KARMA-YONI

Megumu Honda

Of the Tattvasamāsa¹⁾ four sūtras viz. 10th., 11th., 13th. and 22th. tell us the unique theories previously not well-known in the other Sāṃkhya texts.

pañcā 'bhibuddhayaḥ. (10)

The Sarvopakāriṇī, one of the coms., says “The things (*vastu*) are understood (*budh*) or known (*jñā*) closely (*abhitas*) through them, so (they are) *abhibuddhi* i. e. organs of perception (*buddhīndriya*) called eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin which give knowledge of color, sound, smell, taste and touch.” According to the Tattvayāthārthadīpana, Vivaraṇa and Vṛtti, however, *abhibuddhi* never means *buddhīndriya* but the function (*vṛtti*) of thirteen instruments.

- 1) buddhi.....*adhyavasāya* (or *vyavasāya*) “It should be done (*idaṃ karaṇīyam*).”
 - 2) ahaṅkāra.....*abhimāna* “I do (*ahaṃ karomi*).”
 - 3) manas.....*icchā, vāñchā, saṅkalpa*.
 - 4) buddhīndriya.....*kartavyatā* “This is the self-nature of thing (*etat vastu-svarūpaṃ*).”
 - 5) karmendriya.....*kriyā* “This should be done thus (*ittham etat kartavyam*)”
- pañca karma-yonayaḥ.* (11)

The Sarvopakāriṇī says “Five organs as origins of action i. e. organs or means (*kāraṇa*) of (five) actions viz. speaking (*vacana*), seizing (*ādāna*), walking (*viharāṇa*), excretion (*utsarga*) and pleasure (*ānanda*). They are called speaking organ (*vāc*), hand (*pāṇi*), foot (*pāda*), anus (*pāyu*) and the organs of generation (*upastha*).” What Sarvopakāriṇī means is that karma-yonis are nothing but karmendriyas. Other coms., however, explain them in the other way. These are 1) *dhṛti* or steadiness, 2) *śraddhā* or faith, 3) *sukhā* or favor, 4) *vividiṣā* or wish to know and 5) *avividiṣā* or incapacity to know.

1) To keep up one's own belief (*pratiti*) or promise (*pratijñā*) in words (*vāc*), deed (*karman*) and thought (*saṅkalpa*)²⁾, and being situated and fixed on it——

these are indeed the definition of *dhṛti*. 2) Absence of malice (*anasūya*)³⁾, abstinence (*brahmacarya*), performance of sacrifice for one's own sake (*yajana*) as well as for the sake of others (*yājana*), penance (*tapas*), making (*dāna*) as well as receiving (*pratigraha*) gifts, purification (*śauca*)⁴⁾—these are recorded in the Smṛtis as the definition of *śraddhā*. 3) One who desires happiness (*sukha*) will practise learning (*vidyā*) (of Veda), (good) deed (*karman*) and penance (*tapas*). He who aims at the expiation (*prāyaścitta*) is always happy. 4) The origin of wisdom (*prajñā*) of the contemplated ones (*dhyāyin*). This (primary matter) should be understood as one (*eka*), different (from the soul) (*prthak*), eternal (*nitya*), unconscious (*acetana*) and imperturbable (*akṣobhya*)⁵⁾, making the cause and the effect properly. The wish to know (*vividiṣā*) indeed is a function (*vṛtti*) which belongs to the primary matter. 5) Like the one who is bewildered by the mist of poison (Vivecana), or who has internal organ commixed with the honey (called) an object of sense (Vṛtti), or who has drunk poison or who is sleeping or who is intoxicated (Yuktidīpikā).

It is quite interesting that this interpretation of *karmayoni*, said in verses, are also found in the Yuktidīpikā which, before citing the stanzas, introduces following summary.

“These (functions of *prāṇa* and so on) come from the origin of action (*karmayoni*). Discharged from *mahat* and generated by *rajas*, they become five origins of action in a state of egg (*aṇḍa*).” And the author cites a stanza.

“Though discharged from the *buddhi*, yet not attaining to distinctive mark (*lakṣaṇa*) of knowledge (*jñāna*), because it is the (mere) origin (*yoni*) of knowledge—such an operation is the origin (of action) like an egg of the hen.”

“First the characteristics of them are; 1) *dhṛti* means withdrawing one's resolution. 2) *śraddhā* means the state of seed (*bīja*) (to determine) what should be done by all means among the duties announced in the scriptures without hankering after the reward. 3) *sukhā* means the effort through the longing for both worldly and scriptural reward. 4) *vividiṣā* means the will to know. 5) *avividiṣā* means the abstaining from it.”

