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Echoes of Ājīvikism in medieval Indian philosophy

(published in: *Theatrum Mirabiliorum Indiae Orientalis*. A volume to celebrate the 70th birthday of Professor Maria Krzysztof Byrski. Ed. Monika Nowakowska & Jacek Woźniak. Warszawa: Komitet Nauk Orientalistycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk. 2007. (Rocznik Orientalistyczny 60, 2.) Pp. 239-248)

In a recent publication (Bronkhorst 2003) I have extracted what must have been the doctrinal basis of Ājīvikism. This religious movement, which no longer exists and has left us no literature, was close to Jainism, but differed from it in an essential respect. Jainism taught a way to put an end to karmic retribution, the fact that all our deeds bring about results. The solution proposed in the oldest Jaina texts is, in essence, as follows. To escape from karmic retribution a double method is required: (1) one must henceforth abstain from all activity; (2) one must destroy the traces of earlier deeds¹ that are waiting to bring about their effects. Early Jainism was of the opinion that one single set of practices — ascetic practices centering on the total suppression of all activity, bodily, mental, and indeed respirational — could do the job. It is not surprising that suppression of all activity is an excellent way to avoid karmic retribution for future acts. It is less evident that this same attempt at immobilisation destroys the traces of earlier deeds. The early Jainas believed that the immense suffering that inevitably accompanied their form of asceticism destroyed the traces of earlier deeds, so much so that the most successful ascetics would have destroyed all traces of earlier deeds by the time they died, motionless. At this point they would be, of course, liberated, though no longer alive.

Ājīvikism agreed with Jainism in many respects, but did not accept that asceticism could destroy the traces of earlier deeds. Karmic retribution follows its own course, and cannot be interfered with. This means that liberation is only possible when karmic retribution has run its course; this, it was believed, takes a very long time indeed, but is no endless process. At the end of this process the person concerned will take to practices similar to those of the Jainas and will subsequently be liberated. Shortcuts are not possible.

The “logic” of Ājīvika thinking had not been noticed so far because most other religious currents of ancient and classical India believed in more rapid methods to reach the goal of liberation. Jainism represents one of those more rapid methods,² but another one

¹ The Indian texts do not always distinguish between deeds and traces of (earlier) deeds. In the passages to be considered below the term *karman* covers both. Following this usage, I translate sometimes “deeds”, where the context shows that “traces of earlier deeds” are intended.

² Some passages in the Jaina canon suggest that the omission of certain details of ascetic practice might entail a continued existence extending over many future lives, no doubt because the earlier deeds that were in this

became particularly popular. This method is based on the presumed fact that the real self of any human being does not participate in any activity whatsoever. Realising this fact distantiates one from the deeds that are now understood not to have been carried out by one's self, but by a body and a mind that are in essence different from one's self, and therefore from oneself.

Theoretically one might also believe that insight into the true nature of the self would have a somewhat different effect. It might be held that only deeds carried out after insight in the nature of one's self had been gained would no longer evoke karmic retribution; deeds carried out before this insight would in this case bring about karmic retribution as if nothing had happened. We will see below that this position did indeed have followers in India.

There are some indications that the Ājīvikas, too, believed in the existence of a totally inactive self, but we do not know whether and to what extent an insight into its true nature played any role in their method of liberation; the limited evidence at our disposal suggests that it did not.

