

Toshihiro Wada (ed.), *Indian Philosophy and Text Science*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2009, xii + 206 Pp. Rs. 495. (Hardback)

This work stately proclaims birth of the opening of the frontiers of the new methodology of Indian philosophy, whose name is Text Science. Indian Philosophy has so far been studied based on some research methodologies: the traditionally Indian method, the philological method, the method of history of thought, and the philosophical method. Little attention has been paid to the point of the methodology itself in Indian philosophy. Nine papers contributed to this book have presented one proposal about the methodology of Indian philosophy.

Text Science, which is a methodologically new approach toward Indian philosophy, takes notice of the concept of “context”. In this book, “the concept of context” generally includes various information on the outside of texts. Toshihiro Wada, who is the editor of this book, describes that the concept of context may not be necessarily a new tool to scholars of Indian studies. But, since many scholars of Indian studies use this tool unconsciously, Wada claims that he uses it intentionally. He goes on to say: “It is an underlying principle of this book that in order to understand *texts*, written in Sanskrit or other languages, we need to turn our attention towards factors outside of them, such as information provided by other areas of study, which factors we call context.” (p. 2)

This book is composed of four parts: (I) General, (II) Buddhism, (III) Vedānta, Mīmāṃsā, and Vyākaraṇa, and (IV) Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, and has nine papers of Indian philosophy. The contributions are as follows:

Introduction by Toshihiro Wada

Part I: General

1 JHOHANNES BRONKHORST, “The Context of Indian Philosophy”

Part II: Buddhism

2 MASAHIRO SHIMODA, “Some Reflections on the History of Buddhist Canons in Ancient India”

3 SHIGERU SAITO, “The Gandhāran Disturbance in the Late 4th Century CE as a Context: A New Viewpoint of Gandhāran Buddhism”

Part III: Vedānta, Mīmāṃsā, and Vyākaraṇa

4 PARIMAL G. PATIL, “Consuming Scripture: Philosophical Hermeneutics in Classical India”

5 SHOUN HINO, “The Beginnings of Bhakti’s Influence on Advaita Doctrine: The Teachings of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī”

6 TOSHIYA UNEBE, “Bhartṛhari on Text and Context”

Part IV: Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika

7 KATSUNORI HIRANO, “New Light on the Commentary Texts of Ancient India: A Genesis of the Inherence Chapter in the Commentaries on the *Padārtha-dharma-saṃgraha*”

8 TAKANORI SUZUKI, “Text, Context, and Author’s Intention: Two Frames of Reference in the Vaiśeṣika School”

9 TOSHIHIRO WADA, “The Genesis of Sanskrit Texts and Their Context

in Navya-nyāya: From Gaṅgeśa's *Tattvacintāmaṇi* to Its Commentaries"

It is not possible to comment on all the contributions in detail, but we can see three types of understanding of context in these papers. (1) Context as author's personal and social background: In the contributions of chapter 1 (Bronkhorst), chapter 3 (Saito), chapter 4 (Pathil), chapter 5 (Hino), chapter 6 (Unebe), and chapter 8 (Suzuki), context is fundamentally understood as author's personal, social, and historical background. In emphasizing "context", contributors proclaim that original texts should be understood including not independent of the author's some factors. Bronkhorst has pointed out the importance of an understanding of historical background for the researcher of Indian philosophy using the case of Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita (ca 1600). Saito has clarified the social background of Buddhist scholars as the Gandhāran Disturbance in the Late 4th Century. Pathil has emphasized Kumāri's creativity and innovation as his personal context. Hino has indicated Madhusūdana's remarks of the importance of *bhakti* and the idea of *nididhyāsana* as his own factor. Unebe has analyzed Bhartṛhari's concept of *prathibhā*, a flash of understanding, as an important context of understanding of a text (whether a word or a sentence). Suzuki has investigated the different conception of *śabdapramāṇa* (language as a valid means of obtaining true cognition) in the Vaiśeṣika School, and he has found some conflicts in this school as their historical context. Bronkhorst, Saito, and Suzuki have basically considered a social, or historical background as a context. On the other hand, Pathil, Hino, and Unebe have investigated the personal context that is peculiarity of author's thought, or faith. Viewed in this light, these contributors' understanding of context can be regarded as orthodox and general understanding of this concept.

