

# Mahābhāṣya Through the Lens of Tantrayukti

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## Abstract

Mahābhāṣya is the most celebrated commentary composed by Maḥarṣi Patañjali. Of the 4000 sutras of Aṣṭādhyāyī, around 1700 sutras come under the purview of Mahābhāṣya. This text basically tries to explain the Grammatical Concepts, by logically developing the concepts through questions thought of in various angles, providing explanation to each question and if needed providing illustrations drawn across from Vedas to Kavyas to daily life.

The concepts strung together in Mahābhāṣya can be better understood through a device called Tantrayukti. The compound Tantrayukti denotes those devices that aid the composition of a text in a systematic manner to convey intended ideas clearly. When seen through the lens of Tantrayukti, the protocol employed in Mahābhāṣya will be crystal clear.

With this background, this paper outlines the study of,

1. Methodological Aspect - Usage of Tantrayukti in the construction of Bhāṣya.
2. Analytical Aspect - Usage of Tantrayukti-s to discover the patterns in Bhāṣya. By the study of the repeating pattern of Tantrayukti-s in Bhāṣya, methodology used by Patañjali to explain concepts can be unearthed.
3. Interpretational Aspect - Usage of Tantrayukti as a tool which help in interpreting and understanding the insights of Bhāṣya.

## Key-words

Aṣṭādhyāyī, Mahābhāṣya, Tantrayukti

## Introduction

Treatises in Indian Knowledge System were composed based on Scientific and Theoretical Deduction Method. Superstructure of a text was built based on this method. This method was developed as a protocol to be used in any standard treatise. The transition from **Thought to Thesis** had to be a very well-organized format. There were many evaluating tools which would help an author string together a single theme throughout his text.

These tools(तात्पर्य-निर्णायक- लङ्गानि)<sup>1</sup> are,

1. Introduction and Conclusion (उपक्रमोपसंहारौ)
2. Repetition (अभ्यासः)
3. Uniqueness (अपूर्वता)
4. Benefits (फलम्)
5. Explanation (अर्थवादः)
6. Favouring arguments (उपपत्तः)

With the help of these tools, thoughts in the mind of the author were presented in a scientific method. These tools (तात्पर्य-निर्णायक- लङ्गानि) expanded can be called as Tantrayukti. Mention of Tantrayukti is seen in Koutilya's Artha Śāstra<sup>2</sup>(500 BCE), Charaka's Charaka Saṁhita<sup>3</sup> (pre 2nd Century CE), Sushruta's SuśrutaSaṁhita<sup>4</sup> (200 CE, 600 CE), Astangasangraha(300 – 400 CE), Vishnu-Dharmottara-Purānam<sup>5</sup>, Tantrayuktivicara (900 CE) and some other texts. Koutilya list out tantrayukti-s in the 15<sup>th</sup> Adhikarana of ArthaŚāstra.

## What is Tantrayukti?

Tantrayukti is a compound word consisting of two words Tantra and Yukti.

Tantra means Śāstra. It is derived from the dhatu तनु वस्तारे . In the shloka below, Tantra is aptly defined as,

तनोति विपुलानर्थान् तन्त्रमन्त्रसमन्वितान्।  
त्राणं च कुरुते यस्मात् तन्त्रमित्यभिधीयते॥<sup>6</sup>

Meaning “An entity which is instrumented for ability to get expansion as per the necessity and is useful to maintain and hold different aspects concerned with the subject.”

The term ‘yukti’ is derived from the dhatu युजिर् योगे.

Yukti is yojana or planning.

युज्यते संबध्यते अनया इति युक्तिः ॥<sup>7</sup>

Tantrayukti is a tool which achieves,

वाक्ययोजनमर्थयोजनं च ॥<sup>8</sup>

Accordingly, the purpose of Tantrayukti is to connect sentences and to give clarification and expansion of the hidden ideas which can be achieved through,

1. **Vakya-yojana** – Rearrangement of the Sentences and
2. **Artha-yojana** – Rearrangement of meaning of the Sentences.

### **Definition of Tantrayukti**

Tantrayukti is defined by many scholars. Some of the definitions are cited below:

1. Plan of a treatise<sup>9</sup>
2. Forms of Scientific argument<sup>10</sup>
3. Formal elements which gave form to a scientific work<sup>11</sup>
4. Methodology in Sanskrit texts on science<sup>12</sup>

These tools called Tantrayukti-s are extensively used in Ayurvedic Texts. We can see the usage of Tantrayukti in other Śāstras also. As treatises in grammar constitute a major part of our Śāstra tradition, we can be certain of their usage in grammar texts too. Of the many grammar texts in this tradition, Trimuni Vyakaranam is the most celebrated. Trimuni Vyakaranam comprises of Aṣṭādhyāyī by Pāṇini Maharshi, Vartikas by Kātyāyana and Mahābhāṣya by Patañjali.

