

ŚABDAPRĀMĀNYAM IN ŚĀBARA AND KUMĀRILA by
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Pages 218.

Here is a laudable attempt to analyze the Mīmāṃsā doctrine of Śabdapramāṇya and study its component parts and their field of activity and influence against the background of the views of other schools of thought. The study of language formed an important part of the Mīmāṃsā, called Vākya-śāstra, since its aim was to interpret cogently the various injunctions and statements which contained apparent inconsistencies and selfcontradictions; the theories of interpretation evolved by the Mīmāṃsaka-s are of great importance even now. But little has been done by modern scholars in this field, and

hence the present work is quite welcome, since it brings into focus many questions and answers of the system.

Chapter I, 'Meaning and metaphor in the Mīmāṃsā' is introductory and is intended to give the problems from the 'inside'. The next chapter, giving a topical analysis of the Tarka-pāda of Śābarabhāṣya, is also complementary to this. Chapter 3 of the first part deals with Dharma and its significance in early Mīmāṃsā. The author feels that *Codanā* in the Dharma definition means *vedavacanam* rather than *vidhi* according to Śābara.

Part two, '*Śabdapramāṇyam* in Śābara and the early Mīmāṃsā' discusses the views of Śābara and Vṛttikāra (based on the available quotations in Śābara) on *Śabdapramāṇya*, *sabdārthasambandha* and *bhāvanā*. Part three discusses the problems from Kumārila's point of view. The author points out that *Vedapramāṇya* was the basis for the various linguistic theories of the Mīmāṃsaka-s.

The author's statement (p.166) that the grammarians considered *sphota* as a supra-sensible reality different from the syllables needs correction; for *sphota* is the real sentence perceived through the ear-organ, according to the grammarians. Those who know the language very well perceive the whole utterance as a single unit, and understand the meaning in a flash; it is only those who do not know the language well that hear the sound of the syllables one by one.

In the last chapter the author concludes: 'Bereft of the security offered by a Saviour they became inventive enough to discover the footprints of Significance on the sands of time and space, sound and sentence'. 'Their philosophy of language was worked out from the view-point of their basic principle of the ultimate Significance of human discourse'. 'The Mīmāṃsā did not err in its insight; rather it erred in that it failed to stress it and to explicate its implications.'

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