Nikṣepa in *Tattvārthādhigamasūtra*: A Method for the Investigation of Words

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1. Introduction

The first chapter of the *Tattvārthādhigamasūtra* (TAAS) ¹⁾ is an explanation of the theory of knowledge which includes *pramāṇa* and *naya*. The word *jñāna* is defined in the first aphorism of the chapter (TAAS 1.1) as one of the three ways to attain liberation (*mokṣa*): the enlightened view (*samyagdarśana*), the enlightened knowledge (*jñāna*) and the enlightened action (*cāritra*). Among them, the enlightened knowledge depends on only to *pramāṇa* (TAAS 1.10), nevertheless *naya* is considered as important as *pramāṇa*. Thus in the sixth aphorism (TAAS 1.6) it is said that both *pramāṇa* and *naya* cause the understanding of seven *tattvas*: soul (*jīva*), material object (*ajīva*), the flow [of *karman*] (*āsrava*), binding [of *karman*] (*bandha*), stopping [the flow] (*saṃvara*), extinction [of *karman*] (*nirjarā*) and liberation (*mokṣa*).

However, to investigate the function of these seven *tattvas*, not just the two, *pramāṇa* and *nayas*, are indispensable. There is another prerequisite for the understanding of these seven *tattvas*. It is *nikṣepa*, which is one of the ways of investigation (*anuyogadvāra*). In the fifth aphorism of TAAS (1.5) and its autocommentary, it is said that for the purpose of the investigation of *tattvas*, one should apply *nyāsa*, that is, *nikṣepa*. From this point of view, one may say that this *nikṣepa*, too, is as important as *pramāṇa* and *naya*. But, though there are a large number of studies on these two, little attention has been paid, so far, to *nikṣepa*. In this paper, I will examine previous research, and compare the definition of *nikṣepa* in TAAS with its special features as exemplified in the *Anuyogadvārasūtra* passage.

2. Review of previous works on *nikṣepa*

The earliest and most indispensable research on *nikṣepa* is found in K. K. Dixit's *Jaina*

Ontology.²⁾ In this work, he discusses almost all philosophical terms of Jaina thought. *Nikṣepa* is one of them. Dixit emphasizes that there is a relation between *nikṣepa* and *anuyogadvāras* which are ways of investigation for the old āgamas. Briefly, the characteristics of *nikṣepa* highlighted here are two: 1. *nikṣepa* is one of the *anuyogadvāras*, and 2. it is fourfold: *nāma*, *sthāpanā*, *dravya*, and *bhāva*. In the section on the “*Anuyogadvārasūtra*,” he defines *nikṣepa* as follows:³⁾

- *nāma-āvaśyaka*: anything arbitrarily given the name *āvaśyaka*
- *sthāpanā-āvaśyaka*: any physical thing given the shape of *āvaśyaka*
- *dravya-āvaśyaka*
 - *āgamato*: one who knows *āvaśyaka* but is not at present exercising the respective cognitive function.
 - *noāgamato*: 1. the dead body of one who had known *āvaśyaka* (*jñāyakaśarīra*), 2. the newborn body of one who will know *āvaśyaka* (*bhāvi*), 3. *āvaśyaka* from the standpoint of the former external appearance (*tadvyatirikta*).
- *bhāva-āvaśyaka*
 - *āgamato*: one who knows *āvaśyaka* and at present exercises the concerned cognitive function.
 - *noāgamato*: *āvaśyaka* from the standpoint of spirit or internal reality.

“*Āvaśyaka*” is the first element of the title *Āvaśyaka-sūtra*, and for this reason, it is the first target of *nikṣepa*. To teach the correct meaning of every word of the āgamas to pupils, ancient teachers brought out certain meanings of the words through investigations like the *āvaśyaka* example above, and then according to actual context they “fixed” (*ni-√kṣip*) the suitable meaning.

