THE APOHA THEORY OF DIGNĀGA

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In the Fifth Chapter of the P(ramāṇa)S(amuccaya) Dignāga presents the theory of anyāpoha (exclusion of others) which may be regarded as his most original contribution to Indian logic\(^1\). Dignāga declares in the introductory verse (K. 1) that verbal cognition (śabda) is nothing but inference (anumāna) because both of them function on the principle of anyāpoha. He refutes four possible candidates for the meaning of a word (śabdārtha), viz. (i) an individual (bheda), (ii) a universal (jāti), (iii) a relation (sambandha) between them and (iv) a thing possessing a universal (jatimat/ tadvat), and concludes that the meaning of a word is anyāpoha (KK. 2–11). Here he inserts two summarizing verses (KK. 12 & 13)\(^2\). He then deals with the relation of co-reference (samanadhi karanya) and that of qualifier-qualificand (viṣeṣanaviṣeṣyabhāva) with regard to compound expressions such as ‘ntīlotpala’ (a blue lotus) (KK. 14–25ab). Next he gives a detailed account of the apoha theory, with special emphasis on the scope of ‘exclusion’ (KK. 25cd–38). He also criticizes the Sāṅkhya position (KK. 39–45) and discusses the meaning of a sentence (vākyārtha) (KK. 46–49). In the final verse (K. 50) he takes up a few additional topics and concludes that the other so-called pramāṇas, i. e., upamāna and so on, should be regarded as inference.

The aim of this paper is to present the essence of Dignāga’s theory of anyāpoha discussed in PS, V, KK. 25cd-38. Dignāga’s discussion centers upon the question of what is excluded by a word, that is, what is meant by the word anya of anyāpoha. In this connection, he seems to be presupposing the following Vaiśeṣika-like hierarchy of words or universals\(^3\).

Before discussing what is excluded, Dignāga explains three cases where there is no exclusion. (i) Two synonyms (paryāyasaśabda), say ‘vrkṣa’ and ‘taru’ (both meaning ‘tree’), do not exclude each other’s meaning, for they by definition have the same meaning\(^4\). (ii) The word ‘vrkṣa’ does not exclude the meaning of the universal word (samanyaśabda / jātiśabda)\(^5\), ‘pārthiva’ (made of the earth ele-
ment), to which it belongs, for the two words are not incompatible (avirodhin) with each other. The word ‘vrkṣa’ rather encompasses and engenders definite understanding (niścaya) ot the meanings of ‘pārthiva,’ ‘dravya’ (substance), ‘sat’ (existent), etc.; if something is called ‘tree,’ it must be made of the earth element a substance, existent, and so on. Generally speaking,

A UNIVERSAL WORD OF LOWER ORDER DOES NOT EXCLUDE BUT ENCOMPASSES THE MEANINGS OF UNIVERSAL WORDS OF HIGHER ORDER WITH WHICH THE FORMER HAS AN ININVARABLE RELATION (avyabhicārin)\(^6\)......Rule I\(^7\).

(iii) The word ‘sat’ neither excludes nor encompasses the meanings of ‘dravya,’ ‘pārthiva,’ ‘vrkṣa,’ etc., for it awakens expectation (aṅkaṅkṣaṇa) of determining which particular (bheda) it actually refers to——whether something called ‘existent’ is, for instance, a substance or a quality (guna) or an action (karman)——or it raises doubt (sāmdeha) as to which particular it refers to. Generally speaking,

A UNIVERSAL WORD OF HIGHER ORDER NEITHER EXCLUDES NOR ENCOMPASSES THE MEANINGS OF UNIVERSAL WORDS OF LOWER ORDER......Rule II\(^8\).

Now let us see how Dignāga explains what is excluded by a word. It is to be noted that Dignāga recognizes two types of apoha, viz. direct and indirect apoha. (i) The word ‘vrkṣa’ directly excludes the meanings of the word ‘ghaṭa’ (a pot), etc., which share the same universal of ‘being made of the earth
element' (parthivatva) with 'vrkṣa,' for 'vrkṣa' is not compatible (virodhin) with
them in respect of that common universal—once something made of the
earth element is called 'tree,' it cannot be a pot, etc. Generally speaking,

TWO UNIVERSAL WORDS OF THE SAME ORDER EXCLUDE EACH OTHER'S MEANING......Rule III\(^9\).

