yadṛcchāśabda and *saṃjñā*

——from the point of view of proper names——

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At present, the most controversial topic of the philosophy of language is proper names. One of the main questions is whether or not proper names have a sense and, if they have, whether it is given by the descriptions associated with each proper name[1]. In Sanskrit, the term which corresponds to 'proper name' is assumed to be '*yadṛcchāśabda*' (arbitrary word) or in some cases '*saṃjñā*' (name), though the latter means "tecnical term" too. My aim in this paper is to investigate the theory of meaning about *yadṛcchāśabda* and *saṃjñā* advanced by Indian grammarians (vaiyākaraṇa) from the point of view of proper names.

First we shall see the part of the *Mahābhāṣya* (MBh) on the *Śivasūtra* '*ṛk*' in which *yadṛcchāśabda* is discussed in relation to the word '*ḷtaka*'. Bhartṛhari comments on it in his *Mahābhaṣyadīpikā* as follows[2]:

> *yadṛcchā* is, when there is not a cause of application (*pravṛttinimitta*) of a word, what occurs or ceases to occur without cause in the objects which brings about its occurrence or ceasing. For example, the word '*ḍittha*', whose cause of application is only its own form (*svarūpa*), comes into use by means of such naming as in the form of 'I give this name to this'. And in that case, it is always possible to cease to apply the word to "this". Since, with regard to the words whose cause is only their own form, their own form cannot be represented by any other forms than their own, there is no other word which causes their application to cease. Thus the word '*ḷtaka*' is, if it is used as a name, a correct word whose cause is its own form because it is not due to any external causes and does not have any other words which prevent it from coming into use.··············

Some words have fixed meanings. They have fixed synonyms. They are not man-made because we cannot recollect who produced them. However a certain set of words, which is used as names, is not applied to any fixed meanings. Thus

we can say that *jātiśabda* (the words which express the essential character) is, when they are applied to *jāti* (essential character), *yadṛcchāśabda*, because they do not depend on any causes which lie in the object, i.e. *jāti*.·················

In applications of three kinds of words, *jātiśabda*, *guṇaśabda* and *kriyāśabda*, words are fixed, and their meanings are also fixed. But in the application of the fourth word, *yadṛcchāśabda*, it is produced by a certain man.

Thus the distinctive feature of *yadṛcchāśabda* is its lack of any causes of its application on the part of its referent and hence its referring is devoid of fixedness. In the Indian theory of meaning, if *pravṛttinimitta* is equivalent to sense contrasted with reference, it follows that *yadṛcchāśabda* does not have a sense. Is it the case ?

In the MBh on the *Pāṇinisūtra* (P) V-1-119, Patañjali states why the suffix '*tva*' or '*tā*', which means the universal property (*bhāva*), can be attached to *yadṛcchāśabda*[3].

Then, since words like '*ḍittha*' (do not have *bhāva* that *tva* or *tā* means), we cannot get the compounds' member (i.e. '*tva*' or '*tā*'). Therefore such compounds as '*ḍitthatvam*', '*ḍitthatā*', '*ḍāmbhiṭṭatvam*' cannot be formed. However there is a primary *ḍittha* or *ḍāmbhiṭṭa*. If a person does anything that the primary *ḍittha* or *ḍāmbhiṭṭa* did, or he has any quality that the primary one has, people tell him, 'This is your *ḍitthatva*', 'This is your *ḍāmbhiṭṭatva*'. Each *ḍittha* behaves himself in such a way, and each *ḍāmbhiṭṭa* behaves himself in such a way.

Kaiyaṭa comments on this part in his *Pradīpa* as follows[4]:

yadṛcchāśabda like '*ḍittha*' does not depend on any causes of its application on the part of its referent, because it is applied according to one's desire. 'the primary '*ḍittha*·········' means this : first we see some behaviors and qualities that belong to *ḍittha*, and then the word '*ḍittha*' is applied to another person figuratively. In this case its *pravṛttinimitta* is just his behaviors and qualities.··············· The way we establish the relation between *saṃjñā* (name) and *saṃjñin* (named) is as follows : one superimposes a word's own form on its meaning and says that this is *ḍittha*; it means that just as the word '*ḍittha*' is applied to its meaning by means of its superimposition on its meaning, so a word's own form is superimposed on its meaning and consequently the suffix like '*tva*' or '*tā*' is attached to it.

Or others hold that there is an essential character (*jāti*) which inheres in one

individual who undergoes changes through different periods, i.e. his boyhood etc. from his birth to death. In various periods we see the essential character in virtue of which we recognize that he is just that *ḍittha*. It is to the essential character that the suffix, i.e. '*tva*' or '*tā*', is applied.

