The Background

The earlier essay 'Tat Tvam Asi - Part V' and the present essay 'Tat Tvam Asi - Part VI' are basically meant to set the foundation for lakṣya-lakṣanatā-sambandha-jñānam which is the third knowledge-step required for understanding the mahāvākya Tat tvam āsi. Lakṣya-lakṣanatā-sambandha-jñānam is the relationship between the implication (lakṣaṇa) and the implied (lakṣya). The implied meaning, termed 'lakṣyārtha' can be understood only in contrast with 'mukhyārtha', the primary meaning. Hence the need to first study mukhya-vṛtti or direct connotation. The earlier essay was devoted to the explanation of mukhya-vṛtti and mukhyārtha. In this present essay we shall see in detail the second type of vṛtti (connotation) which is lakṣaṇā-vṛtti.

Lakṣaṇā-vṛtti

Lakṣaṇā-vṛtti is commonly translated as secondary connotation, secondary signification, indirect connotation, indirect signification, implied connotation or implied signification.

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1 It is strongly recommended that one should first study Tat Tvam Asi - Part V', published in the January 2005 issue of Tapovan Prasad, before embarking into the study of this essay. The term vṛtti means connotation or signification. Vṛtti is the relationship between a pada (word) and its padārtha (meaning or word-sense). It is divided into two types a) mukhya-vṛtti (primary connotation) and b) lakṣaṇa-vṛtti (secondary connotation). All these have been elaborately explained in the previous essay.

2 Different authors prefer different terminologies while translating the word 'lakṣyārtha'. Hence the need to mention all the technical words which are in vogue.
When the *mukhyārtha* (primary or literal meaning) of a *pada* (word) is incongruous or inappropriate in arriving at the *vākyārtha*, i.e., the cogent meaning of a sentence, then the *pada* (word) will connote a *padārtha* (word-sense) which is different from and yet related to its *mukhyārtha* (primary meaning). This is a very simple idea and can be illustrated with a common example: ‘*muṇcāḥ krośanti* — the galleries are shouting’. Since the inert galleries (*muṇcāḥ*) cannot shout, we construe the meaning or word sense (*padārtha*) of ‘galleries’ as ‘people in the galleries’. This secondary *padārtha*, ‘the people in the galleries’, which is not the *mukhyārtha* (primary meaning) but at the same time is connected with it, is termed *laksyārtha*. *Laksyārtha* can be translated as secondary meaning, implied meaning, indirect meaning or suggestive meaning. Sri Sankaracharya in his work *Vākyā-vṛtti* explains the nature of *laksyārtha*:

\[ \text{मानान्तराविरोधे तु मुन्त्वार्थस्य परियहे} \]
\[ \text{मुन्त्वार्थमधिनामूते वातितिष्कुण्योन्ते} \]

\[ \text{manantaravirdhe tu mukhyarthasya parigrahe} \]
\[ \text{mukhyarthenavinabhute pratitiralaksanocatyate} \]

In case the direct meaning of the word is not acceptable because it is inconsistent with other evidences, the meaning which is clearly intelligible and connected with the direct meaning is considered to be the implied meaning.

Thus the *laksyārtha* of a *pada* fulfils the dual criterion of:

a. not being the *mukhyārtha* (primary meaning) and at the same time

b. being related to the *mukhyārtha*.

The *vṛtti* (signification or connotation) by which a *pada* drops its *mukhyārtha* (primary meaning) and connotes its *laksyārtha* (implied meaning) is termed *lakṣanā-vṛtti*. This *lakṣanā-vṛtti* is classified into three types:

a. *jahal-lakṣanā* or *jahati lakṣanā*

b. *ajahal-lakṣanā* or *ajahati lakṣanā*

c. *jahad-ajahal-lakṣanā* or *jahati-ajahati-lakṣanā* or *bhāgatyāga-lakṣanā*. 
**Jahallakṣaṇā**

In this kind of laksanā-vṛtti the pada (word) gives up its vācyārtha (literal meaning or primary meaning) totally and connotes or signifies a meaning that is related to it's vācyārtha³. The following is the definition given by Swami Brahmalalina Muni in his Vedanta Sudhā.

> शक्यार्थं यत्र सन्त्यवज्य तत्तम्बनिधित्यापरः।
> अर्थं: प्रतीते तत्र जहतीलक्षणा मताः॥

> śakyārtham yatā santyajya taisambandhitayā'parah ||
> arthāḥ pratiyate tatra jahatilakṣaṇā matāḥ॥

When the word totally gives up its literal meaning and connotes an implied meaning which is related to its literal meaning then it is a case of jahallakṣaṇā.

We shall now understand the nature of jahallakṣaṇā with a traditional example: An individual who wants to reach a particular village enquires from a passerby:

**Question** : 'Kutra ghosah — Where is the village?'

**Reply** : 'Gaṅgāyāṁ ghoṣah — The village is on the Ganga'.

We shall now study the methodology by which we understand the above reply.

