



ARTICLE

On being Orthodox renouncers: the *Yuktidīpikā*'s establishment of the Sāṅkhya mode of life (*Sannyāsa*) in the name of the Veda

Hyoungh Seok Ham 

Department of Philosophy, Chonnam National University, Gwangju, Republic of Korea
Email: hamhs@chonnam.ac.kr

Abstract

Unlike other commentaries on the *Sāṅkhyakārikā*, the *Yuktidīpikā* (circa sixth to eighth centuries) problematised the Sāṅkhya tradition's equivocal attitudes toward the Veda. While submitting itself to the authority of the Veda, the *Yuktidīpikā*'s commentary on *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2 illustrates how Sāṅkhya thinkers of the post-Gupta period safeguarded the identity of Brahmin renouncers. Aligning its doctrine with the Upaniṣad, the end of the Veda, the *Yuktidīpikā* launched a Sāṅkhya navigation of the central concern of Indian intellectuals, Vedic hermeneutics, and attempted to secure Sāṅkhya's place within Vedic orthodoxy. This article discusses the *Yuktidīpikā*'s strategy for surviving the peer pressure of Vedic ritualists, as represented by the Mīmāṃsakas, while maintaining Sāṅkhya superiority by exploiting the inner division within the Veda.

Keywords: *Yuktidīpikā*; Sāṅkhya; Mīmāṃsā; renunciation; *sannyāsa*; Vedic orthodoxy

According to the *Sāṅkhyasaptatīvr̥tti*, a commentary on Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṅkhyakārikā*, Kapila, the legendary founder of Sāṅkhya, approached a distinguished Brahmin named Āsuri, who was engaged in sacrifice for a thousand years, and asked: 'Do you enjoy the duty of the householder?' (*ramase gr̥hasthadharmaṇa*). He was told 'yes', and gave the same answer when Kapila approached him again after another thousand years. On Kapila's third approach, that is, when Āsuri had performed sacrifice for 3,000 years, the latter finally answered: 'Sir, I do not enjoy.' Kapila then asked whether Āsuri was able to lead a celibate life (*brahmacaryavāsa*), to which Āsuri answered in the affirmative. In this way, Āsuri, 'the renouncer, having abandoned the duty of the householder, and sons and wives, became the lord Kapila's disciple' (*sa evaṃ gr̥hasthadharmaṃ parityajya putradārāṃś ca pravrajito bhagavataḥ kapilasya śiṣyo babhūva*).¹ In this story, the lifestyle of the Sāṅkhya practitioners is clearly demarcated from that of the householder. To become a disciple of Kapila, Āsuri had to renounce at least three aspects that characterise the life of a householder: sons, wives, and the duty of sacrifice.

¹ See *Sāṅkhyasaptatīvr̥tti* (Esther Abraham Solomon (ed.), *Sāṅkhya-Saptatī-Vr̥tti* (V₁) (Ahmedabad, 1973), 1:8–2:4). This story is also found in the *Suvarṇasaptatī* (*Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經, vol. 54, no. 2137, 1245a08–18); *Sāṅkhyavr̥tti* (E. A. Solomon (ed.), *Sāṅkhya-Vr̥tti* (V₂) (Ahmedabad, 1973), 1:5–19); *Mātharavr̥tti* (Vishnu Prasad Sharma and Sri Satkarisarma Vangiya (eds), *Sāṅkhyakārikā of Śrīmad Īśvarakṛṣṇa with the Mātharavr̥tti of Mātharācārya and the Jayamaṅgalā of Śrī Śaṅkara* (Varanasi, 1970), 1:24–2:14).

Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṅkhyakārikā*—the earliest systematic presentation of the Sāṅkhya philosophy—documents Sāṅkhya's critical attitude towards the householder's duty of sacrifice by specifying its faults in its second verse:

The revelatory means are like the perceptible means [in its being ultimately ineffective], for they are connected with impurity (*aviśuddhi*), destruction (*kṣaya*) and [relative] superiority (*atiśaya*). A superior method, different from both, is the (discriminative) knowledge of the manifest, the unmanifest and the knowing one (or knower—i.e., *puruṣa*).²

Commenting on this verse, most extant commentaries on the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* do not hesitate to identify the revelatory means (*ānuśravika*) as the sacrificial practices enjoined in the Veda and adduce various Vedic and non-Vedic sources³ to prove their defectiveness in removing the threefold existential suffering (*duḥkhatraya*) introduced in the first verse.⁴ These commentaries thereby manifest Sāṅkhya's distance from Indian orthodoxy as represented by the most ancient and authoritative textual corpus of Indian civilisation, the Veda.

However, those commentaries later contradict themselves by listing the Veda, with no reservation, as an exemplary case of trustworthy testimony. *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 4–6 introduces the three sources of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*)—perception (*dṛṣṭa*), inference (*anumāna*), and trustworthy testimony (*āptavacana*)—without explicitly mentioning the Veda.⁵ Nevertheless, the commentaries are almost unanimous in recognising that the Veda constitutes trustworthy testimony.

Following Łucyszyna,⁶ we may organise the commentaries on *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 4–6 into two groups: those that merely list the Veda in the category of trustworthy testimony and those that exhibit a Mīmāṃsā-influenced view of the Veda.⁷ The following belong to the first group: the *Suvarṇasaptati* (sixth century), *Sāṅkhyavṛtti* (sixth century),

² *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2, 'dṛṣṭavad ānuśravikaḥ sa hy aviśuddhikṣayātīśayayuktaḥ/ tadviparitaḥ śreyān vyaktāvyaaktajñāvijñānāt/'. The Sanskrit text of the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* is from Albrecht Wezler and Shujun Motegi (eds), *Yuktidīpikā: The Most Significant Commentary on the Sāṅkhyakārikā* (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 278–285. The translation is from Gerald James Larson, *Classical Sāṅkhya: An Interpretation of its History and Meaning* (Delhi, 1979), p. 256, with modifications.

³ For examples of these sources, see Hyoung Seok Ham, 'Buddhist Critiques of the Veda and Vedic Sacrifice: A Study of Bhāṣya's Mīmāṃsā Chapter of the *Madhyamakahṛdayakārikā* and *Tarkajvālā*', (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2016), pp. 127–136.

⁴ Cf. the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 1, 'Because of the torment of the threefold suffering, (there arises) the desire to know the means of counteracting it. If (it is said that) this (desire—i.e., inquiry) is useless because perceptible (means of removal are available), (we say) no, since perceptible means are not final or abiding' (*duḥkhatrayābhighātāj jññāsā tadabhighātake hetau/ dṛṣṭe sārthā cen naikāntātyantato'bhāvāt*)). The translation is from Larson, *Classical Sāṅkhya*, p. 255.

⁵ The *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 4 lists 'trustworthy testimony' (*āptavacana*) as one of the three sources of valid knowledge and then glosses it in the next verse as 'what is heard from trustworthy beings' (*āptaśruti*). In the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 6, it is declared that this means of valid knowledge covers objects that lie beyond the reach of perception and inference. For detailed discussions on the commentaries' interpretations of these verses, see Olena Łucyszyna [Olena Lutsyshyna], 'Classical Sāṅkhya on the authorship of the Vedas', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 40.4 (2012), pp. 453–467 and O. Łucyszyna, 'The scope of the *Pramāṇas* in classical and postclassical Sāṅkhya', *Asian Philosophy* 32.1 (2022), pp. 33–51.

⁶ Łucyszyna, 'Classical Sāṅkhya on the authorship of the Vedas'.

⁷ The *Jayamaṅgalā* (circa 700 CE or later) is omitted from this grouping because it does not mention the Veda as a case of trustworthy testimony. However, I concur with Łucyszyna, when she says: 'It is unlikely that J[aya]M [aṅgala] denies the authority of the Veda, though nowhere in this text is it said directly that the Vedas are an authoritative source of knowledge' (Olena Łucyszyna, 'Classical Sāṅkhya on the relationship between the Vedic revelation (śruti) and its own doctrine', *Studia Religiosa* 50.4 (2017), p. 314).

Sāṅkhyasaptatīrṭti (sixth century), *Gauḍapādabhāṣya* (sixth century), and *Māṭharavṛtti* (800 CE or later).⁸ Another feature these commentaries have in common is that they do not problematise their own ambiguous stance in relation to Vedic authority. They criticise the Veda for teaching a defective means of removing human suffering in *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2, but in *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 4–6, without any sense of self-contradiction, it is counted as a source of valid knowledge.