Three years after Dixit’s work, Alsdorf published an article about *nikṣepa*.⁴⁾ It is the first article that treats of *nikṣepa* exclusively. As a scholar focusing on the *Uttarādhyāyana-sūtra*, he takes the introduction of the *Uttarādhyāyanasūtra* to elaborate on *nikṣepa*. Though he does not mention Dixit’s work, he also takes into account the classification of *nikṣepa* based on the *Anuyogadvārasūtra*.

Bhatt⁵⁾ comprehensively enumerates examples of *nikṣepa* in old āgamic texts. However, the *nikṣepa* he mainly deals with is a different type of *nikṣepa* that consists of *dravya*, *kṣetra*, *kāla* and *bhāva*, and is considered a prototype of our *nikṣepa*. This type of *nikṣepa* is also important, but as this has no connection with the present subject, we leave it for another occasion.

Based on previous researches, Fujinaga⁶⁾ distinguishes two historical streams: 1. TAAS

and its commentaries, 2. texts not written as commentaries of any āgamic text. He also shows how *nikṣepa* is recognized in each stream.

An exemplification of *nikṣepa* is seen not only in the *Anuyogadvārasūtra* as Dixit mentioned, but also in other āgamic texts. For example, in Jinabhadra's *Viśeṣāvaśyakabhāṣya* (vv. 24–78), where definitions similar to those in the *Anuyogadvārasūtra* are found. As examples of such definitions found in other āgamic texts will be taken up in a future study, I now limit myself to those in the “āgamic stream,” to use the distinction adopted by Fujinaga.

Among four types of *nikṣepa* described in this stream, the last two (*dravya* and *bhāva*), subdivided into *āgamato/noāgamato*, are related to the concepts of cognition and time, and provide important source material for our definition and classification of *nikṣepa*.

3. *nikṣepa* in TAAS

3.1. Definition of 4 *nikṣepas*

nāmasthāpanādravyabhāvatas tannyāsaḥ//5//

By means of “name,” “figure,” “entity” and “condition,” the specification of those [*tattvas* is done]. (TAAS 1.5)

This is the definition of *nikṣepa* in TAAS 1.5, which is followed by the autocommentary. In the commentary, first the word “jīva” is “nikṣepized.”

nāma samjñākarma ity anarthāntaram/ cetanāvato 'cetanasya vā dravyasya jīva iti nāma kriyate/ sa nāmajīvaḥ// yaḥ kāṣṭhapustacitrakarmākṣanikṣepādiṣu sthāpyate jīva iti sa sthāpanājīvo devat-āpratikṛtivad indro rudraḥ skando viṣṇur iti//

“Name” and “denotation” are the same. A name such as “soul” is coined for a thing living or not living. That is “soul as name.” “Soul as figure” is the soul which is represented in a sculpture, clay figure, picture, or the axis of a dice.⁷⁾ For example, a figure of god: Indra, Rudras, Skanda, or Viṣṇu.

There are only minor differences between these two (*nāma* and *sthāpanā*) in TAAS and the same as defined in āgamic stream.

dravyajīva iti guṇaparyāyaviyuktah prajñāsthāpito 'nā dipārīṇāmikabhāvayukto jīva ucyate/

That is “soul as entity” which is 1. devoid of its eternal quality (*guṇa*) and temporal quality (*paryāya*), 2. only based on a concept, and 3. connected with the eternal and natural condition [of soul] (*anā dipārīṇāmikabhāva*).

Then follows the definition of “condition.”

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Nikṣepa in *Tattvārthādhigamasūtra* (M. UEDA)

*bhāvato jīvā aupāśamikakṣāyikakṣayaupāśamikaudāyikapāriṇāmikabhāvayuktā upayogalakṣaṇāḥ
saṃsāriṇo muktāś ca dividhā vakṣyante//*

“Souls as conditions” are 1. connected with five conditions of soul (*aupāśamika*, *kṣāyika*, *kṣayaupāśamika*, *audāyika*, *pāriṇāmika*), 2. as well as awareness (*upayoga*), and 3. are divided into two classes (*saṃsārin* and *mukta*).

