On the Structure of the Tarkakāṇḍa in the Brahmasiddhi

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0. Introduction

As Acharya [2006] (pp. xxxiii–xxxv) has shown, Maṇḍanamiśra’s Brahmasiddhi (BS) probably had three chapters in its original version, and the second chapter which is called Tarkakāṇḍa in Kuppuswami Sastri’s edition was a later-added partition. Among four commentaries on the BS, all except the earliest commentary by Vācaspatimiśra regard the introductory part for the verse 2.1 in Sastri’s edition as the beginning of the new chapter Tarkakāṇḍa. According to these three commentaries, the purpose of the first chapter (Brahmakāṇḍa) is to prove that the Upaniṣads are the valid means of knowing the ultimate truth, brahman. On the other hand, the purpose of the Tarkakāṇḍa is to solve the problem that the Upaniṣads, namely scripture (śabda, āgama), contradict the other means of knowledge such as direct perception if the former makes known non-distinction (abheda) and the latter presuppose distinction (bheda).

1) Maṇḍana challenges this problem with his overwhelmingly elaborate investigation; and we also notice that he shows several times the rules of Mīmāṃsā as the background of his logic. In this paper, I first overview the structure of the Tarkakāṇḍa, and then illustrate one example in Maṇḍana’s discussion in which we can find a strong influence from the tradition of Mīmāṃsā.

1. Rough Structure of the Tarkakāṇḍa

The Tarkakāṇḍa establishes the conclusion that scripture and the other means of knowledge assume non-distinction or oneness (ekatva) without any contradiction. Its rough structure is as follows:

1) Scripture is stronger than direct perception etc.: Cognition based on scripture is not inborn and therefore stronger (see the following chapter); and its validity is from the viewpoint of the ultimate truth, while direct perception etc. have only the practical validity.
Scripture has no figurative meanings and allows no alternative interpretations.

2) **Direct perception does not assume distinction:** There is actually no contradiction between scripture and direct perception. Direct perception grasps an entity through affirmation. It neither excludes nor affirms and excludes, either in sequence or at once. In other words, direct perception does not presuppose distinction.

3-1) **The essential nature of an entity is not distinction:** Distinction, in whatever way we define it, or whether as real or unreal, cannot be the essential nature of a real entity. Nor can we say that an entity is distinct with respect to others. Things’ nature is not dependent on expectation (*apekṣā*) among entities, which is neither the natural property of them nor exists in reality.

3-2) **A single entity has a capacity to appear differently:** Distinction of causal efficacies (*arthakriyā*) or of the effects does not prove that distinction is the nature of things. Rather there is a capacity for an entity to achieve diversity. This is supported by the *Ṛgveda* (*Puruṣasūkta*): It teaches that *puruṣa* is the ground of the universe.

3-3) **Neither inference nor eliminatory inference prove distinction:** One can infer distinction of the effects coming from a single cause, just as one can infer distinction of the causes. It is also easier to postulate capacities for appearing differently. Oneness of an entity does not contradict distinction of its capacity.

4) **Absence too does not prove distinction:** If absence (*abhāva*) were the means of knowing distinction that is mutual absence (*itaretarābhāva*), various faults of mutual dependence follow. For example: We have to know X as well as Y in advance to make negation in the form of “X is not Y” or “X is not on Y”; but then absence would be cognized after the establishment of X and Y, and X and Y would be established on the basis of absence. We can assume neither different types of direct perception nor any other means of knowledge for distinction.

5) **Oneness is not based on recognition:** Distinction cannot be cognized without exclusion; and exclusion is established only after affirmation. If the undifferentiated nature, the object of affirmation, were not grasped, the means of knowledge would be objectless. Recognition (*pratyabhijñā*) is not the only way to grasp oneness or the unitary character as mere-being (*sammātra*), because the first unconceptual cognition is not recognition.

6) **The universal exists in reality as the nature of an entity:** It is neither the case that the two real entities of the universal and particular exist (Vaiśeṣikas’ view), nor that there is a
single entity which has two aspects of the universal and particular (Bhāṭṭas’ and Jainas’ views), nor that only the particular exists (Buddhists’ view). Rather only the universal exists in reality.

