

Theory of "Perfect Penetration Without Obstruction" and Ecological Affinity

On the Epic "Gesar" from the Perspective of Ecological Literature*

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Abstract—Epic "Gesar" is an encyclopedic literary masterpiece of Tibetan well-known to the world. And its encyclopedic inclusiveness provides a broad academic field for research on it in terms of breadth, thickness and depth. From the perspective of ecological literature, the "all creatures are equal" and ecological ethics concern is a main line throughout the epic "Gesar". By studying this epic, it is easy to explore the ecological literary nature of the epic itself.

Keywords—epic "Gesar"; perfect penetration without obstruction; ecological affinity and responsibility

I. INTRODUCTION

In the history, many dignitaries made contribution to Buddhism had left intelligent Buddhist doctrines. For instance, when talking about Buddhist doctrines and worldly concerns, the sixth Patriarch Hui Neng said, "Buddhist doctrine lies in the world and can be felt when you are alive. It is impossible to find Bodhi when you are died ". For another instance, Mahasiddha Milarepa's song of Buddhist doctrine says, "we can use intelligence to deal with all things in the world in a subtle and slight manner without prejudice to dogmata" and so on. In view of those sages, Buddhist doctrines and worldly concerns are two aspects of one reality and can be perfectly fused without obstruction. On this basis, it will be available to more deeply understand the reason why this epic is of the philosophical depth to be sought for in modern ecological aesthetics and the ecological practice guidance meaning with high value, when reading and appreciating the epic "Gesar".

II. THEORY OF "PERFECT PENETRATION WITHOUT OBSTRUCTION"

From view of Buddhism, especially of core doctrines of each sect of Tibetan Buddhism, the theory of "perfect penetration without obstruction" is not clearly proposed by

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one sect.¹ But, the Gelug sect pays attention to "tantrism harmony."² Therefore, in this sense, the Gelug sect eliminates the disputes and solidarity among various sects and establishes its own sectarian authority from the perspective of "all teachings can be implemented without coming into conflict and all Buddhist sayings are instructive." The actual situation is indeed so. Gelug sect deals with the relations among Ningma, Kaggu, Sakya and Jonang and other sects in the manner of "perfect penetration without obstruction". In fact, in view of some people, the Buddhist scriptures do have many "inexplicable" and "self-contradictory" records. For example in Buddhist scriptures, sometimes it is praised to give alms and sometimes it is depreciated to give alms; some section indicates that "ahimsa" is the root of religious discipline, while some section states that it is right to "kill parents". How do you understand that? Some people say that the Buddhist scriptures themselves are very contradictory. That is because they don't understand what are clear Buddhism contents and unclear Buddhism contents and don't know what the convenient and expedient methods are.³

Therefore, it can be known that the so-called "perfect penetration without obstruction" is a basic orientation and "great convenience" between the internal sects of Buddhism and between the sect of Buddhism and other sects, while this orientation and "great convenience" is "an important characteristic of all the teachings of the Buddha" and "trying to adapt to each person's needs and tendencies. Since each of us has different interests, topics, and lifestyles, there is not a method of teaching that can be applied to everyone. The Buddha himself explained that he may teach a certain doctrine in order to make a disciple coming from a particular background understand his teachings. Therefore with respect

¹ Please refer to the core teachings of each sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Ga Zangjia. Teaching theory related chapters in the "Study of Tibetan Buddhism in Qing Dynasty", China Social Sciences Press, September 2014, Ed.1, p156-162.

² Ga Zangjia. Teaching theory related chapters in the "Study of Tibetan Buddhism in Qing Dynasty", China Social Sciences Press, September 2014, Ed.1, p156.

³ Duoshi. "Framework and guidance of Buddhism theories", Gansu Ethnic Publishing House, Ed.1, June 2007, p116-117.

to the same question, the answer can be 'Yes' or 'No' (whichever appropriate)."⁴

Therefore, after understanding this "great convenience", it will be available to understand ecological ethics and ecological affinity in the epic "Gesar" in a manner of "perfect penetration without obstruction".

