

Sāṃkhya Epistemology: Perception and Inference in Classical and Postclassical Sāṃkhya

Sāṃkhya is an important and old Indian philosophical system. One of its integral parts is epistemology. In Indian philosophical systems, their epistemology or its essential part is represented by the theory of sources of true knowledge (*pramāṇa*). Sāṃkhya accepts three sources of true knowledge: perception (*dr̥ṣṭa, pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), and reliable verbal testimony (*āpta-vacana, śabda*).

The aim of this research is to reconstruct Sāṃkhya view on perception and inference. My main thesis is as follows: *Sāṃkhya is a valuable contributor to Indian philosophical reflection on sources of true knowledge, and the input of this school of philosophy is to be taken into account if we seek to understand this reflection deeply.*

Sāṃkhya discusses many important issues of the theory of perception and inference: it defines perception and inference, tries to explain the mechanism of contact of the senses with their objects, as well as the functioning of cognitive organs (powers) during perception and other mental processes, it distinguishes different types of perception (external perception, that is, perception with the medium of external senses, yogic perception, and perception of internal states) and two stages of perception, it criticizes various conceptions of perceptual error and proposes its own one, it elaborates on the members of inference, proposes several classifications of inference, explores the ground of the logical relation of inseparable concomitance on which inference is based, criticizes the rival conception of the scope of sources of true knowledge and formulates its own conception, argues – polemicizing with the Buddhist – that a source of true knowledge and its result are not identical, etc.

This study will be focused on epistemology of the three distinctive forms of Sāṃkhya: 1) classical Sāṃkhya of Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṃkhyakārikā* (ca. 350–450 CE) and eight extant commentaries on it: the commentary which survived in the Chinese translation of Paramārtha (composed ca. 500 CE, translated into Chinese between 557 CE and 569 CE), the *Sāṃkhyavṛtti* (ca. 6th c. CE), the *Sāṃkhyasaptativṛtti* (ca. 6th c. CE), the *Sāṃkhyakārikābhāṣya* (ca. 6th c. CE) by Gauḍapāda, the *Yuktidīpikā* (ca. 7th c. CE), the *Jayamaṅgalā* (ca. 700 CE or later), the *Māṭharavṛtti* (ca. 800 CE or later) by Māṭhara, and the *Sāṃkhyatattvakaumudī* (ca. 841 CE or ca. 976 CE) by Vācaspati Miśra; 2) postclassical Sāṃkhya presented in the *Tattvasamāsa* (ca. 14th c. CE) and its earliest and most significant commentary *Kramadīpikā* (ca. 14th c. CE); 3) postclassical Sāṃkhya of the *Sāṃkhyasūtras* (ca. 15th c. CE) and Aniruddha's *Sāṃkhyasūtravṛtti* (ca. 15th c. CE), their earliest and most important commentary.

The study will be limited to the first two sources of true knowledge – perception and inference. Sāṃkhya view on the third source of true knowledge – reliable verbal testimony – was reconstructed in my book *Philosophy of Word of Classical and Postclassical Sāṃkhya (Filozofia słowa klasycznej i poklasycznej sankhji, Warszawa 2018, 366 pages)*.

This will be the first systematic and comprehensive study of the Sāṃkhya theories of perception and inference, based on all extant Sāṃkhya texts from the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* to the *Sāṃkhyasūtravṛtti*. The Sanskrit primary sources I explore include little-researched texts and texts that have not been translated so far. Four of the eight classical Sāṃkhya commentaries – the *Sāṃkhyavṛtti*, *Sāṃkhyasaptativṛtti*, *Jayamaṅgalā*, and *Māṭharavṛtti* – have not been translated into any of the European languages.

My study belongs to the area of history of philosophy. It will be grounded on an *immanent analysis* of the source texts, as well as on placing them in their *proper historical context*. Reconstructing Sāṃkhya theories of perception and inference, I shall concentrate on the following questions: How did Sāṃkhya philosophers understand these sources of true knowledge? What are the peculiarities of their theories of perception and inference? Where these theories coherent, original, and compatible with the main assumptions of the Sāṃkhya system? How did these theories evolve? How did they influence development of epistemological reflection in Indian philosophy?

This research, showing the contribution of Sāṃkhya to Indian philosophical reflection on perception and inference, will fill the gap in the study of: 1) Sāṃkhya, 2) Indian epistemology, 3) epistemology as the humanity's common heritage. The results of this research can serve the purposes of:

- understanding the entirety of the philosophical system of Sāṃkhya, whose integral and important part is epistemology;

- understanding Indian epistemology. Indian philosophical schools were shaped in polemics and as a response to opponents; they also were mutually influenced. To understand Indian epistemology, we need to take into account Sāṃkhya's voice in these polemics and Sāṃkhya's contribution to Indian reflection on sources of true knowledge;

- introducing Indian ideas and solutions into the context of epistemology conceived as the common heritage of humanity and thus enriching its subject matter, revealing new aspects of epistemological problems and considering them from a different perspective.

I intend to publish the results of this research in the form of a monograph (in the English language) issued by an established publisher.