The Epistemology of the Author of the Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa

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1. Introduction

Pramāṇa—valid means of knowledge in the following context—is one of the most widely discussed topics in philosophical Sanskrit writings. In the Pātañjalayogaśāstra (PYŚ)—the combination of the so-called Yogasūtra and the so-called Yogabhāṣya)—sūtra 1.6 lists the five cittavṛttis (activities of mind): pramāṇa, viparyaya, vikalpa, nidrā, and smṛti. What are accepted as pramāṇa are listed in the next sūtra (1.7). They are: pratyakṣa, anumāṇa, and āgama. The Bhāṣya on sūtra 1.7 has short discussions on the three.

There is a commentary on the PYŚ ascribed to Śaṅkara. We call it the Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa (Vivaraṇa). Whether this Śaṅkara is the same Śaṅkara as the author of the Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya (BSBh) is still an open question. In order to avoid confusions which work is under discussion, I refer to the author of the Vivaraṇa the V-kāra and that of the BSBh the BSBh-kāra in this article.

The V-kāra often devotes substantial amount of text to topics that he deems worthy. Pramāṇa is one of them. Although his goal is essentially to explain and defend the Sūtra and the Bhāṣya, there are many things one can learn about the author in that part of the Vivaraṇa. Below, I will examine the part on pratyakṣa, the first of the three pramāṇas accepted in the Pātañjala system. First I will present how the discussion on pratyakṣa in the Vivaraṇa is structured. Then I will mention two unique positions the V-kāra held. Of the two, the second one might provide a clue to the authorship problem.

2. The Vivaraṇa on Pratyakṣa

The part I examine here begins with the introduction of sūtras 1.6 and 7 and ends after the discussion on pratyakṣa in the Vivaraṇa. This section forms a unit. The text of the
Bhāṣya on pratyakṣa appears simple enough. But the text of the Vivaraṇa has a more complex structure, with its own sub-topics and the flow of discussions. The words of the root text are incorporated in that structure. Below is the outline of the structure of discussions, based on the edition I am currently preparing:

1. Sūtras 1.6 and 7 plus the Bhāṣya on pratyakṣa
2. Pratyakṣa and viśeṣa
   2.1. Why the Bhāṣya says pratyakṣa is mainly concerned with difference
   2.2. Criticism of the [Buddhist] view that sāmānya is unreal
3. Yogipratyakṣa and mānasapratyakṣa
   3.1. Question: Are they separate pramāṇa(s) or kinds of pratyakṣa?
   3.2. Answer: Pratyakṣa
4. Pramāṇaphala (The result of pramāṇa)
   4.1. Two views to be examined: Pramāṇa and its phala are identical; there is an independent phala
   4.2. There is no independent pramāṇaphala
   4.3. Siddhāntas
      4.3.1. No independent phala, nor are pramāṇa and phala identical
      4.3.2. The phala is not the resulting dravya (a thing), either
      4.3.3. The phala is a special state of dravya
      4.3.4. Either kriyā or dravya is figuratively the phala of the other
         4.3.4.1. Opponent: Is the phala only figurative?
         4.3.4.2. Answer: Yes
         4.3.4.3. Opponent: Then, the result being more or less erroneous, no reason to pursue pramāṇa
         4.3.4.4. Answer: Correct
      4.3.4.5. Samyagdarśana [rather than pramāṇa/pratyakṣa] brings about nivṛtti [i.e., mokṣa]
      4.3.4.6. Mokṣa is brought about only by samyagdarśana (not by pramāṇa that leads to action)
4.4. The reason why puruṣa’s nature—being aware of buddhi—is not
established here / Explanation of the intent of the Bhāṣya’s last statement with regard to pratyakṣa

4.4.1. Criticism of the Naiyāyika position of pratyakṣa, including their position on pramāṇaphala

4.4.1.1. Examinations of the view that a cognition is a result of contact
4.4.1.2. Examinations of the view that ideas of taking or removing are the result of pramāṇa

4.4.2. The problem of saṃvedyatva of cittavṛtti

4.4.2.1. Is pramāṇa a karaṇa, one of kārakas?
4.4.2.2. Siddhānta: Cittavṛtti is saṃvedya as the revealer (abhivyāṇjaka)
  Why is the eyesight not grasped while it is an abhivyāṇjaka?
  According to the theory that sense faculties are material According to the theory that sense faculties are not material

4.5. Conclusion: Pramāṇaphala is what the Bhāṣya says it is

4.5.1. Question: How is cittavṛtti object of awareness (saṃvedya)? Answer: Not as pratyakṣa
4.5.2. Final word on pramāṇaphala

Although there are a number of interesting points worth discussing, I will discuss only two points that testify to the author’s philosophy in the following.