III. THE ECOLOGICAL AFFINITY OF "PERFECT PENETRATION WITHOUT OBSTRUCTION"

It is found that from the view of modern ecological philosophy, there is no doubt that the misplaced, confused, self-righteous ecological concepts are returned to the originally unaffected position. This kind of ecological selfish departmentalism thought is perfect penetration without obstruction, while indeed modern people basically has always faced difficulties and restrictions everywhere and cannot deal with it perfectly without obstruction or even to their satisfaction since human beings entered the social form of industrial civilization in a large scale.

As can be seen from the epic "Gesar", except the inevitable bloody war in military tribe era, most scenes in the epic are indeed fascinating, attractive and imaginative such as the white cloud, green grass, blue sky and clear water.⁵ Rappers of the epic sing songs about it happily, which indeed reflects the ecology-friendly relationship of perfect penetration without obstruction and this ecological affinity is based on the equal concepts between people and people and between people and materials. The British philosopher Hume believed that beauty only exists in the hearts of the viewers. This view is biased. The hearts and minds of viewers vary widely. Even their standards for beauty and non-beauty are not unified, how can it be possible to fundamentally maintain a harmonious relationship with the nature? Chinese traditional aesthetics has long recognized that natural beauty is in the natural thing itself, especially thought that the natural landscape itself is beautiful and its beauty is in the natural landscape itself. This understanding not only reveals the independent character of natural thing but also primarily reveals that the mystery of natural beauty lies in the natural thing itself.⁶

The epic "Gesar" extremely worships this "mystery" and regards natural thing itself as superior to everything else. The worship is not pure or in a low-down manner but a reverence from heart and will consciously eliminate the difference between them and further realize the most perfect harmony with the nature. For thousands of years, the ecological affinity like perfect penetration without obstruction in the concept of Tibetan Buddhism plays an ignorable role in the reason why the extremely fragile ecology on Tibetan plateau

can still maintain the last pure land in the world and the unique ecological plateau environment.

The following extract is a segment extracted from the epic, for readers to experience the specific taste and realm:

If you don't know where this is,

I can tell you that this is the center of Mayu Mountain,
the land of happiness and benefit in Lawa town, Gongga county,

the place where yak is misunderstood as wild ox,

the place where yak calf plays with wild ox calf,

the place where lambs are mixed with gazelle,

the place where young goats are mixed with blue sheep,

the place where wild horse group is mixed with horse group,

the place where horse colts tour and play,

the place where there are countless tents,

the place where child ignors,

the place where the old produces childlike innocence,

the place where young men and women tour and play,

the place where wild dog lack food,

and the place where yak calf call for sucking.⁷

Obviously, this scene is very natural.⁸ According to the Buddhist teachings, the ecological affinity of perfect penetration without obstruction is mainly reflected in two aspects such as the ecological responsibility of "the environment and subject of life are fused together" and the natural realm of "perfect penetration in phenomenon".⁹ This means that ecological responsibility and natural environment must be highly consistent; otherwise it will not be able to achieve a perfect penetration or even go to the extreme or opposite side. Of course, it is not easy to achieve perfect penetration. Perfect penetration is actually a very high realm. Why can the epic "Gesar" show us a welcoming picture with a harmonious atmosphere and beautiful environment? First, from view of the "natural environment" or perhaps so far, the Tibetan plateau is still the most mysterious unknown domain in the earth. There is a common saying that "a bystander is always clear-minded and those closely involved cannot see clearly". In fact, for Tibetan Plateau where the epic is

⁷ Jiao Badong. "Gesar — Big Food Treasures", Higher Education Press, ed.1, June 2011, p 50.

⁸ Ditto. On page 49, there is a slogan that talks about "naturally": "I should know my own happiness; otherwise I would be a confused person. The glassy colored cuckoo eats delicious six-grain food and sings sweet songs to people. The buck with developed antlers on the head eats sweet fruit on the grassland and the beautiful antlers are placed in the forest. Golden flower-tail fish lively swims in the sea beside the snow-capped mountain, which is natural. "In essence, it shows a kind of ecological affinity that is perfectly fused without obstruction.

⁹ Chen Yan. "The Ecological Wisdom and Art Appeals of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism", People's Literature Publishing House, ed.1, March 2012, p192-204.

⁴ Duoshi. "Framework and guidance of Buddhism theories", Gansu Ethnic Publishing House, Ed.1, June 2007, p116-117.