Ājīvikism survived for many centuries, right into the second millennium of the common era, but little is known about its later doctrinal positions. So much the greater should be our surprise to find something closely similar in the work of a Vaiśeṣika commentator, Śrīdhara. Śrīdhara's Nyāyakandalī is a commentary on a text which is known by the name Praśastapādabhāṣya, but which calls itself Padārthadharmasaṃgraha. The Nyāyakandalī contains the following passage (D p. 284 l. 25 - p. 285 l. 10; Jh p. 686 l. 8 - p. 687 l. 6; Ny p. 634 l. 9-19; tr. Taber 2006: 182, modified):

- (1) *yo 'pi "kṣīyante cāsyā karmāṇi tasmīn dṛṣṭe parāvare"* (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 2.2.8) *ity upadeśaḥ, tasyāyam arthaḥ: jñāne sati anāgatāni karmāṇi na kriyanta³ iti / na punar ayam asyārthaḥ: utpannāni karmāṇi jñānena vināśyanta iti / tathā cāgamāntaram "nābhuktaṃ kṣīyate karma kalpakotiśatair api, avāśyam eva bhoktavyaṃ kṛtaṃ karma śubhāśubham⁴" ityādi / jñānaṃ yadi na kṣiṇoti karmāṇi anekajanmasahasrañcitānāṃ karmaṇāṃ kutah parikṣayaḥ⁵ ? bhogāt karmabhiś ca*

way not destroyed would need all those future lives to run their course. See e.g. Uttarajjhayāna 29.40: "By renouncing food [the soul] stops the many hundreds of existences [which it would otherwise be doomed to live]" (*bhataccakkhāṇaṃ anegāim bhavasayāim niruṃbhaḥ*; cited Bronkhorst, 1993: 37).

³ V.l. for *na kriyante*: *kṣīyante* (D p. 285 n. 1).

⁴ The line *avāśyam ... śubhāśubham* is not given at this place in editions D and Jh (cp. Ny p. 634 n. 4), but as following the word *upadeśaḥ* some lines earlier in one manuscript (D p. 284 n. 5), as following the word *parāvare* in another (?; Ny p. 634 n. 3).

⁵ V.l. for *parikṣayaḥ*: *saṃkṣayaḥ* (Ny p. 634 n. 5).

*tadārthaṃ coditaiḥ / anantānāṃ katham ekasmin janmani parikṣaya iti cet, na /
kālānīyamāt / yathaiiva tāvat pratījanma karmāṇi cīyante⁶, tathaiiva bhogāt kṣīyante
ca / yāni tv aparikṣīṇāni tāny ātmajñēnāpūrvam asaṅcinvatā⁷ ca krameṇopabhogāt
karmabhiś ca nāśyante⁸ / yathoktam:*

*kurvann ātmasvarūpajño bhogāt karmaparikṣayam /
yugakoṭisahasreṇa kaścid eko vimucyate //*

The statement [found in Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 2.2.8] “When one sees him, both the high and the low, his deeds are destroyed” means: When there is knowledge, future deeds are not carried out. It does not mean that deeds that have already been carried out are annihilated. Another traditional text expresses the same in such words as “No deed is destroyed without having been experienced, even in thousands of millions of kalpas. A deed carried out, whether good or bad, must necessarily be experienced.”

If knowledge does not destroy deeds, how does the destruction of deeds that have been accumulated over many thousands of births take place? As a result of experience and through the [ritual] deeds that have been enjoined for that very purpose.

If [the objection is raised] how endless [numbers of deeds] are destroyed in one single birth, [the answer is that this objection is] not [correctly formulated], because there is no limit to the [amount of] time [available]. Just as deeds are accumulated in every single birth, so [there are] also (*ca*) [deeds that] are destroyed [in every single birth]. Those however that are not [yet] destroyed, they are sequentially annihilated through the experience [of those deeds] by a [practitioner] who knows his self and [therefore] does no [longer] accumulate new [karma], and by the [ritual] deeds [which he carries out]. As it has been stated:

“One who, knowing the nature of the self, brings about the destruction of karma through experiencing [its effects] — some such person is liberated after ten thousand million yugas.”

This passage presents a position that is not all that different from the one which we associate with Ājīvikism. Both Ājīvikism and Śrīdhara state that karma can run its course and come to its natural end; this takes a long time — ten thousand million yugas according

⁶ V.l. for *cīyante*: *ādhiyante* (D p. 285 n. 2).