Gaṅgā is a river — a mass of flowing water (jala-praavāha) and hence there is no possibility of a village with houses, people, trees, cows etc. or for that matter anything being positioned on it except, say, a boat or some such thing which can float on water. Hence we find that the vācyārtha (literal meaning) of the gāṅgā-pada (word ‘gāṅgā’) arrived at by mukhya-vṛtti (primary signification), which is the watery ‘river’, is incongruous and inappropriate in construing a logical meaning for the sentence.

When the mukhya-vṛtti or primary signification fails to give a cogent meaning for the sentence (vākyārtha), we take recourse to laksanā-vṛtti or secondary signification. The vācyārtha (direct

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³ Vācyārthāṁ samagaram parītyajya taisambandhitatram yatā pratiyate tatra jahallakṣaṇā — this is another precise definition from the Sanskrit translation of Vicāra-Sāgara by Vasudeva Brahmen德拉 Saraswati.
meaning) of the ‘gāṅgā-pada’ (word ‘gāṅgā’) is the river — a
mass of flowing water, and this is totally given up. The ‘gāṅgā-
pada’ (word ‘gāṅgā’), by lākṣaṇa-vṛtti or secondary signification
drops its vācyārtha (direct meaning) of ‘river’ and then gives
the connotation ‘tīra - the river-bank’. The sentence ‘gāṅgāyān
ghoṣaḥ — there is a village on the Ganga’— is now understood as
‘tīre ghoṣaḥ — there is a village on the river-bank’. This sentence-
sense (vācyārtha) is quite appropriate and rationally sound, as
a village can definitely exist on the bank which is stable land,
unlike on the watery flowing river.

The vācyārtha (literal meaning) or mukhyārtha (primary mean-
ing) of gāṅgā-pada (word ‘Ganga’) is the flowing mass of water.
The lākṣyārtha or implied meaning is the ‘tīra-padārtha’, the river-
bank. While arriving at this lākṣyārtha of tīra-padārtha, the whole
of the flowing Ganga is totally dropped and therefore we see
that the vācyārtha (direct meaning) is totally abandoned. The
earthy bank which has an absolutely different nature from the
watery Ganga, though connected to the river by proximity, is
taken as the lākṣyārtha or implied meaning of the word Ganga.

- Sentence by mukhya-vṛtti: ‘Gāṅgāyān ghoṣaḥ — The village
  is on the Ganga’.
- Sentence by lākṣaṇa-vṛtti: ‘Tīre ghoṣaḥ — The village is on
  the river-bank’.

This kind of secondary signification or implied connotation
wherein the pada gives up its vācyārtha or mukhyārtha (literal or
primary meaning) fully, and connotes something else different
from its vācyārtha is called jahallaksāṇā. This jahallaksāṇā or jahatti
lākṣaṇā is translated as exclusive-secondary connotation or ex-
clusive-implied signification i.e., the secondary meaning or
implied meaning is arrived at by excluding the mukhyārtha or
literal meaning. (The term ‘jahat’ or ‘jahatti’ means ‘excluding’
and is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘hā’ to ‘give up’).

1 Ganga is water but bank is land. Water flows and is unstable but banks don’t flow
and are steady.

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It is important to note that though by laksanā-vrtti a pada connotes a lakṣyārtha which is different from its vācyārtha, the lakṣyārtha is not totally unrelated to the vācyārtha but only something related to it. The lakṣyārtha of a pada (word), by rules of laksanā-vrtti, has to be always related to the vācyārtha. Thus by laksanā-vrtti the 'gangā-pada' (word 'gaṅgā') connotes only the 'banks of Ganga' and not the banks of the River Nile or the shores of the Indian Ocean.

It is equally important to note that the banks being related to Ganga does not mean that they retain even a trace of the nature of the river, the flowing watery Ganga. Nay, the entire mass of flowing water called Ganga is dropped out of the reckoning when its earthy 'bank' is indicated. In other words, the whole of the vācyārtha is renounced and a new related padārtha of tīra (bank) is brought in to give a cogent meaning to the sentence. This new padārtha, the tīra (bank) is the lakṣyārtha of 'gaṅgā-pada' (the word Ganga).

To summarise, the lakṣyārtha arrived at by jahallaksanā fulfils a dual criterion:

a. The lakṣyārtha is arrived at by completely dropping the vācyārtha (literal meaning) of the pada (word) and

b. The lakṣyārtha is related to the vācyārtha of the pada.

Ajahallaksanā

After placing the food on the dining table, the mother instructs her son, 'Don’t allow the dog to come near the food'. Here the word ‘dog’ also refers to cat, crow or for that matter any animal that may happen to steal the food. The word ‘dog’, while implying other creatures like ‘cat’, does not exclude its primary meaning ‘dog’. In other words, the vācyārtha or literal meaning of the word ‘dog’ is not abandoned while construing the lakṣyārtha. This kind of laksanā-vrtti is termed ajahallaksanā.

