Sanskrit. *Jivas* exist elsewhere, for instance, in earth, water, air, stones, and even in the flames of fire. Thus water in a cup a colony of water-jivas, and the flame of a candle is a colony of fire-jivas. Therefore, if we shake up water in the cup or extinguish the flame of the candle, we are surely harming and killing some of these invisible jivas therein.

It was also likely that *Parsva* believed in the *vaira* theory. *Vaira* means anger, hostility or enemy. The *vaira* theory is a theory of bearing a grudge, and *vaira* works here as the principle of retribution. For instance, if a victim gets hurt or killed, he would emit a grudge or a strong feeling or revenge at the assailant, which would hit and become bound with him until due retribution is brought out in return.

Taking the animist view of the world and the *vaira* theory together, we can get an idea of it, which looks something like this. We are all unconsciously accustomed to breathing air, drinking water, walking,

sitting and talking, as we do every day. But in performing these actions, we are unknowingly harming and killing many invisible jivas, and we are getting, in turn, gripped by the *vaira* emitted by them at every moment. "This must be perhaps the cause of our unhappy state of miseries and sufferings," the ancient populace must have thought. From the side of an assailant, *vaira* is a sin committed unto himself and the cause of his own miseries. A sin was considered as something material in the olden times, which could be cleansed by water, or burnt up by the fire of asceticism. *Vaira*, which is a deep-seated grudge or enmity, could have probably been seen in a concrete material form through the third eye.

Upon this animist view of the world and the *vaira* theory, Parsva must have founded, we would assume, a religious order by teaching some methods of not committing violence to visible and invisible beings, probably by controlling our senses, being attentive to our own action and so on. *Mahavira* was a person who systematized and reformed the old contents of his teachings, by way of adopting the then new doctrines of karma and rebirth, and established a new sect of Jainism.



2. Mahavira's Teachings

The age about the 6-5th centuries B. C. happened to be the age of Upraised. It was the time Vedic and non-Vedic philosophical or religious thoughts were deeply stimulated in search of the nature of Brahman, Axman and the world, for the purpose of attaining the way of salvation. The doctrines of karma and transmigration were then the focus of discussion made in this context of the method of liberation. It was an epoch-making period in ancient India when she was blessed with numerous Upanisadic sages and sophists, including *Mahavira*, Buddha and others. The same world-wide spiritual movement was also occurring in Greece and China led by God's providence. *Mahavira* must be, therefore, one of the sages who established his

own religious sect upon responding to God's call that was made several centuries prior to the coming of Christ.

Now, *Mahavira* put Parsva's old theories of *animism* and *vaira* into the new bottles of the then prevalent doctrines of karma and transmigration. Transmigration is the suffering state of living beings not being able to get out of the cycle of rebirth, from man to animal, animal to plant, and the like. Why does this metempsychosis occur? It is because of *vaira*. As shown in the previous chart, when the assailant harms his victim, the former is gripped by the *vaira* emitted by the latter, and the latter's *vaira* becomes the cause of the former's rebirth. So the assailant's sinful action and his victim's *vaira* are equal in value. Action is called 'karma' in Sanskrit, and this karma which replaced the term '*vaira*' became the cause of rebirth in *Mahavira's* teaching. Karma is of material nature in Jaina concept, which is recorded as something like a dust particle in the early Jaina scriptures.

Jainas do not believe that God exists and He created the world. For Jainas, jivas and matter have existed since times eternal, and jivas and karmic particles have been found in the state of bondage ever since. Jainas do not distinguish the concept of atman (self) from term 'jiva' (living being), and they traditionally prefer to use the rest of it belong to the category of matter. Material karlis particles become bound with a diva in the form of vagina. He, then, starts to transmigrate, and the world phenomena begin to occur. The earliest stage of *karma* and rebirth doctrines reflect the idea of 'an eye for eye' and 'a tooth for tooth' as seen in the rebirth cycle such as 'killing a cow → as a cow → eating grass → birth as grass.'