3. Definition of Pratyakṣa

The V-kāra pulls an interesting philosophical maneuver when he discusses two concepts that may be conventionally called yogipratyakṣa and mānasapratyakṣa (3 in the outline above). The discussion is introduced in the form of a question and an answer that runs as thus in my reconstruction of the text:

[q] nanu ca yogināṁ nirvikalpasamādhijam darśanam? tasyānevaṃlakṣanatvāt tathā sukharāgādīvijñānasya cānindriyaparāṇaṅkāpūrvaṃ tathā cāha—phalaṃ tadaviśiṣṭaḥ pauruṣeyaḥ cittavṛttiḥbodha iti|| . . . .

[a] ucyate—na| pratyakṣasya puruṣapratyayāpekṣatvena parihṛtavāt| na hy apratyayā vṛttīḥ pratyaksam| Caitanyakayahetor eva sapratyayāyāḥ pratyaksatvam| tathā cāha—phalaṃ tadaviśiṣṭaḥ pauruṣeyaḥ cittavṛttibodha iti|| . . . . 10)

In this part, the V-kāra is concerned that the two well-known concepts—expressed with
yogināṁ nirvikalpasamādhijam darśanam and sukharāgādiviśeṣānam in the above passage—are not mentioned in the Sūtra or in the Bhāṣya. Furthermore, the seeming definition of pratyakṣa in the Bhāṣya (indriyapranāḍikayā cittasya bāhyavastūparāgāt tadvivasayā sāmānyaviśeṣātmāno ‘rthasya viśeṣāvadhāraṇapradhānā vrtytih pratyakṣam pramāṇam) could potentially preclude those two phenomena to be pratyakṣa. And since they are also not in the list of cittavṛttis of sūtra 1.6, they will not be accounted for in the system of the PYŚ. As mentioned in the question part [a] above, the expression in the Bhāṣya indriyapranāḍikāyā (“by means of sense faculties”) was the problem.

The solution to this problem was not to take the Bhāṣya sentence that includes the word indriyapranāḍikāyā as defining what pratyakṣa is but to take the next sentence as such. Here is the translation of the [a] part of the above text:

[a] We answer: No. For, the necessity to accept those two kinds of cognition to be other kinds of pramāṇa or the necessity to state that they nonetheless belong to pratyakṣa are precluded since pratyakṣa [only] anticipates notions belonging to puruṣa. Only as much as [an activity of mind] is the cause of the arising of sentience, i.e., if [puruṣa] is aware of it, it is pratyakṣa. Namely, as the [Bhāṣya says]: The effect is the awareness of the activity of mind, undifferentiated from it (pramāṇa), belonging to puruṣa. . . .

Several expressions in the answer part indicate that the V-kāra treats the Bhāṣya sentence typeset in bold above (phalaṁ tadaviśiṣṭah puruṣeyasya cittavruttibodah) as the definition of pratyakṣa. For example, the expressions, “puruṣapratyayāpekṣatvena,” “na hy apratayā vyrtih pratyakṣam” and “sapratayāyāḥ pratyakṣatvan” are all variations of the Bhāṣya’s puruṣeyasya cittavruttibodah. The V-kāra is saying that any activity of mind that puruṣa becomes aware of is pratyakṣa. This understanding of what constitutes pratyakṣa appears unique.

4. Pramāṇaphala and Distrust of Pramāṇa

As the outline above shows, much of the text on pratyakṣa is in fact a discussion on pramāṇaphala (the result of valid means of knowledge). The most notable thing in this discussion is the V-kāra’s distrust of pramāṇa. This distrust can be seen in section 4.3.4 of the outline (p. (64)). There is an exchange with a hypothetical opponent who objects to the siddhānta that the pramāṇaphala is only figurative, i.e., unreal. The V-kāra concedes that the primary result of pramāṇa belongs to puruṣa in its mistaken state.
of discussion is the V-kāra’s distrust of As the outline above shows, much of the text on such. Here is the translation of the [a] part of the above text:

\[ \text{indriyapranāḍikayā} \]

of the PYŚ. As mentioned in the question part [q] above, the expression in the Bhāṣya could potentially preclude those two phenomena to be \[ (66) \]

Objects to the 4.3.4 of the outline (p. (64)). There is an exchange with a hypothetical opponent who appears unique.

I am aware of only one author who exhibits such a denigrating attitude toward pramāṇa. It is the BSBh-kāra. In the introductory part of the BSBh, he tells us how the objects of pramāṇas and śāstras (he distinguishes śāstras from pramāṇas) contain (are produced by?) avidyā. 18 In the second half of the critical comments about pramāṇa, the BSBh-kāra sarcastically likens educated (vyutpattimat) people to animals. What Śaṅkara did not like about pramāṇa is that it eventually results in pravṛtti (taking action) or nivṛtti (stopping action), which is not desirable from his well-known standpoint of no-action.