Mahābhāṣya being the most celebrated and प्रमाण-ग्रन्थ on grammar is also the encyclopaedia of Indian life and culture. Hence it was chosen for the study of Tantrayukti-s.

### **Analysis of Mahābhāṣya**

Different aspects of Mahābhāṣya are considered for the study of Tantrayukti. They are,

#### **1. Methodological Aspect**

While studying the construction of Mahābhāṣya, 32 Tantrayukti-s have been considered. In the 15<sup>th</sup> Adhikarana of Arthashastra, Koutilya lists out Tantrayukti-s along with their definitions. Based on these definitions Tantrayukti-s are marked in the first three Ahnikas of Mahābhāṣya for the present paper. Of the 32 tantrayukti-s enlisted by Koutilya, we see the employment of only some of the Tantrayukti-s extensively in Bhāṣya.

#### **Composition of Bhāṣya**

To understand the usage of Tantrayukti, the composition of Bhāṣya can be seen in three dimensions. They are it's

1. Structure,
2. Content and
3. Refinement of language

Tantrayukti-s which are used in each of these are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Composition of Bhāṣya

Structure	Content	Refinement of Language
अधिकरणम्	संशयः	योगः
विधानम्	अपदेशः	पदार्थः
उद्देशः	हेत्वर्थः	निर्वचनम्
निर्देशः	एकान्तः	वाक्यशेषः
पूर्वपक्षः	नियोगः	अर्थापत्तिः
उत्तरपक्षः	उपदेशः	स्वसंज्ञा
अतिक्रान्तावेक्षणम्	अपवर्गः	
अनागतावेक्षणम्	समुच्चयः	
अतिदेशः	विकल्पः	
प्रदेशः	विपर्ययः	
प्रसङ्गः	व्याख्यानम्	
	निदर्शनम्	
	अनुमतम्	
	निर्णयः	
	ऊह्यम्	

## Structure

The yukti-s for structuring of bhāṣya are 11 in number. But all of these yukti-s are not extensively used by Patañjali. For structuring the bhāṣya, he follows a particular methodology where 9 tantrayukti-s are used widely. These yukti-s for structuring the thesis fall in pair.

अधिकरणम् and विधानम् are for title and contents. With these two Yukti-s bhāṣyakara gives the title to be discussed and contents which will be taken up for study. A Title may be the main Heading or in the case of bhāṣya, Vartikas can also be considered as अधिकरणम् as many concepts are studied under a Vartika.

उद्देशः and निर्देशः are listing and elaborating. उद्देशः is like check points to say what is in each section. Through this Yukti classification and sequence is established. निर्देशः is where each classification is dealt with individually.

Assertive statements are also marked as निर्देशः. निर्देशः is widely used by bhāṣyakara to explain concepts.

पूर्वपक्षः and उत्तरपक्षः are Against and For arguments of topic under discussion. Bhāṣyakara uses these two extensively. Mahābhāṣya is a text written in the style of Vada. So these Yukti-s come in handy to critically correct the objections. Various views on the subject are put forth and refuted.

अतिक्रान्तावेक्षणम् and अनागतावेक्षणम् are used by bhāṣyakara at the place where he wants to elaborate. It may be earlier or later.

### **Content**

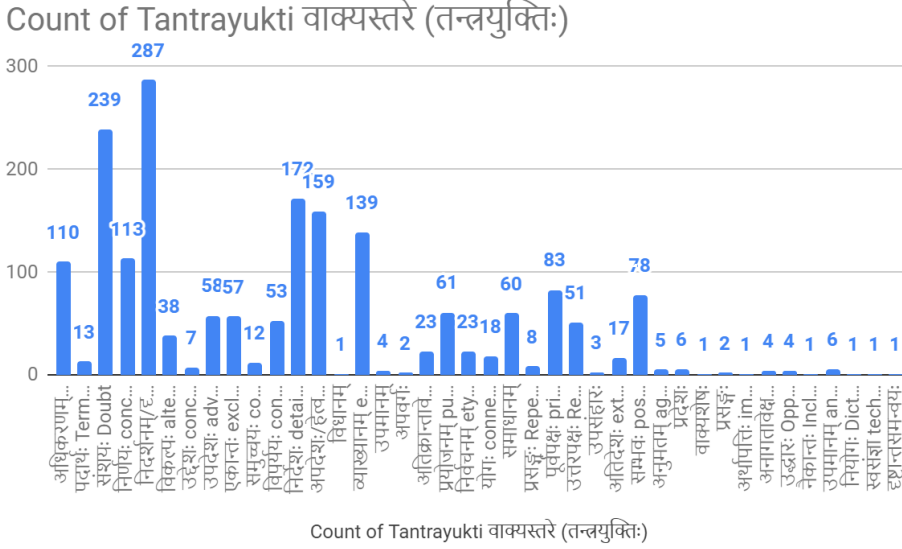
Around 15 Tantrayukti-s are marked for Content creation. Of these Tantrayukti-s संशयः, हेत्वर्थः, निदर्शनम्, अपदेशः, एकान्तः, व्याख्यानम्, समुच्चयः, विकल्पः, विपर्ययः, निर्णयः are mainly found. These markings help us to understand the way concepts have been explained by Bhāṣyakara. A doubt or question is raised first. Before concluding with a निर्णयः, he gives reasons to substantiate the facts, facts are explained through illustrations, rules are stated, previous references are given, facts are clubbed together, optional rules are given, exceptions, advises are stated and finally he gives निर्णयः or सद्धन्तः. By marking of Tantrayukti-s, the style of bhāṣyakara can be easily understood.