The *Yuktidīpikā* (sixth to eighth centuries)⁹ and Vācaspati's *Tattvakaumudī* (ninth or tenth century) belong to the second group. They maintain a Mīmāṃsaka-like Vedic fundamentalism. As Łucyszyna clearly demonstrates, the *Tattvakaumudī*, for example, upholds the authoritativeness or trustworthiness (*prāmāṇya*) of the Veda based on the Mīmāṃsaka doctrine of *svataḥprāmāṇya* (intrinsic validity of cognitions) and *vedāpauruṣeyatva* (the Veda's lack of an author).¹⁰ The *Yuktidīpikā* also makes use of the ideas that the Veda has no author and that it has an independent and unique scope of application, which are found in Mīmāṃsaka texts such as *Śābarabhāṣya* 1.1.2 and 1.1.5, as Łucyszyna rightly observes.¹¹

If the texts in this second group fully acknowledge the authority of the Veda in the same way as the Mīmāṃsakas, how then do they understand *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2, in which Vedic sacrifice is declared to be connected with 'impurity' (*avisuddhi*), 'destruction' (*kṣaya*), and '[relative] superiority' (*atīśaya*)? Do they close their eyes to the self-contradiction, just as the first group of texts do? Or do they submit themselves to the

⁸ For the dating of these commentaries, see Gerald James Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya, *Sāṅkhya: A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy. Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies* (New Jersey, 1987), pp. 15–16.

⁹ Frauwallner suggests 'around 550 A.D.' as the possible date of the *Yuktidīpikā* without providing any evidence (Erich Frauwallner, *History of Indian Philosophy* (Delhi, 1973), Vol. 1, p. 226). Halbfass proposes placing the *Yuktidīpikā* (YD) after Kumārila (600–660 CE) since 'there is no conclusive evidence for Frauwallner's suggestion' and the YD on *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2 'seems to be a response to the *Śloka-vārttika* [of Kumārila]' (Wilhelm Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection: Explorations in Indian Thought* (Albany, 1991), p. 94). In the introduction to their critical edition of the YD, Wezler and Motegi provide the basic framework to determine the date of the text. What is certain is that the YD quotes Dignāga (480–540 CE) several times but not Dharmakīrti (600–660 CE). Despite the *Yuktidīpikā*'s silence on Dharmakīrti, they assign 'circa 680–720 A.D.' as the 'lower limit' for the text, that is, *terminus post quem* (Wezler and Motegi, *Yuktidīpikā*, p. xxviii). This judgement is based on the fact that the YD quotes the *Kāśīkā* (680–700 CE) on Pāṇini's *sūtra* whose date is solid. Wezler and Motegi acknowledge Halbfass's observation, but Kumārila's possible presence in the text plays no role in dating the YD; however, the YD's seeming reference to Kumārila is compatible with their dating. Against the editors' warning that 'the quotation from the *Kāśīkā* cannot, however, be simply done away with by assuming that it is but a later addition to the text' (*ibid.*), Mejer puts forward the thesis that the YD predates the *Kāśīkā*. Referring to the parallelism observable between the YD and the *Jayamaṅgalā* (another later commentary on the *Sāṅkhyakārikā*), Mejer suggests 'perhaps J[aya]M[āṅgalā] has preserved the reading closer to the original reading of the YD which was only later replaced by a lucid explanation taken from the *Kāśīkā*' and, if so, then 'the earlier date for the YD, i.e., circa 550 C.E., is secured' (Marek Mejer, 'Some observations on the date of the *Yukti-dīpikā* (apropos of the new edition)', in *Essays in Indian Philosophy, Religion and Literature*, (eds) P. Balcerowicz and M. Mejer (Delhi, 2004), p. 414). By pointing out another quotation from the *Kāśīkā*, Mejer even proposes the possibility that it is *Kāśīkā*, not the YD, which quotes another's words; and this turns the date of *Kāśīkā* into the 'upper limit' (*terminus ante quem*) of the YD (*ibid.*, pp. 415–416). Bronkhorst also endorses the date of 550 CE but for a different reason. Having demonstrated that there is a case for the *Kāśīkā* drawing upon the source(s) that it shares with texts older than itself, such as the *Brahmasūtra*, Bronkhorst concludes that the *Kāśīkā*-quotation in the YD 'may conceivably have been taken from an earlier commentary in the Pāṇinian tradition' and agrees 'that the date proposed by Frauwallner, circa 550 C.E., is, if not secured, at least possible or even probable' (Johannes Bronkhorst, 'More on the sources of the *Kāśīkā*', in *Problems in Vedic and Sanskrit Literature*, (ed.) M. R. Deshpande (Delhi, 2004), pp. 52–53). However, both Mejer and Bronkhorst do not seriously consider Halbfass's observation that the YD on the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2 introduces the opponent's argument, which resembles that of Kumārila (seventh century). Given diverging scholarly opinions on the date of the YD, I tentatively consider it to have been produced between the sixth and eighth centuries.

¹⁰ Łucyszyna, 'Classical Sāṅkhya on the Authorship of the Vedas', pp. 461–462.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 460–461.

Mīmāṃsakas and efface the trace of Sāṅkhya anti-Vedic sentiment found in their root verse? Focusing on the *Yuktidīpikā*'s commentary on *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2, I will discuss how the Sāṅkhya position represented in the *Yuktidīpikā* formulated its own way of gesturing to Vedic authority without compromising with the Mīmāṃsakas.

The discussions in the *Yuktidīpikā* (hereafter, YD)¹² on *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2 centre on the legitimacy of the Sāṅkhya followers' lifestyle of renunciation. The YD diverges from its predecessors in its efforts to exonerate Sāṅkhya practitioners from the charge of being anti-Vedic and authorise renunciation in the name of the Veda. This article will analyse how the YD developed a 'Vedic' way of securing Sāṅkhya religious practice and illustrate how the Sāṅkhya writers of the sixth to eighth centuries positioned their tradition as orthodox but also superior to that of ritualistic householder Brahmins such as the Mīmāṃsakas.

Embodying Vedic fundamentalism in Sāṅkhya

The YD begins its commentary on the term 'impurity' (*avisuddhi*) in *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2 with the opponent's argument (YD_{WM} 31:19-34:8) that 'comes surprisingly close to Kumāṛila's own argumentation'.¹³ Even though the minute details in the opponent's thesis in the YD and Kumāṛila's discussion do not exactly correspond to each other,¹⁴ based on their extremely similar contents and flow of argumentation, we may be at least assured that the opponent in the YD is a Mīmāṃsaka who held a similar view.

The opponent begins his objection by pointing out the self-contradiction from which most of the commentaries on the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* suffer:

[Sāṅkhya:] There is no fault [in arguing for the impurity of animal slaughter in a Vedic sacrifice] since we do not acknowledge its (i.e., the Veda's) authority. ...

[Mīmāṃsaka:] But this is unreasonable. Why? It is because you are contradicting what you acknowledge. You acknowledge three authorities [in acquiring valid

¹² The edition of the *Yuktidīpikā* used in this study is Wezler and Motegi, *Yuktidīpikā*. When I specify a location of the text, I will abbreviate the text as 'YD_{WM}'. The YD on *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2 is at YD_{WM} 29:16-55:1.

¹³ Halbfass, *Tradition and Reflection*, p. 93. The section of the *Ślokavārttika* to which Halbfass refers is grouped under the heading of '10.4 *aṃśadvayastahimsāsamarthanam* (Justification of animal sacrifice, etc.)' in Kei Kataoka, *Kumāṛila on Truth, Omniscience, and Killing* (Wien, 2011), Vol. 1, pp. 52-58 and Vol. 2, pp. 481-513.

¹⁴ Kumāṛila lists the examples of having sexual intercourse with one's own guru's wife (*gurustrīgamana*) and drinking liquor (*surāpāna*) that respectively give pleasure and neither pain nor pleasure to the receivers of the actions (i.e. the guru's wife and liquor) but do give pain to the agent (i.e. the student and the drinker). This is to refute the claim attributed to Sāṅkhya that the nature of the fruit of an action befalling the agent in the future depends on the effect of that action on the receiver in the present. See *Ślokavārttika, codanā*, 236cd-237ab (Kataoka, *Kumāṛila on Truth*, Vol. 1, p. 53 and Vol. 2, p. 488). For an analysis of the Sāṅkhyas' claim introduced in the *Ślokavārttika* (*codanā*, 235cd-236ab) and the similarity it bears to the Buddhists' arguments, see Hyoung Seok Ham, 'On a Bhāviveka-Sāṅkhya alliance against ritual killing: explaining two nearly identical syllogisms held by Bhāviveka and the Sāṅkhyas respectively against the Lokāyatas and the Mīmāṃsakas', *South Asian Classical Studies* 13 (2018), pp. 359-375. The opponent in the YD (YD_{WM} 33:7-11), on the other hand, mentions the example of 'sexual intercourse with the guru's wife' (*gurubhāryāgamana*), but not the example of drinking liquor. Instead, there is another example of a teacher, according to the Sāṅkhyas' reasoning, 'who would obtain an undesirable fruit' (*aniṣṭaphalasambandhaḥ syāt*) for having a young boy (*mānavaka*) engage in righteous actions such as 'being celibate' (*brahmacarya*), 'repeated recitation of the Veda' (*svādhyāyābhyaśa*), and 'living on alms' (*bhāikṣa*). Houben, based on this case, observes that 'the treatment of the topic in the YD's *pūrvapakṣa* seems not really dependent on Kumāṛila's discussion' (Jan E. M. Houben, 'To kill or not to kill the sacrificial animal (yajña-paśu)? arguments and perspectives in Brahminical ethical philosophy', in *Violence Denied: Violence, Non-Violence and the Rationalization of Violence in South Asian Cultural History*, (eds) Jan Houben and Karel van Kooij (Leiden/Boston/Köln, 1999), p. 150). Nevertheless, he acknowledges that the opponent of the YD is a Mīmāṃsaka when he states that 'the YD gives a *pūrvapakṣa* with sophisticated Mīmāṃsā-like arguments which presupposes, if not Kumāṛila's Ś[oka]V[ārttika], in any case other Mīmāṃsā-texts apart from Jaimini's Sūtra and Śābara's Bhāṣya' (*ibid.*, p. 151).