Besides these definitions the Yuktidīpikā adds their *viśayas* or spheres and their *guṇas* or constituents. Given scheme will be as follows;

(3)

KARMA-YONI (M. Honda)

	(viṣaya)	(guṇa)
dhṛti	sarva	rajas, tamas
śraddhā	āśrama	sattva, rajas
sukhā	dṛṣṭā-nuśravika	sattva, tamas
vividiṣā	vyakta ⁶⁾	rajas
avividiṣā	avyakta	tamas

“He who will know the five origins of action together with the definitions and their spheres and that these are connected with guṇas—him I think to be the best among ascetics.”

Coms. of the Tattvasamāsa classify the five karmayonis into two.

“The four viz. *dhṛti*, *śraddhā*, *avividiṣā* and *sukhā* should be known (to lead to) bondage (*bandha*), whereas *vividiṣā* is settled towards liberation (*mokṣa*).”

The Yuktidīpikā gives following conclusion;

“Take the seed of the four yonis (except *avividiṣā*) as merit (*dharma*). Reflect even *avividiṣā* towards the causes which bring about undesirable results. He who devotes himself towards merit and others, makes a retreat from its adversary, takes pleasure in *sattva*, abstains from self-conceit, abides in knowledge and has the purified yoni—such a man soon reaches the highest brahman.”

“Having established that the five yonis are the causes of merit and others, he who has practised them will, because he is highly cultivated, not go downward any more.”

These five origins of action seem to have their source in the Bhagavadgītā⁷⁾.

“Learn from me these five causes, which are declared in the *Sāṃkhya* doctrine, in order to perform all actions !” (xviii. 13)

And these five causes are; 1) the (material) basis (*adhiṣṭhāna*), 2) the agent (*kartṛ*), 3) the instrument (*karana*), 4) the motion (*ceṣṭā*) and 5) the fate (*daiva*). They do not correspond with the five karma-yonis, but later on the Gītā gives reference to *dhṛti*.

“Free from attachment, not talking of ‘I’, accompanied by *dhṛti* and effort, unchanged in success or failure, —such an agent is called one of *sattva*.” (xviii. 26)

“The division of *buddhi* and *dhṛti*, also, is threefold according to *guṇa*.” (xviii. 29)

And the definition of *dhṛti* is given in xviii. 33–35, among which,

“*dhṛti* with which one holds fast the activities of mind, life-breaths and senses, and which is unswerving *yoga*—that *dhṛti* is of *sattva*.” (xviii. 33) seems to deserve special attention. The definition of *sukha*⁸⁾ follows in xviii. 36–39.

“Which in the beginning is like poison, but in maturity like nectar, that is called the *sukha* of *sattva*.” (37) “(Springing) from union of the senses and their objects, that which in the beginning is like nectar, (but) in maturity like poison—that *sukha* is recorded as of *rajas*.” (38) “The *sukha* which both in the beginning and in its consequence deludes the self, arising from sleep, sloth, and heedlessness—is declared to be of *tamas*.” (39)

These description remind the reader rather those of *avividiṣā* in the coms. of the *Tattvasamāsa* and the *Yuktidīpikā*.

As for *śraddhā* the *Gītā* gives the words *tapas*, *śauca* (42), *dāna* (42) in this eighteenth chapter, but we should rather seek the doctrine of *śraddhā* in the preceeding chapter xvii called *śraddhā-traya-vibhāga-yoga*, where we find, for instance, following words; *yajña*, *tapas*, *dāna* (7), *śauca*, *brahmacarya* (14), *aphalakāṅkṣi* (11, 17), *anupakārin* (20).

Both the *Gītā* and the *Yuktidīpikā* try to differentiate *dhṛti*, *sukha* and *buddhi* or five karmayonis by three *guṇas*.

As a conclusion we cannot ignore the obvious fact that the doctrine of five karmayonis has got some of its materials from the *Bhagavadgītā*.

pañca karmā-'tmānaḥ. (13)

The *Sarvopakāriṇī* does not give a clear explanation. Other coms. expound them in the following scheme.

vaikārika.....śubha-karma-kartṛ

taijasa.....aśubha-k.-k.

bhūtādi.....mūḍha-k.-k.

sānumāna.....śubha-mūḍha-k.-k.

niranumāna.....aśubha-mūḍha-k.-k.

According to the Sāṃkhyakārikā 25 *vaikṛta* is of *sattva*, *taijasa* of *rajas* and *bhūtādi* of *tamas*. The eighteenth chapter (st. 23-28) of the *Bhagavadgītā* we have just examined above mentions *karṭṛ* divided into three by *guṇas*.

