

Liberation in the Nyāyasūtra

KAZUHIKO Yamamoto

What is liberation (*apavarga*, *mukti*, *mokṣa*)? There are many ideas of this. Mīmāṃsakas hold liberation is an eternal blessing (*nityasukha*). Vedāntins hold liberation is happiness (*ānanda*). But Naiyāyikas hold liberation is an absence (*abhāva*) of suffering (*duḥkha*). This absence is destruction (*dhvaṃsa*) that is of the end and no beginning. There is a long history of the discussion of liberation. The earliest stage of this discussion is in the *Nyāyasūtra* (Akṣapāda Gautama, 2nd CE).

The aim of this article is to clarify the system of liberation in the *Nyāyasūtra*. We can divide the *Nyāyasūtra* into two parts. One is an aspect of liberation. The other is logical and epistemological. This is similar to the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* (Kaṇāda, 2nd CE) that is composed of two different layers. One is cosmological and the other is categorical.

We can say that in a history of Indian logic, chiefly an object of cognition (*prameya*) is investigated in the *Nyāyasūtra* that is an old logical text, but chiefly a means of cognition (*pramāṇa*) is investigated in the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* (Gaṅgeśa Upādhyāya, ca. 1320) that is a neo logical text. That is, a theme of investigation had shifted to a means of cognition from liberation (*apavarga*), which is a kind of object of cognition. Neo logic (*navyanāyā*) is secular compared to old logic (*prācīnanyāya*).

A process of liberation in the *Nyāyasūtra* is that at first a true knowledge (*tattvajñāna*) arises by practicing (*abhyāsa*) of meditation (*yoga*). The contents of true knowledge is about a soul (*ātman*), body (*śarīra*), sense organs (*indriya*), materials of sense organs (*bhūta*), objects of sense organs (*artha*), knowledge (*buddhi*), mind (*manas*), activities (*pravṛtti*), faults (*doṣa*), rebirth (*pretyabhāva*), results (*phala*), suffering (*duḥkha*) and liberation (*apavarga*). A true knowledge about soul is that a soul exists now, continues to exist after death and is different from a body, sense organs and mind.

Then a true knowledge destroys faulty knowledge (*mithyājñāna*). An absence

of faulty knowledge destroys faults. An absence of faults destroys activities. An absence of activities destroys rebirth. An absence of rebirth destroys suffering. An absence of suffering is liberation.

Liberation is departure from suffering. A soul had departed from a body where suffering exists and never comes back to the body. So suffering in the definition of liberation is not general suffering but suffering that is a cause of reincarnation (*samsāra*).