knowledge when you list them in *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 4ab as] perception, inference, and trustworthy testimony. Now, the Veda is a trustworthy testimony and you are refuting your own doctrine by saying that it is not authoritative. Therefore, this [answer] is unreasonable.¹⁵

What is most impressive about the YD's confrontation with the Mīmāṃsaka opponent is its immediate concession to the authority of the Veda. Given that the absolute status of the Veda has been acknowledged, the YD regards it as unnecessary to answer the objection. Rather, it accuses the opponent of not properly understanding the Sāṅkhya stance toward the Veda:

Answer. That is not so. It is because you do not understand [our] intention. We disregard what [you] said abundantly because, though being excellent, they do not touch on our intention. Why? It is because we do not oppose the authoritativeness of the Veda. We do not even say that an undesirable fruit will befall the one who engages in killing enjoined by the scripture.¹⁶

Here, the YD not only flatly denies the opponent's charge against the Sāṅkhya position provoked by Īśvarakṛṣṇa's use of the term 'impurity' in relation to Vedic sacrifice, but even confirms that sacrificial killing has no negative consequences. In contrast to earlier commentaries that considered bloody Vedic sacrifice to be impure, the YD, endorsing the Veda as the criterion for judging morality, declares that animal slaughter in the Vedic rituals is faultless—as long as the Veda commands it.

The YD instead understands the word 'impurity' as referring to the 'grief in our [Sāṅkhya but maybe not Mīmāṃsaka] minds out of compassion caused by sacrificial killing' (*himsānimittakaḥ kāruṇyān manasi naḥ paritāpaḥ*), and thereby shifts the word's referent from what is internal to Vedic sacrifice (animal slaughter) to what is external (grief in the minds of spectators). Thus, Vedic sacrifice can no longer be characterised as impure. Calling Vedic sacrifice 'impure' is a practice of metaphorically expressing the 'cause' (i.e. killing) in reference to its 'result' (i.e. grief). Is this non-literal understanding justified? To the YD, Īśvarakṛṣṇa intended such a reading of the word '*avisuddhi*' when he employed the comparative 'better' in 'that which is opposite is better' (*tadviparītaḥ śreyān; pāda c of the Sāṅkhyakārikā 2*). A comparison is only possible between things of the same nature. Therefore, if Īśvarakṛṣṇa did not endorse the praiseworthiness of Vedic sacrifice, the comparative ending *-īyas* in *śreyas* (which means 'better') would have to be considered out of place.¹⁷

These three steps taken by the YD—namely, acknowledging Vedic authority, interpreting 'impurity' as a metaphorical expression, and granting the praiseworthiness of sacrifice—clearly disprove the Mīmāṃsakas' suspicion of Sāṅkhya's non-Vedic affiliation.¹⁸

¹⁵ YD_{WM} 32:1-8, 'tatprāmāṇyānabhyupagamād adoṣa iti cet. ...etac cāyuktam. kasmāt? abhyupagamavirodhāt. 'dṛṣṭam anumānam āptavacanam ca' iti prāmāṇyatrayam abhyupagataḥ bhavadbhiḥ. idānīm vedasyāptavacanatve saty aprāmāṇyaḥ bruvataḥ svamatavyāghātaḥ. tasmād ayuktam etat.'

¹⁶ YD_{WM} 34:9-12, 'ucyate. na, abhiprāyānavabodhāt. citram api bahv etad abhidhīyamāna¹ nābhiprāyaḥ² sprṣatīty upekṣyate. kiṃ kāraṇam? [yasmān] na vayaḥ vedasya prāmāṇyaḥ³ pratyācaksmahe. no khalv api brūmaḥ śāstracoditāyāḥ himsāyāḥ pravartamānasyāniṣṭaphalasambandho bhavati.' [1 Emended from *abhidhīyamāno*.² One manuscript (abbreviated as 'Dkha' in YD_{WM}) attests a better reading: *abhidhīyamānaḥ no nābhiprāyaḥ*.³ Emended from *vedasyaprāmāṇyaḥ*.]

¹⁷ See YD_{WM} 34:22-35:8.

¹⁸ For example, in an often-quoted sentence from the *Tantravārttika*, Kumāṛila lists Sāṅkhya's texts along with those of the Buddhists and Jainas and characterises them as 'not endorsed by those who know the Veda' (*trayivīdhir na pariḡhīṭāni*), 'contrary to the Veda' (*trayivīparīta-*), 'unconnected with [the Veda]' (*-asambaddha-*), and 'teaching about different matters [from *dharma*, that is,] mostly about livelihood though being infused with the fragrance of

However, they do not merely exonerate Sāṅkhya's alleged heretical inclination. They forward Sāṅkhya acceptance of Mīmāṃsā's Vedic fundamentalism, which recognises that even the act of killing living beings is praiseworthy if it is committed under the Veda's mandate. The YD's shift of the referent for the word 'impurity' is a concession to the Mīmāṃsaka claim that only the Veda can decide whether a sacrifice is pure or not.¹⁹ The YD also confers absolute authority on the Veda over all religious matters in the language of Mīmāṃsā, such as authorlessness (*apauruṣeyatva*).²⁰ Positing the Veda as the ultimate reference point, the YD reshapes Sāṅkhya as a fundamentally Vedic tradition, that is, a tradition that can defend its positions based on the Veda without resorting to other methods such as human reasoning.

Having set aside 'impurity' as being external to the Vedic sacrifice, the YD (YD_{WM} 42:12–47:5) finds fault with the Vedic means of sacrifice by confirming two other characteristics that Īśvarakṛṣṇa lists: 'destruction' (*kṣaya*) and 'relative superiority' (*atiśaya*). In the course of proving the destructibility or non-eternality of the fruits of Vedic sacrifice, the YD introduces a Mīmāṃsaka objection that attempts to make use of Sāṅkhya's newly affirmed Vedic identity.

Question. [The result of Vedic sacrifice] is eternal because of the force of Vedic words. It is as follows: We are those who regard Vedic words as the authority. What the Vedic words say, that is our authority. And it (=the Veda) says this [ritual] means results in immortality, for example, 'he overcomes death, he overcomes evil.' Therefore, even those who do not want [to acknowledge that this ritual means results in an eternal fruit] should accept this for sure. Or, if they don't accept, they would abandon [their own] thesis that the Veda is the[ir] authority.²¹

This is not an objection but a test of the authenticity of Sāṅkhya's Vedic identity. It simply asks whether the Sāṅkhya followers really believe in what the Veda says, or how far they are willing to go along with the Veda.

The YD interestingly meets this Mīmāṃsaka challenge in a Mīmāṃsaka manner. It cites supportive passages from the Veda and, using the hermeneutical techniques for which the Mīmāṃsakas are famous, reads and interprets Vedic passages in its own favour. To corroborate its claim for the non-eternality of Vedic sacrifice,²² the YD quotes a passage from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (10.5.3, 5–6) which states that people who perform

a bit of wholesome teachings that accord with *śruti* and *smṛti* such as non-violence, honesty, self-control, giving, and compassion' (*ahiṃsāsatyavacanadamadānadayādiśrutismṛtisaṃvādistokārthagandhavāsitaḥjivikāprāyārthāntaropadeśīni*). See Subbāśāstrī (ed.), *Śrīmājājiminipraṇīte Mīmāṃsādarśane ādīta ārabhya dvitīyādhyāyaprathamapādāntaḥ prathamō bhāgaḥ* (Poona, 1929), 194:8–13, and Kunio Harikai (ed.), 'Sanskrit text of the *Tantravārttika*: Adhyāya 1, Pāda 3, Adhikaraṇa 1~3 collated with five manuscripts', *Annual Report of Medical Anthropology and Humanity* 3 (2008), 42:4–13.

