

## Criticism on Sāṃkhya in the *Ārya-lankāvatāra-vṛtti*

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The *Ārya-lankāvatāra-vṛtti* (LAV: Toh. No. 4018) written by Jñānaśrībhadrā, who flourished about the middle of the 11th century, is the commentary on the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra* (LS) without its *Dhāraṇī-parivarta*- and *Sagāthaka*-chapters. It is existing in the Tibetan version only, and has 262 folios in the Derge edition.

As well known, in LAV are cited and criticized many and various theories of Tīrthikas, Tīrthakaras or Tīrthyas, i. e. Brāhṃaṇic Philosophy and Pārśaṇḍa or Hinduistic thoughts and quoted many Buddhist canons.<sup>1)</sup>

Among others the most frequently cited school (Tīrthika) is Sāṃkhya, which is mentioned 65 times. By the way, the next is Vaiśeṣika which is mentioned 57 times. Here I will try to analyze the remarkable Sāṃkhya theories cited and criticized in LAV.

In LAV we can find several peculiar fragments of Sāṃkhya theories.

(1) LAV depicts the outline of the Sāṃkhya theory :

It is said that the deed of the Sāṃkhyas is to attain liberation by knowing the twenty five *Tattvas* (principles) entirely, that is by knowing *Puruṣa* (and) the twenty four kinds of the remains from *Guṇa* (Attribute) entirely. The state of equilibrium of (three) *Guṇas*, i. e. *Sattva* (yod pa), *Rajas* (rdul ba) and *Tamas* (mun pa), is called the *Pradhāna* (Primordial). From this (issues) *Mahat* (chen po : the Great Principles). It is the synonym of *Buddhi*. From *Mahat* (issues) *Ahāṅkāra* (ngar byed pa: I-principle). From *Ahāṅkāra* (issue) *Pañca Tanmātra* (five rudimentary essences), i. e. the objects, sound etc. From *Pañca Tanmātra* (issue) *Pañca Bhūtāni* (five gross elements), five organs of sensation, i. e. the Ear, the Skin, the Eye, the Tongue, the Nose, and five organs of action, i. e. speech (*vāk* : tshigs), hand, feet, anus (*pāyu* : gsang khung), the generative organ (*upastha* : mtshan ma'i mtshan nyid). *Manas* (the Mind) puts together properly (*samkalpayati* : kun du rtog pa'o). Intelligence (*cetanā* : sems can) is the nature of *Puruṣa*.

Sāṃkhyas consider about liberation :

There can be no doubt in this

that whoever recognizes the twenty-five *Tattvas* (principles),  
in whatever stage of an Brāhman's life rejoices,  
and whether he wears braided hair, long hair, or a tuft of hair,  
he attains liberation. (15a<sub>4-7</sub>)<sup>2)</sup>

(*pañcaviṃśati-tattvajñō yatra kutra āśrame rataḥ/  
jaḥi munḍi śikhī vā'pi mucyate nātra saṃśayaḥ!*)

This stanza is quoted in the *Gauḍapāda-bhāṣya* ad the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* (SK) 1,2 (the first quarter), 22 ; *Māḥara-vṛtti* ad SK 22 ; The Gold-Seventy tr. by Paramārtha ad SK 2 (as the *Gāthā* preached in “Mokṣa”) and 37.<sup>3)</sup> And LAV criticizes on it with cynicism :

And yet (de ste) (it is said that) save the extinction of the evil desires, by understanding the distinction between *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* (one could) attain liberation. If it is just so, then why can not (he) attain liberation, by understanding the distinction of bird, wall, woolen cloth, flask etc.?  
(15a<sub>4</sub> ~ b<sub>2</sub>)

Here to recognize the twenty-five *Tattvas* and to understand the distinction between *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* are separated by the particle “de ste” (*atha* : and yet). These two kinds of cognition are treated as belonging to different systems each other as mentioned later.

(2) The same kind description as the first half of above assertion and a cynical criticism are also seen on another passage.

It is considered (by Sāṃkhya) that *Guṇa* consisting of pleasure, pain and darkness in the state of equilibrium of *Pradhāna*, such thing is the cause of *Mahat*. *Mahat* is the synonym of *Buddhi*. From *Mahat* (issues) *Ahaṅkāra* (nga rgyal). From *Ahaṅkāra* (issue) *Pañca Tanmātra*, i. e. the objects, sound etc. From *Pañca Tanmātra* (issue) *Pañca Bhūtāni*, five organs of sensation, and five organs of action, and *Manas*. Save to know the affection for Self, if by knowing so (one) could attain liberation, then why can not (he) attain liberation by knowing the difference between a tent-cloth and a wall etc. ? (33b<sub>6</sub> ~ 34a<sub>1</sub>)

It is worth notice that in these quotations five organs of sensation, and five organs of action, and *Manas*, i. e. the eleven organs are the issues (*vikṛti*) from *Pañca Tanmātra*.<sup>4)</sup> not from *Ahaṅkāra* as in SK.