⁷ The variant *apūrvam saṅcinvatā* “accumulating *apūrva*” (D, Jh, Ny p. 634 n. 6) is to be looked upon as a scribal error that is only too understandable in this context.

⁸ V.l. for *nāśyante*: *vilāpyante* (D p. 285 n. 3), *vilopyante* (Ny p. 634 n. 7).

to the verse cited by Śrīdhara, 8'400'000 great kalpas according to some accounts of Ājīvikism — but not infinitely long. However, this similarity should not blind us to the fact that there is an important difference between the two positions. Śrīdhara, contrary to the Ājīvikas, does not state that karma runs its finite course for every individual; it runs its finite course only for those who know the self. For all others, deeds are continually created and destroyed, apparently without end.

How does knowledge of the self interfere in this potentially infinite process? The answer lies in the sentence “When there is knowledge, future deeds are not carried out” (*jñāne sati anāgatāni karmāṇi na kriyante*). This cannot but mean that the deeds one carries out after one has gained knowledge of the self do no longer “count” in terms of karmic retribution. Knowledge of the self is as good as the asceticism aiming at total immobilisation practised by the early Jainas, Ājīvikas and others: it stops the accumulation of new deeds, so that the only remaining concern now is to destroy the traces of earlier deeds. For Śrīdhara, as the above passage suggests, there is not very much one can do to expedite the destruction of earlier deeds: having attained knowledge of the self, all one has to do is wait ten thousand million yugas, and one will be liberated.

This however overlooks one vital factor. The above passage mentions a second method to destroy the traces of earlier deeds, viz., ritual deeds which “have been enjoined for that very purpose” (*tadarthaṃ codita*). These ritual deeds have to be carried out by someone who knows the self, and for whom new deeds no longer bring about karmic retribution. All this is clear from the sentence “Those [deeds] however that are not [yet] destroyed, they are sequentially annihilated through the experience [of those deeds] by a [practitioner] who knows his self and [therefore] does no [longer] accumulate new [karma], and by the [ritual] deeds [which he carries out]” (*yāni tv aparikṣāṇāni tāny ātmajñēnāpūrvam asañcinvatā ca krameṇopabhogāt karmabhiś ca nāśyante*). How ritual deeds can destroy (the traces of) earlier deeds is not explained, and remains a mystery. It is however clear that if it is true that ritual deeds can have this effect, every Brahmin who knows his self and aspires for liberation will be well advised to carry out those ritual deeds.

The passage just discussed occurs between other passages which are no doubt meant to describe respectively earlier and later stages in the development of the individual in search of liberation. An earlier stage is described as follows (D p. 283 l. 13-19; Jh p. 683 l. 12 - p. 684 l. 5; Ny p. 632 l. 18 - p. 633 l. 3):

- (2) *nivṛttetarābhilāṣasya kāmyakarmabhyo nivṛttasyāpi nityanaimittikakarmādhikāro na nivartate, tāni hy upanītaṃ brāhmaṇamātram adhikṛtya vihitāni / mumukṣur api brāhmaṇa eva, jāter anucchedāt / sa yady adhikāritve saty avasīyakaraṇīyāny atikramet pratyavāyo 'sya pratyaham upacīyeta, tadupacayāc ca baddho na mucyate / yathoktam:*

*yāni kāmyāni karmāṇi pratiśiddhāni yāny api /
tāni badhnanty akurvantaṃ nityanaimittikāny api // iti*

Even for someone whose other desires have stopped and who has stopped performing optional [ritual] deeds the obligation to perform regular (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittika*) [ritual] deeds does not stop, for those have been prescribed for all initiated Brahmins. Even when desiring liberation he remains a Brahmin, because his caste (*jāti*) does not cease. If he, even though there is this obligation, neglects [the ritual deeds] that must necessarily be carried out, his sin will increase from day to day; and due to that increase he is bound and will not be liberated. As it has been stated:

Optional and forbidden [ritual] deeds bind him who does not even perform the regular and occasional ones.