As shown above, Kaiyaṭa keeps three contexts of utterance in his mind. They are as follows: 1) baptism or naming, 2) the situation in which a certain proper name is figuratively applied to some other person than its bearer because the former has the same quality and performs the same actions as the latter, as in the case in which we say of a Japanese great philosopher that he is a Wittgenstein in Japan, and 3) the situation in which we recognize one and the same essential character in an individual that persists through various periods. Of these three, it is only in 1) that proper names do not have their sense. But it is to be noted that the proper name in 2) is used not as a referring expression but as a predicate and, therefore, we, in fact, cannot call it a 'proper name'[5].

Let us turn now to *saṃjñā*. According to Indian grammarians, we can divide them into two groups: 1) artificial ones (*kṛtrima*) and 2) natural, i.e. derivative ones (*akṛtrima*). Some *saṃjñā-s* have both etymological senses and technical ones. Thus *kṛtrima saṃjñā* belongs to *yadṛcchāśabda*[6]. Now we shall investigate the arguments about *saṃjñā* in this context.

Bhartṛhari states in his *Vākyapadīya* (VP) as follows:

In everyday language *saṃjñā-s* depend on their own form. Some of those are applied to their objects when there is any cause of their application, and others are applied even when there is not. (II-366[7])

In grammatical literatures *mahatī saṃjñā-s* (big names) are based on their own form. When there is any cause of their application, it is inferred[8]. (II-367)

In II-367 '*mahatī saṃjñā*' means a name such as '*kāraka*', '*upasarjana*', '*sarvanāman*', etc. which are composed of more than one syllable[9].

Of the two kinds of names, *kṛtrima* does not have any causes of its application on the part of its object, and *akṛtrima* has. In other words the former does not have an etymological sense, and the latter has one, though as a technical term its sense may be different from it[10]. In grammar '*ṭi*[11]',

'ghu'[12], 'bha[13])', etc. are the members of the former and 'karmapravacan-īya[14])', 'sarvanāman[15])', etc. are of the latter. In ordinary language words like 'dāmbhiṭṭa' belong to the former and those like 'śatrughna', 'balab-hadra' to the latter. It is to be noted that the members of the latter are descriptions both in grammar and in ordinary language.

As has been said, Indian grammarians lay emphasis on the fact that *saṃjñā,* even if it has a derivative sense, has its own form first as its cause of application. Bhartṛhari states this point clearly in the first chapter of the VP too. There the *saṃjñā* '*vṛddhi*', though it has a derivative sense in ordinary speech, has a peculiar sense in grammar[16].

> Just as words like '*vṛddhi*', based on their own form, get the relation with their *saṃjñin* (named) (*ā, ai, au*) represented by the word '*ādaic*', so the word '*agni*', based on the word '*agni*', gets the relation with the sound represented by the word '*agni*'. (I–59∼60)

For example, according to the rule '*iko yaṇ aci*', for *i, u, ṛ,* and *ḷ* represented by '*ik*' which is firstly based on its own form, *y, v, r,* and *l* represented by '*yaṇ*' which is firstly based on its own form are substituted. In this case the form of the *saṃjñā* is different from that of the *saṃjñin.* In the same way '*vṛddhi*' get the relation with the *saṃjñin, ā, ai,* and *au* represented by '*ādaic*'. On the other hand the word '*agni*' which has the same form as the *saṃjñin* in grammar, based on its own form, get the relation with the *saṃjñin,* i.e. the sound represented by '*agni*'[17].

From the fact that, in general, grammarians call into question the form of words and sentences, it follows that Indian grammarians, as is shown by the example of the word '*agni*', attach importance to words' own form. Moreover the problem characteristic of the grammar of Pāṇini arises. Bhartṛhari says in the VP,

> Before *saṃjñā* becomes connected with *saṃjñin,* it has its own form as its sense. That is how it becomes suitable for the cause of the use of the genitive and nominative case affixes. (I–66)

To begin with, according to P. I-2-45, a nominal base is defined as meaningful. Next, according to P. IV-1-1, case affixes are appended to

nominal bases and then, according to P. II-3-46, one of the senses of a nominative case affix is the sense of its nominal base. Thus in the sūtra '*vṛddhir ādaic*' one problem arises. This is a *saṃjñāsūtra* which defines the word '*vṛddhi*'. Therefore on the stage of this sūtra '*vṛddhi*' has no sense, and so it cannot get the name '*prātipadika*' (nominal base) with the result that it cannot have a nominative case affix.