(3) But LAV does not always refers other texts than SK :

Sāṃkhya observes : *Guṇa* of pleasure, pain and darkness, which are insentient external things set about the maṇḍala of sphere (gnas kyil dkyil 'khor). The nature of *Puruṣa* is perceptibility

(tshor ba can).

As the insentient milk flows out for the benefit of the sentient calf, so does insentient *Pradhāna* act for the benefit of *Puruṣa*. (166a7 ~ b1)

This sentence is not the verse form in the text, but seems to be inserted “sentient” and “insentient” to the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* 57.

*vatsala-vivṛddhi-nimittam kṣīrasya yathā pravṛttir ajñasya/  
puruṣa-vimokṣa-nimittam tathā pravṛttiḥ pradhānasya //57//*

Sāṃkhya’s opinion is continued to the above :

It is reasonable that since this *Vyakta* (Manifest) has (*Guṇas* of) pleasure, pain, and darkness, the cause of it as the *Avyakta* (Unmanifest) which has pleasure, pain, and darkness does also exist. For example the earth is as same as effect, vase and pan etc... The *Guṇas* of the beginning cause are transformed into the *Guṇas* of effect. Therefore the external object of enjoyment is insentient, but *Puruṣa* as the enjoyer is sentient. It is the tale (lo rgyus) of Sāṃkhya (166b1 ~ 3)

These Sāṃkhya theories are cited as the antithesis against the proposition of LS “The external world does not exist” (*drśyan na vidyate bāhyam*. Nj.1545, cf. Suzuki p.13317).<sup>5)</sup>

But any further logical argument is not given in particular.

(4) LS says that :

Some regard impermanency to consist in the changing of form. <*anye rūpasya vikāntaram anityatā*> (Nj. 2054, Suzuki p. 17624)

LAV accounts that this is the opinion of Sāṃkhya, and quotes “the Patañjali’s commentary” (Pa tan dza la’i ’grel pa) :

The activity of (three) *Guṇas* is not firm. These *Guṇas* never stay even in a moment in itself. (228b5)

LAV continues to explain this :

Sarvajña preaches likewise that whatever perishes invisibly in all things is impermanent. (228b5 ~ 6)

Thus LAV approves of this “Patañjali’s” opinion as coinciding in the Buddhist view of impermanency. This statement is, however, not found in the Patañjali’s *Yogasūtra*. Therefore this “Patañjali” may not be the author of the *Yogasūtra*, but the teacher of Sāṃkhya. The *Yuktidīpikā* quoted Patañjali’s statements seven times, and Dasgupta discussed the difference of two Patañjalis.<sup>6)</sup> So it is possible that the above statement is a fragment of the Sāṃkhya teacher Patañjali’s text.

(5) When LS explains the rise, abiding and ceasing of the *vijñānas* (Nj. 376), LAV refers to the Tirthikas, and presents the Six-Moment theory of Sāṃkhya.

Sāṃkhya, Naiyāyika and Vaiśeṣika argue that things abide for six moments (*kṣaṇas*). They do not

thoroughly understand the characteristic of the moment (*kṣaṇa*) and the continuation (*prabandha*). For example, Sāṃkhya argues that the transformation (*pariṇāma* : 'gyur ba) has six parts ; that is rise (*utpatti*:skye ba), existence (*sat*:yod pa), evolution (*pariṇāma*: 'gyur ba), growth (*vivṛddhi*: mnam par 'phel bar 'gyur ba), decrease (*apacaya* : 'grib pa) and disappearance (*vināśa* : 'dzig pa). *Buddhi*, *Śabda* and that which does not appear swiftly have also (them). (65b<sub>5</sub> ~ 6)

But LAV asks in return :

If always they are not both in the gradual and the simultaneous (transformation), how is it able to transform in (the thing which has) the nature of swift disappearance? (65b<sub>6</sub> ~ 7)

This represents a radical criticism to the *Pariṇāma-vāda* of Sāṃkhya.

(6) The similar kind of discussion appears also in the commentary on LS: “*Vijñāna* is subject to birth and distruction, and *Jñāna* is not subject to birth and destruction” (Nj. 157<sub>1</sub>, Suzuki 136<sub>1</sub>). Concerning in this “birth and destruction”, LAV refers and denies the idea of Six-Moment theory of Tīrthikas.