5 The relationship between the Ganga and its banks is described technically as samyoga-sambandha.

6 Refer to the two-fold criterion of lakṣyārtha explained under the sub-heading 'laksanā-vrtti'.

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In jahallakṣaṇā, we arrived at the laksyārtha (secondary or implied meaning) by renouncing the vācyārtha or mukhyārtha (literal or primary meaning). But in ajahallakṣaṇā, we arrive at the laksyārtha (implied meaning), by retaining the vācyārtha (literal meaning) and then adding one or more new specific components that are obviously related to the vācyārtha. Thus the resultant laksyārtha contains the original element of the pada’s vācyārtha (word’s literal meaning) along with its added related element or elements. Swami Brahmalina Muni in his Vedānta Sudhā defines ajahallakṣaṇā:

When a special meaning is arrived at by adding on to the primary sense a meaning related to the very same primary sense, it is called ajahallakṣaṇā.

The following is the traditional example given by the Vedānta āchāryas to illustrate ajahallakṣaṇā. While visiting a horse stable or a horse race, one hears the statement ‘sōṇaḥ dhavati — The red runs’. We shall now study the methodology by which one construes the meaning of this sentence.

The vācyārtha (literal meaning) or mukhyārtha (primary meaning) of the ‘sōṇa-pada’ (word ‘red’) is the property of ‘sōṇatva’ (redness). Properties like redness, whiteness, greenness and blueness do not exist independently, let alone being capable of running. Properties require a substratum to reside. Since there is a logical inconsistency of the mere property ‘redness’ running, in the sentence ‘sōṇaḥ dhavati – The red runs’, while construing the sentence, we are forced to take recourse to laksanā-vṛtti or secondary signification.

Vācyārthena sahaiva vācyasambandhijnānam tena padena jāyate tatpade tasminnarthe ajahallakṣaṇā grāhyā— a precise definition from the Sanskrit translation of Vicāra-Sāgara by Vasudeva Brahmendra Saraswati.
`Aśvah` (horse) is related to `sonatva` (redness) by contextually being its substratum (as this sentence was heard in a horse stable). This enables us to come to the lakṣyārtha (implied meaning or secondary meaning) of `sona-pada` (word-red) as `sonaḥ aśvah` (red horse). Thus an utterly new component of aśvah (horse) is added to the vācyārtha `sonatva` (literal meaning `redness`) to derive the lakṣyārtha (implied meaning) of `sona-pada` (word-red). Now the sentence `Sonaḥ dhavati — The red runs` is construed as `Sonaḥ aśvah dhavati — The red horse runs`.

- Sentence by mukhya-vrirti: `Sonaḥ dhavati — The red runs`.
- Sentence by laksanā-vrirti: `Sonaḥ aśvah dhavati — The red horse runs`.

This kind of laksanā-vrirti is called ajahal-laksanā or ajahati-laksanā because the vācyārtha (direct meaning) is not excluded while construing the lakṣyārtha (implied meaning). The term `ajahat` or `ajahati` means `non-excluding` or `not abandoning`. The term ajahal-laksanā or ajahati laksanā is translated as non-exclusive secondary signification or non-exclusive secondary connotation.

To summarise: The lakṣyārtha arrived at by ajahallaksanā fulfills two criteria:

a. The lakṣyārtha is arrived at by retaining the vācyārtha (literal meaning) of the pada (word) and adding on a new component to the vācyārtha.

b. The new component added to the vācyārtha is related to the vācyārtha.
Conclusion

One may mathematically differentiate the lakṣyārthaś derived using jahallakṣaṇaḥ and ajahallakṣaṇaḥ:

- Lakṣyārtha by jahallakṣaṇaḥ = new component related to vācyārtha – vācyārtha
- Lakṣyārtha by ajahallakṣaṇaḥ = new component related to vācyārtha + vācyārtha.

These two — jahallakṣaṇaḥ and ajahallakṣaṇaḥ — are verily the foundation for understanding the third, final and most important type of laksana-vṛtti, the jahad-ajahal-laksanaḥ. It is through this jahad-ajahal-laksanaḥ that we will be able to derive the lakṣyārthas (implied meanings) of ‘tatpada’ (word ‘tat’) and ‘tvampada’ (word ‘tvam’), which help us to understand the akhaṇḍartha of ‘Tat tvam asi’. This topic of jahad-ajahal-laksanaḥ will be taken up in the next essay. As one studies these concepts, one is sure to examine and admire the great dexterity with which our ancient masters have dealt with and analysed subtle philosophical concepts. Truly speaking, no philosophy in the world can compare with the intellectual rigour and consistency of Advaita Vedānta. Our salutations to the vibrant intellectual tradition of Vedānta.

Auspicious days

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