¹⁹ The opponent supposes that the Sāṅkhyas—those who acknowledge the Vedic authority—perceive killing as impure based on the Veda's instruction. The YD implicitly concurs with this by providing no refutation. Cf. YD_{WM} 32:15–18, 'Suppose that you are also given a question on this matter: "How do you ascertain that killing is impure because it destroys the cherished bodies of living beings?" Then [you] should certainly answer: "Based on the Veda"' (*yadi caitasmīn arthe bhavān api paryanuyujyeta katham idaṃ niścīyate yad uta prāṇiṇām iṣṭaśarīravāpādanād avīsuddhir hiṃseti, avāśyam abhidhāniyaṃ śāstrata iti*).

²⁰ The YD_{WM} (39:18–19) characterises the Veda (*āmnāya*) as 'not preceded by human intellect, independent, and working for the sake of what is ultimate for human' (*apuruṣabuddhipūrvakāḥ svatantraḥ puruṣaṇiḥśreyasārthaṃ pravartamānaḥ*). This is the reiteration of the Mīmāṃsaka opponent's claim that the YD introduces at YD_{WM} 32:13–14 (*apuruṣabuddhipūrvakas tv āmnāyaḥ svatantraḥ puruṣaṇiḥśreyasārthaṃ pravartate*).

²¹ YD_{WM} 43:5–9, 'śābdasāmarthyān nityatvam iti cet. syād etat. śābdapramāṇakā vāyam. yac chabda āha tad asmākaṃ pramāṇam. sa cāśya hetor amṛtatvam āha tarati mṛtyuṃ tarati pāpmānam ityādi. tasmād anicchatāpy etad avāśyam abhyupagantavyam. anabhyupagame vā pratijñāhānir vedāḥ pramāṇam iti.'

²² This paragraph is based on the YD's commentary (YD_{WM} 42:12–45:12) on the word 'destruction' (*kṣaya*).

sacrifices pass into smoke, transmigrate the three realms, and finally come down to the earth again.²³ As this passage directly contradicts another Vedic passage that warrants an eternal life in heaven, the YD again proposes a deviation from the literal meaning of the given text. In understanding a Vedic sentence whose literal meaning speaks of impossibility, for example—‘he [i.e. Prajāpati] extracted his own momentum’ (*sa ātmano vapām udakhidat*)²⁴—one needs to postulate another, figurative, sense. Therefore, when the Vedic passage in support of the eternity of sacrificial fruits contradicts not only the other Vedic passage, but also perception and inference, the YD concludes that it is to be taken figuratively to mean not eternity (*nitya*), but an extended time (*prakṛṣṭa*).

In proving the ‘relative superiority’ (*atīśaya*) of Vedic sacrifice, the YD also resorts to a Vedic passage for the Sāṅkhya cause.²⁵ The Mīmāṃsaka opponent denies both attributes of ‘destruction’ and ‘relative superiority’ by having deities—supposedly eternal and absolute—as part of Vedic sacrifice inherent in its ritual materials (*dravyasamavāyiniṃ devatām kratāv aṅgabhāvam upagacchantīm*). Having pointed out that the Sāṅkhyas do not accept such an idea, the YD further observes that, even if it were the case, the indestructible and absolute fruit can be obtained by performing any action the Veda enjoins. This is because any ritual action—as the marginal note says, even *japa* (muttering prayer)²⁶—involves a performer’s body and, according to the Veda, a body consists of all deities. The YD then asks ironically, ‘what’s the use of those [Vedic] means of slaughtering living beings?’ (*kiṃ prāṇivinaśahetubhiḥ*). In this argumentation, the key idea of ‘body being constituted by deities’ is provided by verses found in Vedic texts such as the *Atharvaveda Saṃhitā* 11.8.32: ‘Therefore, the learned indeed think this [body of] a person is Brahman. It is because all deities are put together in this body’ (*tasmād vai vidvān puruṣam idaṃ brahmeti manyate/ sarvā hy asmin devatāḥ śārīre ’dhisamāhitāḥ*//).²⁷

In the hands of the YD confronting the Mīmāṃsakas, Sāṅkhyas followers become Mīmāṃsakas in the very general sense of being examiners of the Veda.²⁸ The Sāṅkhyas, as represented in the YD, openly acknowledged the authority of the Veda and the effectiveness of Vedic sacrifice. In so doing, the YD had to read the first defect of Vedic sacrifice—impurity—as a misplaced expression that must be understood metaphorically. However, the YD confirmed the other two defects and maintained Sāṅkhya’s critical attitude. What is characteristic about this exchange is that the YD plays the Mīmāṃsaka game. Without complaining about the rule that the Veda makes the final decision, the YD attempts to demonstrate that the Veda itself teaches that the Vedic

²³ Cf. Patrick Olivelle (trans.), *The Early Upaniṣads: Annotated Text and Translation* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 236–237.

²⁴ This is the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 2.1.1.4. See Arthur Berriedale Keith, *The Veda of the Black Yajus School Entitled Taittirīya Saṃhita* (Cambridge, 1914), part 1, pp. 133–134.

²⁵ This paragraph is based on the YD’s commentary (YD_{WM} 45:13–47:3) on the word *atīśaya* (‘relative superiority’).

²⁶ YD_{WM} 46:(5), ‘It is because even [in the case of a person] who merely mutters a prayer, [his] body certainly attains the status of being a part of [that ritual]’ (*japamātram api hi kurvato ’vaśyaṃ śārīram aṅgabhāvam eti*).

²⁷ Cf. *Atharvaveda Saṃhitā* 11.8.32, ‘Therefore, indeed, one who knows man (*puruṣa*) thinks “this is *brahman*”; for all deities are seated in him, as cows in a cow-stall’ (*tasmād vai vidvān puruṣam idaṃ brahmeti manyate/ sarvā hy asmin devatā gāvo goṣṭha ivāsate*//); the translation is from William Dwight Whitney, *Atharva-Veda Saṃhitā: Translated With a Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (Cambridge, 1905), part 2, p. 651. For the Sanskrit text, see R. Roth and W. D. Whitney (eds), *Atharva Veda Saṃhita* (Berlin, 1855), 261:11–12. Note that *pāda* d of the *Atharvaveda Saṃhitā* 11.8.32 is different from the YD’s verse. However, Whitney (*ibid.*) notes that one manuscript has a reading of ‘*śārīre ’dhi samāhitāḥ*,’ as it is quoted in the YD.

²⁸ Bronkhorst investigates the Vedāntins such as Śaṅkara who ‘present themselves as Mīmāṃsakas’ (Johannes Bronkhorst, ‘Vedānta as Mīmāṃsā’, in *Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta: Interaction and Continuity*, (ed.) J. Bronkhorst (Delhi, 2007), pp. 33–34). The author of the YD, unlike those Vedāntins, does not present Sāṅkhya philosophy as ‘Mīmāṃsā at heart’ (*ibid.*) but it can be called Mīmāṃsā in a limited sense as long as he does not deny the Mīmāṃsā mode of argumentation and the ideological presuppositions that it makes.

sacrifice results in non-eternal and non-absolute fruits for its performer. The YD presents the Sāṅkhyas as the insiders, that is, the Vedic Brahmins.

In search of a Vedic injunction of renunciation

The story of Kapila and Āsuri clearly illustrates the identity of Sāṅkhya practitioners as renouncers. In the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*, the introduction of the fourfold *āśrama* (stage of life) system as a way of legitimising the lifestyle of renouncers is attributed to a certain demon named 'Kapila'. Being cautious on connecting this Asura Kapila and Kapila in the *Mahābhārata*, Olivelle concludes that 'there may have been at least one tradition that associated the *āśrama* system with Kapila and the followers of the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy'.²⁹ Although it does not mention the founder's name, the YD defends the *āśrama* of renunciation by refuting the Mīmāṃsakas who regard the renunciation of the householder's duty of sacrifice as a heretical practice not approved by the Veda.

Right after the YD's confession that Sāṅkhya does not consider Vedic sacrifice to be impure,³⁰ the Mīmāṃsaka opponent abruptly switches the discussion's agenda to the legitimacy of renunciation—*sannyāsa*—referring to the Vedic sentences that enjoin the lifelong duty of sacrifice: 'Renunciation is impossible because non-separation [from the duty of ritual] is taught [in the Veda].'³¹

The Mīmāṃsakas divide the Veda into *mantra* and *brāhmaṇa*,³² and further classify the latter into *vidhi* (injunction), *arthavāda* (eulogy), and *nāmadheya* (name). Among these four constituents of the Veda, injunction is the most important since it prompts a human agent to perform a ritual action that brings about an unprecedented (*apūrva*) fruit beneficial to him.³³ Eulogy and name are subordinate to injunction. Name is an element that denotes a particular sacrifice, whereas eulogy, complementing various aspects of sacrifice, makes Vedic rituals appealing to human agents.³⁴ Eulogy thus has a significance insofar as it is construed with a specific injunction of ritual action that it eulogises.³⁵ Should the Sāṅkhyas adhere to their lifestyle of being renouncers, founded on the Veda, what the Mīmāṃsakas thus desire to know most is whether there is a direct injunction from the Veda that sanctions the *dharma* status of renunciation.