Mahavira classified jivas into visible beings such as animals and plants, and invisible microscopic organisms consisting of earth-jivas, water-jivas, fire-jivas and wind-jivas. These invisible jivas have one sense of touch alone. A dust particle is, for instance, a whose body is made of air; and a drop of sweat is also a colony of jivas whose bodies are made of water. Here an earth jiva, for example, has three meanings, ① a jiva alone, ② a body made of earth alone, and ③ a jiva wearing its body of earth, which are to be distinguished within the context.

If the universe is full of such beings, our daily actions of breathing, eating, talking, walking, sitting and lying down, either conscious or unconscious, are surely violent ones. In the primitive period of Jainism, action (*karma*) was, therefore, evil, and so *Mahavira* upheld the idealism of non-action or *akarama*. '*Akarma*' here does not mean something like Laotza's concept of non-action after nature, but literally means non-action of a physical body with the sole aim of not

harming any beings.

If this idealism of akarma or non-action were practised literally, no monk nor church could remain in the world to maintain the Jaina law. *Mahavira*, therefore, did not perform akarma in its literal sense. Instead, he created many rules of concession. For instance, even though a monk walks carefully according to the Jaina rules, he might happen to step on a worm and kill it. He did it carelessly without any intention of killing it. In such a case, he should be gripped by the worm's *vaira* (=karma). But he could remove it by repenting and performing asceticism; then it would not become the cause of rebirth. A monk's misdeed made unintentionally, although abiding by the Jaina rules, is thus considered as blameless. Householders who have to bring up their families in all sorts of situations cannot abide by the ascetic rules as such. Jainism is thus a religion originally intended for monks only, and salvation is therefore only attainable by becoming a monk.

Then how did *Mahavira* practise *ahimsa* in order to attain salvation? It is recorded in the earliest Jaina text called the *Acarangasutra* that *Mahavira* used to beg for scraps of food by visiting from them. Since cooking means direct killing of all things, Jaina monks are not allowed to cook. So they have to beg for their food to survive. They are not allowed to receive food that was cooked for their sake, because it means killing all things indirectly for their sake. They likewise have to drink water that was boiled or filtered by householders. *Mahavira* went alone stark naked, without using cold water, not bathing, not cleaning his teeth, not using fire, and not scratching his body. *Mahavira* did not say, "Sacrifice yourself and serve all thing." Serving all things means to allow them to do all what they want to. When mosquitoes or insects bit his back, he did not drive them away, and let them do so. He thus served all things. He slept little, spoke little, and was always vigilant. He bore all hardships, ate coarse food, often fasted, and practised meditation.

Beside this vow of *ahimsa*, *Mahavira* established a commandment of non-possession of things. By maintaining and using some belongings such as a bag and slippers, we are bound to commit more *himsa* to all tangled with thorns and to have it ripped, by which many *jivas* were killed. Even today, Jaina monks do not possess more than three robes, a blanket, an alms bowl, a piece of wiping cloth, a brush for wiping small insects, an umbrella, a needle, nail cutters, a pen, medicine and the like. Jaina churches have no belongings of their own such as temples and lodgings. These belong to laymen. Jaina monks are not responsible for performing rituals that necessarily

involve *himsa* to all things. Their duty is to walk the path of liberation, and guide householders in this direction.

The puritan feature of Jaina ascetics owes, besides to the vow of *ahimsa* in serving all things, a great deal to this vow of non-possession, which was established by *Mahavira* himself. It was, then, adopted by the Yoga School. *Mahavira* taught us, "Give up the idea of possessing things." 2,500 years before Rev. Sun Myung Moon commanded us to do so. Besides the vows to abide to, that is, not to lie, not to steal, and not to commit adultery; they were commonly shared by the other religious sects in *Mahavira's* time. Jainas generally consider that *ahimsa* is their essential commandment, in which the rest of the vows stand in a position of support, for they are directly or indirectly working for the sake of *ahimsa*.

