

# *Pratibimbavāda and Dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*

On Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's Accepted Theory (*Siddhānta*)

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## 1. Introduction

In the *Advaita* school, this diverse world is supposed to appear from *brahman*, the single spiritual principle. The world is divided into a spiritual existence and a material existence, and the former is further divided into three categories, *sākṣin*, *īśvara*, and *jīva*.<sup>1)</sup> As is well known, in the history of *Advaita* there are three theories concerning the problem of the division of the single *brahman* into these three spiritual categories, known as the *ābhāsavāda*, *pratibimbavāda*, and *avacchedavāda*.<sup>2)</sup> Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (ca. 16th cent.), a scholar of the *Advaita* school, in his *Siddhāntabindu* (SB) proposed *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* as a fourth alternative and claimed it to be the commonly accepted position of *Vedānta* (*vedāntasiddhānta*).<sup>3)</sup> However, in his *Bhagavadgītāgūḍhārthadīpikā* (BhGGAD) on *Bhagavadgītā* (BhG) 7.14, Madhusūdana seems to base himself on *ābhāsavāda* or *pratibimbavāda* to explain the division of *brahman* into *sākṣin*, *īśvara*, and *jīva*. Previous scholarships has not addressed the relationship between *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* and *pratibimbavāda*.<sup>4)</sup> In this paper, I examine the problem of why Madhusūdana seems to base himself on *pratibimbavāda* even though he regards *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* the commonly accepted theory.

## 2. *sākṣin*, *īśvara*, and *jīva* in *pratibimbavāda* and *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*

First, I would like to consider the relevant parts of BhGGAD on BhG 7. 14 in order to determine whether the argument here really is based on *pratibimbavāda*. In BhGGAD on BhG 7.14, Madhusūdana discusses the division into *sākṣin*, *īśvara*, and *jīva* of the consciousness (*caitanya*) that is *brahman*.<sup>5)</sup> The main points of this argument can be summarized as follows: 1) *īśvara* corresponds the original image (*bimba*) of the consciousness. 2) *Jīva* corresponds to the reflection (*pratibimba*) of the consciousness. 3) *Sākṣin* is the gener-

al consciousness of both *īśvara* and *jīva*. Should this argument of the BhGGAD be considered representative of *pratibimbavāda* or *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*? In the SB, two types of *pratibimbavāda* are mentioned, that of Prakāśātman (ca. 10th cent.) and that of Sarvajñātman (ca. 9th–11th cent.). According to Prakāśātman, *jīva* is the consciousness reflected in ignorance, that is to say, the reflection of the consciousness and *īśvara* is the original image of the consciousness.<sup>6)</sup> Therefore, the argument of the BhGGAD is consistent with Prakāśātman's *pratibimbavāda*. On the other hand, the SB also explains two types of *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* and Madhusūdana states that the first of these is commonly held in *Vedānta*. According to this view, *īśvara* is the original image of consciousness, and *jīva* is the consciousness reflected in ignorance, that is to say, a reflection of the consciousness.<sup>7)</sup> In short, *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*, Prakāśātman's *pratibimbavāda*, and the BhGGAD all claim that *īśvara* is the original image of the consciousness and *jīva* is the reflection of the consciousness reflected in ignorance. Therefore, the *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* that Madhusūdana regards as the accepted theory of *Vedānta* is also consistent with the explanation of the BhGGAD.

So far, I have not discussed the role of *sākṣin* in *pratibimbavāda* and *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*, a problem to which I would like to turn now briefly. In the SB, both *pratibimbavāda* and *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* are treated as arguments asserting that *īśvara* is the original image, and in both theories *sākṣin* is considered the consciousness accompanying *īśvara* and *jīva*.<sup>8)</sup> This explanation of *sākṣin* also coincides with that of the BhGGAD.