To avoid the problem, Indian grammarians assert that in this case the sense of the word '*vṛddhi*' is its own form. The word '*vṛddhi*', having its own form as its sense, becomes capable of appending a nominative case affix. Now it is to be noted that *saṃjñā* in grammar differs from *saṃjñā* in everyday speech in that it is a technical term based on definition. Thus Bhartṛhari says,

> In the sūtra, since it has its own form as a sense, a nominative case affix comes after *saṃjñā*. To surpass[18], as shown by the use of a genitive case affix, the sense of a nominal base is brought about by the very sense. (VP I-67)

To summarize.

1. '*yadṛcchāśabda*' does not altogether correspond to 'proper name'. It may, like '*ṭi*', be applied to many objects, if it does not have any causes of its application on the part of its referent. However we can say that '*ṭi*' is identified with the description based on the definition of the *saṃjñāsūtra*. Therefore its cause of application is the sense of the description, though Indian grammarians do not definitely say so. Thus it is just on the stage of *saṃjñāsūtra*, i. e. naming that it does not have its cause of application. In the same way *jātiśabda* does not have its cause of application when we give a name to the *jāti*, though, according to Indian grammarians, it is not the case because words have no beginning.

2. Therefore from the fact that Indian grammarians define '*yadṛcchāśabda*' as 'a word which does not have its cause of application', it does not follow that it does not have any senses in any contexts of utterance. What we think of as a sense of *yadṛcchāśabda* is as follows: (1) a word's own form, (2) the essential character in individuals, and (3) the sense of the

descriptions based on activities and qualities of that person. (3) has something to do with the problem of 'subject' and 'predicate'. In this case it is not a pure proper name in the sense that it is not a referring expression.

3. One of the reasons why *yadṛcchāśabda*, or *saṃjñā* included in it, is not always a proper name or a singular term is that Indian grammarians traditionally regard word, meaning and the relation between the two as eternal *(nitya)*. They paid attention to arbitrary words because those words apparently betray the principle. What they are primarily concerned with is not the fact that those words refer to an individual but the fact that it is applied arbitrarily[19]. Indeed there were some people who did not regard *yadṛcchāśabda* as a word, because it violates the above principle[20].

4. From the fact that it is an arbitrary word, it follows that it is hardly assumed to designate its object rigidly[21].

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1) On the descriptivist view, see Bertrand Russell, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism", *Logic and Knowledge*, London, 1956, pp. 175–281; John Searl, *Speech Acts*, Cambridge, 1969, pp.162–174, etc. One of the representatives of anti–descriptivists is S.A. Kripke *(Naming and Necessity*, Cambridge, 1972). On the theory of proper names in the Nyāya school, cf. J.L. Show, "Proper Names : Contemporary Philosophy and the Nyāya", *Analytical Philosophy in Comparative Perspective*, Dordrecht, 1985, pp. 327–372. 2) Ed. by Abhyankar and Limaye, pp. 59–60. 3) MBh (ed. by Kielhorn) II, p. 366, ll. 18–23. 4) *Pradīpa* (*Vyākaraṇamahābhāṣyam*, ed. by Vedavrata, Rohatak 5 vols) IV, pp. 90–91. 5) cf. P.T. Geach, *Reference and Generality* (3rd Edition), Ithaka, 1980, p. 37. 6) cf. Yudhiṣṭhir Mimaṃsak, *Saṃskrit vyakaraṇ-śastr ka itihas* vol 2, Sonipat, pp. 9–10. 7) The verse–number of S. Iyer's edition. 8) cf. VP II–368. 9) cf. MBh I, p. 81, ll. 26–27. 10) cf. H.P. Dvivedi, *Studies in Pāṇini*, Delhi, 1977, pp. 12–15. 11) P. I–1–64, 12) P. I–1–20. 13) P. I–4–18, 19. 14) MBh on P. I–4–83. 15) P. I–1–27. 16) P. I–1–1. 17) cf. P. P.I–1–68, IV–2–33. 18) cf. MBh on P. II–3–50; VP III–14–6 ; G. Cardona, "Anvaya and Vyatireka in Indian Grammar", *The Adyar Library Bulletin* 31–32, 1967–68, pp. 315–324. 19) In later times, however, Nāgeśabhaṭṭa attach importance to the fact that *yadṛcchāśabda* refers to an individual. See his *Uddyota* (*Vyākaraṇamahābhāṣyam*, ed. by Vedavrata, I, p. 70). 20) cf. MBh I, p. 20. 21) cf. S.A. Kripke, op. cit.

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