Scripture, Men and Heaven:
Causal structure in Kumārila’s action-theory of bhāvanā

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Śabara’s conjunctive usage of bhāva, kriyā and bhāvanā
Interpreting Jaimini-sūtra 2.1.1, bhāvārthāh karmaśabdās tebhyaḥ kriyā pratīyeta ..., Śabara first clarifies his theory of bhāvanā. Though he has a developed idea of bhāvanā with its three elements, i.e. sādhya, sādhana and itikartavyata, he uses the terms bhāva and kriyā too as possible substitutes of bhāvanā, probably following the traditional terminology of action seen in the above sūtra, bhāvārthāh and kriyā. On the one hand he interprets yajeta as having a bhāva-structure: tathā yateta yathā yat kiñcid bhavati 1) or yāgāt svargo bhavati (A 2099.12). He also glosses it as svargasyotpattim (A 375.9) and phalasya ... nispatīḥ (A 375.8-9). On the other hand he interprets the same yajeta as yāgena svargam kuryāt (A 2106.17) and yāgena svargam bhāvayet (A 2114.7). 2)

Kumārila’s unification of all three as bhāvanā alone
Using Śabara’s concept of bhāvanā as a starting point, Kumārila develops the theory further with appropriate modifications. He singles out bhāvanā as representing the essential structure of all actions, i.e. the meaning of all finite verbs (ākhyātāni), because it is important for him to stress that all actions are essentially causal. Therefore he dismisses the other two, bhāva and kriyā, but by integrating rather than by excluding them. In his interpretation of the sūtra, he understands bhāva in a rather forced manner, through an unusual ‘etymology’ (vyutpatti), as an equivalent of bhāvanā (A 374.20-21). And he objects to Śabara’s straightforward interpretation of bhāva as “becoming” (A 386.16-17), for he needs to find in the sūtra some support for his concept of bhāvanā. But this does not mean that bhāva is completely discarded in his theory of action. It survives in bhāvanā, because bhāvanā essentially comprises the two, kriyā and bhāva (bhāvanā = kriyā + bhāva). Kriyā, on the other hand, is “upgraded” to be the same as bhāvanā through his skillful analysis.

Analysis of intransitive and transitive verbs
For this integration into bhāvanā,
Kumārila first analyses through sāmānādhikaranāya 3) the general structure of actions denoted by finite verbs, especially transitive ones, e.g. pacati, gacchati and so on, which denote kriyā, the meaning of a representative transitive karoti (A 376.25-26). Kriyā, the action of making, necessarily requires a kriyamāṇa, an object to be made, which is nothing but the agent of bhāva, the thing that becomes (i.e. arises). Thus he shows the general structure of transitive verbs to be: “The agent of becoming becomes the object of making” (A 377.9-10; kārttē kriyā → kārman = kārttē bhāva).

For further clarification he defines in contrast the two, bhāva and kriyā: bhāva he defines as “an action of the agent merely acquiring its own body [i.e. coming into existence]” (A 376.27-28); kriyā he defines as “an action of an agent which has [already] acquired [its own] body (i.e. existence)” and as “an action which aims at another [thing] acquiring [its] body (i.e. which aims at another thing’s coming into existence)” (A 377.7; A 376.28-29).

“Discovering” the universal structure of causal-action: prayojakavyāpāra and prayojyavyāpāra He next identifies this kriyā-structure as being nothing but causal. We can see this as an upgrading of kriyā to bhāvanā. The prayojaka, the agent of a causal action (hetu in the grammarian tradition), causes the prayojya, the object of the causal action, to become, i.e. makes it an agent of becoming (A 377.24-25; prayojaka → vyāpāra → prayojya → vyāpāra). He defines bhāvanā as “an action of the causal agent, which has as its subsidiary element the action of the caused object’, which is mentioned by a part of the same [causative] word [e.g. bhāvayati and vikīlayati]” (A 378.5-6; A 378.9). In this way Kumārila establishes causal actions as denoted by finite verbs, especially transitive ones. As he summarises himself, “Thus, through kriyā, bhāvanā is established in all finite verbs” (A 378.15).

General structure of causal-action Kumārila further proceeds to demonstrate, through the application of this kriyā-structure, that even intransitives and kṛdantas essentially have a causal sense (A 381.10; A 379.28). Thus, according to him, we can analyse any action as essentially causal.

Application of arthātmikā bhāvanā to śabdātmikā bhāvanā: Analysis of vidhi-structure Analysing the organic structure of Vedic rituals, Śabara developed his ideas about action and probably invented the concept of bhāvanā. Kumārila continues from Śabara’s idea and abstracts a universal causal-structure from all actions, not
only Vedic but also worldly, with the device of pravojakavyāpāra and pravojavy-
āpāra. The universal structure of causal-action, not restricted by Kumārila to Vedic
ritual actions, becomes ready to be applied to all kinds of actions, not only physical
but also verbal, injunction (vidhi) in particular, which we can easily see to be
relevant to ritual actions. This is evident in the same sūtra, Jaiminisūtra 2.1.1, eṣa
hy artho vidhīyate. 4) Also the word codanā, which is a synonym of vidhi and
upadeśa for Kumārila (Ślokavārttika autpattika, v. 11cd), has a causative form, as
shown e.g. by Śabara: ācāryacoditataḥ karomā (Frauwallner ed., 16.9-10). Kumārila
labelled the verbal action, i.e. the injunction, as śabdātmikā bhāvanā, in contrast
with which he named the physical (and mental) action arthātmikā bhāvanā (A 114.
14-15; A 378.20-21). Being a bhāvanā, an injunction is analyzed with a pravojak-
pravojya formulation. Scriptural passages, liṅḍis in particular, cause men to take
actions (liṅḍi → bhāvanā → puruṣa → bhāvanā).