### 3. What is the difference between *pratibimbavāda* and *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*?

Up until this point, it appears that there is no difference between *pratibimbavāda* and *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*. In the following, I would like to focus on Madhusūdana's *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* to show where the two theories diverge. In his *Advaitasiddhi* (AS), Madhusūdana posits the following four defining characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) of perception and existence (*dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi*)<sup>9)</sup>: 1) Being caused by ignorance, something comes into existence only if it is known to someone. 2) Likewise, being caused by ignorance, something does not exist when it is not known to someone. 3) For example, with the perception of the light of mother-of-pearl shells, silver that also shines only comes into existence by being mistakenly perceived. 4) Something comes into existence only when it is known by someone perceiving it. In addition the SB states that *jīva*, due to his own ignorance, becomes the material and efficient cause of the world, and this corresponds to the AS's statement that it is from ignorance or

the understood limiting condition that existence arises only due to being known. Moreover, in *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*, since everything seen by *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi* is merely cognitively existent, a teacher and the sacred treatises, as belonging to what can be seen, are also considered provisional assumption of the seer himself.<sup>10)</sup>

Is the seer himself, that is *jīva*, a merely cognitive existence, then? Furthermore, while in the *Advaita* school it is generally thought that *īśvara* creates the world, is in *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* *īśvara* not considered the creator? In *pratibimbavāda*, *jīva* is not merely a cognitive but a real existence (*pāramārthika*).<sup>11)</sup> Furthermore, in the SB, *īśvara* is said to govern the creation, continuance, and destruction of the world.<sup>12)</sup>

First, I would like to examine the level of existence of *jīva* in *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*. In the AS, *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi* is applied to creations different from the six constituents having no beginning, namely *jīva*, *īśvara*, consciousness, the difference between *jīva* and *īśvara*, ignorance, and the binding of ignorance to the soul, but is not applied to these six.<sup>13)</sup> Therefore, *jīva* is not an object of *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi*. Additionally, although *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi* applies to all that is seen (*dr̥śya*), which is therefore considered to be namely cognitive existence, because *jīva*, *īśvara*, and *sākṣin* are classified as seer (*dr̥ś*),<sup>14)</sup> *jīva* is not a cognitive existence. And because of the similarity between *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* and *pratibimbavāda* concerning the division of *jīva*, *īśvara*, and *sākṣin*, all of which have no beginning, it seems that even in *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* *jīva* is considered to be real.

Moreover, concerning the creation of the world from *īśvara*, it is stated in the SB that *hiraṇyagarbha* is a creator of the gross elements.<sup>15)</sup> In *Advaita* doctrine, *hiraṇyagarbha* is said to be the aggregate (*samaṣṭi*) of *jīva*, and according to Madhusūdana, he corresponds to the “single *jīva*” (*ekajīva*) of *ekajīvavāda*, which is equal to *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*.<sup>16)</sup> *Pratibimbavāda* also agrees with *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* with regard to *ekajīvavāda*, which argues that *jīva* is single.<sup>17)</sup> Furthermore, considering that *ekajīvavāda* is equivalent to *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*, Madhusūdana seems to think that what is created by *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi* are the gross elements and the phenomenal world that consists of them.

It should be noted in this regard that in the descriptions of *hiraṇyagarbha*, *īśvara* is generally described without further theoretical distinctions. This also applies to both *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* and *pratibimbavāda*. Consequently, it can be concluded in light of the considerations so far that there is no difference between them. One more thing to be noted is that *pratibimbavāda* is a theory explaining the division of *sākṣin*, *īśvara*, and *jīva*, while

*dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* is a theory explaining the creation of the phenomenal world. Therefore, the purpose of the two theories differs. In addition, *ekajīvanavāda*, which is equivalent to *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*, is a theory arising from the question of whether *jīva* is inherently single or multiple, and its nature is consequently different from *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda*. From the above, it can be concluded that *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* was formed by relying on *pratibimbavāda* to explain the division of *sākṣin*, *īśvara*, and *jīva* and complementing it with a theory of cognitive creation to account for the phenomenal world.

