

A NOTE ON 'BHANĠA' IN SAPTABHANGI

In spite of the fact that students of Indian Philosophy and Indology alike have acknowledged the importance of the roles of *Saptabhaṅgi* and *Syādvāda* in Jaina Philosophy, there are considerable strains in the explanation of them at their hands. Such strains can be roughly classified into four groups: (a) Strains in the analysis of the notion 'syāt' that the doctrine of *Syādvāda* involves, (b) strains in the analysis of the notion 'bhaṅga' that *Saptabhaṅgi* involves, (c) strains in the explanation of the frame of *Saptabhaṅgi* as also of *syādvāda* and (d) strains in the explanation not only of *Nayavāda* with which *Saptabhaṅgi* is closely connected but also the strains in the explanation of the relation between *Nayavāda* and *Syādvāda*. These strains and the questions they pose are no doubt interrelated and hence any endeavour to give a full account of the doctrine of *Syādvāda* in general and that of *Saptabhaṅgi* in particular cannot be complete unless these questions and strains are satisfactorily dealt with. As a part of such an extensive investigation we shall concentrate, in this paper, on the analysis of the notion of 'bhaṅga' and shall postpone considerations of the other problems to an investigation to be taken up later on. The entire paper falls into three sections: the first attempts to explain and analyse the expression 'bhaṅga', the second presents a catalogue of various considerations envisaged to be put forward through the notion of *bhaṅga* by Jaina philosophers and logicians, the third discusses the problem of the relation between *bhaṅga* on the one hand and either modality or truth-value and/or truth-conditions on the other, while the concluding part of the paper summarises some of the important points, this discussion brings forward, that will have a significant bearing on the full explanation of the frame—the doctrine of *Syādvāda*.

I

The word 'bhaṅga' is indeed used in various senses. In the present context it is needless to present a list of its various uses. If we consider the way the notion of 'bhaṅga' is explained traditionally then it will be clear that two of its senses have been highlighted, but none of which, according to us, is satisfactory. On

the one hand, concentrating on the consequences to which the doctrine of *Saptabhaṅgi* leads, or rather is supposed to lead it has been argued that *bhaṅga* means 'Conditional Predication' and so the doctrine of *Syādvāda* or *Saptabhaṅgi* is 'a doctrine of conditional predication'. On the other hand, it has been argued that what is meant by '*bhaṅga*' is an 'attribute or a property' and considered in this way *Saptabhaṅgi* is that doctrine in which such attributes are 'stated as predicates in seven different propositions'.² The points which these two contentions, apart from the fact the first confuses between *Saptabhaṅgi* and *Syādvāda*, in the heart of hearts, seem to focus on are different and yet, to me it appears at least, they fall outside the central tenet of the doctrine of *Saptabhaṅgi*. The first consideration seems to propound that the doctrine of *Saptabhaṅgi* puts forward a bundle of seven-fold conditional predications and this bundle can be broken or divided into seven conditional predicates. The second consideration, on the contrary, seems to maintain that as, perhaps, the nature of a thing can be analysed in its properties or attributes, where such properties or attributes turn out to be analysens, similarly different propositions that the doctrine of *Saptabhaṅgi* embraces could also be analysed into seven different statements, for every such proposition is a statement about attributes or properties the thing has.

But the point of considerable importance in this context is that the doctrine *Saptabhaṅgi* is neither an attempt in the direction of division nor in the direction of an analysis. The issue is not about a thing but rather about statements. Further, to be precise, the issue is not about statements but, as will become clear in the sequel, about forms of statements. *Bhaṅga* does not aim at either dividing or analysing a thing. Any explanation of *Saptabhaṅgi* in general and of *bhaṅga* in particular, therefore, through the model either of division understood in the sense cutting or unpacking or even of analysis would turn out to be both misleading and confusing.

The word *bhaṅga* is, however, used in another important sense. It is used sometimes in the sense of arrangement or organization (*ākṛti*)³ or sometimes in the sense of a type or form (*prakāra*)⁴. We shall not, for the present, bother about the former sense. We prefer, instead, to concentrate on the latter sense first. As we have argued elsewhere⁵ the proper context of *Saptabhaṅgi* is descriptive state-

ments about things, which not only emerge some time or the other but also that they retain some kind of identity in spite of the fact that they undergo a change. Given such descriptive statements the legitimate question that arises with reference to them is : can we consider statement-forms of such statements and can we enumerate some important statement-forms in such a way that every statement descriptive of the nature of thing can be taken to be a substitution instance of any one or more of them. The problem, that is, is of statement-forms and that of the enumeration of important statement-forms.