Connecting śabdātmikā and arthātmikā bhāvanā As arthātmikā bhāvanā com-
prises three elements (aṃśas), śabdātmikā bhāvanā too requires three: the sādhyā
is *puruṣapravṛtti, i.e. arthātmikā bhāvanā (Ślokavārttika vākya, v. 275; A 114.17-18;
A 389.24); the sādhana is vidhijñāna (A 114.22-23); the itikartavyatā is prāṣast-
yajñāna. (A 114.23-24). To explain, Vedic injunctions, liṅḍis in particular, accomplish
men's taking action (arthātmikā bhāvanā) through vidhijñāna. For no one follows an
injunction without recognizing it to be an injunction. The vidhiśakti, though sufficient
by itself to prompt men, is further supported by the knowledge of a praiseworthiness
(prāṣastvajñāna), which is understood from the arthavāda-portion. 5) In this manner,
Kumārila succeeds in connecting two causal actions: liṅḍis make men take action,
which in turn causes heaven to arise (liṅḍi → bhāvanā → puruṣa → bhāvanā → svarga → bhāva).

Analysis and connection of adhyayanavidhi Arthātmikā bhāvanā is verbalized as
vāgena svargam bhāvayet, which is a gloss of a Vedic injunction svargakāmostya jayeta.
The agent of this command is the liṅḍis, the bhāvanā of which can be also verbalized
as vidhijñānena puruṣapravartanam bhāvayet (= puruṣaṁ pravartayet). 6) But if the
liṅḍīs are the agent of the commands to men to perform (ritual) actions, who is
it that commands them in turn to perform the action of commanding men? Kumā-
rila appoints the adhyayanavidhi, i.e. svādhyāyo 'dhyetavyah, to take this role of
“meta-injunction”, which orders other vidhis, including itself, to order men. 7) Thus Kumārila succeeds in interpreting both types of bhāvanā as having the same structure and verbalization.

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\text{adhyayanavidhi} \rightarrow \text{bhāvanā} \rightarrow \text{liṅgā} \rightarrow \text{bhāvanā} \\
\text{liṅgā} \rightarrow \text{bhāvanā} \rightarrow \text{puruṣa} \rightarrow \text{bhāvanā} \\
\text{puruṣa} \rightarrow \text{bhāvanā} \rightarrow \text{svarga} \rightarrow \text{bhāva}
\]

**Three layers of causal-action**: Kumārila’s framework of interpreting Vedic ritual

Starting out from Śabara’s concept of bhāvanā, Kumārila succeeds in showing that bhāvanā encompasses the entire process of Vedic ritual, from the *adhyayanavidhi* to heaven’s arising (bhāva), including all the subordinate necessary elements of prāṣṭāvyā and so on. Thus he establishes the Mīmāṃsā framework for interpreting the Vedas and Vedic rituals, namely a consistent three-layered structure of causal actions.

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1) Śābarabhāṣya ad 2.1.1: tathā yajeta yathā kimcid bhavati. Ānandāśrama first ed. (=A). 375.3. Madana Miśra (Bhāvanāvideka 23.1,166.3-167.2 in Ramaswami’s ed). clearly presupposes the reading yateta not yajeta. I also accept his yat, though there is a variant which omits it. Their witnesses too support the accepted readings, namely the Brhatī and the Rjuvimalā. 2) For further clarification of Śabara’s usage and intention, see K. KATAOKA “Naraseru no Kaishaku gaku”, Indo Tetsugaku Bukkyō gaku Kenkyu, 3,1995,47-60. 3) Mahābhāṣya ad 1.3.1: kim karoti? pacati. Cf. H. KURODA “Kumārila no Bhavana setsu ni tsuite (1)”, JIBS 28-1,1979,458-456. 4) Kumārila explains the content of esa... arthaḥ as kuryād yajinā svargam (A 375.25). 5) Tattvārāttika ad 1.2.7, A 114.25: tatra vidhiśaktir (-saktir-) Oxford ms., according to K. HARIKAI: Koten Indo Seiten Kaishaku gaku Kenkyū, Fukuoka, 1990,492; -vibhaktir A) avasidati, tām prāṣṭāvajñānam uttabhnāti. 6) A 114.17-20; HARIKAI (op. cit. 119) takes “pravartanan” as intransitive, as if a synonym of pravṛtti, but Kumārila seems to intend a causative, for he could have used pravṛtti instead of pravartana if he had intended an intransitive sense. But I agree that it is confusing, for logically we expect pravṛtti here, not pravartana, as a sādhyā. 7) A 114.16-17: svādhyāyādhyanavidhinetare sarve vidhiyākāḥ svādhyāyapadopattaś cātāma niyujyate bhāvayaḥ iti. HARIKAI (op. cit. 119) takes “ātma” as equivalent to puruṣa (probably following G. Jhā’s translation), but this is clearly not intended. See e.g. Nyāyasudhā, p.32; Ajitā, p.29 in Allahabad ed., part2, pp. 7-8 in Harikai’s ed.

(Key Words) Śabara, Kumārila, pravajaka, bhāvanā, adhyayanavidhi

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