⁵ The beauty of nature is the most universal beauty. Qian Junsheng, Yu Mouchang. Philosophy of Ecology, Publishing House of Party School of the Central Committee of CPC, ed. 1st, July 2004, p 447.

⁶ Qian Junsheng, Yu Mouchang. Philosophy of Ecology, Publishing House of Party School of the Central Committee of CPC, ed. 1st, July 2004, p 447.

produced, the bystander may not be clear and those closely involved may get stuck in it more seriously. Why say so? Because there are the holy mountain rising up to the cloud and capped with snow all the year round, the holy lake that is too clear to reflect one's heat and lungs and one's former and future lives, as well as the rare animals and strange flowers growing on sharp cliffs, the varied clouds at your fingertips and the blue crystal-like air. So, who can clearly tell this "natural environment". It is inevitably to get stuck in it. It can naturally produce a fairy land and holy phenomenon. We have to say that this is a wise choice for us to be filled with admiration with the natural environment and a conversion in religious feelings.

IV. ECOLOGICAL RESPONSIBILITY OF "PERFECT PENETRATION WITHOUT OBSTRUCTION"

From the view of ecological responsibility, it is difficult to clearly tell why a sense of responsibility arises, but it is believed that "connection" is the bond of responsibility. Sadly, modern people ignore often this connection and even deny that they are escaping from it. They think that it is superfluous in superstition and don't know that this is the equal quantity exchange in the interlinked infinite energy circle. At this point, the arguments of "God is dead" and "re-creating God" come to my mind. This argument holding careful altitude in aspect of ecological environment is not superfluous, because the question of true or false is not applicable to all things. The emergence of sense of ecological responsibility in the epic "Gesar" is to maintain the most essential connection between the two sides in this pure and simple faith that seems to be untrue but full of religious atmosphere. This ecological responsibility has been immersed in every corner of the epic, including good and evil, noble and ordinary, fairy and devil, etc., such as the demons of devil in the epic whose parasites are also mountains, rivers, land, birds and beasts and so on. Since the most essential souls of life are fostered in the nature of the original ecology, it can be seen that the "deep friendship" given in it is also reflected from the opposite, not to mention the simple and good people. The ecological responsibility of "perfect penetration without obstruction" is vividly reflected in many poems in the epic "Gesar", and there are many poems as follows.

If you don't know where this is,

I can tell you that it is on the boundary of Chawarong

where there are the three valleys of white snow-capped mountains.

Lions lie on the mountain.

Small lions shake their green bristle.

The middle of the three mountains is fully covered with aliums.

Fierce tiger hides in the forest

It is a breeding place of multi-colored fierce tigers.

It is the collection place of rivers at bottom of the three valleys.

Fishes and otters often swim in the water.

It is a breeding place of golden-eye otters.¹⁰

The "breeding place" and "collection place" appeared in the poem are vivid presentation of Tibetan ancestors' care for the land and homeland and consciously fulfilling the ecological responsibility for it.

V. CONCLUSION

From this discussion, it is enlightened as follows: Buddhism uses the concept of "perfect penetration without obstruction" to construct a harmonious and friendly relationship between all beings and all things in the nature,¹¹ spreads Buddhism in Tibetan plateau, that is Tibetan Buddhism and puts forward many environmental protection concepts, disciplines, means and methods suitable for the local place in combination with the special ecological environment of the plateau.¹² These measures are deepened into the hearts of epic creators and also further affect the cultivation of Tibetans. Everything seems to be a very contradictory and unreasonable concept and practice in the view of the outside world. However in the ancient epic, Buddhism on the plateau that challenges the surviving limits of human beings and full of extensive land and rivers, faithfully and silently put into practice their ideas, namely ecology is sacred and unique; ecology is perfectly harmonious and friendly.

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¹⁰ Li Chaoqun, Dunzhu (translator). "Chawa Arrow Sect", Tibet People's Publishing House, ed.1, August 1987, p 45. (in Chinese)

¹¹ Chen Yan. "The Ecological Wisdom and Art Appeals of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism", People's Literature Publishing House, ed.1, March 2012, p192. (in Chinese)

¹² Therefore, we see the religious festivals such as the Yogurt Festival. Apart from the religious attributes, the reason why it cannot be denied is that the festival is set up for the purpose of protecting the ecological environment.