



## Akalanka—as a Logician

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(I) Akalanka occupies a unique place in the development of Indian logic. He was one of the foremost Jaina logicians. If Kundakundācārya is to be considered as the father of Jaina logic, Akalanka cemented the foundations of Jaina logic and built a logical structure with depth and subtlety of thought. His writings are difficult to understand and even eminent logicians have expressed their profound admiration for the subtlety of thought and depth of vision in his writings. Prabhācandra, in the first part of his Nyāyakumudacandra has expressed his admiration for Akalanka and said that he was fortunate to have been able to study the writings of Akalanka, although his writings are full of subtlety of thought.<sup>1</sup> Vādirājasūri was amazed at the profundity of thought expressed in the writings of Akalanka. It is difficult to express in our words the profundity of thought contained in the writings of Akalankadeva.<sup>2</sup> The writings of Akalanka are so difficult for understanding that 'ordinary persons like me would not be able to explain much less comment on the writings'.<sup>3</sup> As Dharmakīrti is for Buddhist logic, Akalanka is for the Jaina logic. In the Śravaṇabeḷagola inscription, it has been stated that Akalanka is the Brahmaspati in the six darśanas.<sup>4</sup> After Ācārya Pūjyapāda Akalankadeva has been eulogised as the sun dispelling the darkness of ignorance arising out of the perversity of thought, as the sun clears darkness and gives light.<sup>5</sup>

(II) It is difficult to give a clear picture of the life-history of Akalanka. Similarly there is controversy regarding the period in which he lived. Some have suggested that Akalanka lived in the latter part of the 8th century on the basis of the interpretation on 'Vikramānka as 'samvat', as mentioned in the verse in the Akalankacarita.<sup>6</sup> He has been considered as the contemporary of Rājā Dantidurga alia Kriṣṇarājā of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty. The other view suggested by Sri Jugal Kishore Mukhtār fixed his date as the seventh century A. D. on the basis of the interpretation of the word Vikramārka as 'vikramasamvat'. Pandit Kailāścandra Śāstri is of the opinion that Akalanka's period must have been from 620 to 680 A.D. There is verse of Dhanañjaya in which the Pramāṇaśāstra of Akalanka has been mentioned with respect.<sup>7</sup> Ācārya Jinasena has mentioned the name of Akalanka in *Ādipūraṇa* with reverence and gratitude.<sup>8</sup> On the basis of the review of the various views about the date of Akalanka, Shri Nemichandra Śāstri has suggested that Akalanka must have lived in the latter half of the seventh century.<sup>9</sup>

It is as much difficult to give a coherent and authentic picture of his life-story as it is difficult to determine the age in which he lived, but one thing is certain that he must have been from the south. There is the mention in the Rājāvalikathe that Akalanka was the son of Puruṣottama the minister of the king Śubhatuṅga of Mānykheṭa. In the Praśasti of the first adhyāya of Tattvārtha-vārtika it has been suggested that he was the son of the king Laghuhavya, although it is difficult to identify the king. There is greater evidence to consider him as the son of the minister of the king Śubhatuṅga.<sup>10</sup> Some interesting incidents have been described in the Kathakoṣa of Prabhācandra. Akalanka and Niṣkalanka were two brothers. When they came of age, the parents tried to persuade them for marriage. But they refused to get married and enter into the life of 'ghastha', because once when they had gone along with their parents to a muni, the parents had taken the vow of brahmacharya for the period of one week in their presence. The boys insisted that the vow once taken is always valid and it applies to them also, although they



