YOGA EDUCATION

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All potential residue (saṃskāra)—or whatever might have been left of them having thus been restrained initially by the memory of the cognitive and meditative levels of trance, what now remains to be done is to restrain even that. What has already been achieved at the stages of ultra-cognitive and ultra-meditative stages (asaṃprajñāta) is that the citta has been freed from knowledge, feeling, experience, memory (smṛti) and memory-potentials (saṃskāra) generated by the vyāttis.

Finally all being restrained, with the transition from the seeded to the still higher level bearing no seed, there appears the highest state of trance-consciousness termed the seedless trance (nirbhija samādhī). The citta now ceases to act, as there is no purpose left to serve (citta vyātti nirodhā).

Here ends the exposition of trance-consciousness (samādhī), the first chapter of Yogasūtra, dealing with (Sāṃkhya) Yoga compiled by Patañjali.

Since Gautama is a recognised teacher of Sāṃkhya it is quite reasonable to think that he must have been mentioned in Itihāsa-Purāṇa literature. In the course of my studies I have come across some reference to a certain yogin Gautama, who, on reasonable grounds, may be supposed to be identical with the above mentioned Gautama.

In the Kumārikā-khaṇḍa of the Skandapurāṇa (Ch. 55) we find the mention of one great yogin Gautama Akṣapāda by name (Gautama the gotra name and Akṣapāda the proper name) who is said to be the husband of Ahatyā and a person who brought the river Godāvari (55.4-7). In this chapter we find a considerable number of verses showing Gautama's view about Yoga, its auxiliaries, supernormal powers, etc. (In fact Yoga was practised by Gautama, an account of which was given by Nārada to Aijuna; vide verses 9-10). As this description of Yoga seems to us highly valuable we are giving here an outline of the Purānic account (55.9-142).

Yoga defined as the cessation of the fluctuations of the citta (verse 11); Eight auxiliaries, namely: yama, niyama, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhārāna, dhyāna, and samādhi (12-13); Description of five yamas, namely ahimsā, etc. (14-20); Description of five niyamas, namely sauc, śuṣṭi, tapas, japa and bhakti for the guru (21-26a); Definition and
varieties of praṇāyāma; good and bad results of praṇāyāma if practised in a right or wrong way (27b-40); Description of praṇāha (41-42) of dhāraṇā (42b-46) and dhyāna (deities to be meditated upon) (47-50), of dhārā (51) and of samādhi (52-60); An account of the upasargas (obstacles) (61-69a), of items of food to be taken (69b-72) and of the ariṣṭas (portents that indicate approaching death).

In the description of Yoga as given here the following points are worthy of notice:

1. Āsana (yogic posture) has not been mentioned.
2. Dhyāya has been mentioned as an auxiliary and placed between dhāraṇā and dhyāna.
3. Japa has been used in place of suādhyāya.
4. Devotion of a guru (i.e. to look after the guru as Śiva, vide verse 25) has been mentioned in place of tāvāra-pranidhāna.
5. The lowest variety of praṇāyāma is said to cover a period of 12 mātras (30).
6. Practice of praṇāyāma (sitting on the padma posture only) is said to produce four results, namely sānti, praśānti, dīpi and prasāda (36-39).
7. Pratāpāha is defined as the withdrawal of the citta from the objects (41), which shows that Gautama laid less stress on the withdrawal of the organs from their respective objects.
8. Retention of air in different regions of the body has been prescribed at the time of practising dhāraṇā.
9. It speaks of five upasargas, namely praṭīthā, śrīvāna, daiva, bhrama and āvarta (61-69a); cp. YS. 3. 36.

We find a remarkable account of siddhis (supernormal powers) in this chapter (verses 93-114), a similar account of which is not found in any well-known work on Yoga. Here siddhis have been divided into eight groups, each having eight subdivisions; thus 64 kinds of siddhis are enumerated here.

The group concerning the earth with 8 sub-divisions is called Aśāinī. Similarly the group concerning the water (ap, jala), light (tejas), air (āyu), the sky (ākāśa), the mind (manas), the egoism (anahkāra) and the cognitive principle (buddhi) (each having eight subdivisions) are respectively called Rākṣasī, Yāksī, Gāndharvī, Aindrī, Saumyā, Prājāpatyā and Brahmi.

After this, there is a verse (115) stating that the attainment of these powers is sometimes inimical to the highest goal. Eight powers of the anīmā group (anīman, mahīman, etc.) are defined in verses 116-121. In the last part of this chapter (verses 122-142) we find general views about Yoga practice and yogin.

Since we find a considerable number of Gautamas in the Purānic works (sometimes they are described as belonging to sectarian religions; vide Skanda-p, Aruṇacala 1.5.3-5 for a Saiva Gautama) it is almost difficult to identify any one of them with Gautama, the yogin. The yogin Gautama is said to be husband of Ahalyā. We find some accounts of this Gautama in the Epics and the Purānas. According to Rāmāyaṇa Gautama lived near Vaijayantapura, the capital ruled by the king Nimi (7.55.5-6). He is said to have practised austerities with his wife in the outskirts of Mithilā (1.48.14-16). He may be the same Gautama as is mentioned in Śānti-p. 265.45 (Methāthith Gautama, a great wise man, practised penance). Similarly Śānti-p. 129.4-8 give a vivid description of penances practised by one Gautama, residing at the mountain Pāripātra. In the Hamśa Upaniṣad we find that one Gautama was taught in Yoga by Sanatkumāra. A description of the Ĉakras with japa, dhyāna and ten kinds of nāda is given here. Several Gautamas are mentioned in the Upaniṣads like the Bhādārān̄yaka, kauśikti, Chāndogya, etc. Any one of these Gautamas may be identical with the yogin Gautama, provided we find some clear indication to establish the identity.

We are not going to examine here the question whether this Gautama is identical with the author of the Nyāyaśūtra. We can only draw the attention of our readers to the fact that the Nyāyaśūtra has an express statement about the places where Yoga may be practised successfully (4.2.42) and it speaks of yama-niyamās as purifying factors and holds that yogaśūtra is to be learnt in order to know adhyātmavidhi.

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