

## Bhartṛhari on Sentence (*vākya*) and Its Meaning (*vākyaṛtha*) as *Pratibhā*

Yoshichika HONDA

0. Bhartṛhari, a grammarian-philosopher, is well known as the upholder of the view that a sentence is an indivisible unit (*akhaṇḍavākyavāda*). According to him, it is not the word (*pada*) but the sentence (*vākya*) that really conveys the meaning in our verbal communication; the meaning of the sentence (*vākyaṛtha*) is *pratibhā*. The word *pratibhā* is usually rendered as 'intuition', 'flash of insight', 'flash of understanding', 'instinct' and so on. These renderings are not able to give us an accurate understanding of *pratibhā*; rather, they are very misleading. The *pratibhā* Bhartṛhari considers to be the sentence-meaning is properly the cognition by which all its constituent word-meanings are unified into an integrated whole and in which they are connected with one another through the qualificand-qualifier relation (*viśeṣaṇaviśeṣyabhāva*).

1. Concerning the *pratibhā* as such, in *Vākyapadīya* II, k. 143, Bhartṛhari states as follows:

*vicchedagrahane 'rthānām pratibhānyaiva jāyate/  
vākyaṛtha iti tām āhuh padārthair upapāditam||*

When the meanings [of the individual words of a sentence] have been understood distinctively, the *pratibhā* arises differently [from the cognition of the individual word-meanings]. [*Vaiyākaraṇas*] call the [*pratibhā*], which is brought about by the meanings of the [individual] words, the meaning of the sentence. The point to notice is that the *pratibhā* which is born after the meanings of the constituent words of a sentence are grasped is totally different from the cognition of the individual word-meanings. The cognition of the individual word-meanings is only the means (*upāya*) of understanding the sentence-meaning. How then is the *pratibhā* to be conceived of?

Bhartṛhari speaks of the characteristics of the *pratibhā* in the following kk. 144-145 as follows:

*idaṃ tad iti sānyeṣām anākhyeyā katham cana/  
pratyātmavṛttisiddhā sā kartrāpi na nirūpyate||*

The [*pratibhā*] cannot be communicated to others as such and such. The [*pratibhā*] which is proved by the function of self [illuminating] is not determined even by an agent [i.e., a listener].<sup>1)</sup>

*upaśleṣam ivāṛthānāṃ sā karoty avicāritā/  
sārvarūpyam ivāpannā viśayatvena vartate||*

The [*pratibhā*] which is not definable [as such and such] brings about the mingling of the meanings [of individual words]. The [*pratibhā*], appearing to have all forms [of the word-meanings], occurs as an object<sup>2)</sup>

Here we notice that the *pratibhā* which is not communicated to others by saying that this is such and such brings about a mingling (*upaśleṣa*) as it were of the meanings of constituent words. To put in the other way round, these constituent word-meanings achieve unification through the *pratibhā*. As is indicated by the use of the particle *iva* in k. 144, *pratibhā* does not actually brings about the mingling of the word-meanings. It seems, however, as if it were built up by the word-meanings. In fact, *pratibhā* is a unitary entity.

Bhartṛhari refers to the three steps through which *pratibhā* arises in his Vṛtti on *Vākya-pāḍīya* I, kk. 24-25.<sup>3)</sup> At the first step, by a particular cognition (*buddhi*), an entity is at one time grasped which is qualified by all kinds of qualifiers (*sarvaviśiṣṭa*) and which is nothing but a conglomeration (*kalāpa*) of the elements related to the entity (*samsargin*). At the next step, another cognition analyzes (*pravibhakta*) it. At the third step, *pratibhā* arises only after re-assembling or unifying (*anusamdhāna*) these analyzed parts. Unless we reflect (*pratyavamṛṣati*) them in the related form (*samsargarūpa*), *pratibhā* is not born.<sup>4)</sup>

The question which we must consider is how the *pratibhā* of the nature of cognition can be the sentence-meaning. Nāgeśa gives an answer to this question.<sup>5)</sup> According to him, it is proper that the sentence-meaning

is called *pratibhā* on the basis that it is an object of the cognition of *pratibhā*. The interpretation given by him is acceptable. For the *pratibhā* is of a self-cognitive nature (*svasamvedana*), as Bhartṛhari suggests it by the expressions '*pratyātmavṛtti*' in k.144 and '*viśayatvena*' in k.145 and Puṅyarāja explicitly states it in his commentary on k.144.<sup>6)</sup> The one and the same cognition of *pratibhā* is characterized as the cognized, the meaning, and the cognizer, its cognition.