were very young at the time when the parents took the vrata in the presence of the muni. The two brothers remained unmarried and devoted themselves to the study of śāstras. They joined the Buddhist Academy for the study of the Buddhist Nyāya, as Buddhism was in the ascendent stage at that time. Akalanka was a brilliant boy and was well-versed in the Jain philosophy. The two brothers had joined the Buddhist Academy in the guise of Buddhist scholars, as otherwise they would not have been admitted. But once, when the teacher was explaining the Saptabhaṅgi nyāya of the Jainas, the lesson was not correctly taught. After the teacher left the class Akalanka quietly corrected the lesson. Later, the teacher got suspicious that the pupil who corrected the lesson must be a Jaina. The life of the two brothers was in danger due to the unhealthy and phanatic rivalry of Buddhists towards Jainas. They ran for life. But unfortunately Niṣkalanka was caught and killed by the guards of the king. It was destined that Akalanka was to escape for the sake of the promotion of learning and the advancement of logic and metaphysics. Another interesting incident in his life has been narrated in which it was stated that Akalanka defeated the Buddhist scholars in the court of Himaśīta of Kalinga in logical and metaphysical discussions with the help of Yakṣini Kūṣmāṇḍini. The Buddhist scholar was being assisted by the deity (goddess) Tārā.<sup>12</sup> Apart from the story contents in the incident, the narration has to be looked at from an historical perspective. From the analysis of the narration it is clear that there was academic and sectional rivalry between the Buddhist and the Jaina sections of society for social and spiritual supremacy. It is also clear that the tāntrik and the ritualistic aspects of religion had come to stay. The deities were invented and invoked for the sake of gaining superiority over one another. 'Para-spiritual' ritualistic practices became important in society—may be for the sake of retaining the supremacy of one's religion or for establishing faith in the 'para-spiritual' practices so that the common man would be satisfied.

(III) We now consider the work of Akalanka in the field of logic and metaphysics with special reference to the Jaina system of thought. Akalanka's contribution to the study of Jaina logic and philosophy is immense. His works may be studied from two points of view :—(a) his original works, and (b) his commentaries on the works of other great Ācāryas.

(a) His original works are :

1. *Laghīyastraya* with the notes.
2. *Nyāyaviniścaya* with notes.
3. *Siddhiviniścaya* with notes.
4. *Pramāṇasaṁgraha* with notes.

(b) Some the commentaries that he wrote, we may mention :

1. *Tattvārthvārtika—sabhāṣya*.
2. *Aṣṭaśati—devāgamavṛtti*.

*Laghīyastraya* is primarily a logical treatise with certain explanations of the epistemological implications of the logical concepts like *naya* and *nikṣepa*. The logical and epistemological critique of the theory of *pramāṇa* in the light of the Jaina analysis of the *pramāṇas* is a special contribution of Akalanka in this work.

*Laghīyastraya* is a critique of knowledge. It gives critical analysis of the problem of knowledge in the light of logical and epistemological implications. It has three parts : (1) *Pratīti praveśa*, (2) *Nyāya praveśa* and (3) *Nikṣepa praveśa*. *Pramāṇa praveśa* has four sections : (i) *pratyakṣa pariccheda*, (ii) *Viśaya pariccheda*, (iii) *parokṣa pariccheda* and (iv) *Āgama pariccheda*.

In the *Nyāyakumudacandra*, commentary on *Laghīyastraya*, Prabhācandra has mentioned the seven sections in the *Laghīyastraya* on the basis of the two-fold distinction in the *Pravacana praveśa*. Akalanka has also written a short treatise on the *Laghīyastraya* which is primarily in the form of added notes to the work and not an independent work.