²⁹ Patrick Olivelle, *The Āśrama System: The History and Hermeneutics of a Religious Institution* (Oxford, 1993), p. 99.

³⁰ A long digressive section on the legitimacy of renunciation begins with the opponent's remarks quoted below. The section ends at YD_{WM} 42:4 where the YD moves on to provide its comments on the second fault of the Vedic sacrifice, namely, 'destruction' (*ḥaya*).

³¹ YD_{WM} 35:9, 'sannyāsānupapattiḥ aviyogaśravaṇāt.'

³² YM_{WM} 31:1-2, 'Question. Then, what is this revelation? Answer. Mantra and brāhmaṇa' (*āha. kaḥ punar ayam anuśravaḥ? ucyate. mantrabrāhmaṇam.*). Cf. *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 2.1.32-33: 'The name "mantra" is applied to those texts that are expressive of the said (assertion, of things connected with prescribed acts). To the rest (of the Veda) the name "brāhmaṇa" (is applied)' (*taccodakeṣu mantrākhyaḥ// śeṣe brāhmaṇaśabdah//*). The translation is from Ganganatha Jha (trans.), *Shabara-Bhāṣya* (Baroda, 1933), Vol. 1, pp. 202 and 204. For the Sanskrit text, see Subbāśāstrī, *Śrīmājaiminīprāṇite Mīmāṃsādarśane*, 434:3 and 436:2.

³³ Cf. *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.2, 'Dharma is a beneficial action defined by an injunction' (*codanālakṣaṇo 'rtho dharmah//*). For the Sanskrit text, see Erich Frauwallner, *Materialien zur ältesten Erkenntnislehre der Karmamīmāṃsā* (Wien/Graz/Köln, 1968), 16:8.

³⁴ For discussions on *arthavāda* and *nāmadheya* in the Mīmāṃsā literature, see Arthur Berriedale Keith, *The Karmamīmāṃsā* (Calcutta, 1921), pp. 79ff. and Ganganatha Jha, *Pūrvamīmāṃsā in its Sources* (Varanasi 1964), pp. 159ff.

³⁵ Cf. *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.2.7, 'Being construed along with injunction, they would serve the purpose of commending those injunctions' (*vidhinā tv ekavākyatvāt stutyarthena vidhinām syuh//*). The text and translation are from Kunio Harikai, 'Mīmāṃsaka theory of *Gauṇa* or metaphor from Śabaravāmin to Kumārilabhaṭṭa', in *Dieux, génies, anges et démons dans les cultures orientales & florilegium indiae orientalis Jean-Marie Verpoorten in honorem*, (eds) Christophe Vielle, Christian Cannuyer and Dylan Esler (Bruxelles, 2017), p. 279.

The Mīmāṃsakas in the YD, distinguishing between *śruti* (the ‘heard’ text, i.e. the ‘authorless’ Veda) and *smṛti* (the texts founded on the Veda whose authors are ‘remembered’), first require the Sāṅkhya opponent position to provide *śruti* sentences that support the idea of renunciation. Upon being offered several Upaniṣadic passages, the Mīmāṃsakas highlight the underlying imbalance of authority between the injunctive and complementary sentences of the Veda. While ritual activities are enjoined by injunctions (*vidhi*) marked by optative (*lin*), imperative (*lot*), and gerundive (*kr̥tya*) endings, pro-renunciation sentences are mere eulogies (*arthavāda*) that have ‘the purpose of making what is enjoined attractive’ (*vihitasya prarocanārtham*).³⁶

At first, the YD counters this claim with several ‘consequence’ arguments (*prasaṅga; reductio ad absurdum*) based on the principle that any part of the Veda should not be rendered purposeless (*ānarthakya*). The Veda does not mandate adopting renunciation. Nevertheless, it praises renunciation and thereby makes it attractive. The YD considers the act of praising to be tantamount to the act of enjoining when it asks: ‘Why the Veda—which is not preceded by any human intellect, independent, working for the sake of what is ultimate for humans—should praise what is indeed not wanted as something to be done?’³⁷ It also reports an unidentified opinion of the followers of Śābara that ‘a praise alone without an injunction’ (*antareṇa vidhiṃ stutir eva*) can make the praised action look appealing.³⁸

However, the YD is not totally dissatisfied with the *vidhi*-centric hermeneutical scheme of the Mīmāṃsakas. Drawing on such a hermeneutical principle, it later attempts to affirm the legitimacy of renunciation within the Mīmāṃsaka vision of the Veda. Hence, the YD argues, should *arthavāda* serve the purpose of and be a part of *vidhi*, the Mīmāṃsakas need to postulate the existence of an injunction of renunciation. If it is not found, that does not mean such an injunction does not exist. It is just that more effort is needed in the search, since the scripture has been handed down through various traditions.³⁹ The YD’s rejoinders are indeed ingenious, but we observe that it suffers from the same old problem that the initiators of the original *āśrama* system confronted. When the *Gautama Dharmasūtra*—which can be dated between the fifth and first centuries BCE—rejected the possibility of renunciation based on the strength of ‘*pratyakṣaśruti*’ (expressed Vedic text) over ‘*anumitaśruti*’ (inferred Vedic text),⁴⁰ orthodox Brahmins had already considered and abandoned the YD’s urge to find a presumptive Vedic injunction.

³⁶ See the relevant discussion at YD_{WM} 38:8–39:3.

³⁷ YD_{WM} 39:17–19, ‘*yad dhi kartavyatayā neṣṭam tad apuruṣabuddhipūrvakaḥ svatantraḥ puruṣaṇiḥśreyasārtham pravartamāna āmnāyaḥ kim iti prarocayet?*’

³⁸ Cf. YD_{WM} 40:7–9, ‘Furthermore, [renunciation is established] because [your argument] is uncertain. It is not certain that only what is enjoined is to be done. Likewise, the followers of Śābara recite the following. ‘Here, [in case of the following sentence, that is,] “Going to the village is glorious for you,” eulogy alone, without an injunction, makes Devadatta like to go to the village’ (*kiṃ cānyat. anekāntāt. na cāyam ekānto yad vihitam eva kartavyam. tathā ca śābarāḥ paṭhanti grāmagamaṇam bhavataḥ śobhanam ity atrāntareṇa vidhiṃ stutir eva devadattam grāmagamanāya prarocayātīti*).

³⁹ YD_{WM} 40:16–41:2. Kumārila also considers diverse branches of Vedic transmission lineage and people’s carelessness as reasons why we cannot find the root Vedic texts in case of some *smṛti* passages (Kiyotaka Yoshimizu, ‘Kumārila’s criticism of Buddhism as a religious movement in his views on the sources of dharma’, *Acta Asiatica* 108 (2015), p. 46). Cf. *Tantravārttika* (Subbāśāstrī, *Śrīmajjaiminipraṇīte Mīmāṃsādarśane*, 164:18–19 and Harikāi, ‘Sanskrit text of the *Tantravārttika*: Adhyāya 1, Pāda 3, Adhikaraṇa 1~3’, 9:26–27): ‘The source [Vedic text] of the *smṛti* is not found [in some cases] because Vedic branches are scattered [over the world], human beings are careless [in their search for the root text], and [the matter at stake] is [mentioned] in various chapters’ (*śākhānām viprakīrṇatvāt puruṣāṇām pramādataḥ/ nānāprakaraṇasthatvāt smṛter mūlam na dr̥ṣyate//*). The translation is adapted from Kei Kataoka, ‘Transmission of scripture: exegetical problems for Kumārila and Dharmakīrti’, in *Scriptural Authority, Reason and Action*, (eds) Vincent Eltschinger and Helmut Krasser (Wien, 2013), p. 252.

⁴⁰ Olivelle, *The Āśrama System*, pp. 84–85.