2. As stated above, *pratibhā* is the cognition which grasps its object as unified. In this paragraph we will examine the nature of constituent word-meanings of a sentence-meaning. Since Bhartṛhari is a proponent of the unity of the sentence, its constituent word-meanings are merely abstracted constructs. The mental act of abstracting the words from a sentence is called *apoddhāra* 'extraction.' Separately from an indivisible sentence, we may have its constituent words through this act.<sup>7)</sup> Although the extracted words are unreal (*asatya*), they can serve as the means (*upāya*) of understanding of the sentence-meaning. This extraction of the words from a sentence is in parallel with that of *prakṛti* and *pratyaya* from a word in the grammatical analysis. It is obvious that *prakṛtis* and *pratyayas* are never used independently in our worldly communication. This implies that these linguistic items are not real in the field of our verbal communication. The same may be said no doubt, of the words which are extracted from a sentence.<sup>8)</sup> The extracted words, therefore, are also not real according to Bhartṛhari. He draws an analogy between the extraction of the word-meaning from the sentence-meaning and that of the perfume of a flower from the scent in which it is mingled with the perfume of a sandal-wood.<sup>9)</sup> We differentiate the perfume of the latter in the way that this is the perfume of the flower; this is that of the sandal-wood, though the scent really has the unity. In the same way, the word-meaning is conceptually extracted from the sentence-meaning, so that one can say that this is the meaning of that word.

The words are extracted from a sentence on condition that the word-meanings have already been extracted from the meaning of the sentence. If it were possible to extract the word-meanings irrespective of their corresponding meanings, phonemes (*varṇa*) which are meaningless could also be extracted from a word. Therefore, the meaning of the sentence also should have the word-meanings as deserving of extraction. The meaning of the sentence, thus, are not absolutely indivisible.<sup>10)</sup> Commenting upon *Vākyapadīya* III, Jāṭisamuddeśa, k. 1, Helārāja says:

*vākyaṛthāś ca sthitalakṣaṇo niraṃśaḥ kārakotkalitaśarīrakriyāsvabhāvaḥ/ tatra cāṃ-  
śāṃśikalpanayā apoddhāre kārakātmā kriyātmā cāṃśo vibhāgārha.../*

And the meaning of the sentence which has a fixed character and has no constituent parts is the action which is characterized by its participants. And when, with reference to it [i.e., an indivisible sentence-meaning], [the word-meanings] are extracted by assuming the parts and their possessor, the parts which are possible to analyze are the action and its participants.

The sentence-meaning consists of two elements: something that has already been accomplished (*siddha*) and something to be accomplished (*sādhya*). Among the word-meanings extracted from the sentence-meaning one is an action, the rests of them are its participants (*kāraka*); the former is *sādhya* and the latter *siddha*. Since an action which is the meaning of the verb is the principal component of a sentence-meaning, the other components are subordinate to it. Then, how do constituent word-meanings stand before extraction? According to the *Vṛtti* on *Vākyapadīya* I, kk. 24-26, they are 'closely connected' (*atyantasamśṛṣṭa*).<sup>11)</sup> *Paddhati* comments that there are no word-meanings independently existing before extraction.<sup>12)</sup> The word-meanings stay closely connected with one another before extraction. The close connection among the constituent word-meanings is the qualificand-qualifier relation. A qualificand cannot be exist without reference to a quaifier. In this sense, a qualified action may be regarded as an indivisible unitary sentence-meaning.

3. Now we are sure that, before extraction of the meanings of the

words, the sentence-meaning is a qualified action. We shall discuss it in detail. Bhartṛhari clearly states that the qualified action (*viśiṣṭakriyā*) is the meaning of the indivisible sentence in his *Vākyapadīya* I, k.71:

*viśiṣṭaiva kriyā yena vākyaṛthaḥ parikalpyate/  
dravyābhāve pratinidhau tasya tat syāt kriyāntaram||*

For one who assumes that the meaning of a sentence is a qualified action, the action, which is performed by substitute when the material is not available, would be another one.