Thus considered the issue neither tilts in the direction of predication, conditional or otherwise, nor in the direction either of division or of analysis. The issue of predication would figure on the level of the description of a thing and not on the plane of the consideration of statement-form and enumeration of some important statement-forms. Even if it is taken, for the sake of argument, for granted that every statement that we employ for describing the nature of a thing is of S-P form, on the level of the consideration of statement-form or their enumeration the fundamental problem is not that of predication. Even on the plane of statements the problem of predicates and predication would turn out to be a significant one provided the statements that are taken to be descriptive of the nature of thing are of S-P form. That according to Jaina logic the statements descriptive of the nature of things are of S-P form is a differenti, a though, an important point. One point however, is clear. The problems that figures on the plane of statements and those that figure on the plane of statement forms and their enumeration are different sorts of problems. In the same way, in this context, the fundamental problem can neither be that of division of a thing nor an analysis of it in attributes or properties that it has and which may be considered as possible analysens.

The question, it seems, that is attempted to be posed with the introduction of the notion of *bhanga* has two important facets of it. On the one hand the question that seems to be posed is : what is the form of any statement that we employ to describe any thing ? The answer that seems to be given to this question is : to say very roughly, S-P kind of statement. The next question that seems to be posed is : granting that the statements that we employ to describe things are of S-P form, are they of the same form or can we

enumerate some important kinds of them ? By way of an answer to this question it seems to be maintained that although, *prima facie*, every statement that we use to describe a thing is of S-P form yet if we take into consideration the various statements, each one of which is S-P form, that we use to describe things then we can enumerate seven important kinds of them some of which are fundamental or primary while others are derived or secondary.

Thus, *bhaṅga* in one of its various senses brings two main considerations to the fore : (a) what, in general, is the statement-form of the statements that we use to describe things ? and (b) under which different important kinds of them can we enumerate ? First, of these, is the issue of the determination of the statement-form of the descriptive statements while the second is of the enumeration of the important kinds of statement-forms of the descriptive statements. These issues are interrelated and yet not the same. For, whereas it is the syntactical consideration that will solve the first one of these issues, it is the enumerative and classificatory consideration that will solve the second problem and yet the considerations involved in each one of them are not exactly the same. It is with reference to the second issue that complicated syntactical and other considerations will have to be taken into account, but more about them later.

Our consideration so far has brought out that the kind of considerations that *bhaṅga* is supposed to bring out have to do something either with the determination of the form of the descriptive-statements or with enumeration of the important statement-forms of the descriptive statements. Although this is the central contention that *bhaṅga* attempts to put forward, it is not the only consideration that is envisaged to be put forward by the introduction of the expression '*bhaṅga*.'

II

Jaina logicians and philosophers did not restrict the points they attempted to put forward with the help of the notion of *bhaṅga* only to the two considerations that have been brought out in the preceding section. Notwithstanding the fact that these are the prominent considerations they also endeavoured to use the notion of *bhaṅga* proliferatively. Over and above the central consideration brought out in the previous section, therefore, Jaina logicians

and philosophers have also argued that there are six other considerations that the notion of *bhaṅga* is supposed to propound. It has been argued that *bhaṅga* does not merely mean a statement-form (*Vacanprakāra*)⁶ but also is indicative of seven kinds of features a thing may have like existence etc. as also seven doubts (*saṁśayāḥ*) about them, sevenfold inquisitivenesses (*Jijāṅsāḥ*), sevenfold questions (*Praśnāḥ*) and sevenfold answers (*uttarāṇi*).⁷ In fact it has been argued in a soritical form of argument that sevenfold questions arise from sevenfold inquisitivenesses, sevenfold inquisitivenesses arise from sevenfold doubts, sevenfold doubts arise because there are in all seven kinds of features that a thing can have (*tat (vastu) viśayābhūta dharmāṇāṁ saptavidhātvāt*)⁸ The sevenfold features of a thing are those like (a given thing) possibly/somehow (*kathāñcit*) has (such and such a feature) or is (of such and such a nature) etc.⁹

It is quite obvious that in putting forward all these considerations either conjunctively or alternatively many questions are confused. Prominently the logical and epistemological questions are not only confused but also confounded with one another. The questions of the statement-form of a descriptive statement and of the enumeration of their important kinds is mainly a logical and hence a syntactical question. Being so it is independent of epistemological considerations. Epistemological considerations will arise, if at all, with reference to informative statements and not with reference to the statement-form of an informative statements. Further, such epistemological considerations will arise especially with reference to the consideration of the problem what sort of information is given by a given descriptively informative statement.