II . Jainism Reviewed in the Context of Unification Thought

Now, let us make an appraisal of *Mahavira's* teaching centered around *ahimsa* and the Jainas position in the context of Unification Thought. According to the Unification Principle, salvation is to restore fallen man and the world to God from Satan's hands, thereby restoring the original purpose of God's creation. In accomplishing this task, all human beings on earth and in the spirit world have to, first of all, have their Satanic lineage converted to God's lineage. Then, Lucifer, now standing as Satan, has to be subdued and placed back in his former position as archangel. Finally, the present Satanic world has to disappear, and the original order of the world has to be regained. The task of salvation is thus to be performed by God and his son, the Messiah, in cooperation with man, and the former is assumed to be shouldering 95% of the total responsibilities against 5% of the latter. These figures, which are no more than symbolic, indicate that salvation is impossible to be attained without God's grace.

1. Doctrines of Karma and Rebirth

Ancient Indians were totally unaware of this concept of salvation, and they came upon the doctrines of karma and transmigration, to give explanation to the causes of suffering on earth and offer a method of freedom therefrom. The Aryan invaders from Europe brought to India the idea of God or Brahman with them, however they did not bring in the concepts of man's fall and original sin, which are the primary causes of man's sufferings. Satan thus successfully

worked his way out. Satan is, in no doubt, afraid of the Messiah, for he has the power to subdue him. He is, however, not at all worried about the doctrines of karma and rebirth, for these are incapable of taking man and the world away from him. Instead, these doctrines can allow man safeguarding the Satanic world as it stands. This is the state of being that Satan welcomes most.

2. Animal Sacrifice

Uplifting the banner of *ahimsa*, Jainas (as well as Buddhists) attacked Brahmins who used to sacrifice animals. The practice of animal sacrifice must have been brought into India by the Aryan invaders along with their idea of God. Animal sacrifice is an important ceremony in the monotheistic tradition. An animal is killed here and its blood is shed, symbolizing the liquidation of sin, as in the case of Jewish circumcision. Sacrificing a lamb symbolized sacrificing the Messiah, through which man is supposed to be brought closer to God. All things created by God did not fall, therefore they stand in a position purer and closer to God than man. They have thus become the offerings to God, through which man is allowed to get closer to Him. Non-Vedic Indians including Jainas (and Buddhists) were totally unaware of this concept of animal sacrifice.

3. Jaina View of Life

"*Ahimsa* is the way of salvation," taught *Mahavira*. There is nothing more precious than life for any living being, whether it be a man or a worm. 'Love of life' is the supreme value underlying the highest truth, highest goodness and highest beauty. Life is very dear to any jiva, for it is irreplaceable and weighs heavier, it is said, than the earth. Jaina idealism of *ahimsa* as such must have come from their sound judgement regarding love for all things' lives. Jainism inherited the primitive animistic view held in the *pre-Mahavira* period, that the world is full of invisible jivas. Jainas then came up with a peculiar notion that an earth-jiva's life, an elephant's life and a man's life are all equal in value. This idea might have come from the doctrines of karma and rebirth. The doctrine of karma is based on the view of life that jiva or atman is primarily pure and identical. However, when this pure jiva gets bound with karmic participles, he starts to transmigrate by way of taking various forms of life, such as the earth-jiva, an elephant, man or whatever, in accordance with the law of transmigration. All jivas in all form are, therefore, in essence

equivalent in terms of life.

4. Present-day Animists and Ecologists' View of Life

A present-day animist like prof. Keiji Iwata of Kyoto University²⁾ supports an idea that the cosmos is the space for life, and all living beings including man are equivalent in terms of life. All things in nature, that exist in totally different dimension from that of man, are beautifully maintaining their own system of order, diversity, autonomy, cooperation, coexistence, cyclic circulation and so on. Their system as such is, in fact, functioning better than that of man. Some of today's ecologists have, then, arrived at the conclusion that man is no more than a part of nature, and his intelligence stands in no higher a position than at a relative level. Now they are appealing to us, "We should re-evaluate the idealism of love of life and love of all things." Man's DNA and that of all things are almost alike, hence all forms of life stand equal in value. Today's animists and ecologists have thus come up on the side of Jainas.