(2) Context as the rule of language game in commentaries: In contributions of chapter 7 (Hirano) and chapter 9 (Wada), so called "the quotation theory" in commentaries, which is a kind of rule of a language game in school, is discussed as context. Hirano investigates the system through which the commentaries convey information, and he has attempted to find certain rules in the textual transformation (intentional or not-intentional) in the information transmission within the Vaiśeṣika School as context. Wada, based on "the quotation theory" like Hirano, has analyzed the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* and its two commentaries, and clarified the way in which commentaries are composed and what context impels them to arise in their extant forms. To sum up, Hirano and Wada consider the commentary texts as the texture of quotation, which is composed of information drawn from preceding texts, and attempt to clarify the rules of its quotation as context. In other words, although they are not using the word of a language game, the rules of the quotation in the commentary texts can be regarded as the rule of the language game in the school, because it seems reasonable to suppose that composing commentary texts by quotation according to a fixed rule is a performing of a language game. From this viewpoint, we can see "the quotation theory", which is a kind of rule of a language game, as a new type understanding of context in ancient Indian philosophical schools.

(3) Context in a dialogic text: In a contribution of chapter 2 (Simoda), context is considered as the concept showing “a past to affect the present,” not of a past that is closed with no bearing on the present in Buddhist canonical book, which is dialogic texts. Simoda points out two characteristics: (1) the correlation of a religion and its canon, (2) the attempts of endless interpretation of the canon for corresponding actually, about canonical book. Since Buddhists canonical texts have these two characteristics, he has regarded these texts as dialogic texts that have “the work-like aspect”, which is a concept discussed by Dominick LaCapra.¹ LaCapra distinguished between “the documentary aspect” and “the work-like aspect”. When a reader deals with a text as a “document” of historical source, LaCapra argues, he or she unilaterally recreates the historical context of the text, and, at this time it is only the text that is the subject to change. On the other hand, when one reads a text as a “work”, LaCapra goes on to assert, a dialogue arises between the reader in the present and the work from the past and, on this occasion, not only the text but also the reader will go through changes as he or she reads along with texts. To sum up, Simoda has considered context in dialog between a text (a canon) and a reader (a Buddhist), using this concept of “work-like aspect” in dialogic texts of LaCapra. We can see a third viewpoint of context that is different from the two above here.

This book will become a very important work of the turning point that creates the argument on methodology in Indian philosophy. Text science, however, has some problems to discuss the direction and the details of methodology. In this book, the concept of context, as we have seen, is not used in one meaning, but three meanings, and nine contributors’ awareness of issue about context is not necessarily corresponding, excluding Hirano and Wada. Thus, for example, Bronkhorst’s standpoint of considering the historical backgrounds as important factors in understanding Indian philosophy conflicts with Simoda’s viewpoint of finding context in work-like aspect of dialogic texts instead of dealing with scriptures merely as historical document. Nevertheless, I dare to find the new possibilities of the methodologically controversial approaches in this book as resulting in the some expansion of perspectives in Indian philosophy.

The problem of the text and the context has been discussed by various awareness of the issues in some fields except Indian philosophy, we have already had a lot of examples of this discussion, namely: Pragmatics of Semiotics,² Analysis of ordinary language by Ordinary Language School,³ Speech Act Theory started in John L. Austin,⁴ and Discourse Analysis of Paul Grice.⁵ And Jacques Derrida, who is a French philosopher, argued, in connection with this

1 Diminic LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982.

2 Steven Davis (ed.), *Pragmatics: A Reader*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

3 P.F. Strawson, *Introduction to Logical Theory*, London: Methuen / New York: Wiley, 1952.

4 J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: the William James lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955-*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.

5 Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.

problem that the outside of texts does not exist.⁶ Moreover, in the field of intellectual history, many scholars have discussed the problem of text and context. Especially, we should not overlook an argument of LaCapra referred by Simoda. Thus, it is unsatisfactory that these discussions in other fields are hardly referred to in this book.

Text Science in Indian philosophy has many rich possibilities, in which we can find at least two directions for the future: one is the advancing of the research in each specialty, keeping scholar's unity liberally, with the policy "paying attention to context in order to understand texts," and the other is a strict methodology that unified the concept of context, getting a lot of result of other fields. Which will text science choose from these two? Or, is another direction selected? We must look more carefully into the development of research of the study group of text science led by Wada at Nagoya University in the future.

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⁶ Jacques Derrida, *L'écriture et la différence*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1967.