But the search for an injunction supporting Sāṅkhya does not end with the digression on *sannyāsa* on the word ‘impurity’. Later, having explained the basic meaning of the second half of *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2 (YD_{WM} 50:13ff.), the YD introduces the Mīmāṃsaka’s argument that ritual dominates the Veda because of the existence of injunctions. The YD opposes this view, and as it does so, it presents non-ritualistic types of injunctions from the Upaniṣads:

If you argue that ritual is primary because there exists an injunction [for it], [I would answer]: No. It has been already answered. How was it? There is no difference that [can be] made by [the explicit existence of] an injunction. Or, even when we accept [the difference], it exists also regarding that[, that is, knowledge]. Indeed, there exists an injunctive scriptural passage for the act of knowing. How? It[, the Veda,] says as follows: ‘The self (*ātman*) that is free from evils, free from hunger and thirst, free from old age and death, free from sorrow; the self whose intentions are real—that is the self that should be sought, that is the self that should be investigated (so *’nveṣṭavyaḥ*, sa *jijñāsitavyaḥ*). When someone discovers that self and perceives it, all his desires are fulfilled and he obtains all the worlds. Such words of Prajāpati are heard.’ (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.7.1)⁴¹ Again, it also says [as follows]: ‘Two kinds of knowledge—higher and inferior—should be known (*veditavye*).’ (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.1.4)⁴² Therefore, [your argument] that ritual is primary because there exists an injunction [for it] is merely your attachment to your own thesis.⁴³

The Upaniṣadic injunctions⁴⁴ the YD provides here are mandates to seek after (*anveṣitavya*), to investigate (*jijñāsitavya*), and to know (*veditavya*). While these are not

⁴¹ The translation of this passage is adapted from Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, pp. 279 and 281.

⁴² Cf. Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, p. 437.

⁴³ YD_{WM} 52:15-23, ‘vidhisadbhāvāt kriyāprādhānyam iti cet, na, uktavāt. katham etat? nāsti vidhikṛto viśeṣaḥ. upetya vā tatrāpi tadutpatteḥ. asti hi jñānasyāpi vidhāyakaṃ śāstram. katham? evaṃ hy āha. ya ātmāpahatapāpmā vijighatso vipipāso vijaro vimṛtyur viśokah <satya>saṃkalpaḥ so ’nveṣṭavyaḥ sa jijñāsitavyaḥ. sa sarvāṃs ca kāmān avāpnoti sarvāṃs ca lokān yas tam ātmānam anuvidya vijñānātīti prajāpater vacanaṃ śrūyate <iti>. punar apy āha. dve vidye veditavye parā caivāparā ca yā <iti>. tasmād vidhisadbhāvāt kriyāprādhānyam iti svapakṣānurāgamātram’ etat’ [‘Emended from svapakṣānurāgamātram].

⁴⁴ As Yoshimizu points out, Kumārila changes his opinion on whether the Upaniṣadic injunctions have their unique objective of liberation or not, most likely referring to the same *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* passage quoted in the YD. See Kiyotaka Yoshimizu, ‘Kumārila’s reevaluation of the sacrifice and the Veda from a Vedānta perspective’, in *Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta: Interaction and Continuity*, (ed.) J. Bronkhorst (Delhi, 2007), pp. 235–236.

In the *Śloka-vārttika*, Kumārila considers that the Upaniṣadic injunction for the knowledge of *ātman* serves the purpose of ritual actions. Cf. *Śloka-vārttika (Sambandhākṣepaparīhāra)* vv. 103–104, [The Upaniṣadic injunction] that *ātman* should be known is not enjoined for the sake of liberation. It [only] indicates that the knowledge of *ātman* is a cause of engagement in a ritual action. As long as it is accepted that [the knowledge of *ātman*] is for the sake of other [objectives, that is, rituals], the description of its result must be a eulogy; [thus, the result of the knowledge of *ātman*] is no other than the result [of ritual actions] such as heaven’ (*ātmā jñātavya ity etan mokṣārthaṃ na ca coditam/ karmapravṛttilhetutvam ātmajñānasya lakṣyate// vijñāte cāsyā pārārthyē yāpi nāma phalaśrutiḥ/ sārthavādo bhaved eva na svargādeḥ phalāntaram//*). The translation of verse 104 is adapted from Yoshimizu, ‘Kumārila’s reevaluation of the sacrifice’, p. 235, fn. 109.

In his *Tantravārttika*, however, Kumārila, referring to the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.15.1, confirms the distinctiveness of the Upaniṣadic injunctions. For example, he states: ‘this [Upaniṣad] passage that declares the result of the state of attaining the supreme self (*paramātman*) characterised by the non-return [to this world] is not eulogy (*arthavāda*) since [the knowledge of *ātman*] does not belong to [any ritual] context and is not inherently related with a[ny] sacrificial performance’ (*apunarāvṛtyātmakaparamātmaprāptyaavasthāphalavacanam aprakaraṇagatatvena anaikāntikakratuṣaṃbandhāc ca na ... arthavādatvam; Subbāśāstrī, Śrīmajjaiminipraṇīte Mīmāṃsādarśane*, 288:15-17 and Kunio Harikāi (ed.), ‘Sanskrit text of the *Tantravārttika*: Adhyāya 1, Pāda 3, Adhikaraṇa 9 Vyākaraṇa Adhikaraṇa collated with five manuscripts’, *South Asian Classical Studies* 6 (2011), pp. 16–19).

injunctions on sacrifice, neither are they concerned with renunciation, enjoining rather with their gerundive endings cognitive acts such as knowing. The YD apparently could not solve the old problem that an injunction of renunciation does not exist. But why does it list the injunctions of knowing in support of its own position? What does the act of knowing have to do with Sāṅkhya?

Aligning the Sāṅkhya ideal with the Upaniṣad

We may answer this question by attending to the peculiarities of the YD's interpretation of the second half of *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2 which runs as follows:

A superior method, different from both, is the (discriminative) knowledge of the manifest, the unmanifest and the knowing one (or knower—i.e., *puruṣa*) (*tadviparītaḥ śreyān vyaktāvyaaktajñāvijñānāt*//).⁴⁵

The common understanding of this line adopted in other commentaries takes 'tad-' as both the visible (mentioned in *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 1cd) and Vedic means of sacrifice (in 2ab), and posits the reason for Sāṅkhya's superiority over them in its discriminative knowledge of the 25 Sāṅkhya principles that can be categorised under the terms of the manifest (*vyakta*), unmanifest (*avyakta*), and knower (*jñā*).⁴⁶

The YD, on the other hand, understands 'tad-' as heaven (*svarga*), realised by the performance of Vedic sacrifice. It completely disregards the visible means, which has no Vedic basis and thus is not praiseworthy,⁴⁷ and posits 'liberation' (*mokṣa*) as a better fruit that lacks the three defects of Vedic sacrifice.

The word 'it' (*tat-*) refers to the result, which has the characteristic of the attainment of heaven (*svarga*), achieved by the injunction of ritual activities. 'That which is opposite to it' refers to [something] pure (*śuddha*), indestructible (*akṣaya*), and without relative superiority (*niratiśaya*). [If you ask,] 'what is that?', [we] answer that it is liberation (*mokṣa*) that is 'better.' The following has been said. Both of those [results, that are,] heaven and liberation are praiseworthy for they are enjoined by the Veda; however, liberation is more praiseworthy.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ The translation is from Larson, *Classical Sāṅkhya*, p. 256.

⁴⁶ With the exception of the *Tattvakaumudī*, all the classical commentaries on the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* understand 'tad-' as referring to the visible and Vedic means discussed respectively in *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 1 and 2. For example, see *Suvarṇasaptati* 1245b27–29, 'Question. If then, which means is superior? Answer. 'What is opposite to these two is superior.' The two means are, namely, 1. what is taught by the medical science and 2. what is taught by the Veda. The [superior] means, which is opposite to these two means, is attained by the investigation (*jijñāsā*) (外曰: 若爾何因爲勝? 答曰: 翻此二因勝。謂二因者。一醫方所說, 二皮陀所說。翻此兩因欲知所得因); see also *Sāṅkhyavṛtti* (6:16–17), *Sāṅkhyasaptatīvṛtti* (9:12–13), *Gauḍapādabhāṣya* (H. T. Colebrooke and H. H. Wilson (eds and trans), *The Sāṅkhya kārikā, or, Memorial Verses on the Sāṅkhya Philosophy* (Oxford, 1837), 3:14–15), *Jayamaṅgalā* (Sarma and Vangiya, *Sāṅkhyakārikā of Śrīmad Īśvaraḥṣṇa*, 67:22–23), and *Mātharavṛtti* (6:27–28). The *Tattvakaumudī* takes 'tad-' to refer to 'revelational means' (*ānuśravika*) alone by glossing the pronoun as 'tasmād ānuśravikāt' (Srinivasa Ayya Srinivasan (ed.), *Vācaspatimīśras Tattvakaumudī: Ein Beitrag zur Textkritik bei kontaminierter Überlieferung* (Hamburg, 1967), 74:28–29).