(ii) The word 'vrkṣa' indirectly excludes the meaning of the word 'apya'
(made of the water element), for 'vrkṣa' encompasses the meaning of 'parthiva'
(Rule I) which in turn excludes the meaning of 'apya' (Rule III). Generally
speaking,

A UNIVERSAL WORD OF LOWER ORDER EXCLUDES WHATEVER IS
DIRECTLY EXCLUDED BY UNIVERSAL WORDS OF HIGHER ORDER WITH
WHICH THE FORMER HAS AN INVARIABLE RELATION ......Rule IV\(^10\).

In order to exhaust all the possible relationships between two universal words,
Dignāga mentions a third case: (iii) the word 'parthiva' disregards the meaning
of the word 'rāpa' (color), for 'parthiva' indirectly excludes the meaning of 'guna'
(Rule IV) which in turn neither excludes nor encompasses the meaning
of 'rāpa' (Rule II). Generally speaking,

A UNIVERSAL WORD OF LOWER ORDER DISREGARDS THAT WHICH
BELONGS TO WHATEVER IS DIRECTLY EXCLUDED BY UNIVERSAL
WORDS OF HIGHER ORDER WITH WHICH THE FORMER HAS AN INVARIABLE RELATION......Rule V\(^11\).

In brief, a given word excludes the meanings of words which share the same
universal with it and it indirectly excludes whatever is directly excluded by
words of higher order, thus engendering definite understanding of their meanings,
and it awakens expectation or raises doubt about the meanings of words of
lower order. In the remaining space, I would like to mention a few interesting
points found in this section of PS, V, and not explicitly discussed in previous
studies of Dignāga's theory of anyapoha,

(i) The expression 'samānadhikaranya' has two distinct meanings, viz. the
relation of referring to the same thing and the relation of having the same
locus\(^12\). Although Dignāga normally employs the expression in the first mean-
ing, he does recognize the second meaning in PS, V, K. 30.
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(ii) G. Cardona has shown that the Indian grammarians determine the constant co-occurrence of a word—he calls it a linguistic item—and a meaning by anvaya and vyatireka\(^{13}\). He quotes Kaiyata’s formulation: ‘[Anvaya:] the understanding of a meaning when there is an item; [vyatireka:] the non-understanding of a meaning when an item is absent’. (pp. 337–8) A similar account of anvaya and vyatireka is given by Dignāga in PS. V, K. 34 and Vṛtti. Dignāga considers that anvaya and vyatireka are the two means of a word to express its meaning, and he defines them respectively as ‘employment in similar cases’ (tulye vṛttiḥ) and ‘non-employment in dissimilar cases’ (atulye vṛttiḥ)\(^{14}\). In other words, anvaya is the employment of a word when a meaning is intended, and vyatireka is the non-employment of a word when a meaning is not intended. The difference between Dignāga’s formulation and the grammarians’ is due to the fact that the former is made from the point of view of the speaker, while the latter is made from that of the listener.

(iii) A universal, say rāpatva (colorness), is generally believed to be a ground for applying (pravṛttinimitta) a word, say ‘rāpa’, to those which are supposed to possess that universal, e.g. blue, yellow, etc. Dignāga rejects this view and concludes that we employ a certain word for a certain group of objects only because we follow the linguistic convention generally accepted by ordinary people\(^{15}\).

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NOTES


2) Frauwallner in the above-mentioned article has pointed out that the two verses correspond to PS, II, KK. 13 & 17 = Nyayamukha, KK. 17 & 18.

3) The table has been reconstructed from the information given in PS, V, K. 25

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cd, Vṛtti & Ṭīkā, K. 28, Vṛtti & Ṭīkā, and K. 35, Vṛtti & Ṭīkā. It should not be regarded as complete, but as subject to more specifications.

4) PS, V, K. 25cd and Vṛtti.

5) Although Dignāga mentions the name ‘particular word’ (bhedaśabda), I do not use it because the difference between a universal word and a particular word is only relative......the word ‘dravya’ is a particular word with regard to ‘sat’ but it is a universal word with regard to ‘parthiva’.

6) In this connection x has an invariable relation with y, if x is absent whenever y is absent.

7) PS, V, K, 25cd and Vṛtti, and KK. 27 & 35.

8) Ibid., K. 25cd and Vṛtti, and KK. 26 & 35.

9) Ibid., K. 28ab and Vṛtti.

10) Ibid., K. 28cd and Vṛtti.

11) Ibid., K. 28cd and Vṛtti.


14) Cf. PS, II, K. 5cd: anumeye ’tha tattulye sadbhavo nastitāsati!!

15) PS, V, KK. 37–38ab and Vṛtti.