The confusion that Jaina logicians and philosophers seem to be ushering in by various considerations that they attempt to put forward through the notion of *bhaṅga* are not limited, however, only to the confusion between logical and epistemological considerations. They put forward through their contention that *bhaṅga* also means a feature of a thing, questions, inquisitiveness on the part of a questioner, doubts in his head and these further being linked with features of a thing penetrate still deeper. Here, further two considerations are confused viz. genesis of the questions about features of a thing alongwith the psychological and epistemological or quasi-epistemological factors that may be brought in for the satisfactory explanation of such a genesis and the question of the corres-

pendence between features that a thing has and the features given in the descriptive statements about a thing. This amounts to presupposing a kind of correspondance between ontological, epistemological and logical issues. As logical and epistemological questions, since they arise on two different planes, should not be confused with each other so too these sorts of questions should not be confused with either logical or epistemological questions.

These, however, are not the only considerations that are expected to be put forward through the notion of *bhāṅga*. There are at least three more important considerations that come to the foreground, and they are : (i) It has been argued that the notion of *bhāṅga* not only means a statement-form but also enumeration of two main kinds of such statement-forms : (a) those statement-forms which are employed to make a descriptive statements assertively about a thing as a whole or (b) those statement-forms which are used to make a descriptive statement assertively (*ādeśa*) about a particular feature of a thing¹⁰ There are two points that arise in this connection : (1) classification of assertions is not tantamount to classification of statement-forms, and (2) classification of assertions cannot be taken to be the ground of the classification of statement-forms. The problem of statement-forms is a syntactical one, while that of assertions is a semantical one. Although in an important sense syntactical and semantical considerations cannot be completely severed from each other and although it cannot be said that either syntactical or semantical considerations can account for both of them yet to say that the classification that arises on semantical level also holds on syntactical level is, to say the least, philosophically monstrous and confusing. (ii) Secondly, it has been argued that according to the authors of some Jaina philosophical texts¹¹ the notion of *bhāṅga* also puts forward grammatical considerations.¹² Perhaps this is so. We say perhaps because this contention is not borne out by other texts. But this is not the crucial issue here. Even if it is granted, for the sake of argument, that the notion of *bhāṅga* proposes also to expound some grammatical considerations yet this too leads to a disastrous consequence provided we believe that there is one-one correspondence between grammatical and logical form of a statement. One may argue, although this is indefensible, that every statement, no matter whether descriptive of the nature of a thing or not, is of S-P form. But this does not entail that what is meant by a grammatical

and logical subject as well as by a grammatical and logical predicate is the same. Moreover, it also does not entail that grammatical and logical form of a statement are the same or that one is the sure guide for the other. Hence, even if it is agreed that the notion of *bhaṅga* also puts forward grammatical considerations, it does not imply that such grammatical considerations have something importantly to do with statement-forms and their enumeration. Last, but not the least, grammatical considerations, even if they can and do arise with reference to expressions and statements, cannot and do not arise with reference to statement-forms. To say that they do is to confuse between statements and statement-forms on the one hand and between logical and grammatical considerations on the other. (iii) Lastly, it has been put forward that *bhaṅga* also means particularity of a thing (*vastuvicalpa*)¹³ which is considered through modalities of two kinds : spatial (*sthānabhangakaḥ*) or temporal (*kramabhāṅgaka*)¹⁴. Although such modalities are important in the descriptive statements about a thing and although they lead to what is called positional, topological, locative or place logic on the one hand and temporal logic on the other, yet their consideration is irrelevant in connection with the consideration of the problem either of statement-form or enumeration of their important kinds.

Our discussion has brought out that there are two kinds of considerations that are attempted to be put forward through the concept of *bhaṅga* : (a) the primary and logical consideration is the problem about form of descriptive statements, the proper context of *syādvāda* and the related problem of the enumeation of important statement-forms of such descriptive statements; but (b) the considerations that are associated with the notion pf *bhaṅga* did not remain limited only to this consideration. The applicability of the notion of *bhaṅga*, in respect of some kind of logical analogy with the first kind of consideration, came to be proliferated and not only epistemological, explanatory and justificatory considerations came to be associated with the notion but even the grammatical, modal and other kinds of considerations came to be confused with the primary consideration. The problems the first kind of consideration leads to are of one kind. While those the second kind of considerations lead to are other sorts of problems. Any honest inquirer into the implications of the notion of *bhaṅg* must judiciously sift these different although perhaps related considera-

tions and through such sifting not only should keep different domains of consideration distinct but also should guard himself from falling into some of the unsurmountable confussions.