Jainism presents a many-folded approach to the understanding of the nature of reality. The Anekānta outlook is the very basis of the Jaina view of life. And Samyag-Jñāna (right knowledge) is the essential characteristic of the soul. It is also the prerogative of the soul. Knowledge and the source of knowledge could be considered from two aspects : (a) pratyakṣa (direct knowledge) and (b) parokṣa (indirect knowledge.) Pratyakṣa Jñāna is the knowledge that the soul gets directly without the help of sense organs, as the sense organs are impediments to the attainment of perfect knowledge. However, with a view to accommodating the traditional views of other systems of Indian thought, knowledge gained directly by the soul without the help of the sense organs was termed as Mukhya pratyakṣa, and sense experience was considered as Saṁvyavahāra pratyakṣa. Akalanika has given an exhaustive and critical analysis of the two types of pratyakṣas. He has also given critical exposition of the ontological problems of permanence and change, unity and diversity and the one and the many. Dravyārthikanaya leads to the unity and paryāyārthikanaya presents the distinctions. The Jaina view of reality is comprehensive. Reality cannot be considered as mere unity nor mere diversity. It is unity and diversity. It is equally diversified. Similarly it is both eternal and non-eternal—eternal if looked at from the synthetic point of view, and non-eternal from the practical point of view (vyavahāranaya). Akalanika gives a critical exposition of the various forms of knowledge, like mati, smṛti, saṁjñā and cintā. In the latter half of *Laghtyastraya* Akalanika has discussed the logical and epistemological implications of pramāṇa and naya along with the fallacies involved therein. Nayābhāsa has been critically examined. In this part, he has considered the presentation of the nature of reality given by the other Indian systems of thought from the different nayas. And to assert the exclusive truth of the expression of reality from a particular point of view is to be dogmatic. It is ekānta. For the Absolutist, assertion of reality as One. The Buddhist gives emphasis on the changing nature of reality as fundamental considered from the point of view of moments. Both give partial views of truth, not the whole truth. But to insist on the exclusive and the full truth for these presentations would be dogmatism and ekānta. The Logical positivists and the school of Analytic philosophy give the view of reality from point of view of linguistic analysis (śabdanaya). But it is not the whole truth. Akalanika, in his *Laghtyastraya*, has given an exhaustive and critical account of the logical and epistemological problems concerning the nature of reality in the light of his discussions of the problems in other schools of Indian philosophy.

In the *Nikṣepa Viśaya* Akalanika has discussed the problem regarding the nature and function of nikṣepa. One can strive for self-realisation through the understanding of the fundamental principles of Jainism by means of pramāṇa, naya and nikṣepa. One can also understand the nature of jīva-dravya through the comprehension of the many facts of a thing. Akalanika has made subtle distinction between the assertion of the many facets of a thing and the assertion regarding the nature of a thing from a particular point of view. The former predication is the *pramāṇavākya* while the latter is the *nayavākya*. The *pramāṇavākya* is the comprehensive predication of the nature of a thing as for example the statement 'Syādjīva eva' presents the predication of the Jīva-dravya. It is called 'sakalādeśa' predication. *Nayavākya* presents the predication of a facet of the nature of Jīva-dravya, for example from a particular point of view. 'Syādistijīvaḥ' is predication of this types which is called *Vikalādeśa* predication. Such distinction is the special feature of the analysis of logical and epistemological concepts made by Akalanika.

Again, Akalanika gives a critical study of the logical and epistemological problems with special reference to the concepts in other Indian systems. In the works *Nyāyaviniścaya*, *Pramāṇa-saṁgraha* and *Siddhiviniścaya* the *Nyāyaviniścaya* has three sections and problem of pratyakṣa, anumāna and śabda have been thoroughly discussed. Akalanika has refuted the Buddhist, Sāṁkhya and Yoga theories of the characteristics of pratyakṣa. While discussing the theory of inference he has given a comparative picture of the nature of anumāna and the consequent implications of the validity or the fallacies thereon in the light of the criticism of the theories of inference in other schools of thought. In the third part of the *Nyāyaviniścaya* he has elucidated the



Jaina theory of Āgama-pramāṇa and refuted the 'apauruṣeyatva' of Āgamas as propounded by the Mīmāṃsakas. He has also discussed the nature of mokṣa and other metaphysical problems at the fringe of the logical and epistemological discussions which are the primary problems of the book.

*Pramāṇasaṃgraha* is a study of the epistemological problems of mati, śruta, smṛti pratyabhijñā, tarka and the other fallacies involved in logical and psychological process of thinking. For instance, the fallacies like, asiddha, viruddha, vāda and jāti have been analysed. The theories of causation as arising out of the discussions of the logical problems have been presented. There is again a discussion of the naya and nikṣepa as a corollary of the total discussion.

*Siddhivinīścaya* has twelve parts. It gives a critical study of the same problems of logical and epistemological concepts like naya, pramāṇa, pratyakṣa, pratyabhijñā, smṛti, jalpa and other logical concepts.