Thus Maṇḍana claims that all the means of knowledge prove non-distinction as essential. Now, let us go into that part of his discussion in which we can see his reliance on the rules of Mīmāṃsā.

2. Mīmāṃsā Rules Functioning in the Background

In the beginning of the Tarkakāṇḍa, Maṇḍana raises the following question: If scripture on the one hand and direct perception and the rest on the other are contradictory, the former teaching non-distinction and the latter presupposing the opposite, which is stronger? Maṇḍana’s first opponent, who claims that direct perception and the rest are stronger, cites five reasons for his position:

[1:] Scripture is dependent on direct perception etc. (Scripture requires direct perception etc. for establishing its phonetic form.)
[2:] Scripture can miss the subject, while direct perception etc. never misses it.
[3:] Scripture has room for different interpretations, while direct perception etc. do not.
[4:] Scripture has internal contradictions, while direct perception etc. do not.
[5:] Scripture is subsequent to direct perception, with which a new-born baby is equipped.

Against the fifth reason Maṇḍana replies as follows:

Auto-commentary on the BS v. 2.1 (p. 40, ll. 3–7): ‘The other opinion (= Siddhānta) is as follows—It is scripture that is stronger when [it] is contradictory to [direct perception etc]. It is [on the basis of the rules on annulment that] “If there is a sequence [between the two things], the preceding one is weaker, as in the case of the archetype ritual (prakṛti) (JS 6.5.54).” For, arising of the following [cognition] is not accomplished without cancelling (annulling) the preceding [cognition] (ŚV Codanāsūtra 57cd).” To explain, of course (kila) for everyone there is ascertainment (pariccheda) of distinct entities, which is inborn (nisargaja) [and] caused by direct perception etc. On the other hand, there is the understanding of non-duality, which comes later (āgantu), is only for some people, requires and is preceded by the [ascertainment of distinct entities], [and] is not inborn. Such [an understanding of non-duality], since it cannot arise (udi) without destroying preceding [ascertainment through direct perception etc., arises characterised by the cancellation (annulment) of these.’

The discussion is based on the Jaiminisūtra (JS) 6.5.54. This is a rule of annulment (bādha)
in the context of contradiction between the expiation of the *udgāṭṛ* priest and that of the *pratihartṛ* priest. Different expiations are prescribed for each of them when they break the chain of priests in the ritual performance.\(^4\) And if they break the chain one after another, the expiation of the latter priest is applied because of this rule.\(^5\) Likewise, the cognition based on scripture is stronger than that based on perception since it comes later. In other words, the cognition of non-duality requires to be preceded by and thereafter destroy (cancel) the cognition of distinction.

In the above statement, Maṇḍana combines the JS and Kumārila’s half-verse in the Ślokavārttika (ŚV) into one complete sentence. Though Kumārila does not refer to the rule, Maṇḍana understands v. 57 as being related to it. Possibly it was because Śabara in his comment on this rule discussed the relation between two contradictory cognitions\(^6\) that it was opened to a more general context, inviting Maṇḍana, as it were, to follow Śabara in making this rule the basis of his logic.

### 3. Our Experience in Conformity with the Mīmāṃsā Rules

Having shown this rule of JS, Maṇḍana claims that in our experience too, the following cognition is stronger than the preceding one:

**Auto-commentary on the BS v. 2.1 (p. 41, ll. 4–10):** Furthermore, it is actually seen (experienced) that the following cognition is stronger than the preceding cognition even though [the latter] is needed [by the former] as the cause. For example, in case of trees located at a distance, the cognition of trees is [stronger than] the cognition of [a group of] elephants [that preceded it]. For, the cognition of [a group of] elephants is needed by the clear (vyakta) cognition of trees as its cause. It is not the case that the [clear cognition of trees] is produced only through the contact between the sense-organs and an object, because [the clear cognition of trees] does not take place immediately (āpāte: at a glance). Nor does [it take place] at a particular place, because the [clear cognition can] occur for a man who is standing at the [same] point [where he saw a group of elephants]. [Conclusion:] Therefore, [we] should think that for [a person] whose mind is fixed upon a large tree in front, the [clear cognition of a tree] is made through a contact of sense-organs etc. that are accompanied (saciva: assisted) by the latent traces [left by] [a series (streams) of] cognitions in conformity with the initial false cognition (viparyāśa).