⁴⁷ See the marginal note (YD_{WM} 47:(3)) on the word 'superior' (*śreyas*): 'Since the visible means is far removed [from the Veda], even consideration of it is not appropriate here. With this intention, the author of the [*Sāṅkhya*] *kārikā* stated "better," not "best" (*dṛṣṭasya tu dūrāpāstatvād atra gaṇanaiva na yuktety āśayena kārikākāraḥ śreyān ity abhyadhān na tu śreṣṭhaḥ*).

⁴⁸ Cf. YD_{WM} 47:10–13, 'tad ity anena karmavidhiniṣpādītasya svargaprāptilakṣaṇasya phalasyābhisambandhaḥ. tasmād viparītaḥ śuddho 'kṣayo niratiśaya ity arthaḥ. ko 'sāv ity ucyate mokṣaḥ śreyān. etad uktaṃ bhavati. ubhāv apy etau praśasyau svargāpavargāv āmnāyavihitāt, mokṣas tu praśasyatarāḥ.'

In this manner, the YD has the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* (the root text of the classical Sāṅkhya) declare that the Sāṅkhya objective of liberation is Vedic and, at the same time, that the Sāṅkhya goal of liberation is superior in comparison to the Vedic ritualists' goal of heaven. However, though the YD does not specify it, the 'Veda' that enjoins one to know and thereby liberates one from *samsāra* (transmigration) could have been more narrowly limited to a portion of the Veda, the Upaniṣad.

It is quite symptomatic that the YD, having provided the basic service of grammatically analysing the compound 'vyakta-avyakta-jñā-vijñāna' of the root verse (YD_{WM} 48:15–50:12), stops using the word 'vijñāna' (discriminative knowledge) and, instead, employs the word 'jñāna' (knowledge) throughout. With the word 'jñāna,' it puts forward several arguments to prove that liberation arises from knowledge (*jñānān mokṣah*). In so doing, the YD corroborates its arguments with quotations from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, and a Vedāntic text titled *Paramārthasāra* that commonly contain the word 'jñāna' or words that contain derivatives from the root '√vid' (e.g. 'ātmaavid' and 'brahmaavid') without any reference to Sāṅkhya's 25 principles (*tattva*).⁴⁹

Why doesn't the YD directly claim the superiority of the 'Sāṅkhya' means of knowledge over the Vedic sacrifice? Why does it emphasise the generic principle that liberation comes from knowledge without specifying that that knowledge comprises the 25 *tattvas*? As we have seen, it is because the YD wants to frame the Sāṅkhya as Vedic. In the classical Upaniṣadic sources, injunctions on knowing are found, and those Upaniṣads declare that one overcomes *samsāra* through knowledge but with sacrificial actions one is bound to be reborn again. The second verse of the *Sāṅkhyakārikā* ends with the word '-vijñāna', which may be taken as a synonym for 'jñāna' in a general context. The YD sees an opportunity to base Sāṅkhya on the Vedic, precisely the Upaniṣadic, foundation in that word. With Upaniṣadic injunctions on knowing, the YD could stand on the same orthodox footing with the Mīmāṃsakas; and with rich Upaniṣadic passages iterating the principle that knowledge (*jñāna*) rather than action (*karman*) is the cause of immortality, it could claim Sāṅkhya's superiority. That superiority was gained by ignoring the difference between Sāṅkhya's discriminative knowledge (*vijñāna*) of the 25 principles and the Upaniṣadic knowledge (*jñāna*) of *ātman* (Self), and by equating the Sāṅkhya's ideal of *mokṣa* with that of the Upaniṣad.

The last words of the YD on *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2 betray its full confidence in the path of knowledge over action. Consisting of six verses, it begins with a line in which the YD finally discloses its inclination toward the Upaniṣad: 'the highest secret is read at the end of the Veda'.⁵⁰ In their entirety, they are designed to refute a certain Vedic ritualist who holds that the disabled, like eunuchs, attain liberation in the knowledge-based *āśrama* of renunciation (*sannyāsāśrama*),⁵¹ while others attain it in the root-*āśrama* (*mūlāśrama*) of the sacrificing householder (*grhasthāśrama*). Let me cite the last three verses for the sake of brevity.

[Knowledge] is the cause of attaining the state of isolation (*kaivalya*) and is the determination of reality; for these reasons, it is enjoined by the Veda, eulogised,⁵² praised by exceptional persons like Yajñavalkya.

⁴⁹ See YD_{WM} 50–52 for these quotations.

⁵⁰ YD_{WM} 54:5, 'paraṃ rahasyaṃ vedānāṃ avasāneṣu paṭhyate'.

⁵¹ The YD, in fact, uses the term 'āśramāntara' (another *āśrama*). It is the marginal note that glosses that expression as 'sannyāsāśrama' (YD_{WM} 53:(1)). Note that the original meaning of *āśrama* refers to the residence and lifestyle of a particular type of householder and, thus, 'another *āśrama*' basically means '*āśrama* other than that of householders'. Olivelle states that 'the compound *āśramāntara* is used with the meaning "other than a householder" in the *Mahābhārata* and even by medieval authors such as Śaṅkara and Kumārila' (Olivelle, *The Āśrama System*, p. 23).

⁵² Instead of 'stutiḥ' adopted in YD_{WM} 54:11, I took the reading of 'stutā' listed as a variant in the manuscripts.

The same knowledge, just as a girl given to a eunuch, does not shine to those blinded by desire for sensual objects, those who uphold perverse doctrine.

Therefore, having dispelled this [verbal] army of bad reasons submitted by those who follow [their own] desire, an intelligent person should indeed proceed from the *āśrama* [of householders] to the *āśrama* [of renouncers] based on sound reasoning.⁵³

Unlike the defensive voice that the YD employed in its argument with the Mīmāṃsakas, these verses straightforwardly display the antagonism that the YD bears towards the Vedic ritualists. The YD brings back the insulting label of ‘eunuch’ to the ritualists: they are so impotent that they are not capable of appreciating ‘a given girl’, that is, the path of knowledge in which the Veda instructs them. The girl does not shine in their arms since they are blinded by desire for other sensual objects that the Veda promises to the performers of sacrifice such as cattle, victory, and heaven. Being ignorant of how to discern the superiority between the two Vedic goals—heaven and liberation—they follow their desire and blame the Sāṅkhya practitioners who leave behind, just as Āsuri did, wives, sons, and the duty of lifelong sacrifice with poorly formulated arguments.

The Veda does not enjoin renunciation. It enjoins knowledge. Nevertheless, the Veda sanctions renunciation in an indirect manner. Renunciation is a Vedic way of living because the intelligent (*matimat*) people who devote their lives to Vedic knowledge choose to live so based on sound reasoning (*yukti*). And the light of such reasoning from the *Lamp of Reasoning* (*Yuktidīpikā*) is of Upaniṣadic nature in that it makes knowledge—the ‘girl’ of the Veda—shine forth and outshine the other Vedic means—sacrifice.

Conclusion

Concluding his study on the teachings of Pañcaśikha⁵⁴ in the *Mahābhārata* 12.211–212, Motegi makes the following general observation:⁵⁵

⁵³ YD_{WM} 54:11–16, ‘kaivalyaprāptihetutvād yā vedavihitā stutā/ prasastā yājñavalkyādyair viśiṣṭais tattvaniścayāt// seyam viṣayarāgāndhair viparītarthavādibhiḥ/ vidyā kanyeva pañḍāya diyamānā na śobhate// tasmād rāgānugair ukṭāṃ kuhetupṛtanām imām/ apohya matimān yuktyā hy āśramād āśramaṃ vrajet//’.

⁵⁴ Although it is beyond the scope of this study, there is a verse attributed to Pañcaśikha that claims the possibility of liberation in any of *āśrama*. It says: ‘One who knows the 25 principles will be emancipated, whichever stage of life he may dwell in, whether he may have twisted hair, or a shaved head or knotted hair. There is no doubt about this’ (*pañcaviṃśatitattvajñō yatra tatrāśrame vaset/ jaṭi muṇḍi śikhī vāpi mucyate nātra saṃśayah//*). The text and translation are from Shujun Motegi, ‘The teachings of Pañcaśikha in the *Mokṣadharmā*’, *Asiatische Studien* 53.3 (1999), p. 513. This verse must have been famous among the Sāṅkhyas since it or its variants is quoted in most of the commentaries on the *Sāṅkhyakārikā*, namely, *Suvarṇasaptati*, *Sāṅkhyavṛtti*, *Sāṅkhyasaptativṛtti*, *Gauḍapādabhāṣya*, *Jayamaṅgalā*, *Mātharavṛtti*. Curiously enough, it is not quoted in the YD and the *Tattvakaumudī*. Those commentaries that quote the verse, however, pay attention only to the fact that the verse is speaking of the 25 principles (*tattva*) and neglects the implication of this on the relationship between *āśrama* and liberation. But Pañcaśikha seems to be related to the doctrine that liberation is possible in any *āśrama* considering the contents of the *Mahābhārata*, Book 12, Chapter 308 where the king Janaka, who is the disciple of Pañcaśikha, debates with Sulabhā under the framing question, ‘concerning whether there has ever existed a man who attained emancipation without giving up the position of king’ (Motegi, ‘The teachings of Pañcaśikha’, p. 518). Therefore, there must have been diverging opinions over the necessary relationship between *āśrama* (especially, *sannyāsa*) and liberation among the Sāṅkhya thinkers and it may not be a coincidence that the YD and the *Tattvakaumudī* do not quote this Pañcaśikha’s verse.