It is to be noted that not carrying out prescribed ritual deeds is here explained as amounting to committing sin. Not carrying out prescribed deeds cannot be reduced to doing nothing, it is stated, and what one does do at that time is a sin. At this earlier stage, clearly, prescribed ritual deeds are not carried out in order to destroy past deeds, but to avoid committing sin.

We have seen that this changes the moment one acquires knowledge of the self. From that moment onward prescribed ritual deeds do more than avoiding sin, they destroy (the traces of) earlier deeds. The question is, what comes next? If one carries out prescribed ritual deeds with knowledge of the self until all earlier deeds have been destroyed, what happens? How does all this end?

For an answer to these questions we have to look at the passage coming after passage (1). It is only possible to give some extracts of it here. It becomes clear right from the beginning that during this last stage of the journey a different kind of knowledge of the self comes into play. This expresses itself through a different terminology. So far there was talk of knowledge and of a practitioner who knows his self (*jñāna, ātmajñāna*). In the now following passage the essence of the self (*ātmatattva*) is stated to become fully clear (*sphuṭībhavati*). When that happens not even prescribed ritual deeds are carried out any longer, and indeed, the passage leaves no doubt that the person to whom the nature of the

self has become fully clear is no ordinary mortal; he is a yogi called *jīvanmukta* “liberated while alive” who is no longer aware of his external surroundings. The relevant portions of this passage read (D p. 285 l. 11-19; Jh p. 687 l. 8 - p. 688 l. 2; Ny p. 634 l. 20 - p. 635 l. 5):

- (3) *tad evaṃ vihitam akurvataḥ pratyavāyopapattes⁹ tasya ca bandhahetutvād anyato virāmābhāvāt, pratyavāyanirodhārthaṃ muktim icchatā yogābhyāsāvirodhena bhikṣābhōjanavad yathākālaṃ vihitāny anuṣṭheyāni, yāvad asyātmatattvaṃ na sphuṭibhavati / sphuṭīkṛtātmatattvasyāpi jīvanmuktasya tāvat karmāṇi bhavanti, yāvad dehayātrānuvartate¹⁰ / ātmaikapraṭiṣṭhasya tv abhyarṇamokṣasya pariṅśānaprāyakarmaṇaḥ tāni naśyanty eva¹¹, bahiḥsaṃvittivirahāt / pariṅśānasamādhisāmarthyaviśadīkṛtam upacitavairāgyāhitapariṅśāpāparyantam āpāditaviṣayādvaitam unmūlitanikhilaviparyayavāsanam ekāgrikṛtāntaḥkaraṇakāraṇam ātmajñānam¹² eva kevalaṃ tadāniṃ sañjāyate¹³ na bahiḥsaṃvedanam, bāhyendriyavyāpāroparamāt / tatra kaḥ saṃbhavaḥ karmaṇām?*

Since, then, sin is produced in this way in the case of someone who does not carry out prescribed [deeds], and because that is a cause of bondage and [sin] does not come to an end as a result of any other [procedure], he who desires liberation should perform prescribed [deeds] at the appropriate time in order to put an end to sin, this because there is no contradiction between [prescribed deeds and] the practice of Yoga, just as there is [no contradiction between] begging and eating. [He should perform prescribed deeds] until the essence of the self becomes fully clear to him. Even when the essence of the self has been made fully clear to him and he is liberated while alive, there will be deeds¹⁴ for him as long as his bodily life continues. But those deeds fully disappear when he resides exclusively in the self, when liberation is near and his [earlier] deeds have been as much as completely destroyed; this because he is [at this point] separated from external consciousness. Only a special knowledge of the self — purified by the capacity arising from perfected concentration, culminating in the ripening brought about by accumulated passionlessness, the non-duality of objects having been brought about, all mental traces connected with mistaken ideas having been eradicated, the cause [of this

⁹ V.l. for *pratyavāyopapattes*: *pratyavāyotpattes* (D; Jh; Ny p. 634 n. 8).