When we see trees in the distance, the cognition of something different such as elephants is corrected (annulled) by the following right cognition of trees. Such a process of error and correction of our cognition is found in Maṇḍana’s *Sphoṭasiddhi* (SS) too in the same man-
ner; but the Mīmāṃsā rule is invisible in the SS, since Maṇḍana does not refer to it when he discusses the process of our cognition there, and since he quotes the Vākyapadiya as the ground and focusses our attention on that. The discussion Maṇḍana gives in the SS is a concise version of that in the BS. And in the BS, he starts with Jaimini’s rule (and Śabara’s interpretation which he follows) before giving his own explanation. This suggests that his investigation in the BS and SS is the result of following that rule.

As exemplified in this case, Maṇḍana applies the rules of Mīmāṃsā to his epistemic analysis, giving them the status of basic testimony, even though they were originally purely concerned with the ritual performance.

4. Conclusion

Whether scripture and the other means of knowledge equally prove non-distinction is the main theme in the Tarkakāṇḍa, as we can see in the summary. And in the beginning of the discussion, Maṇḍana first shows the JS following Śabara’s interpretation as the rule to be followed, and then expands his own discussion. Those rules are about the performance of the ritual or about mantra; and they are mentioned very briefly or sometimes not even referred to. But if we carefully look at the rules, Maṇḍana’s discussion is strictly based on the Mīmāṃsā rules there. Further study will clarify how far this is true of the whole chapter.

Notes

1) In this paper, I tentatively translate bheda as ‘distinction’ and abheda as ‘non-distinction’ for convenience.
2) Jha [1934] (Translation p. 1148, ll. 6–8): ‘In the case of one (disconnection) coming after the other, the former is weaker, —as in the case of the original Primary.’
3) Kataoka [2011] (Translation vol. 1, p. 266, ll. 1–6): ’As for invalidity (tv apramānatā), it is quite easy (laghy eva) [to find it out] through directly knowing a mistake (sākṣādviparyayajñānāt) [in the previous cognition]. For (hi) the arising of the latter [cognition] (utpattir uttarasya) does not take place (na ... sidhyati) without putting aside the former [cognition] (pūrvābādhena).’
4) According to Benson [2010] (p. 546, fn. 236), it is a situation that happens when one of the priests breaks the chain of priests as they emerge from the hall at the morning pressing by letting go of the hem of the garment of the priest in front of him.
5) See Benson [2010] (p. 546, l. 19–p. 547, l. 4) for a parallel explanation in the Mīmāṃsānyāyasamgraha.
6) Śabara uses the word vijñāna ‘cognition.’ See the Śābarabhāṣya on the JS 6.5.54.
7) See Maṇḍana’s auto-commentary on the SS v. 19 (p. 139, l. 4–p. 141, l. 1).
Abbreviations and Primary Sources

BS  *Brahmasiddhi by Ācārya Maṇḍanamiśra with Commentary by Śaṅkhapāṇi*. Ed. S. Kuppuswami Sastri. Madras Government Oriental Manuscript Series, no. 4. Madras: The Superintendent, Government Press, 1937.

JS  *Śrīmajjainipranītaṃ Mīmāṁsādarśanam*. Vol. 4, Adhyāyas IV–VII. Ed. Kāśinātha Vāsudeva Śastrī Abhyamkara and Ganeśāśāstrī Jośi. Ānandāśramasanskṛtagranthāvali, no. 97, Puṇyākhyaṭṭa: Ānandāśramamudrālaya, 1932.

ŚV  *Ślokavārtttika of Śrī Kumārila Bhaṭṭa with the Commentary Nyāyaratnākara of Śrī Pārthasārathi Miśra*. Ed. Ganga Sagar Rai. Varanasi: Ratna Publications, 1993.

SS  *The Sphoṭasiddhi of Acārya Maṇḍanamiśra with the Gopālikā of Ṛṣiputra Parameśvara*. Ed. S. K. Rāmanātha Śastrī. Madras University Sanskrit Series, no. 6. Madras: University of Madras, 1931.

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