In the logical discussion of the pramāṇas, the question of pratyabhijñā to be considered as pramāṇa by the Jainas has been discussed. Upamāna is to be included in the 'Sādhya pratyabhijñā' (recognition on the basis of similarities). Certain metaphysical problems concerning the nature of bondage of the soul to karmic particles which are material in nature and the possibility of presenting a coherent view of this problem has been critically studied. The *Siddhivinīścaya* is a comprehensive and critical treatise on logic and metaphysics, although the emphasis is primarily on the discussion of logical and epistemological problems. Akalanka by his three works on logic has established himself as the undisputed master of logic and the relentless critic of the inadequacies in the theories of other schools of Indian thought.

Now we come to his two important commentaries which have brought him fame as philosophical commentator. The *Tattvārthavārttika-sabhāṣya* and the *Aṣṭaśati* have thrown greater light on the subtleties of thought as expressed in the *Tattvārthasūtra* of Umāswāmi and the *Āptamīmāṃsā* of Samantabhadra.

*Tattvārthavārttika-sabhāṣya* is a unique work which synthesises the explanatory notes in the form of vārttika and the commentaries on the sūtras of the *Tattvārthasūtra* of Umāswāmi. The work is based on the *Sarvārthasiddhi* of Pūjyapāda. On the basis of the presentational statements of *Sarvārthasiddhi* Akalanka has formulated the explanatory notes and has commented elaborately on these explanatory notes. It is, in fact, a compendium of *Sarvārthasiddhi*. And it would be easier to understand the intricacies of the discussions in the *Tattvārthavārttika-sabhāṣya* only when we have a thorough understanding of the *Sarvārthasiddhi*.

*Tattvārthavārttika* has ten parts based on the ten chapters of the *Tattvārthasūtra*. The cardinal note of this work is the confidence of the author to present solutions of all the problems in the light of the Anekānta attitude, specially in discussing the metaphysical problems.<sup>13</sup> In discussing the metaphysical problems raised in the *Tattvārthasūtra* and in the *Sarvārthasiddhi*, several contemporary philosophers of the age have been referred to, such the Akriyāvādins, Ajñānavādins, Vinayāvādins and the Kriyāvādins. Cosmological problems like the structure of the Universe have been elaborately presented. Here we are reminded of the exhaustive presentation of the constitution of the Universe as presented in the *Tiloyapaṇṇatti*. Akalanka has shown his masterly ability as a logician and a critic in the *Tattvārthavārttika*.

*Āptamīmāṃsā* of Ācārya Samantabhadra is a scholarly exposition of Anekāntdarśana. And *Aṣṭaśati* presents a critique and an enthusiastic exposition of the assertions of Ācārya Samantabhadra in the *Āptamīmāṃsā*. The *Aṣṭaśati* is so called because it contains 800 ślokas. This work presents a critique of the several philosophical theories like Dvait-advaita, Śāśvata-śāśvata, Daiva-puruṣārtha and Pāpa-puṇya and many other views. Vigorous presentation of the anekānta view is the cardinal note of this work.<sup>14</sup>

(IV) The style of Akalanaka is thoughtful, cryptic and difficult to understand. He is more concerned with the analysis, critical study and with the presentation of the subtleties of thought than with the flourish of language. Yet his writings are not bereft flourish and we find subtle and meaningful satire against the writings of other schools of thought.

The writings of Akalanaka have been an important landmark in the development of logic and metaphysics. His works have contributed to the effective presentation of the development of Jaina logic and metaphysics, in the perspective of the problem in other systems of Indian thought.

Anekānta is the foundational principle on Jainism. It permeates the very texture of Jaina thought and life. In the context of the present day development of logic and linguistic analysis as metaphysical theory, it would be necessary to study the contributions of Akalanaka afresh in the light of the modern developments in logic.

Akalanaka showed the catholicity of outlook in understanding the problems of other views of thought as expressed in the controversies in the Indian systems of philosophy. Without entering into the controversy regarding the original intention of the author in the verse given below, we might with confidence say that Akalanaka did express the magnanimity of thought and catholicity of outlook—

Yo viśvam vedāvedyam janana jala nidherbhangināḥ paraḍṛṣvā |  
 Pourvāparya viruddham vacanamānupsmam niṣkalaṅkaṁ yadīyaṁ ||  
 Tām vande sādhuṇandyaṁ salalaguṇanidhim dhvastadoṣadviśantam |  
 Buddham vā Vardhamānam Śatadalanilayam Keśavam vā Śivam vā ||

