The Position of *prasaṃkhyāna* as an Aspect in the Theory of Practice by Sureśvara

Masahiko TANIGUCHI

The study on hand aims at clarifying the content and position of *prasaṃkhyāna* in the theory of practice by Sureśvara (c. 720-770 AD)

First, in the *Sambandhokti*, that is, the introductory prose section of the *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* (hereafter, abbreviated as *Nais*)¹⁾ 3.90 that outlines Sureśvara's criticism of the exponents of *prasaṃkhyāna*, a certain exponent explains *prasaṃkhyāna* as follows :

"It is said that *prasaṃkhyāna* is the repeated application of the mind to reasoning by means of the logical method (*yukti*) called *anvayavyatireka*, which is its turn is applied to the meaning of revelatory sentences like ' That thou art' in the Śruti. And when practiced, it gives rise to perfect knowledge by increasing the correct knowledge and not by increasing the concentration on one single object" (for reasons of space only the translation is presented here).

According to this assertion, the correct knowledge to be increased does already exist in man before *prasaṃkhyāna* is practiced. Further, as regards *anvayavyatireka*, it represents a method of interpretation of the Śruti, and Sureśvara goes so far as to assert that this is indispensable for obtaining an understanding of *vākyārtha* (meaning of revelatory sentences)²⁾. Sureśvara refutes the above-mentioned argument in *Nais* 3.90 as follows :

(90) What arises from accumulating *abhyāsa* is only the concentration of mind. Actually the various means of knowledge do not bring about the knowledge of its objects as a result of repetition.

Here *abhyāsa* is used in place of *prasaṃkhyāna*. Furthermore, another exponent of *prasaṃkhyāna* appears in *Nais* 3.123 who asserts that the revelatory sentences present the knowledge of *ātman* only indirectly, and in *Nais* 3.124 Sureśvara's response goes as follows :

However, we do not support the view that correct understanding is produced by *prasaṃkhyāna*,

which represents nothing but the repetition of reasoning (by logical method) and of the revelatory sentences of the Śruti. "Wherefore?"

(124) If reasoning and revelation sentences did not bring about correct knowledge for him earlier, what sort of completely new thing (*apūrva*) could result from their repetition?

Afterwards however, he makes a turn and approves *prasamkhyāna* conditionally :

Then, if someone says that he is not able to maintain his life without *prasamkhyāna*, we will acknowledge it only in *śravaṇa* (hearing) etc. "On what conditions?"

(125) We will accept the method of repetition in *prasamkhyāna* in hearing contents related to *ātman*, Man will come to an understanding after correctly hearing what he heard only a little bit or fragmentarily.

The fact that the term *prasamkhyāna* is simply replaced by *abhyāsa*, and the wording "the method of repetition in *prasamkhyāna*"³⁾ in *Nais* 3.125, suggest that he did not acknowledge the method of practice as advocated the exponents of *prasamkhyāna* but rather approved the method of "repetition" contained therein.

However, according to preceding studies⁴⁾ the below-mentioned points have already been clarified. Sureśvara regards *prasamkhyāna* as an extremely preliminary and auxiliary element in the practice and acknowledges its usefulness for physical and mental actions like religious rites or meditation and logical reasoning. In practice *prasamkhyāna* is carried out on the same stage together with *śravaṇa* and *manana* (reasoning) ; as a result *prasamkhyāna* enables those, who cannot understand *vākyaṛtha* in a single *śravaṇa* and *manana*, to obtain an understanding of this religious teaching. According to preceding study by Shoun Hino⁵⁾ the point is clarified that for Sureśvara, as a consequence of practicing the repetition of *śravaṇa* and *manana*, the state in which an understanding of *vākyaṛtha* has been obtained is *nididhyāsana*, and what makes up the term *manana* is nothing but *anvayavyatireka*.

From it the following conclusion can be derived.

Sureśvara takes out only the element of "repetition" from the *prasamkhyāna* and calls the "repetition" of *śravaṇa* and *manana*, which are mental acts for illuminating *vākyaṛtha*, "*prasamkhyāna*". Therefore, in the explanatory description of up to 14 stages in the *sambandhokti* in *Nais* 1.52 the 10th stage of the "practice of yoga", *yogābhyāsa*⁶⁾, which contains *śravaṇa* and *manana*, again includes also *prasamkhyāna*. However, *śravaṇa* and *manana* are required for attaining *ātman*, and especially

anvayavyatireka that constitutes the term of *manana* is indispensable for clarifying *vākṃyārtha*. On one side the degree of necessity of *prasaṃkhyāna*, which is their "repetition", is determined by the capability of the practitioner. For those who understand *vākṃyārtha* in only one single *śravaṇa* and *manana* the repetition is therefore not necessary. As a result *prasaṃkhyāna*, while being in the very same way a mental action, ranks lower than *anvayavyatireka*. In addition, a point of analogy can also be discovered between religious rites and *prasaṃkhyāna*. Because religious rites that contribute to the purification of mind, too, are in their turn determined by the purity of the practitioner as regards their degree of necessity.

- 1) The text uses the following : *The Naiṣkarmyasiddhi of Sureśvarācārya with the Candrikā of Jñānottama*, Ed. the late Colonel G. A. Jacob. revised edition by M. Hiriyanna. Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series No. 38, 1925. 4th edition. Poona : Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1980.
- 2) Nais 2.9. The following research exists about the *anvayavyatireka* of Śaṅkara and Sureśvara : Hacker, P. [1950] *Untersuchungen über Texte des frühen Advaitavāda, 1. Die Schüler Śaṅkaras*. Mainz: Verlag der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, 1950, p. 1980, pp. 1999-2000; Mayeda, Sengaku [1978] "Sureśvara and 'Tat Tvam Asi,'" *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, Tokyo, 27-1, pp. 70-77 (in Japanese) Shoun Hino [1982] *Sureśvara's Vārtika on Yājñavalkya-maitreyī Dialogue, Brhadāranyakopaniṣad 2.4 and 4.5*. 2nd ed. Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass, 1991, pp. 47-53; Halbfass, W. [1991] *Tradition and Reflection*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991, pp. 162-180.
- 3) "*prasaṃkhyāne śrutāv asya nyāyo ' stv āmreḍanātmakah*"
- 4) M. Hiriyanna [1925] Introduction to the text shown in note 1 ; Introduction, pp. xiii-xxx ; Hacker loc. cit. pp. 1992-2012 ; Alston, A. J. [1971] *The Realization of the Absolute, the "Naiṣkarmyasiddhi" of Śrī Sureśvara*, translated by A. J. Alston. 2nd ed. London : Shanti Sadan, 1971 ; R. Balasubramanian [1988] *The Naiṣkarmyasiddhi of Sureśvara*. Ed. R. Balasubramanian. Madras University Philosophical Series No. 47. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1988.
- 5) Hino, loc. cit., pp. 22-25 ; Hino [1981] "Sureśvara on *nididhyāsana*," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, Tokyo, 29-2, pp. 164-165 (in Japanese)
- 6) Hacker, loc. cit., p. 1980 ; pp. 1995-1999 ; Hino, loc. cit, pp. 8-21.

〈Key Words〉 Sureśvara, *prasaṃkhyāna*, *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi*

(Graduate Student, Tokyo University)