It is noteworthy that this “soul as entity” and “soul as condition” are not subdivided.

As we can see above, the definitions of *dravya* and *bhāva* are very different. Why did these differences occur? It is possible to seek an answer to this question in the previous sūtras of TAAS where “*jīva*” is defined.

3.2. The background of *nikṣepa*

*samyagdarśanaññānacāritrāṇi mokṣamārgaḥ//1// tattvārthaśraddhānam. samyagdarśanam//2//
tan nisargād adhigamād vā//3// jīvājīvāsravabandhasaṃvaranirjarāmokṣās tattvam//4//*

1. The path to liberation is constituted of the right view, knowledge, and conduct. 2. [Among them,] right view is the faith in truth. 3. [The faith results] spontaneously or from understanding [the truth]. 4. The truth is soul, material object, the flow [of *karman*], binding [of *karman*], stopping [the flow of *karman*], extinction [of *karman*] and liberation.

Thus, “*jīva*” is the first among the *tattvas*, and this is the reason why in the TAAS commentary it becomes the first object of *nikṣepa*. But why, then, do the seven *tattvas* need to be investigated? We can seek an answer for this question in the second and third aphorisms. The right view, one of the causes of liberation, is produced from the understanding of truth (*tattva*), and complete understanding of the truth is achieved through the method of investigation, *nikṣepa*.

The fact that the word “*tattva*” is the first element of the title *Tattvārthādhigamasūtra* can be considered as another reason why the word “*tattva*” is the target of *nikṣepa* in the commentary. Because in the āgama period, when the *nikṣepa* method is used, even the title of a text is the object of investigation. It should be noted that, in TAAS, *nikṣepa* which is just a method for the investigation of the meaning a word becomes important even for the achievement of liberation.

4. Conclusion

From these remarks it becomes clear that the characteristics of *nikṣepa* as presented in āgama texts, and as discussed in TAAS and its autocommentary, are noticeably different, mainly with regard to *dravya* and *bhāva*. This is due to the innovation of TAAS. To wit, as

seen in the previous section, *nikṣepa* is related to the doctrine of truth (*tattvas*) and that of liberation. For this reason, the word “*jīva*,” which is added to an afterwise coherent list of *tattvas*, needs to be investigated.

Subsequently, did all logicians adopt the definition of *nikṣepa* as defined in TAAS and its autocommentary? Are the subdivisions of “*dravya*” and “*bhāva*” lost in the later period? The answer is negative: Even in later commentaries of TAAS, some logicians define *nikṣepa* following āgamas, while others do so following TAAS and its autocommentary. Therefore, an examination of other commentaries of TAAS is called for.

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- 1) *Tattvārthādhigama* by Umāsvāti being in the original sanskrit with the Bhāshya by the author himself. Edited by Mody Keshavlal Premchand, Bibliotheca Indica New Series, No. 1044. 2) Dixit, K. K. *Jaina Ontology*. L. D. Series 31. Ahmedabad 1971. 3) Dixit [1971: pp. 67–68]. 4) Alsdorf, L. “*nikṣepa*—A Jaina Contribution to Scholastic Methodology,” in *Kleine Schriften*. Wiesbaden 1974. pp. 257–265. 5) Bhatt, B. *The Canonical Nikṣepa*. *Studies in Jaina Dialectics*. Indologia Berolinensis Band 5. Leiden 1978. 6) Sin Fujinaga, *Nikṣepa*, *Journal of Jaina Studies*. Jaina Studies. 2006. pp. 1–15. 7) At this moment, the meaning of *akṣanikṣepa* is not clear.

〈Key words〉 Jaina, *nikṣepa*, *Tattvārthādhigamasūtra*

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