

Advaitins' Theory of *Lakṣaṇā* and Pāṇinian Grammar

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In India, metaphor, one of the important topics of language, has been researched in terms of the theory of *lakṣaṇā* (secondary signification). Indian thinkers have, however, dealt not only with metaphors but with other expressions under the name of *lakṣaṇā*. They generally divided it into two kinds: *lakṣaṇā* in which an expression does not abandon its own sense (*ajahallakṣaṇā*, which is also called *upādānalakṣaṇā* especially by rhetoricians) and *lakṣaṇā* in which an expression does abandon its own sense (*jahallakṣaṇā*, also called *lakṣaṇalakṣaṇā*). In addition, Advaitins of the Vedānta school admit a third division, i.e., *lakṣaṇā* in which an expression *partly* abandons its own sense and *partly* does not (*jahadajahallakṣaṇā*, also called *bhāgalakṣaṇā*). By means of the third *lakṣaṇā* they spelled out the meaning of the famous sentence *tat tvam asi* (you are that). This sentence, which is not constituted of a subject and a predicate, is classified as an identity statement, and hence, as an example of that *lakṣaṇā* in ordinary language, they took the identity statement so '*yaṃ devadattaḥ* (This is that Devadatta). According to them, *tat* and *tvam* in *tat tvam asi* abandon part of their own senses that are incompatible with each other, and indicate the identity of the referents of the two terms.

Lakṣaṇā is contrasted with *abhidhā* (primary signification). However, why, in *lakṣaṇā*, must an expression *abandon* the intrinsic sense that it possesses in *abhidhā*? We may wonder whether, in the case of *jahallakṣaṇā*, *gaṅgā* (the Ganges) must *abandon* its own sense when it refers to its bank.¹⁾ In the same way, why, when we identify the referent of *tvam* with that of *tat*, must *tat* or *tvam* *partly abandon* its own sense? Do we have to put stress only on the aspect of referents? I previously insisted that we need

not resort to the theory of *lakṣaṇā* to interpret identity statements such as *tat tvam asi*.²⁾ In this paper, I shall inquire into the background of the thought that an expression abandons its own sense. For that purpose I shall have recourse to some works of the Pāṇinian grammarians as a basis of Indian theories of meaning.

We should bear in mind, in the first place, the following two points. First, according to the Pāṇinian grammarians, an expression may, in line with the context of an utterance, signify only a part of the properties it can express. In that case, however, the grammarians do not assert that the expression partly abandons its own sense. Here I shall not explain the theory, and I refer the reader to my previous article.³⁾ Secondly, we find in the *Mahābhāṣya* (MBh) of Patañjali the thought that a constituent of a compound (*samāsa*) abandons its own sense, and it is this idea which I shall investigate now.

MBh on Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (P.) 2-1-1 reads as follows:

They say that *ṛtti* means 'denoting a meaning other than [the meanings of its constituents]' (*parārthābhīdhāna*). —Now, for those who say so, is *ṛtti* one in which its constituents abandon their senses (*jahatsvārthā ṛtti*), or one in which its constituents do not abandon their own senses (*ajahatsvārthā ṛtti*)?⁴⁾

The Advaitins' theory of *lakṣaṇā* is concerned, as shown above, with words that constitute a sentence (*vākya*). In the case of MBh, on the other hand, the question is whether constituents of a compound abandon their own senses in light of the meaning of the compound as a whole. Patañjali takes *rājapuruṣa* as an example and shows that we can correctly explain the meaning of the compound neither in terms of *jahatsvārthā ṛtti* nor of *ajahatsvārthā ṛtti*. After all, however, he argues that a compound should be explained as involving *jahatsvārthā ṛtti* by clarifying the meaning of the *jahat*. This then raises a crucial point in comparison with *jahadajahallakṣaṇā*.

Though the [constituent term of the compound] abandons its own sense, it does not do so entirely. It abandons [that part of] its own sense which is incompatible with the meaning of the other [constituent of the same compound]⁵⁾

Though Patañjali does not use the word *jahadaajahad-*, the meaning of *jahat* explained here is equal to *jahadaajahat* of *jahadaajahallakṣaṇā* in that a constituent term abandons that part of its meaning which is incompatible with the meaning of the other part of the compound. In his *Samkṣepasūtrika*, Sarvajñātman of the Advaitin sect illustrates the point as follows:

In the sentence *tat tvam asi*, *tvam* is never synonymous with *tat*. Between the two terms, there is no relation of the differentiator (*bhedaka*) and the thing differentiated (*bhedya*). Since the primary sense of *tvam* is incompatible with that of *tat*, the two terms refer to one part possessed of one flavor (*ekarasa*) that manifests in the meanings of the two terms. (1-225)

Similarly, in his *Vedāntasāra*, Sadānanda says as follows:

Therefore, because in the meaning of the sentence so '*yaṁ devadattaḥ* Devadatta determined by *this* time is incompatible with Devadatta determined by *that* time, the sentence, or its meaning, abandons the incompatible part determined by *this* time or *that* time, and indicates only the part of Devadatta in which the two are compatible with each other. In the same way, because in the meaning of the sentence *tat tvam asi* Spirit (*caitanya*) determined by mediateness (*parokṣatva*) is incompatible with Spirit determined by immediateness (*aparokṣatva*) even if in fact the two are identical, the sentence, or its meaning, abandons the incompatible part determined by mediateness or immediateness, and indicates only the partless Spirit in which the two are compatible with each other.⁶⁾

Moreover, we should pay attention to the theory of differentiation (*bheda*) and association (*saṁsarga*): the two constituents of a linguistic unit mutually differentiate their respective referents from things which are not related, and, as a result, one becomes associated with the other, and *vice versa*. For example, in the compound *rājapuruṣa* (king's man), the term *rājan* differentiates the man to which the term *puruṣa* refers from men of owners other than kings, and the term *puruṣa* differentiates the king referred to by the term *rājan* from kings who have belongings other than men. It was because Advaitins could not, by means of the theory of *bheda* and *saṁsarga*, elucidate the meaning of identity statements such as *tat tvam asi* that they presented the theory of *jahadaajahallakṣaṇā*.