⁵⁵ Motegi, ‘The teachings of Pañcaśikha’, pp. 534–535, fn. 80.

Sāṃkhyas teach a rigid dualism of material and spirit which inevitably denies traditional values such as the belief in *brahman* or the authority of the Veda; however, for certain reasons they chose not to oppose the tradition and tried to co-exist with it, unlike the Buddhists and Jains. They had to accept the traditional values to a certain extent to survive in the Hindu society as an ‘orthodox *darśana*.’ It is most likely that with this change Sāṃkhya finds its place as a teaching for *brāhmaṇas* who reside in the fourth stage of life (*āśrama*).

In this article, we saw how the YD attempted to ‘find Sāṃkhya’s place’ in the orthodox fold of the Indian intellectual community. We traced how the YD survived the Mīmāṃsaka challenge, and now we have a more concrete picture of how Sāṃkhya followers in the sixth to eighth centuries accepted traditional values and to what extent they had to modify their reading of the root text, *Sāṃkhyakārikā 2*, in the process.

The YD on *Sāṃkhyakārikā 2* is, as a whole, proof of the thesis that the Veda sanctions the renunciators’ lifestyle. *Sannyāsa*, the *āśrama* of renunciation, was still not accepted as legitimate, at least by the Mīmāṃsakas, according to the YD. Sāṃkhya intellectuals, therefore, could not simply resort to the orthodox status of *sannyāsa* to substantiate their Vedic affiliation. They had to prove the Vedic basis of the *sannyasāśrama* by themselves. What is remarkable in the YD’s proof is that it accomplished the project of legitimising *sannyāsa* within the Mīmāṃsakas’ *vidhi*-centric hermeneutical framework. It criticised the Mīmāṃsaka obsession with the actual existence of an injunction for an action, but it eventually discovered and presented injunctions in its favour. This was done through exploiting the inner division of the Veda, that is, its ritual-portion (*karmakāṇḍa*; *kriyāvācin*) and knowledge-portion (*jñānakāṇḍa*; *jñānavācin*). Observing the common goal of gnostic liberation in the Upaniṣad and Sāṃkhya, and ignoring the difference between Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s *vijñāna* and the Upaniṣadic *jñāna*, the YD firmly rooted the Sāṃkhya tradition in the Veda. The place it found for Sāṃkhya was the end of the Veda.

We witness that the Indian intellectual community after the sixth century, that is, after the fall of the Gupta Empire (320–550 CE), was under pressure from the orthodox symbolised in the name of the Veda. Buddhists, for example, ‘by the sixth century’, contended ‘no longer with dissenting coreligionists, but with non-Buddhist challengers’.⁵⁶ And the challengers were headed by the staunchest guardian of the Veda, the Mīmāṃsakas, as evinced by their increasing presence in the writings of representative Buddhist authors such as Bhāvivēka (500–570 CE), Dharmakīrti (600–660 CE), and Śāntarakṣita (725–788 CE). We may observe the same ‘Vedic challenge’ of the sixth century in the Sāṃkhya literature. Supposing that those commentaries dated to the sixth century by Larson and Bhattacharya –namely, the *Suvarṇasaptati*, *Sāṃkhyavṛtti*, *Sāṃkhyasaptativṛtti*, and *Gauḍapādabhāṣya*—predate the YD,⁵⁷ we may state that the YD on *Sāṃkhyakārikā 2* was a Sāṃkhya response to those who questioned the Vedic status of Sāṃkhya and against the ever-increasing pressure for Brahmanisation during the post-Gupta period. We further notice that the ‘Vedic challenge’ was the ‘Vedic turn’ for the Sāṃkhya tradition, for Vācaspati’s commentary (ninth or tenth century) on *Sāṃkhyakārikā 2* presents an explanation that takes Vedic authority for granted.⁵⁸ While the other non-YD commentaries do not see Sāṃkhya’s

⁵⁶ Vincent Eltschinger, *Buddhist Epistemology as Apologetics: Studies on the History, Self-understanding and Dogmatic Foundations of Late Indian Buddhist Philosophy* (Wien, 2014), p. 95.

⁵⁷ See Larson and Bhattacharya, *Sāṃkhya*, pp. 15–16.

⁵⁸ The *Tattvakaumudī* considers even the ‘impurity’ (*aviśuddhi*) of Vedic sacrifice mentioned in *Sāṃkhyakārikā 2* to be caused by a Vedic prohibition, namely, ‘do not kill any living being’ (*mā hiṃsyāt sarvā bhūtāni*). Thus, Vācaspati’s discussion is not whether Sāṃkhya recognises the authority of the Vedic mandate to kill an animal in ritual contexts; rather, it discusses the contradiction between the Vedic prohibition (‘do not kill’ (*mā hiṃsyāt*)) and the Vedic injunction (‘One should slaughter an animal dedicated to Agni and Soma’ (*agniṣomiyaṃ paśum*)).

equivocal stance on the Veda as problematic, Vācaspati's *Tattvakaumudī* sees no need to confront a 'Vedic challenge' and thus does not show the 'growing pains' documented in the YD.

The YD on *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2 enables us to see the Sāṅkhya tradition as dialogically engaged with other schools. Based on the authority of the Upaniṣad, the YD authorised the *āśrama* of renunciators, and in so doing, the YD stepped into the realm of Vedic hermeneutics. Considering the following remark by Olivelle, it seems this was inevitable: 'The history of the *āśrama* system, moreover, should be firmly located within the history of Brāhmanical hermeneutics (*mīmāṃsā*)—that aspect of Brāhmanical theology engaged in interpreting received sacred texts.'⁵⁹ The game that the YD played was indeed hermeneutical. To win the game, the YD had to read seemingly adverse and irrelevant passages of the Veda as supporting the Sāṅkhya case. And in that hermeneutical game, at least according to its own presentation, the YD gained the upper hand over the Vedic ritualists. In the YD, Sāṅkhya participated in the general discourse of contemporary intellectuals and spoke the common language shared with other schools. By entering into the debate on the *āśrama* system, the YD on *Sāṅkhyakārikā* 2, unlike other commentaries, contributed the Sāṅkhya voice to one of the central themes that had engaged the majority of Indian intellectuals, regardless of their affiliations. In so doing, it also strengthened the place of Sāṅkhya in the intellectual history of India.

Acknowledgements. My sincere thanks are due to the following people. Edeltraud Harzer, Olena Łucyszyna, and Noémie Verdon helped me in organising my thoughts at the initial stage. Kiyotaka Yoshimizu answered my queries about Mīmāṃsā and reviewed the first draft of the article. Kei Kataoka contributed to this project by reading the relevant portion of the *Yuktidīpikā* and discussing difficult points together. I also thank the two anonymous reviewers of *JRAS* for their critical comments that deepened my understanding of the material.

Conflicts of interest. None.

ālabheta). Seeing no contradiction between the two (*na...kaścid virodho 'sti*), Vācaspati concludes that one act of ritual killing causes two—one positive and one negative—results. Cf. *Tattvakaumudī* 74:9–10, '[There is no contradiction] because [ritual killing] will increase sin for the human [agent] but [at the same time] will help [the completion of] ritual' (*sā hi puruṣasya doṣam āvakṣyati kratoś copakarīṣyatīti*). However, having quoted a passage attributed to Pāṇḍasīkha that speaks of how the demerit mixed with the merit from performing a sacrifice is removable and endurable (*svalpaḥ saṅkaraḥ saparihāraḥ sapratyavamarṣa iti*), Vācaspati (72:23–74:2) explains that such a negative mixture can be removed by expiatory rites (*prāyaścitta*) and, even if one neglects to perform them, the pain caused by animal slaughter is bearable to 'someone who has already plunged into the great lake of nectar' (*-sudhāmahāhradāvagāhin*).

⁵⁹ Olivelle, *The Āśrama System*, p. 7.

Cite this article: Ham HS (2023). On being Orthodox renunciators: the *Yuktidīpikā*'s establishment of the Sāṅkhya mode of life (*Samnyāsa*) in the name of the Veda. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 33, 627–641. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186322000402>