Man was created by God, says the Unification Principle, as the object of His love, and all things were created for the sake of man. Man arrived on earth, in other words, to fulfill the purpose of developing and perfecting His love, that has forever been lying in the state of unfathomable potency. All things are under man's domination, so that he can consume them in order to perform the purpose of God's creation. Consequently, man's life is more precious than the lives of all things in terms of the purpose of His creation. They are not equal in value. All things are created to die on earth, while man is to transmigrate after his death, to the spirit world and enjoy his eternal life centered around God.

According to Rev. Moon, all things are happy to be consumed by man, had he not fallen, and become a part of his flesh, for they can meet God therein. However, man fell, and has dominated all things wrongly ever since. It is therefore not surprising to read in Romans 8:19, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," because man, having been controlled by Satan, has dominated over them wrongly and misused them to the point that they are now on the verge of destruction.

5. The Servant of Servants'

Mahavira taught, "Serve all things." This position of man corresponds to that of 'the servant of servants' in the Unification view of man's history.³⁾ It stands for the period during Noah, before entering the

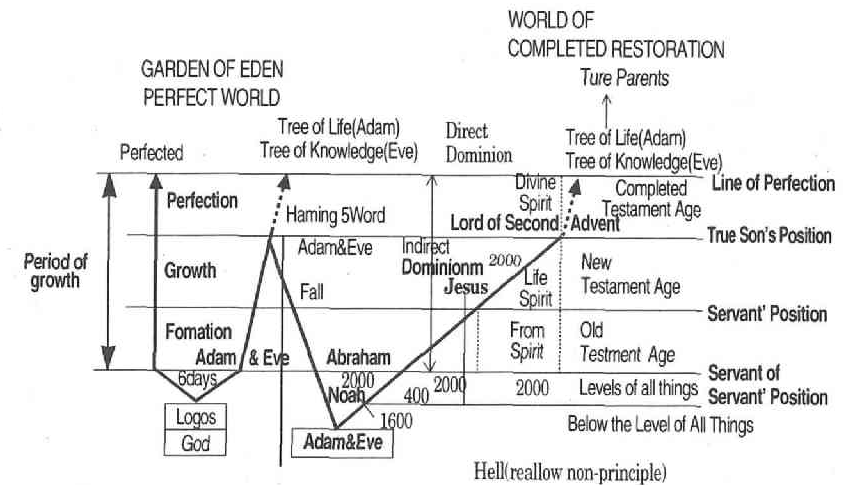
Old Testament age. This is the path man is destined to go through in restoring his position through indemnity, and Jainism must be representing this position in human history. This position of 'the servant of servants' represented by Jainism was bound to appear before arriving at the age of the Old Testament. Primitive religion of nature worship appearing in the ancient world, including Vedic nature worship as well as ancient Greek and Chinese nature worship, as long as they are not polluted by shamanism and magic, must be sharing the same position of man serving all things. A servant of servant cannot see his Lord directly. He can see Him indirectly through the mediation of God's servants or all things, upon whom he attends. It thus seems that Jainism made its appearance to shoulder the responsibility of taking part of this position in the providential history.

Satan works through man's flesh. If his mind is strong enough to subdue his flesh, he can easily return to God. Man's flesh is unfortunately stronger than his mind. The flesh controls the mind as it wants, says Rev. Moon, because the false power of love bound with Satan at the time of his fall was stronger than the power of conscience held at that time.⁴⁾ God, therefore, established religion all over the world in order to weaken the power of flesh and strengthen the power of mind, so that man can return to God by subjugating his flesh. This is, according to him, the main purpose of religion. Religion thus compels us to perform all that our flesh dislikes to do, for instance, "Fast!", "Offer services!", "Make sacrifices!", and even "Become and offering!" An offering means sacrificing one's own life to God. So it is said in St. Luke 17:33, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it." Then, the puritan way of life led by Jaina ascetics has truly been the course of rigorous life worthy of God's praise.