(Which) Sāṃkhya, Naiyāyika and Vaiśeṣika imagine to stay for six moments (*kṣaṇas*) occurs gradually, but not simultaneously. For example, Sāṃkhya (imagines) six kinds of transformations of a thing, i. e. rise, existence, evolution, growth, decrease and disappearance, (but things) do not occur simultaneously ; because it is unconsiderable. (177a<sub>7</sub> ~ b<sub>1</sub>)

Now, we should try to examine the discussions on the Liberation theory of Sāṃkhya.

(7) LAV criticizes :

The Sāṃkhyas consider that a being rises and a being ceases. Then the ignorant which is a being has not end, and the wisdom which is not existing previously has no rising. How can (it) attain liberation? (125a<sub>3</sub>)

(8) Concerning about the description in LS: “The ignorant who are attached to the notion of rising and disappearing, fail to understand the extinction of pain” (Nj 220<sub>4</sub> ~ 5, Suzuki p. 190<sub>8</sub> ~ 10), LAV explains that it means :

Tīrthyas such as Sāṃkhyas etc. who speak of external object (*bāhyārtha-vādin*) presume that a very swift body enters into *Samsāra*, and one who knows the difference between *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* disappears (=attains liberation). (238a<sub>1</sub> ~ 2)

And then LAV criticizes the Sāṃkhya :

When external things do not exist and the Self does exist, how can be born (the things)? By knowing the difference between *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, how can extinct (the thing)? As in the case of knowing the distinction between the tent-cloth and the walls etc., it is not possible by such a (knowledge) in Tīrthyas to be understood the extinction of pain (*duḥkha-kṣaya*). (238a<sub>2</sub> ~ 3)

This criticism is based on the *Tathāgata-garbha* theory. Because on the context of the same passage, it is said that the *Tathāgata-garbha* is to comprehend the pureness in the nature (de bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po ni rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba'i chud pa ste/ 238a5). It means that this comprehension of Buddhism is not possible by Tīrthikas.

(9) LS presents a liberation theory Tīrthakaras :

Again, Mahāmāti, some Tīrthakaras having perverse mind (*durvidagdha-buddhayaḥ* : mi mkhas pa'i blo can) consider that by inspecting the difference between *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, and since the transformation of *Guṇas* is creator, (by abandoning *Guṇas*, one can attain) *Nirvāṇa*. (Nj. 18315-17; cf. Suzuki p. 158<sub>31-35</sub>)

LAV comments on this passage, firstly about the last phrase : Naiyāyika and Vaiśeṣika say that by abandoning *Guṇas* of object one can attain liberation. And secondly : Sāṃkhyas are said by *Sarvajña* as “having perverse mind”. They consider that *Puruṣa* discriminates the *Guṇas* of what is grasped as sound etc. ; *Pradhāna* (Primordial) is the object of *Puruṣa*. (Even if one) knows the difference between the sentient (*Puruṣa*) and the object such as shape (*rūpa*), (it) is like (to know) the difference between cloth and wall. (Then,) *Sarvajña* thinks, as long as the affection for self does not go back, if (they) say that rudimentary essences (*Tanmātra* : de tsam) will attain liberation, or while unconscious *Guṇa* is creator, the conscious (*Puruṣa*) is not creator, (they) have perverse mind. (212a<sub>4</sub> ~ 7)

Futher LAV describes the Sāṃkhya thought :

*Prakṛti*, the substance having characteristic of pleasure, pain and darkness and the enjoyment by *Puruṣa* are the essence of the objects of perception. The profit which *Buddhi* perceives does *Puruṣa* enjoy. Sāṃkhyas consider so and so. (212a<sub>7</sub>)

Here LAV criticizes this thought with a quotation from the “Vārttika”.

Then again *Vārttika* argues exactly, if it is reasonable that judgement about the objects (occurs) in the conscious beyond doubt, how is it possible for *Buddhi* to differ from *Puruṣa*? (212a<sub>7</sub> ~ 212b<sub>1</sub>)

This sentence is not directly found in the *Pramāṇa-vārttika* of Dharmakīrti, but it is possible to represent some *Vijñāna-vādin*'s position.