Let us go back to the V-kāra. Despite his effort to discuss pramāṇa, he is skeptical of the utility of pramāṇa when it comes to mokṣa. This is noteworthy, because he accepts saṃyagdarśana to be the cause of mokṣa. Apparently it is not something one gains by pramāṇa. At this point, the V-kāra’s refusal to acknowledge the utility of pramāṇa for mokṣa rather appears to come from personal taste, or perhaps even from a simple dislike. On the other hand, modern scholars have noted the BSBh-kāra’s lack of interest in pramāṇa. 19 Again, as is well-known, the BSBh-kāra’s position is that the knowledge brings about mokṣa and the knowledge comes from the Upaniṣads. Apparently, again, the Upaniṣads are not part of pramāṇa for him. Combined with the sarcastic tone about educated people, this negative attitude toward pramāṇa rather appears to reflect his personal dislike of philosophers who endlessly discussed pramāṇa. The Vivaraṇa and the BSBh talk about pramāṇa being ultimately wrong in quite different contexts. Wordings are also completely different (it is hard to postulate borrowings). What are shared are the conclusion and the beliefs that lead to the conclusion: that pramāṇa makes a person act; and that actions are the opposite of the final salvation.

Now the Vivaraṇa has the following sarcastic conclusion to the discussion on
The Epistemology of the Author of the Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa (Harimoto)

pramāṇaphala:

\[
\text{tasmāt pramāṇaphalphāhijñānābhēmānamātram eva kevalaṁ paṇḍitaṁ mātmanāṁ ity upekeṣaṁyaṁ iti}||
\]

In conclusion, just a pure arrogant misconception about the term pramāṇaphala simply belongs to those who mistakenly consider themselves to be learned; it should be ignored.

Here the V-kāra is sarcastic toward “those who mistakenly consider themselves to be learned.” I cannot help hearing a very similar sarcastic tone to that of the BSBh-kāra. Whether the same person or not, the BSBh-kāra indeed followed the V-kāra’s advice. There is no discussion on pramāṇaphala in the BSBh.

I would like to express my thanks to Greg Seton who helped write this article.

Notes

1) See Wezler 1983, 17–18, Bronkhorst 1985, 203, and Maas 2006, xii–xix.
2) pramāṇāvaparyavikalpanidrāsmṛtayah[[6]]
3) pratyakṣānumānāgamāh pramāṇāh[[7]]
4) For the title of the text, see Harimoto 2014, 9.
5) For example, the Vivaraṇa has an extensive commentary on Īśvara.
6) It corresponds to p. 18, l. 25–p. 25, l. 20 in the 1952 Madras edition.
7) The version that the V-kāra knew was as follows: indriyapraṇāḍikāya cittasya bāhyavastūparāgāt tadviṣayā sāmānyaviśeṣātmano ‘rthasya viśeṣādvāhāraṇapradhānā vṛttih pratyakṣam pramānam| phalaṃ tadaviṣistah praurṣeyaś cittavṛttiḥ&da| pratisamvedi buddheḥ puruṣaḥ ity upariṣṭāt pravedayisyāmah].
8) The part corresponds to p. 18, l. 25–p. 25, l. 19 of the 1952 edition. For general introduction to the text critical situation and the relationship between witnesses of the Vivaraṇa, see Harimoto 2014, 15–43. There are only two main witnesses to the text. Both are palm-leaf manuscripts written in the Malayalam script. One is preserved in Trivandrum and the other in Lahore. The remaining witnesses, including the 1952 edition, all derive from either of the two palm-leaf manuscripts.
9) One may note that the order of the topics follows that of the Pramāṇasamuccaya of Dignāga.
10) I have introduced a conjectural emendation in the beginning of the answer part: “ucyate—na| pratyaṅkṣasya” against the reading “ucyate na pramāṇasya . . .” attested in primary witnesses. The editors of the 1952 edition suggested another emendation: ucyate| pratyaṅkṣasya. Note they dropped the particle “na” in the beginning of the answer as well.
11) See note 6 above.
12) Immediately after the cited [q] and [a], the Vivaraṇa has the following: evam ca sati sukharāgādijñānasya kliṣṭākliṣṭarūpasya tadaviṣṭapuruṣaṇa pratyayayaphalphāvasānatvāt pratyayāṣatā siddhai-
va]] (That being the case, it is very much established that the cognition of pleasure, wish, etc., which can be either wholesome or not wholesome, is pratyakṣa since it ends up with the effect that is the notion belonging to puruṣa but not distinguished from it [the cognition].)

13) I have yet to fully comprehend the significance of this view, nor have I found anyone else who shares a similar view in relation to pratyakṣa. I intend to conduct further investigations in the future.

