

II-25. Significance of the Dhavla

True knowledge thrives best in glass house, where everyone can look in. When the windows are blacked out, as in war, the weeds take over. When secrecy muffles criticism, charlatans and cranks flourish.

-Max Perutz in *Is Science Necessary?*

The Moodbidri pandulipi is the oldest known complete copy of the words from the Arihant tradition of thought. To retain the integrity of the tradition, the Dhavla tika acknowledges the sources in their original Prakrit or Sanskrit form. It discusses parallel developments. It has been a model for learning and scholarship ever since it was completed in 827 CE. Relevant features include:

1. Dhavla is a review and compendium of the seven centuries of work set in motion by Shatkhandagam. It is a 'shining' example of the knowledge transfer process from the tradition of monks and scholars who came to be dependent on written material. Such a reliance of the technology of written material brought new people into the fold, and freed energies for deeper contemplation.
2. It is a remarkable work that sets a very high standard. It remains a viable model for scholarly work. It reviews, critically examines, integrates, and illustrates with hypothetical examples. It reaches to the core of the thoughts of the period. Although it rarely references specific work from other traditions, it quotes and examines 368 different prior points-of-views. Yet the text hardly mentions personalities or specifics of contemporary life in general.
3. Appendices (*Chulica*) integrate, tabulate, summarize, and cross-correlate information that is implicit in the matrix of Shatkhandagam. They elaborate on specific issues.

4. Dhavla and derived texts have been and still used as advanced aids for training of scholars. The text weaves its way through a variety of simple and complex concerns with questions and answers. It advises the pupils about trivial and not-so-trivial issues which they might encounter during their discussions. Consistent with the anugam approach, it prepares people to reason with reality-based arguments, with making a judgment about other faiths.
5. The material is secular and inspiring. Those who wish to look for the divine insights or factual details are likely to be disappointed. Examples are mostly hypothetical, and the text occasionally slides into hyperbole and mild rhetoric. Overall it stays clear of the later-day ideas about omniscience, rituals, and purification of soul.
6. Strength of Dhavla is in the use of language for reality-based reasoning. Yet elaboration of syad and anekant is marginal. Use of quantitative concepts and operations is probably from the 200-500 CE period. It often ignores concerns about definitions and continuity of thought.

Presumably because of comprehensiveness of Dhavla the terse systematic approach of Shatkhandagam is somewhat compromised. Personally, I find the *pad* structure of Shatkhandagam to be a far more effective method (device) for learning to reason.

I believe that the Hindi translation of the Prakrit pad of Shatkhandagam is unduly influenced by the later developments based on the Dhavla and Gommat Saar. Consistency with the later material establishes the historical precedence as well as the continuity of the thought process. It shows that development of thought comes from a deeper understanding of the concerns and methods. I also believe that the later texts are unduly influenced

by the Sanskritized-approximations of certain terms. In such cases the possibility exists that attempted sanitization of thought through language may have "thrown the baby with the bath water." I believe that it is necessary to keep focus on the fact that the flow of thoughts goes in the direction of ancient to modern, and from mind to language, but not the other way. Only a determined reader can focus on the content with the hope that nuances of the original thought process appear within grasp.

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