¹⁰ V.l. for *dehayātrā*: *yātrā* (D; Jh; Ny p. 634 n. 9).

¹¹ V.l. for *naśyanty eva*: *bhraśyante* (D p. 285 n. 5; Ny p. 635 n. 1).

¹² V.l. for *ātmajñānam*: *ātmātattvajñānam* (D; Ny p. 635 n. 2).

¹³ V.l. for *sañjāyate*: *santānāyate* (D p. 285 n. 6); *santāyate* (Ny p. 635 n. 3).

¹⁴ The ambiguity of the term *karman* — “deed in general” or “ritual deed” — does not allow us to decide with certainty whether the person “liberated while alive” continues to carry out ritual deeds, as Mesquita (1994: 472) claims.

knowledge], viz. the inner organ, having been fixed on one point — only this knowledge and nothing else arises at that moment, no external consciousness, because the external organs have now ceased to function. How could there be deeds in that [state]?

For a person in this state there is no obligation to carry out even prescribed ritual deeds, for the following reason (D p. 285 l. 21-23; Jh p. 688 l. 3-6; Ny p. 635 l. 6-9):

- (4) *tadā cākaraṇanimittaḥ pratyavāyo*¹⁵ *'pi nāsti, sandhyeyam upasthitetyādikam ajānato brāhmaṇo 'smīti pratītirahitasya karmādhikāraparibhramśāt / yathoktam:*
brāhmaṇatvānahammānī katham karmāṇi saṃsṛjed iti

At that moment there is also no sin caused by not carrying out [prescribed deeds], because the obligation to carry out deeds falls away for someone who does not know that twilight has arrived and who is without awareness that he is a Brahmin. As it has been stated:

How could someone who does not consider himself a Brahmin bring about [ritual] deeds?

In order to get an even clearer idea of the type of person that is “liberated while alive” the following passage may be helpful (D p. 285 l. 24-25; Jh p. 688 l. 7-8; Ny p. 635 l. 10):

- (5) *na cāsyoparatasamastavyāpārasya kāṣṭhavad avasthitasyāpi prāṇihimsāpi saṃbhavati /*

Nor is it possible that he, all of whose activity has stopped and who remains [motionless] like a log of wood, harms living beings.

The end of the career of the person “liberated while alive” is described in the following passage (D p. 286 l. 3-16; Jh p. 688 l. 11 - p. 689 l. 12; Ny p. 635 l. 13-25):

- (6) *yadā tu yāvantaṃ kālam āyurvipākena karmaṇā śarīraṃ dhārayitavyaṃ tāvatkālaprāptir abhūt, tadā svakāryakaraṇāt*¹⁶ *karmasamucchede tatkāryasya śarīrasya nivṛttiḥ / tannivṛttau tatkāryasya tattvajñānasyāpi vināśād ātmā kaivalyam āpadyate / tatrātmattattvajñānasya vihitānāṃ ca karmaṇām*

¹⁵ V.l. for *pratyavāyo*: *prativāyo* (D).

¹⁶ V.l. for *°karaṇāt*: *°kāraṇāt* (Ny p. 635 n. 5).