(10) LS describes a certain way of *Nirvāṇa* :

Some, Mahāmāti, conceive *Nirvāṇa* in the recognition of the twenty-five *Tattvas* (truths). (Nj. 184<sub>9</sub>, Suzuki, p. 159<sub>8</sub>)

LAV explains that directly without any critical comment :

This refers the Sāṃkhyas. (There are two types of Sāṃkhyas.) Some one aspires after *Īśvara* (*Seśvara* or *Īśvara-vādin* : dbang po 'dod pa : the theistic), and some one does not aspire after *Īśvara*

(*Nirīśvara* or *Anīśvara-vādin* : dbang po mi 'dod : atheistic). (The one) considers that *Īśvara* who has action and has not action above the twenty-five *Tattvas*, is the cause of *Nirvāṇa*. (They say) in general : (here is quoted the above standard aphorism of Pañcaśikha “*pañcaviṃśati-tattva-jño ... nātra saṃśayaḥ* //). The atheistic (Sāṃkhyas) say that by recognizing the difference between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, one attains liberation. (214a<sub>2</sub> ~ 4)

In the following passage are mentioned the issue (*vikṛti*-) theory as like as in the above (1), (2) as the Sāṃkhya tale. Here also eleven organs issue from *Tanmātra*, not from *Ahaṅkāra*. Especially worth notice description, however, is that two systems of liberation theories as seen at (1), are marked here, i. e. the so called standard aphorism of Pañcaśikha is theistic idea, and the theory which asserts liberation can be attained by discrimination between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* is atheistic idea. If this is true, it naturally follows that the classical Sāṃkhya theory in SK represents not only atheistic but also specific one different from the liberation theory of the so called Pañcaśikha's standard.

From these descriptions, at least we may say, Jñānaśrībhadrā used some texts other than SK, together with SK. When he criticized on Sāṃkhya, he did not point out the fallacy of formal logic, but he resorted to common sense with metaphorical and/or cynical expressions. And it might be left unsaid that his principal idea was the *Tathāgatagarbha* (e.g. 239b<sub>1</sub> ~ 3), which was detached from the solid permanency as *Puruṣa* or *Prakṛti*.

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- 1) Susumu Yamaguchi, CHIKICHUJOKEN NO NYURYOGAKYOCHU NI TSUTTE (On the *Laṅkāvatāra-vṛtti* of Jñānaśrībhadrā), *Nihon Bukkyogaku Kyokai Nenpo* 8, pp. 121~155 ; Hakuyu Hadano (ed.), *The Ārya-laṅkāvatāra-vṛtti*, Hozokan 1993, p. v, pp. 529~531 ; Toshiya Unebe, “NYURYOGAKYO” NI INYO SARERU BARUTORIHARI NO GE NI TSUTTE, *Bukkyo Bunka* No. 8 (Jan. 1998), pp. 23 ~ 42.
  - 2) The number of LAV denotes the folio and line of the Derge edition, in Hakuyu Hadano (ed.) *op. cit.*
  - 3) This stanza is, however, also quoted and called “The standard aphorism of Pañcaśikha (*Pañcaśikhenā pramāṇa-vākyaṃ*)” in Bhāvāganeśa's commentary the *Tattva-yāthārthyadīpana* (TYD) ad the *Tattvasamāsa-sūtra* 3. The *Jayamaṅgalā* also quotes it at the beginning. *Gauḍapāda* ad SK1 has “*tatra*” for “*kutra*” ; *Gauḍapāda* ad SK1, *Jayamaṅgalā* and perhaps also the Gold-Seveny have “*vaseḥ*” for “*rataḥ*” ; but TYD has “*sthitāḥ*” for “*rataḥ*”.
  - 4) The *Tarkajvālā* of Bhāviveka chap. VI *Sāṃkhyatattvāvatāra* (Derge 227b<sub>6</sub> ~ 7) also describes

the same view, although *Manas* is not mentioned. In SK, they are the issues from *Ahaṅkāra*. Therefore LAV seems to cite some issue (*vikṛti*-) theory other than the SK's. The similar view is observed in the Gold-Seventy tr. by Paramārtha after SK 26. It describes as a heterical doctrine that five organs of sensation issue from five *Tanmātras*, "the Ear issues from sound *Tanmātra*" and so on. (Taisho, vol. 54, p. 1251c; Esho Yamaguchi, *The Development of the Sāṃkhya System of Philosophy*, Kyoto 1974, p. 125,127). We can trace another similar kind of view that eleven organs issue from five gross elements (*bhūtas*), in the *Caraka-saṃhitā* IV *Śarīra-sthānam*, chap. 1, śloka 63 ~ 64 and the *Joyuishikiron-jukki* (*Tch'eng wei louen chou ki* : Taisho, vol. 43 p. 252c).

5) Nj : *The Lankāvatāra Sūtra* ed. by Bunyiu Nanijio, Otani University 1956.

Suzuki : *The Lankavatara Sutra—A Mahayana Text*, by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, London 1932 (Taipei 1994 rep.)

6) Surendranath Dasgupta, *A history of Indian Philosophy*, Cambridge 1963, Vol. I, p. 233.

⟨Key Words⟩ Sāṃkhya, *vikṛti*, liberation, *Tathāgatagarbha*

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