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.....if we regard the meaning of the sentence [*'tat tvam asi'*] as an association (*saṃsarga*), there rises an incompatibility of the two words. (*Samkṣepaśārīra*, 1-145)

Patañjali's argument shown above, on the other hand, is followed by his remark on the theory of *bheda* and *saṃsarga*.⁷⁾ He does not articulate that we can, by means of the theory of *jahatsvārtha*, elucidate the meaning of a linguistic unit we cannot explain by means of the theory of *bheda* and *saṃsarga*, whereas Advaitins make clear the difference between the sentences to which the theory of *jahadaajahallakṣaṇā* applies and the sentences to which the theory of *bheda* and *saṃsarga* applies.

Nāgēśabhaṭṭa, a grammarian of the 18th century, does not regard *bheda* and *saṃsarga* as what are understood by means of words (*śābdabodha*).

It is not correct that *bheda* and *saṃsarga* are denoted by a compound, because we cannot directly understand what has *bheda* as a mode (*prakāra*).If *saṃsarga* were denoted by a compound, *jahatsvārtha* would be wrong, because the meaning of the first member of the compound necessarily remains as *pratiyogin*⁸⁾

Advaitins regard identity statements as indicating partless (*akhaṇḍa*) objects by means of *jahadaajahallakṣaṇā*. On the other hand Pāṇinians regard the meaning of compounds as *ekārthibhāva* (lit. becoming a single meaning).⁹⁾ Therefore it is only a matter of convenience that we analyse a compound into its constituents or analyse the meaning of a compound into the meanings of its constituents. A compound is, in fact, one single nominal base¹⁰⁾ and hence its meaning is unanalyzable, i.e., partless (*akhaṇḍa*). Nāgēśabhaṭṭa points out this similarity between the theories of the Advaitins and the Pāṇinians.

Just as, according to the Vedānta's theory, we recognize a partless object from the sentence *tat tvam asi* and so on, so do we from *vṛtti* (integrated linguistic forms, including compounds). That is what *ekārthibhāva* means.¹¹⁾

That partless objects are understood by means of words implies that *bheda* and *saṃsarga* are not understood by means of words.

To be a partless meaning is to bring about the understanding that an association (*saṃsarga*) of meanings of constituent words cannot take place there.¹²⁾

Nāgēśabhaṭṭa, like Sarvajñātman, takes the referring expression *prakṛ-*

ṣṭaparakāśa as an example of an expression that indicates a partless object.

To summarize, the thought that an expression partly abandons its own sense leads back to the Pāṇinian theory of the meaning of compounds, in which the aspect of referents is underlined. The Advaitins' theory of *jahadaajahallakṣaṇā* on identity statements follows a line of thought that was already prevalent in Indian theories of meaning before the Common Era. The Advaitins' theory differs from the Pāṇinian theory in that it deals with a sentence as a linguistic unit. In later times, Nāgēśabhaṭṭa of the Pāṇinian school, in turn, made use of the Advaitins' theory to elucidate the meaning of compounds. This indeed shows that both of these theories follow the same line of thought.

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- 1) In the sentence *gaṅgāyāṃ ghoṣaḥ* (The village is on the Ganges) *gaṅgā* refers not to the river Ganges but to its bank.
 - 2) 'Dōitsusei-genmei no Imiron' (Sarvajñātman on Identity Statements), *Mayeda Sengaku Hakase Kanreki Kinen Ronshū: Ga no Shisō*, Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1991, pp. 463-473. (in Japanese)
 - 3) 'Pāṇinian Theory of *Guṇasamudāya*: Indian Cluster Theory', *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū*, 39-2, 1991, pp. 1049-1045.
 - 4) MBh (ed. by F. Kielhorn, Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute), vol. 1, p. 364, ll. 6-7.
 - 5) MBh, vol. 1, p. 364, ll. 15-16.
 - 6) *Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda*, ed. by Colonel G.A. Jacob, Reprint: Varanasi, Chaukhamba Amarabharati Prakashan, 1975, pp. 37-38.
 - 7) MBh, vol. 1, p. 364, ll. 23-26.
 - 8) *Uddyota (Vyākaraṇamahābhāṣyam)*, ed. by Vedavrata, 5 vols, Rohatak: Haryana-sahitya-saṁsthan, 1962-63), vol. 2, p. 522, ll. 19-21.
 - 9) *Vākyapadīya* (ed. by S. Iyer, Poona: Deccan College, 1973) 3-14-44.
 - 10) Cf. P. 1-2-46.
 - 11) *Uddyota*, vol. 2, p. 522, l. 22.
 - 12) *Vaiyākaraṇasiddhāntalaghumañjūṣā*, ed. by M.N. Bhandari and N.S. Pandey, 2 vols, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1989 (Second Edition), vol. 2, pp. 1402-3.

⟨Key Words⟩ *lakṣaṇā*, Sarvajñātman, Patañjali, Nāgēśabhaṭṭa, Pāṇinian
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