TY-2026 · 14 — Tantrayukti Studies

अर्थापत्तिः

What Follows Unsaid: Implication

डॉ. मन्था-श्रीनिवासुः · Dr. Mantha Srinivasu · 10 Nov 2026 · AṠ 15.1.29–31; Su. Utt. 65.20

Abstract

Arthāpatti, "what follows from the sense", is the device by which a text conveys what it does not state. All three authorities give the same definition — "what, unstated, follows from the meaning" — and three instructive examples. Kauṭilya: "one who knows the ways of the world should approach a king … through what is pleasing and beneficial", from which it follows that he should not approach him through what is unpleasant and harmful. Suśruta: when someone says "I shall eat rice", it follows that he does not want gruel. Cakrapāṇi: the prohibition of curd at night implies that it may be eaten by day. The same word names a means of knowledge disputed between the schools: the Mīmāṃsakas hold it to be independent — Devadatta, known to be alive, is not at home, so he must be outside — while the Nyāyasūtra reduces it to inference and charges it with being inconclusive. This article distinguishes two forms in the examples (implication by the contrary and implication from a choice), relates them to the Mīmāṃsā postulation and to Gricean implicature, and answers three objections: that arthāpatti is inconclusive, that it is only inference, and that it licenses reading into a text what is not there. It concludes that arthāpatti is the economy of a śāstra — saying one thing so that its counterpart need not be said — and that its discipline lies in the word *arthāt*: what follows from the sense, not from the reader's wish.

Keywords: arthāpatti; tantrayukti; implication; implicature; postulation; a contrario; presupposition; abduction; inference to the best explanation; Mīmāṃsā; Nyāyasūtra; Arthaśāstra; Suśruta; Caraka

1. प्रवेशः · Place in the lists

Arthāpatti is thirteenth in Kauṭilya's list, thirteenth in Suśruta's and thirteenth in Caraka's — the only tantrayukti that stands at the same place in all three lists. It opens the group of devices concerned with what a text implies, completes and reverses. The compound is *artha* ("sense, meaning, matter") + *āpatti* ("arrival, befalling"): what arrives of itself from the sense of what is said.

2. लक्षणानि · The definitions

> यदनुक्तमर्थादापद्यते सार्थापत्तिः
> लोकयात्राविद्राजानमात्मद्रव्यप्रकृतिसम्पन्नं प्रियहितद्वारेणाश्रयेत
> नाप्रियहितद्वारेणाश्रयेतेत्यर्थादापन्नं भवतीति

> "What, unstated, follows from the sense is arthāpatti." — Example: "One who knows the ways of the world should approach a king endowed with personal excellence and material resources through what is pleasing and beneficial (to him)" — from this it follows by sense: "he should not approach him through what is unpleasant and harmful."
>
> Kauṭilya, *Arthaśāstra* 15.1.29–31

> यदकीर्तितमर्थादापद्यते सार्थापत्तिः। यथा ओदनं भोक्ष्ये इत्युक्ते ऽर्थादापन्नं भवति नायं पिपासुर्यवागूमिति ॥
>
> "What, unmentioned, follows from the sense is arthāpatti. For example: when 'I shall eat rice' is said, it follows from the sense that he does not want gruel."
>
> Suśruta, *Uttaratantra* 65.20

> अर्थापत्तिर्नाम यदकिर्तितमर्थादापद्यते सार्थापत्तिः; यथा- नक्तं दधिभोजननिषेधः, अर्थाद्दिवा भुञ्जीतेत्यापद्यते।
>
> "Arthāpatti is what, unmentioned, follows from the sense. For example: from the prohibition of eating curd at night it follows by sense that one may eat it by day."
>
> Cakrapāṇidatta, *Āyurvedadīpikā* on Caraka, *Siddhisthāna* 12.41–44

3. लक्षणपरीक्षा · Testing the definitions

3.1 Two forms in the examples

Authority	Stated	Implied	Form
Kauṭilya	Approach through what is pleasing and beneficial	Not through what is unpleasant and harmful	**By the contrary**: from a positive rule to the prohibition of its opposite
Cakrapāṇi	Not curd at night	Curd by day (is permitted)	**By the contrary**: from a restricted prohibition to the permission outside the restriction
Suśruta	"I shall eat rice"	He does not want gruel	**From a choice**: from a stated choice to the state of the chooser

Kauṭilya's and Caraka's examples work by the contrary. A rule that names a manner (pleasing and beneficial) or a time (night) implies something about the opposite manner or the remaining time; otherwise the qualification would have been idle. Suśruta's example is of a different kind: from what

a person chooses we learn something not about the opposite rule but about the person — his appetite, his condition. For a physician this is no small matter: the patient's choice of solid food over gruel tells of his state.