Puṅyarāja, commenting on this verse, takes up the utterance *vrīhibhir yajeta* 'Ritual should be performed with rice.' This seems to convey the meaning composed of the meaning of the two constituent words '*vrīhibhiḥ*' and '*yajeta*.' But the meaning of the sentence *vrīhibhir yajeta* is nothing but the ritualistic act in which rice should be used as its material (*vrīhikanāṅikā yajatikriyā*), that is, the action of sacrificing qualified by the rice as the instrument. This qualified action as the meaning of the sentence has no constituent word-meanings (*nirastāvayavārtha*). One would think that one can perform the sacrifice with such a substitute as wild rice (*nivāra*) when the enjoined material is not available. The sacrifice which is ordered by the expression *nivārair yajeta* is, however, completely different from one which is ordered by *vrīhibhir yajeta*. In other words, one sentence never share the constituent word-meaning with the other sentence. What this fact means is very significant. The sentence-meanings of *vrīhibhir yajeta* and *nivārair yajeta* are completely distinct from each other. Each of them is a unity. It follows from what has been said that insofar as the constituent word-meanings stand in the qualificand-qualifier relation through the *kriyā-kāraka* relation, the meaning of the sentence is indivisible and an integrated whole.

4. In conclusion, let us summarize the essential characteristics of *pratibhā* as the meaning of the sentence.

(1) *Pratibhā* is the cognition whose object is the unity of the word-meanings.

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(2) *Pratibhā* grasps the word-meanings as unified through the relation of *kriyā* and *kāraka*.

(3) The constituent word-meanings of a sentence-meaning are conceptually extracted and are not real.

(4) *Pratibhā* is the cognition of self-cognitive nature (*svasaṃvedana*). So *pratibhā* has two aspects: the meaning of the sentence and its cognition.

The *pratibhā* which is regarded as the meaning of the sentence is not mere 'intuition'. *Pratibhā* is a single synthetic cognition. It is like a picture which has variegated colors or many constituent parts but still one and single.

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[References and abbreviations]

Iyer, Subrahmania [1969] *Bhartṛhari: A Study of the Vākyapadīya in the Light of the Ancient Commentaries*. Poona: Deccan College.

VP: Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*.

- 1) Puṅyarāja, commenting upon this verse, clearly stated that *pratibhā* is self-cognition (*svasaṃvedana*). 2) cf. VP I, 28-29 3) Vṛtti on VP I, k. 24-26: *sarvaviśeṣaṇaviśiṣṭam hi vastu saṃsarginīnām mātrānām kalāpaṃ yaugapadyena-ikasyā buddher viśayatām āpannam utarakālam icchan buddhyantaraiḥ pravibhajate/ pravibhaktasyāpi cānusaṃdhānam antareṇārthakriyāviśayā pratibhā notpadyata iti punaḥ saṃsargarūpaṃ eva pratyavamṛśati/* 4) It is interesting that the process through which *pratibhā* arises bears a similarity to that of Buddhist's *adhyavasāya*. 5) *Vaiyākaraṇasiddhānālaghumañjūṣā* (Chaukhanba ed.), p. 417 6) Puṅyarāja on VP I, k. 144 7) Helārāja on VP III, Jāṭisamuddeśa, k. 1: *vākyasyaiva niramśasya vācakatvād antarā padapratipattir vibhrama iti kim asatyena padena vyutpāditenety āsaṅkya apoddhṛtyaiva vākyebhyaḥ ity āha/ apoddhṛtya kalpanā-buddhyā pṛthak padam niṣkṛṣya/ akhaṇḍāvākyavyutpattāu upāyaḥ padavyutpattir vākyavādinām, akhaṇḍapadavyutpattāu iva parikalpitarūpaprakṛtipratyayāgamādeśā-divyutpattiḥ padavādinām/* 8) See VP I, k. 10 9) VP I, k. 89. 10) This point is already observed by Iyer [1969:221]. 11) Vṛtti on VP I, kk. 24-26 12) Paddhati on VP I, kk. 24-26

<Key Words> Bhartṛhari, *vākya*, *vākyārtha*, *pratibhā*, *anusandhāna*

(Assistant, Hiroshima University)