*bandhahetukarmapratibandhe¹⁷ vyāpārād asti sambhūyakāritā / śarīrādiviviktam
 ātmānaṃ jānataś ca tadupakārāpakārāv ātmany
 apratisandadhānasyāhaṅkāramamakārayor uparame saty upakāriṇy apakāriṇi ca
 rāgadveṣayor abhāvād udāsīnasyāpravṛttāv anāgatayoḥ kuśaletarakarmaṇor
 asañcayāt, sañcitayoś copabhogena karmabhiś ca parikṣayād vihitākaraṇanimittasya
 pratyavāyasya ca vihitānuṣṭhānenaiva pratibandhāt¹⁸ / kṣiṇe karmaṇy aihikasya
 dehasya nivṛttau kāraṇāntarābhāvād āmuṣmikasya dehasya punarutpattyabhāve¹⁹
 saty ātmanaḥ svarūpeṇāvasthānam / yathoktam:*

*nityanaimittikair eva kurvāṇo duritakṣayam /
 jñānaṃ ca vimalīkurvann abhyāsenā tu pācayet //
 abhyāsāt pakvavijñānaḥ kaivalyaṃ labhate naraḥ / iti*

When however the time has come to an end during which the body is to be kept alive by the karma whose ripening [determines] the length of life, at that point — since karma has now gone, having produced its effects — the body, which is its effect, disappears. Since with the disappearance of the [body] also its effect, viz., knowledge of the essence [of the self] is destroyed, the self now reaches isolation (*kaivalya*). In this respect knowledge of the essence of the self and prescribed deeds are partners, because both work to counteract karma which is the cause of bondage; (1) because future karma, whether good or bad, no longer accumulates for someone who knows the self to be different from the body etc., who remembers that factors favourable or unfavourable [to the body etc.] do not belong to the self, who, when notions of “I” and “mine” have come to an end, is indifferent with regard to what is favourable or unfavourable [to the body etc.] because he is now free from passion and repugnance, and who does therefore no longer act; (2) because accumulated karma (both good and bad) have been destroyed by experience (*upabhoga*) and [ritual] deeds; (3) and because sin caused by not carrying out prescribed [deeds] has been counteracted precisely by the performance of [those very] prescribed [deeds]. When then, karma having been destroyed, the present body has disappeared and no future body arises because there is no other cause [to bring it about], the self remains in its own form. As it has been stated:

One who is destroying sin by regular and occasional [ritual] deeds, purifying his knowledge, will bring it to fruition by means of practice. The man whose knowledge is ripened as a result of experience obtains isolation.

¹⁷ V.l. for °*pratibandhe*: °*pratibandha* (D; Jh; Ny p. 635 n. 6).

¹⁸ V.l. for *pratibandhāt*: *pratirodhāt* (Ny p. 635 n. 7).

¹⁹ V.l. for *punarutpattyabhāve*: *punarāyatyabhāve* (Ny p. 635 n. 8).

The above passages from Śrīdhara's *Nyāyakandalī* present us with a method to attain liberation from the cycle of rebirths with the help of Vedic ritual activity. Traditionally Vedic traditional activity is presented as leading to heaven, not to liberation. Śrīdhara's passages present it as an essential ingredient of the path to liberation. They can be an essential ingredient because none of the traditional methods to destroy the effects of deeds committed earlier — most notably knowledge of the self and ascetic practices concentrating on immobilisation — are here acknowledged to do so. Knowledge of the self and physical and mental immobilisation do have their role to play, to be sure; but they do not destroy the effects of earlier deeds. Without a method to destroy those effects one will have to wait for (at least) ten thousand million yugas, in spite of knowing the self and performing ascetic practices. At this point Śrīdhara brings in such a method, which is nothing else but the performance of regular (*nitya*) and occasional (*naimittika*) Vedic rites. A position very close to ancient Ājīvikism permitted this defender of the Vedic tradition to find a place for Vedic rituals on the path leading to liberation.