“Free from attachment, not talking of ‘I’, accompanied by *dhṛti* and effort, unchanged in success or failure—such *karṭṛ* is called one of *sattva*.” (26)

“Passionate, seeking the results of action, greedy, injurious, impure, accompanied by joy and grief—such *karṭṛ* is celebrated as one of *rajas*.” (27)

“Undisciplined, vulgar, arrogant, tricky, dishonest, lazy, despondent and procrastinating—such *karṭṛ* is said to be of *tamas*.” (28)

Then we can presume that, if *karmātman* be identical with *karṭṛ*, at least first three in the doctrine of five *karmātmans* may take some of their source from *karṭṛ* in the *Bhagavadgītā*.

trividho mokṣaḥ. (22)

This kind of doctrine is not found in any other Sāṃkhya texts. The coms. run thus;

“1) By increase of the knowledge (*jñāna*) and 2) by abstaining (*uparata*) there will be the cessation of virtue (*dharma*) and wickedness (*adharma*), then 3) from the cessation of virtue and wickedness (there will be) the isolation (*kaivalya*). Thus is declared. This is said.

The primary liberation indeed is by the knowledge, the second by cessation of the affection, but the third by cessation of the whole. (Thus) is named the characteristics of the liberation⁹⁾.” (Tattvavivecana)

“1) By increase of the knowledge there is the first¹⁰⁾ (liberation) in the form of suppression (*nivṛtti*) of the ignorance (*avidyā*). 2) By cessation of the affection there is the second (liberation) in the form of calmness (*upaśama*) of the sense-organs. 3) By cessation of the whole¹¹⁾ where namely virtue and wickedness do not work, there is the third (liberation) in the form of non-origination of virtue and wickedness. These three liberations are secondary because it (can) be (got) through the medium of knowledge. The principal liberation is nothing but the everlasting suppression of threefold misery.” (Yā-thārthadīpana)

“1) By increase of the knowledge, 2) by tranquilizing the affection of sense-

organs and 3) by cessation of the whole. 1) By increase of the knowledge (and) 2) by tranquilizing the affection of sense-organ there is 3) the cessation of one's own virtue and wickedness, and by the cessation of virtue and wickedness there is isolation." (Vṛtti)

"1) The first (liberation) occurs for the man who understands that to have performance of pious deeds and others as his highest (aim) is nothing but the best (way) to perceive the nature of the soul (*puruṣa*). 2) Then (the second liberation occurs for the man who understands)¹²⁾ that the state of change even in the elements (*bhūta*) and the sense-organs. 3) Then the third liberation occurs when knowing¹³⁾ the souls (*ātman*) separately from the primary matter (*prakṛti*). Although the first and the second are not the real liberation, still one should see that they are used to be said liberations because they remove the bondage to the extent of their partial discriminative discernment (*aikadeśikā-nyāta-khyati*)." (Sarvopakāriṇī)

1) Ed. in the Sāṃkhya-saṃgraha by V. P. Dvivedin, Benares 1908-21, Ch. SS. work 50. See also T. R. Chintamani: A note on the date of the Tattvasamāsa, JORM. vol. II. p. 145ff.

2) "body (*kāye*)" according to the Vivecana.

3) Self-recitation of the Vedas (*svādhyāya*) according to the Vṛtti.

4) Burnt offering (*homa*) according to the Vivecana, the Yāthārthadīpana and Vṛtti.

5) *asatkārya* (Yuktidīpikā).

6) P. Chakravarti's edition has *vyakti*. Here *vividīṣā*, however, should mean manifested, clear or distinct, whereas *avividīṣā* should mean not manifest, indistinct or vague.

7) P. Chakravarti thinks that *pañca-yony ugravakram* in the Śvet. Up. I. 5 must be the earliest reference to our *karma-yoni* (*Origin and Development of the sāṃkhya system of thought*, New Delhi 1975 p. 275), but I cannot find the close relation between them.

8) *sukhā*, a feminine gender, in coms. on the Tattvasamāsa and the Yuktidīpikā seems to be in accordance with *yoni*.

9) This stanza is referred to in the Yāthārthadīpana and the Vṛtti too.

10) Read *prathamā* in stead of *ekāḥ*.

11) Read *kṛtsna-* in stead of *kṛcchra-*.

12) Lacking in the text.

13) Read *jñānataḥ prakṛti-rūpāt* in stead of *jānataḥ prakṛti-rūpas*.