#### Notes and References

1. *Nyāyakumudacandra* IV Adhyāya.  
 “Trailokyodaravartivastuviśayajñānaprabhāvedyayo,  
 duṣprāpōpyakalanaka devasaraṇiḥi prāptōtra punyodayāt |  
 Svabhyastaśca vivecitaśca śataśaḥ sōnantavīryoktito  
 Bhuyānme nayanītidattamanasatadbodhasiddhipadah ||”
2. *Nyāyavinīścayavivarāṇa* of Vādirājasuri  
 “Gūḍhamarthamakalanaka vāṅmayāgadha bhūminihitam tadarhimām |  
 Vyanjayatyamalamanantavīryavāk dīpavartiraniśam pade pade ||”
3. *Ibid.* :.....  
 “Bhūyobhedanayāvagāhana devasya yadvāṅmayam |  
 Kastadvistarato vivicya vaditum mandam prabharmādrśaha ||”
4. Nemicaṇḍra Shastri : *Tīrthankara Mahāvīra aur Unaki Ācārya Paramparā* (Jaina Vidvat Pariṣad 1974.) Vol. II. pp. 300. “Ṣaṭtarkeṣvakalanaka devavibhudhaḥ sāksādayam bhūtale.”  
 quoted from *Jaina Śilālekha Saṁgraha*, Part. I. Vo. 47.
5. *Jaina Śilālekha Saṁgraha* : inscription 108.  
 as quoted by Nemicaṇḍra Shastri :  
 “Tataḥ param Śāstravidām munināmagresarōbudakalaṅkasūrihi |  
 Mithyāndhakkārasthagitākhlīlārthābhā prakāśitā yasya vacomayūkhehe | |”
6. *Akalanaka Carita* mentioned as A.D. 778.  
 “Vikramārkaśakābdīyaśatasaptapramajuṣi |  
 Kalē Akalanakayatinō Baudhairvadō mahānbhūt | |”
7. *Dhanañjaya Nāmamālā* as quoted by Nemicaṇḍra Shastri in his *Tīrthankara Mahāvīra aur Unaki Ācārya Paramparā* p. 305.  
 “Pramāṇamakalanakasya Pūjyapādasya lakṣaṇam |  
 Dhanañjaya kavehe kāvyā Ratnatrayamapaścimam | |”
8. Jinasena : *Ādipurāṇa* (Bharatiya Jñānapeetha) 1/53.  
 “Bhaṭṭakalanakaśrīpalapātrakesariṇām guṇāhā |  
 Viduṣām hṛdayarūḍhā hārayantētimirmalāhā | |”



9. Nemicandra Shastri : *Tīrthankara Mahāvīra aur Unaki Acārya Paramparā*. Vol II. p 306.
10. *Tattvārthavārttikaprasasti*.

“Jiyacciramakalnakabrahmā Laghuhavvanṛpativaratanayah |  
Anavaratanikhilajananutavidhah praśastjanahṛdah | |”

Also see *Ārāḍhanākathakoṣa*.

11. *Rājāvalikathe*
12. *Nyāyakumudacandra*, part I, of Prabhācandra
13. *Tattvārthavārttika* (Bharatiya Jñanapeetha) 1, 6-7.
14. *Aṣṭaśati* (Bharatiya Jaina Siddhanta Prakashan Samiti Kashi) 1914, Karika. 109.  
“Yatsat tatsarvamanekāntātmakam vastutattvam sarvathā tadarthakriyākāritvāt |  
Na kincitdekāntam vastutattvam sarvathā tadarthakriyāsambhavāt ||  
Nasti sadekantaha sarvavyāpāravirodhaprasangāt asadekantavaditi |  
Vidhinā pratiṣedhena vā vastutattvam nyamyate ||”



It is human effort which leads to liberation. Though no action takes place in seclusion and human beings are also affected by circumstances and environments, yet the main factor, however remains human effort. Here we accept the existence of freedom of will over circumstances.

The reality is that that no object can interfere with the working of another object, whether animate or inanimate. So the self, accordingly is the agent of its own actions and modifications.

Thus the acceptance of the freedom of will glorifies the human efforts.