### **Refinement of Language**

Around 6 tantrayukti-s can be seen here. Of them योगः, पदार्थः, निर्वचनम् are mainly found in bhāṣya. योगः to connect the sentences, पदार्थः to clarify meanings of the words, निर्वचनम् for etymology are seen which help in the refinement of language.

## 2.Analytical Aspect - Usage of Tantrayukti-s to discover the patterns of Bhāṣya

Graph 1. Statistics on Tantrayukti in Sentences of Bhāṣya



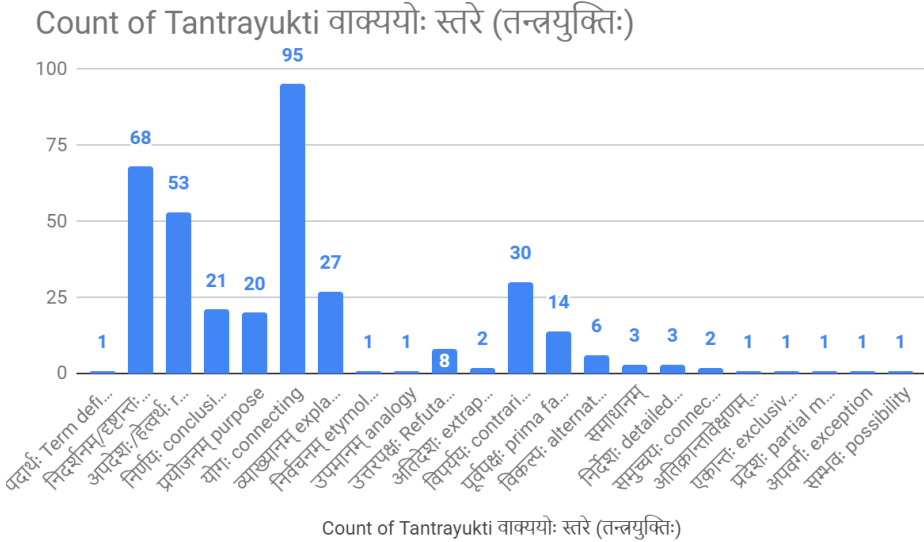
If the graph above is observed, निदर्शनम्, संशयः, निर्देशः, हेत्वर्थः, व्याख्यानम्, अधिकरणम्, पूर्वपक्षः, उत्तरपक्षः, सम्भवः, प्रयोजनम्, समाधानम्, निर्णयः, उपदेशः and एकान्तः are the most used Tantrayukti-s in Bhāṣya. By observing these Tantrayukti-s, the pattern followed by Bhāṣyakara can be discovered.

To explain concepts, he generally follows the pattern of अधिकरणम्, व्याख्यानम्, संशयः, पूर्वपक्षः, सम्भवः, उत्तरपक्षः, हेत्वर्थः, निदर्शनम्, निर्देशः, प्रयोजनम्, एकान्तः, समाधानम्, उपदेशः, निर्णयः. This pattern may slightly vary according to the concept to be explained.

Table 2. An example to show the pattern used in Bhāṣya.

सूत्रे व्याकरणे षष्ठ्यर्थो नोपपद्यते- व्याकरणस्य सूत्रम् इति	व्याख्यानम् explanation
किं हि तदन्यत्सूत्राद् व्याकरणम्, यस्यादः सूत्रं स्यात्?	संशयः Doubt
शब्दाप्रतिपत्तिः	अधिकरणम् Topic
सूत्रे व्याकरणे षष्ठ्यर्थोऽनुपपन्नः	अधिकरणम् Topic
शब्दानां चाप्रतिपत्तिः प्राप्नोति	व्याख्यानम् explanation
व्याकरणाच्छब्दान्प्रतिपद्यामहे इति	समाधानम्
न हि सूत्रत एव शब्दान्प्रतिपद्यन्ते	समाधानम्
किं तर्हि?	संशयः Doubt
व्याख्यानतश्च	समाधानम्
ननु च तदेव सूत्रं विगृहीतं व्याख्यानं भवति	पूर्वपक्षः prima facie argument
न केवलानि चर्चापदानि व्याख्यानम्- वृद्धिः, आत्, ऐच् इति	व्याख्यानम् explanation
किं तर्हि?	संशयः Doubt
उदाहरणं प्रत्युदाहरणं वाक्याध्याहार इत्येतत्समुदितं व्याख्यानं भवति	समाधानम्
एवं तर्हि शब्दः	निर्णयः conclusion