III

Those modern scholars who consider the problem of the implications of the notion of *syāt* as well as that of *bhaṅga* connect the two notions and aggravate the whole problem by bringing in some of the additional, although important, considerations. One such point which is attempted to be made is that the notion of *bhaṅga* is connected with the problem of truth-value and truth-conditions. It is attempted to be argued, on the other hand, that the notion of *bhaṅga* is connected with the notion of modality. What is relevant in this context is that what the notion of *bhaṅga* is centrally and primarily connected with is the issue of statement-form and enumeration of the important statement-forms of the descriptive statements. Both these issues are logical and hence formal. Each one of these problems is neutral not only to the consideration of truth-value and truth-conditions but also of the consideration of modality, of whatever kind it may be, unless we are to say that every descriptive proposition is such that modality is ascribed to a proposition externally. We can and must make sense of the problems of statement-form and enumeration of their important kinds independently of both these issues. Structure of a proposition or statements itself does not justify either particular kind of modality or the number of truth-values one should acknowledge. Similarly form of a statement in itself cannot specify under which truth-condition will anybody be in a position to assign truth-value to a given proposition that fits into a particular statement-form. Again, form of a proposition does not connote anything of its cognitive relation, factuality or otherwise. Justification of such a nature of given proposition would certainly bring in the considerations of modality, truth-value, truth-conditions etc. But all these issues clearly fall outside the jurisdiction of the problem of statement-forms and enumeration of their kinds. Consideration of the features, further, that the thing has is an important issue. Such features can also be considered either on the plane of potentiality or actuality. But questions of this sort too, do not figure in the consideration of the problems that are centrally connected with the notion of *bhaṅga*.

As it is important to distinguish between the central and peripheral or even proliferative issues that are connected with the significant employment of the notion of *bhaṅga* similarly it is of equal importance not to confuse between the issues that figure in the entire context of the explanation of the doctrine of *Syādvāda* and the issues that are centrally connected with the notion of *bhaṅga*. It is this that is often lost sight of. As a result such considerations are put forward no two of which are compatible with each other nor are they cotenable in the same context. Some scholars have also wrongly identified *Syādvāda* with *Saptabhāṅgi*. The consideration of the difference between the two falls outside this paper.

It is, thus, important not only to distinguish between central and peripheral issues connected with the notion of *bhaṅga* but it is also of paramount significance that we do not confuse between the totality of issues the doctrine of *Syādvāda* focusses its attention on and the problems the notion not only of *bhaṅga* but also of *syāt* is connected with are not confused with one another. It is failure of this sort that the consideration of the doctrine of *Syādvāda*, both at the hands of traditional as well as modern scholars, has led to some of the unsurmountable confusions. The entire issue is very complex and to be able to disentangle some of the complexities involved we must, as a preparatory background, understand not only the notion of *syāt* but also of *bhaṅga*. We dealt with the former problem elsewhere, while here we considered the notion of *bhaṅga*. The explication of the doctrine of *Syādvāda*, indeed a formidable task, falls outside the periphery of this small paper. But any explication of the doctrine of *Syādvāda* shall not be able to accomplish the goal independently of clearly understanding both these notions, to explain one of which was the aim of this paper.

In conclusion, we can say that the notion of *bhaṅga* essentially and centrally deals with is the problem of statement-form and *saptabhāṅgi* is an enumeration of their important kinds. What is the basic structure of the statement-form and in all how many statement-forms there are, as also the problem of truth-values and truth-conditions, the kinds of modalities involved are some of the important problems that would have to be considered in the later context of *Syādvāda* and as these considerations fall outside this paper we refrain from dealing with them. In the same way one important consideration in the sense of arrangement or organiza-

tion as one of the way in which the notion of *bhāṅga* is used too has an important role to play in the larger context of the explanation of the frame of *Syādvāda*, where we shall have to distinguish between modalities on the plane of semantic object-language and the modalities on the plane of semantic meta-language. These problems are all outside the present consideration and yet because, at least derivatively, they are connected with the notion of *bhāṅga* that a reference to them is made here leaving the full treatment of them to some later time.

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NOTES

1. Kundakunda; *Pravacanasāra*; Upadhye, A. N. (ed) Introduction; p. 80
2. Mookerjee, S; *The Jaina Philosophy of Non-absolutism*; p. 29
3. *Vaimayārṇava*, 3934
4. *Abhidhānarājendrakōśa*, Vol. V. P. 1334
5. "An Analysis of *Syāt* in *Syādvāda*"—a paper presented to the seminar on Jaina Logic and Philosophy, held in the University of Poona. *IPQ*, Vol. V, 1978.
6. Hemacandra; Commentary, called *Anyayogavyavacchedikā* on *Syādvādamanjari* of Mallisenasuri; 23
7. Vimalaśāsa; *Syādvādamanjari*
8. op cit
9. op cit
10. Hemacandra; op cit
11. *Jayadhavadh*
12. Upadhye, A. N; op cit; P 81
13. *Abhidhānārajendra*; op cit.