vr̥tti and *jñāna*

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In the Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Vedānta literature, the word *vr̥tti* appears as the last member in the compound words such as *buddhivr̥tti*, *cittavr̥tti* or *antaḥkaraṇavr̥tti*. This *vr̥tti* is usually understood to mean “function”, “operation” or “activity”, relying on the interpretation of the commentators who interpret it as *kriyā*, *vyāpāra* or *karman*¹⁾. In some cases, however, the word *vr̥tti* is replaced by the word *jñāna* (cognition, knowledge)²⁾ and the commentators interpret it as *jñāna*. The aim of this paper is the investigation of the grounds that *vr̥tti* is interpreted as *jñāna*³⁾.

vr̥tti and *jñāna* occur in the following context. Vācaspatimiśra, in his commentary on the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 5, says as follows⁴⁾:

The determination (*adhyavasāya*) is the function of *buddhi*, i.e., *jñāna*. When the function of the sense-organs (*indriya*) which come in contact with the objects operates, then it produces the suppression of *tamas* in *buddhi*. The abundant state of *sattva* [which follows the suppression of *tamas*] is called the determination, *vr̥tti* or *jñāna*. This is the means of cognition (*pramāṇa*). And the influence over the soul-power is called the result (*phala*) [of the means of cognition], *pramā* or *bodha*.

From this passage it is evident that both *vr̥tti* and *jñāna* are synonymous with the abundant state of *sattva* in *buddhi*. And here we must pay attention to the fact that this is the means of cognition. Although we are inclined to regard *jñāna* as the result of the means of cognition, according to Vācaspatimiśra *jñāna* is not the result of the means of cognition. Therefore this *jñāna* is limited in scope. This is also clear from the fact that the influence over the soul-power is called the result of the means of cognition.

Furthermore Vyāsa, in his commentary on the *Yogasūtra* 1-7, comments

on the means of cognition and the result of it as follows :

citta is affected by an external thing through the channel of the sense-organs. After that, [*citta*-]*vr̥tti* makes it (an external thing) its own object..... This *vr̥tti* is the means of direct cognition (*pratyakṣa pramāṇa*). The result [of it] is *cittavr̥ttibodha* belonging to *puruṣa*, which is undistinguished from [*cittavr̥tti*].

In the same way as the comment of Vācaspatimiśra, *vr̥tti* is the means of cognition and the result of it is *cittavr̥ttibodha*. And we can infer that this *vr̥tti* is called *jñāna* from the fact that the misapprehension (*viparyaya*), the mental construction (*vikalpa*), the sleep (*nidrā*) and the memory (*smṛti*) are enumerated as other *cittavr̥ttis* in the *Yogasūtra* 1-6.

Although, as indicated above, *vr̥tti* and *jñāna* are used to mean the means of cognition, the question remains : why is *vr̥tti* interpreted as *jñāna* ? This question will be capable of solution by the investigation of the usage of the word *jñāna*⁵⁾. Madhusūdanasarasvatī and Dharmarāja explain it as follows⁶⁾ :

In the respect of *vr̥tti* the use of the word *anubhūti*, i.e., the word *jñāna*, is secondary, because we can not use the word *anubhūti* to directly indicate not-*ātman*. Because [*vr̥tti*] is the determinant of *jñāna*, there is the figurative use of *jñāna* in the respect of *vr̥tti*.

Furthermore Vijñānabhikṣu, in his commentary on the *Sāṃkhasūtra*, illustrates the usage of the word *pramā* as follows⁷⁾ :

(1) If *bodha* belonging to *puruṣa* is *pramā*, then *buddhivr̥tti* is the means of cognition. And (2) if *buddhivr̥tti* is *pramā*, then the contact of the sense-organ with the object is the means of cognition.⁸⁾

Here he suggests the possibility that *pramā* is used to indicate both *bodha* belonging to *puruṣa* and *buddhivr̥tti*. But after rejecting case (2), he calls case (1) the principal conclusion (*mukhyasiddhānta*)⁹⁾ in conformity with the theory of Vyāsa¹⁰⁾. This fact in itself shows that case (2) is called the secondary or figurative conclusion (*upacārasiddhānta*) and *buddhivr̥tti* is called the secondary or figurative *pramā*.

These explanations of the word *jñāna* or *pramā* clearly show that in the respect of *vr̥tti* there is not the principal use of the word *jñāna*. As is

well known, in the Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Vedānta philosophy *jñāna* is regarded as identical with the absolute existence, namely *ātman* or *puruṣa*. In this case *jñāna* is specially called *bodha* or *anubhūti*. And in the respect of this absolute existence there is the principal use of the word *jñāna*.

In transitory life, however, *jñāna* is never identified with *ātman* or *puruṣa*. It is no doubt that this dilemma is known in the Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Vedānta philosophy. Hence, I would like to point out that in order to extricate from this dilemma, *vṛtti* is interpreted as *jñāna*.

- 1) cf. *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī* 12. p. 110²³ ed. by S.A. Srinivasan, Hamburg, 1967; *Yuktidīpikā* 28. p. 102⁹ ed. by R.C. Pandeya, Delhi, 1967; *Jayamaṅgalā* 28. p. 92⁴ ed. by S. Vaṅṅiya, Varanasi, 1970. etc. It is interesting to note that T.M.P. Mahadevan translates this word as "psychosis". *The Philosophy of Advaita*, Madras, 1957, p. 13, fn. 2.
- 2) See *Tattvavaiśārādī* 3-1. p. 119¹⁵ ed. by R. S. Bodas, Bombay, 1917; *Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya* 1-89. p. 45¹⁹⁻²⁰ ed. by R. Garbe, Cambridge, Mass., 1943; *Pātañjalayogasūtrabhāṣyavivaraṇa* 2-18. p. 179¹⁴ ed. by P.S.R. Sastri and S.R.K. Sastri, Madras, 1952. etc.
- 3) I am now preparing another paper which deals with *vṛtti* in detail.
- 4) *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī* 5. p. 80²³⁻²⁷.
- 5) cf. A. Wayman: "Notes on the Sanskrit term *jñāna*", *JAOS.*, Vol. 75, No. 4, 1955, pp. 253-268.
- 6) *Advaitasiddhi*, ed. by N.S. Ananta Krishna Sastri, Delhi, 1982, p. 773⁶⁻⁷; *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* 1-4. p. 8³ ed. by S.S.S. Sastri, Madras, 1984³. Dharmarāja quotes the sentence "*antaḥkaraṇavṛttau jñānatvopacārāt*" from *Pañcapādikāvivarāṇa* written by Prakāśātman in order to prove his theory. We might identify this sentence with the sentence of line 17, page 41 in the text (edited by Rāmaśāstrī Bhāgavatācārya at Benares in 1892) where the word *antaḥkaraṇa-parināma* is used instead of the word *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*.
- 7) *Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya* 1-87. p. 43¹⁷⁻¹⁸.
- 8) This interpretation is based on the understanding of the instrument (*karāṇa*) of *pramāṇa* as "the cause which is never dissociated from connection with effect (*phalāyogavyavacchinna-kāraṇa*)".
- 9) *bodha* belonging to *puruṣa* is called *mukhyaḥpramā* by Vijñānabhikṣu. *Yoga-vārttika* 1-7. p. 32²³ ed. by N. Misra, Varanasi, 1982.
- 10) *Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya* 1-87. p. 43²¹⁻²⁴.

〈Key Words〉 *vṛtti*, *jñāna*, *pramāṇa*, *bodha*

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