Graph 2. Statistics on Tantrayukti between Sentences



In between sentences also this pattern can be seen. These patterns make the understanding of Bhāṣya easier.

### 3. Interpretational Aspect - Usage of Tantrayukti as a tool which help in interpreting and understanding the insights of Bhāṣya.

Bhāṣya's feature is said thus,

सूत्रार्थो वर्ण्यते यत्र पदैर्वर्णानुसारिभिः।  
स्वपदानि च वर्ण्यन्ते भाष्यं भाष्यविदो विदुः।

In Mahābhāṣya, Patañjali-maharshi follows a very interesting narrative interspersed with certain catch words, illustrations and reasoning from Loukika as well as Vaidika background.

His usage of words are a great help in marking Tantrayukti and in turn, we can understand the text in a specific manner.

1. When he wants raise a question(संशयः), he begins with phrases like किं चातः, किं च भोः, किं तर्हि, किं कारणम्, किं प्रयोजनम्, किं च कारणम्, किं निपातनम्, किं च, किं तर्ह्युच्यते, कथम्, कथं तर्हि, कथं पुनरिदम् etc.

2. When he wants to introduce the prima facie view, he begins with sentences like,

ननु च भोः कार्येष्वपि वर्तते, ननु च भवानप्यभ्यन्तरो लोके, यदि तर्हि लोक एषु प्रमाणम्, किं शास्त्रेण क्रियते? etc.

3. To explain reasons, he begins with,

कुत एतत् ?, यावता कार्येष्वपि वर्तते, तत्र कुत एतन्नित्यपर्यायवाचिनो ग्रहणम्, न पुनः कार्ये यः सिद्धशब्द इति।

4. When optional rules have to be given, sentences begin with अथवा, as in

अथवा भूयानधर्मः प्राप्नोति, अथवा युक्त एवात्र तद्धितार्थः

5. Bhāṣyakara is very fond of giving illustrations. Each concept is illustrated properly to give clear understanding. तद्यथा is the word with which he begins the illustrations.

This way, a lot of examples can be given. Through these phrases, Tantrayukti-s can be easily identified and by knowing the Lakshana of Tantrayukti, intended meaning of the sentence can be understood. Thus Tantrayukti-s help us in interpreting and understanding the sentences of Bhāṣya.

## **Cconclusion**

Indian knowledge System is a treasure house of knowledge. To pass on knowledge from generation to generation, a well-structured ग्रन्थ-निर्माण-पद्धति should be in place. Our ancestors answer for this was Tantrayukti. Tantrayukti-s are those tools that help an author to present his ideas in the form of a systematic text. By the study of Mahābhāṣya, it can be concluded that Tantrayukti-s are definitely practiced in the composition of Bhāṣya.

For future study,

1. All the ahnikas of Mahābhāṣya can be taken up for Tantrayukti analysis.
2. Structural analysis of different texts can be done based on Tantrayukti-s.
3. Tantrayukti-s should be learnt as part of course-work, so that thesis can be written systematically.

**To conclude, “Tantrayukti-s are tools that can bridge the gap between Śāstras.”**

संदर्भसूचि:

<sup>1</sup> श्लोकसङ्ख्या 183, अध्यायः 5, वेदान्तसारः

<sup>2</sup> Tantrayukti is explained in the 15<sup>th</sup> Adhikarana of Koutilya’s ArthaŚāstra

<sup>3</sup> Tantrayukti is explained in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Siddhistanam in Charaka Saṃhita

<sup>4</sup> Tantrayukti is explained in the 65<sup>th</sup> chapter of Uttara-Tantra in Suśrutasaṃhita

<sup>5</sup> Tantrayukti is explained in the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter of Third Kanda

<sup>6</sup> अजितागम-तन्त्रावतार-पटलम् 1.115

<sup>7</sup> चरक-सूत्रम् 11

<sup>8</sup> सुश्रुत-संहिता 65/4

<sup>9</sup> Shamashastry 1909:459

<sup>10</sup> Vidyabhushana 1921:24

<sup>11</sup> Obberhammer 1968:600

<sup>12</sup> Sharma KV 2006:30

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