#### 4. Conclusion

We can conclude that Madhusūdāna based himself on *pratibimbavāda* even while regarding *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* as the orthodox theory because *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* does not differ from *pratibimbavāda* with respect to the problem of the division of *sākṣin*, *īśvara*, and *jīva*. However, in the relevant part of the BhGGAD are to be found not only the description of *pratibimbavāda* but also one assuming *ābhāsavāda*,<sup>18)</sup> and in the BhGGAD *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi* is not touched upon.<sup>19)</sup> Therefore, in the BhGGAD Madhusūdāna possibly did not take *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* to be the accepted theory, contrary to what is stated in the SB and the AS. These are subjects for future research.

#### Notes

1) SB 53, 1–4: *asminmate padārtho dvidvidhaḥ, dṛk dr̥śyaṃ ca. anyeṣāṃ vādirikalpitānāṃ padārthānāṃ atraivāntarbhāvāt. tatra dṛkpadārtha ātmā pāramārthika ekaḥ sarvagaikarūpo 'py aupādhikabhedena trividhaḥ, īśvaro jīvas sākṣī ceti.*

2) See Shima 1987, Timalisina 2006, pp. 28–32.

3) SB 29, 17–20: *ajñānopahitaṃ bimbacaitanyaṃ īśvaraḥ. ajñānapratibimbitaṃ caitanyaṃ jīva iti vā, ajñānānopahitaṃ śuddhaṃ caitanyaṃ īśvaraḥ. ajñānopahitaṃ jīva iti vā. mukhyo vedāntasiddhānta ekajīvanavādākhyāḥ. imam eva ca dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivādam ācakṣate.*

4) In Gupta 2006 which is a comprehensive study of Madhusūdāna teaching, this point is not mentioned.

5) BhGGAD 357, 13–17: *jīveśvarajagadvibhāgaśūnye caitanye 'dhyastānādir avidyā sattvapradhānyena svachchadarpaṇa iva mukhābhāsaṃ cidābhāsam āgrhṇāti. tataś ca bimbasthānīyaḥ parameśvara upādihidoṣānāskanditaḥ, pratibimbasthānīyaś ca jīva upādihidoṣāskanditaḥ. īśvarāc ca jīvabhogāyākāśādikrameṇa śarīrendriyasaṃghātas tadbhogyas ca kṛtsnaḥ prapañco jāyata iti kalpanā bhavati. bimbapratibimbamukhānugatamukhavac ceśajīvanugatamā māyopādhi caitanyaṃ sākṣīti kalpyate. tenaiḥ ca svādhyastā māyā tatkāryaṃ ca kṛtsnam prakāśyate.*

6) SB 28, 14–19: *ajñānopahitaṃ bimbacaitanyaṃ īśvaraḥ. antaḥkaraṇatatsaṃskārāvachchinnajñānapratibimbitaṃ jīva iti vivaraṇākārāḥ. ajñānapratibimbitaṃ caitanyaṃ īśvaraḥ. buddhipratibimbitaṃ caitanyaṃ jīvaḥ. ajñānānopahitaṃ tu bimbacaitanyaṃ śuddham iti saṃkṣepaśārīrakārāḥ... imam eva*

*pratibimbavādam ācakṣate.*

7) SB 29, 17–20: *ajñānopahitaṃ bimbacaitanyaṃ īśvaraḥ. ajñānapratibimbitaṃ caitanyaṃ jīva iti vā, ajñānūpahitaṃ śuddhaṃ caitanyaṃ īśvaraḥ. ajñānopahitaṃ jīva iti vā. mukhyo vedāntasiddhānta ekajīvavādākhyaḥ. imam eva ca dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivādam ācakṣate.*

8) SB 53, 6–9: *avidyāpratibimbeśvarapakṣe bimbacaitanyaṃ sākṣī, bimbeśvarapakṣe ca bimbapratibimbamukhānugatamukhasvarūpavaj jīveśvarānugataṃ sarvānusaṃdhātṛ caitanyaṃ sākṣīty ucyate. vārttikakāramate tv īśvara eva sākṣīti dvaividhyam eva jīveśvarabhedena dr̥ṣaḥ.*