14) Some of the other points the V-kāra makes with regard to pramāṇaphala are as follows: there is no independent pramāṇaphala; nor pramāṇa itself is its phala; either action [resulting from pramāṇa] or a state of dravya [the pramāṇa causes man to seek] is mutually figuratively the phala; the Naiyāyikas’ definition of pratyakṣa is wrong; the view that the phala is one of the desire to take, that to remove/avoid, or being impartial is wrong; cittavṛtti is the revealer (abhivyayajaka) for puruṣa; puruṣa’s awareness of cittavṛtti is not pratyakṣa.

15) “nanu ca bhavato ‘py upacaritam eva phalam, ṛṣtyaviśiṣṭāyāḥ phalatvenābhyapagamāt| puruṣasya ca śuddhatvāt, tadākāratāyā anṛtatvam| . . . (Opponent: For you, too, the result [of pramāṇa] is nothing but figurative. For, [the state (avasthā) of puruṣa] not distinguished from activities [of mind] is accepted as the result [of pramāṇa] by you. Also, since puruṣa is pure, that [puruṣa] has the shape of them [i.e., activities of mind (cittavṛtti)] is erroneous.)” This part corresponds to p. 22, ll. 14–15 in the 1952 edition. I do not propose any major changes to the reading.

16) “ata eva ca samyagdarśanād ātyantikī nivṛtti upapadyate|| yeśām amithyā phalam teśām vairāgyakāraṇābhāvāt, samyagdarśanānvesaṇānapapatter mokṣābhaṇāh| na ca kriyāparinīśpādyo mokṣaḥ, anityatvaprasaṅgānī|.” This part is 4.3.4.5 and 4.3.4.6 in the outline, corresponding to p. 22, ll. 23–26 of the 1952 edition. Note that our author equates mokṣa with ultimate cessation (ātyantiki nivṛttih) and that he distinguishes samyagdarśana (the right view) from pramāṇa, primarily pratyakṣa in this context.

17) A few things should be noted about this position. One is that, as the V-kāra repeatedly exhibits, he believes that salvation is brought about by knowledge (jñāna). Apparently, however, pramāṇa does not bring it. As he clearly states in 4.3.4.5 and 4.3.4.6 of the outline (see the note above), samyagdarśana brings about nivṛtti (cessation) and that is salvation (mokṣa). See, in this connection, his explanation of sūtra 1.1, which is translated in Harimoto 2014, 187–193. See especially n. 344 on p. 188 and n. 356 on p. 191. There, he insists that the goal (prayojana) of the PYŚ is cessation (nivṛtti) and its means is vivekakhyaṭi (discriminative knowledge), which he sometimes paraphrases as samyagdarśana.

18) katham punar avidyāvadviśayāṇi pratyakṣaṇḍīni pramāṇāṇi sāstrāṇi catē| ucye—dehiṇdriyādīśv ahāṁmamābhimānahastasasya pramāṭṛtvānupattau pramāṇapravṛttyanupatteḥ| na hindriyāṇy anupādāya pratyakṣādiyavahāraḥ saṃbhavati| na cādiṣṭhānam antareṇdriyāṇāṃ vyavahāraḥ saṃbhavati| na cānadhyaṣṭātmabhāvāna dehe na kaścid vyāpriyaḥ| na ca pramāṭṛtvam antareṇa pramāṇapravṛṭtir asti| tasmād avidyāvadviśayāṇa eva pratyakṣaṇḍīni pramāṇāṇi sāstrāṇi ca|
paśvādibhiś cāviśeṣāt| yathā hi paśvādayaḥ śabdādibhiḥ śrotrādīnāṃ saṃbandhe sati,
śabdādivijñāne pratikūle jāte tato nivartante, anukūle ca pravartante; yathā daṇḍodyatakaraṃ
puruṣam abhimukham upalabhya māṃ hantum ayam icchatīti palāyitum ārabhante, harita‐
trṇapūrṇapāṇinim upalabhya tam praty abhimukhibhavanti; evaṃ puruṣā api vyutpannacittāh
krūradṛṣṭīn ākrośataḥ khaḍgodyatakaraṇ balavata upalabhya tato nivartante, tadviparītān prati
pravartante, atāḥ samāṇah paśvādibhiḥ puruṣānāṃ pramāṇaprameyavyavahārāḥ| paśvādīnāṃ ca
prasiddho 'vivekapuraḥsaraḥ pratyakṣādivyavahāraḥ, tatsāmānyadarśanād vyutpattimatām api
puruṣānāṃ pratyakṣādivyavahārās tatkālaḥ samāna iti niścīyate| (BSBh, pp. 40–43)

See, for example, Mayeda 1979, 47.

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Key words  Pātañjalayogaśāstravivarana, Pātañjalayogaśāstra, Yogasūtra, Yogabhāṣya, pramāṇa,
pratyakṣa, Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhāṣya, Śaṅkara

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