It is known to scholars that the verses quoted by Śrīdhara in the passages considered above originally belonged to the *Bṛhaṭṭikā*, a lost text of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, the famous Mīmāṃsaka who must have lived in the seventh century of the common era (See esp. Mesquita 1994: 466 ff.). Studies have shown that the ideas expressed in these verses agree with what we find in other works by Kumārila.²⁰ There is no need to review all this here. Unfortunately there seems to be no passage in those other works confirming that, according to Kumārila, karmic retribution in the case of someone who knows the self (but who does not perform Vedic rites) will automatically come to an end after ten thousand million yugas. It is understandable that Kumārila was not keen to point out that liberation was, after all, also accessible to those who do not perform Vedic rites. And yet, if Śrīdhara correctly represents Kumārila's position, the inner logic of Kumārila's thought obliged him to accept this. If knowledge of the self stops the karmic efficacy of all deeds subsequently carried out, then liberation is a mere matter of time, the time namely required to experience the effects of all earlier deeds. Kumārila did not deny this, nor could he deny this.²¹ He could only point out

²⁰ A debate is going on about the order in which Kumārila's various works were composed, and about the question whether Kumārila's views changed over time. See Frauwallner 1962; Mesquita 1994; Taber 1992; 2006; Yoshimizu 2006.

²¹ Kumārila did introduce a “safety valve”, to be sure, by stating that those who do not perform the prescribed rites commit a sin. Kumārila does not seem to elaborate this theme in connection with the person “who knows the self”, and understandably so: According to his own thinking the deeds of those who know the self do no longer count in terms of karmic retribution; this should also be true of the sins of those who do not perform prescribed rites.

in his Brhātṭikā, perhaps under the influence of Ājīvika or related ideas, that this way to liberation takes for ever; to be precise: ten thousand million kalpas.²² Ritual activity provides a shortcut, the only possible shortcut. This, if the preceding analysis is correct, is the reason why even those who desire liberation should perform Vedic rites.

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Abbreviations:

- D The Praśastapāda Bhāṣya with commentary Nyāyakandalī of Sridhara. Edited by Vindhyesvari Prasad Dvivedin. Second edition, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications 1984 (Sri Garib Dass Oriental Series, n° 13).
- Jh Praśastapādabhāṣya (Padārthadharma saṅgraha) with commentary Nyāyakandalī by Śrīdhara Bhaṭṭa. Edited with Hindi translation by Pt.

²² Enomoto (2002: 237-238) draws attention to a passage in the Gautama Dharmasūtra (19.5) where an opponent expresses the view that karma does not perish (*na hi karma kṣīyate*). This could indeed concern the karma that plays a role in the classical belief in rebirth determined by karma, for the Dharmasūtra shows awareness of this belief in 11.29-30. The statement that karma does not perish might then be close to Ājīvika beliefs. Enomoto's other citation, this one from the Buddhist Aṅguttara Nikāya (V p. 292: *nāhaṃ bhikkhave sañcetanikānaṃ kammānaṃ katānaṃ upacitānaṃ appatisaṃviditvā vyantibhāvaṃ vadāmi* “Mendicants, I do not declare that without having experienced (the retribution of karman) there can be the end of intentional karman (once) created and accumulated”), is equally interesting. It is quite isolated in the Buddhist canon, and obviously recalls the position elsewhere attributed to the Ājīvikas, as in Dīgha Nikāya I p. 54: *tattha n'atthi: imināhaṃ silena vā vatena vā tapena vā brahmacariyena vā aparipakkaṃ vā kammaṃ paripācessāmi, paripakkaṃ vā kammaṃ phussa phussa vyanti-karissāmīti* “There is no question of bringing unripe karma to fruition, nor of exhausting karma already ripened, by virtuous conduct, by vows, by penance, or by chastity. That cannot be done.”

- Ny Durgādhara Jhā. Varanasi: Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya 1963 (Gaṅgānāthajhā-granthamālā vol. 1). Reprint: Varanasi: Sampūrṇānanda-saṃskṛta-viśvavidyālayaḥ 1977.
- Nyāyakandalī [of Śrīdhara], being a commentary on Praśastapādabhāṣya, with three subcommentaries. Edited by J. S. Jetly and Vasant G. Parikh. Vadodara: Oriental Institute 1991 (Gaekwad's Oriental Series, n° 174).