

THINKING RITUALLY (Rediscovering the Pūrva mīmāṃsā of Jaimini) by FRANCIS X CLOONEY, S. J. Publications of De Nobili Research library, Vol. XVII. Vienna Institute fur Indologie der Universital, 1990. Pp. 293.

The Pūrva Mīmāṃsā gives the ancient Indian theory of hermeneutics; though neglected for long by western Indologists because of the several ritualistic examples quoted, rarely known in modern India, some scholars are beginning to take special interest in this field and Francis X Clooney is a keen student who came to India and studied the relevant texts under traditional pandits. The basic text is the Mīmāṃsā sūtra of Jaimini (c. 200 B.C.). Śabara wrote a detailed *Bhāṣya* on it. There are two commentaries on the

*Bhāṣya*, one by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa and the other by Prabhākara (sixth century A.D.). Clooney feels that the original sūtra has not been understood and explained properly by later commentators. Prabhākara and Kumārila differ in their interpretations. Kumārila complains that earlier commentations have given an atheistic interpretation. Clooney feels that even Śābara has not understood the sūtras properly. The terse and crisp sūtras cannot be understood without some exegetical help. Even to find fault with the commentators one has to get a general meaning of the sūtras with their help. How can one be sure that discarding all commentaries and explaining according to one's own scholarship is the best way to understand the sūtras? Modi tried this method unsuccessfully with *Brahma sūtras*. Can Clooney claim that he is successful? The basic knowledge he got is based on traditional scholars who are well versed in the commentaries. Can we return to the sūtras of Pāṇini, completely discarding the *Vārttika* and the *Bhāṣya*? Clooney's intention is to fix the sense of the Mīmāṃsā sūtra as a whole by an intensive and internal study of the text itself working from a knowledge of parts of the text to a sense of the whole. If Śābara is not infallible, can Clooney be?

Jaimini's sūtra is based on the Śrauta sūtras, and depends on a thorough knowledge of the rituals. Clooney analyses the regular vocabulary of Jaimini.

He commends Śābara's contribution to articulate a definitively exegetical vocabulary'. One chapter is devoted to the explanation of 'Dharma of the sacrifice'. One chapter entitled 'Jaimini's Mīmāṃsā in the context of Brāhmaṇas and Buddhism' is interesting and a bit provoking. Comparing Buddhist *nirvāṇa* with Mīmāṃsā *nivṛtti*, he says, 'In both cases it is a cessation of action, but we lack sufficient evidence to identify the two'. The chapter on *Apūrva* discusses the role of *apūrva* in the development of Mīmāṃsā. *Apūrva* is not mentioned in the sūtra; but Śābara and Kumārila accept it as a connecting link between the sacrifice and the result. 'It is a transcendent reality surviving the sacrifice till the result is achieved'; its locus is the ātman. Prabhākara uses the term *niyoga* in this sense, for him '*Apūrva* has to do with the connection between word and action, not that between action and result. Mīmāṃsakas

assume *apūrva* on the basis of the *pramāṇa* called *arthāpatti*. Clooney's statement that later Mīmāṃsakas did not stress that 'meaning is in action' may not be accepted by traditional scholars. I commend this 'challenging and stimulating work to students of Indian philosophy in general and Mīmāṃsa in particular'.

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