III. 'Salvation' and 'Messiah' in the Bible, Unification Principle and Jainism

Rev. Tomohisa Ota made a comparative study of the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Unification Principle (=Divine Principle) in his small book entitled, "The Bible and the Unification Principle."⁵⁾ While comparing the views on 'salvation' and the 'Messiah' expressed in these three works, he came to find a law of continuity working through them, taking the form of a thesis-antithesis-synthesis.

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However, when a comparison is made between two of them, i. e. between the Old Testament and the New Testament, or between the New Testament and the Unification Principle has a key to unify the whole, comments Rev. Ota, otherwise there remains a state of mutual alienation and exclusion of Jainism, after we make a brief exposition of his account summarized in the following chart.

Regarding salvation, Judaists insist that righteousness which leads one to salvation is attainable by deed through abiding within law, while Christians maintain that it is attainable by having faith in Jesus. According to Judaism, self-reliance alone leads one to arrive at salvation, whereas it is reached solely by God's grace according to the Messiah through abiding in His word, comes from God's grace together with man's self-reliance.

As regards to the Messiah, Moses is a political emancipator as well as the coming Messiah in Judaism, in which he is vested with a functional meaning. For Christians, however, Jesus Christ is a redeemer, free from original sin; thus he is vested by them with an ontological meaning. Unificationists consider that the Messiah is both, a redeemer and a political emancipator taking the position of Adam. Finally, the Messiah is an exemplary leader of people for Judaists, whereas he is, for Christians, a redemptive personage who

	Old Testament	New Testament	Unification Principle
Salvation	Law	Gospel	Word
	Deed	Faith	Attendants
	By Self-reliance	By grace	By both
Messiahian	Political Emancipator	Redeemer	Both
	Functional	Ontological	Both
	Exemplary	Redemptive	Both

extends His salvation to everyone all one-sidedly, Unificationists maintain that he has both characteristics.

Now, let us examine the position of Jainism in the context of This chart. Jainas say that man arrives at liberation by abiding in their rigorous law, through ascetic performance of ahimsa, solely relying on his own capacity. The Messiah-like personage for Jainas is the *Tirthankara* or Passage Maker, who is, like the Arhat of Hinayana Buddhism, an exemplary figure in reaching the level of perfection ahead of us. The twenty-four Tirthankaras are expected to appear periodically in each boundless cosmic period, and *Mahavira* is regarded as the twenty-fourth Tirthankara of the present cosmic period. *Tirthankaraship* is thus vested by Jainas with a functional meaning. He is a religious leader who teaches us, in the most exemplary manner, how to get out of the cycle of rebirth by exerting his efforts. This position of Jainism must be likewise shared by Hinayana Buddhism, while *Mahayana* Buddhism and Vaisnavism must be sharing the same ground with Christianity.

IV. Conclusion

The brief examination made above discloses that Jainism and

Judaism stand in a comparable position called 'the servant's position' in the context of providential history, despite the fact that they belong to totally different systems of religion in time and space. It means that they shouldered comparable responsibilities in their own historical places, and have made each of their own contributions to God for His providence of restoring man and the world. We already know that Jainism also stands in the position of 'the servant of servants' by performing its responsibility of serving all things. Having thus occupied two earlier positions of 'the servant' and 'the servant of servants' in the providential history, Jainas, up to this day, have made considerable contributions to mankind and to God, who has been with them all this time and guided them as their own Parent, even though Jainas do not recognize Him.

Note

- 1) Also Hindus making up 82.6%, Mohammedans 11.4%, Christians 2.4%, Sikhs 2.0%, Buddhists 0.7%, according to the "World Almanacs", 1996
- 2) Author of "Philosophy of the Cosmos" and "Anthropology of Grass, Trees · Worms · Fish", etc.
- 3) Refer to the next chart quoted from the Divine Principle, p.137, which is slightly modified with some additional information.
- 4) "Family", Kogensha, Tokyo, no.319, Aug.1995, pp.24-25.
- 5) Published by Kowa, Tokyo, 1995.