9) AS 533, 13–534, 1: *na, doṣaprayuktatvanibandhanasya jñātaikasattvasyājñātasattvābhāvasya vā, pratīpamnopādhydṛṣṭijanyajñātaikasattvasya vā, draṣṭrantarāvedyatve sati jñātaikasattvasya vā vivakṣitatvāt.*

10) SB 29, 20–23: *asmiṃś ca pakṣe jīva eva svājñānavaśāj jagadupādānaṃ nimittaṃ ca. dr̥ṣyaṃ ca sarvaṃ prātīkikam. dehabhedāc ca jīvabhedabhrāntiḥ. ekasyaiva ca svakalpitaguruśāstrādyupabṛṃhiṭhaśra vaṇamananādīdārḍhyād ātmasākṣātkāre sati mokṣaḥ.*

11) SB 28, 17–19: *anayoś ca pakṣayoḥ buddhibhedāj jīvanānātvam. pratibimbasya ca pāramārthikatvāj jahadajahallakṣaṇaiva tattvamādīpadeṣu.*

12) See Manabe 2016.

13) AS 534, 2–4: *nanu — “jīva īśo viśuddhā cit tathā jīveśayor bhidā/avidyā taccitor yogah ṣaḍ asmākam anādayaḥ!” iti prācāṃ vacanena...virodha iti cet, na, anādyatiriktasr̥ṣṭivivakṣaya eva dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭisvīkārāt...*

14) See fn. 1).

15) SB 53, 12f.: *kāraṇībhūtaraja-upahito brahmā sraṣṭā. hiraṇyagarbhas tu mahābhūtakāraṇatvābhāvān na brahmā, tathāpi sthūlabhūtasraṣṭṛtvāt kvacid brahmety upacaryate.*

16) See Manabe 2017.

17) See fn. 11).

18) BhGGAD 359, 6–8: *yady api darpaṇagataś caitrapratibimbahḥ svaṃ paraṃ ca na jñāti, acetanāṃśasyaiva tatra pratibimbītatvāt tathāpi citpratibimbāś cittvād eva svaṃ paraṃ ca jñāti. pratibimbapakṣe bimbacaitanya evopādhisthatvamātrasya kalpitāt. ābhāsapakṣe tasyānirvacanīyatve 'pi jaḍavilakṣaṇatvāt.*

19) In Saha 2014 which clarified the Advaita philosophy in the BhGGAD, there is no term *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭi*. Additionally, in Madhusūdana's commentary on *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 1.1.1–3, *dr̥ṣṭisr̥ṣṭivāda* also is not found.

## Abbreviations

AS *Advaitasiddhi of Madhusudanasarasvatī with the Commentaries Gauḍabrahmaṇandī, Viṭṭhaleśopādhyāyī, Siddhivyākhyā of Balabhadra, and a critical summary called Chaturgranthī by M. M. Ananta Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī.* Ed. M. M. Ananta Kṛṣṇa Śāstrī. Bombay: Pāndrūng Jāwajī, 1937.

BhGGAD *Srimadbhagavadgītā with the Commentaries Śrīmadśāṅkarabhāṣya with Ānandagiri, Nilakanṭhī, Bhāṣyotkarṣadīpikā of Dhanapati, Śrīdharī, Gūṭārthasaṃgraha of Abhinavaguptācārya, and Gūḍhārthadīpikā of Madhusūdana with Gūḍhārthatatvāloka of Śrīdharmadattaśarmā (Bhachchāśramā).* Ed. Wāsudev Laxmaṇ Shāstrī Paṇṣīkar. Bombay: Nirṇaya Sāgar Press, 1936 (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.).

SB *Siddhāntabindu of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī: Being a Commentary on the Daśaślokī of Śaṅkarācārya With two Commentaries Nyāya Ratnāvalī of Gauḍabrahmaṇanda and Laghuvyākhyā of Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha.* Ed. Tryambakram Śāstrī Vedāntācārya (The Kashi Sanskrit Series 65) Varanasi: Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, 1989 (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.).

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