3.2 The Mīmāṃsā postulation

For the Mīmāṃsā school arthāpatti is an independent means of knowledge:

> अर्थापत्तिरपि दृष्टः श्रुतो वार्थो ऽन्यथा नोपपद्यत इत्यर्थकल्पना, यथा जीवतो देवदत्तस्य गृहाभावदर्शनेन बहिर्भावस्य अदृष्टस्य कल्पना ।
>
> "Arthāpatti too: when a matter seen or heard cannot be accounted for otherwise, the supposition of another matter — as, from seeing that Devadatta, who is alive, is not at home, the supposition of his being outside, which is not seen."
>
> *Mīmāṃsāsūtra of Jaimini* 1.1.5 (shabara)

The Mīmāṃsā form is *anyathānupapatti*, "impossibility otherwise": two known facts appear to conflict (he is alive; he is not at home) and a third is postulated to reconcile them (he is outside). Later Mīmāṃsakas distinguish arthāpatti from what is seen (*dṛṣṭārthāpatti*) and from what is heard (*śrutārthāpatti*); the tantrayukti belongs to the second, for it concerns what follows from the words of a text.

3.3 The Nyāya critique

The Nyāyasūtra denies that arthāpatti is a separate means of knowledge and raises a sharper objection:

> अर्थापत्तिरप्रमाणमनैकान्तिकत्वात्
>
> "Arthāpatti is not a means of knowledge, because it is inconclusive."
>
> *Nyāyasūtra of Gautama* 2.2.3

> असत्सु मेघेषु वृष्टिर्न भवतीति सत्सु भवतीत्येतदर्थादापद्यते, सत्स्वपि चैकदा न भवति । सेयमर्थापत्तिरप्रमाणमिति ॥
>
> "From 'when there are no clouds there is no rain' it follows by sense that 'when there are clouds, there is rain'; yet even when there are clouds, sometimes there is none. So this arthāpatti is not a means of knowledge."
>
> *Nyāyasūtra of Gautama* 2.2.3 (vatsyayana)

The reply of the sūtra is that this is not arthāpatti at all, but its semblance:

> अनर्थापत्तावर्थापत्त्यभिमानात्
>
> "(The objection fails,) because it takes as arthāpatti what is not arthāpatti."

Nyāyasūtra of Gautama 2.2.4

असति कारणे कार्यं नोत्पद्यत इति वाक्यात्प्रत्यनीकभूतो ऽर्थः सति कारणे कार्यमुत्पद्यत इत्यर्थादापद्यते । अभावस्य हि भावः प्रत्यनीक इति । सो ऽयं कार्योत्पादः सति कारणे ऽर्थादापद्यमानो न कारणस्य सत्तां व्यभिचरति । न खल्वसति कारणे कार्यमुत्पद्यते तस्मान्नानैकान्तिकी । यत्तु सति कारणे निमित्तप्रतिबन्दात्कार्यं नोत्पद्यत इति कारणधर्मो ऽसौ न त्वर्थापत्तेः प्रमेयम् । किं तर्ह्यस्याः प्रमेयम्? सति कारणे कार्यमुत्पद्यत इति यो ऽसौ कार्योत्पादः कारणस्य सत्तां न व्यभिचतति तदस्याः प्रमेयम् ।

"From the sentence 'when the cause is absent, the effect does not arise', the contrary matter follows by sense: 'when the cause is present, the effect arises' — for being is the contrary of non-being. This arising of the effect, which follows by sense when the cause is present, does not deviate from the existence of the cause: the effect never arises when the cause is absent. Therefore it is not inconclusive. That the effect sometimes does not arise though the cause is present, because of an obstruction, is a property of the cause; it is not the object of arthāpatti. What then is its object? That the arising of the effect, when the cause is present, does not deviate from the existence of the cause — that is its object."

Nyāyasūtra of Gautama 2.2.4 (vatsyayana)

Vātsyāyana's point bears directly on the tantrayukti. The objector took the object of the arthāpatti to be "clouds, therefore rain", and found it false. Vātsyāyana identifies its true object more narrowly: whenever there is rain, there were clouds. Failures of rain despite clouds belong to the cause and its obstructions, not to what the sentence implies. A correct arthāpatti draws exactly as much as the sense requires. Caraka's example observes this limit: from "not curd at night" follows "curd by day is not prohibited" — a permission, not a command.

4. पूर्वपक्षः खण्डनं मण्डनं च · Objections and replies

4.1 Is arthāpatti not inconclusive?

ननु "ओदनं भोक्ष्ये" इत्युक्ते "न यवागूं पिपासुः" इति न नियमः — उभयम् अपि कदाचित् इष्यते । "नक्तं दधि न" इत्युक्ते दिवा अवश्यं भोक्तव्यम् इति अपि न । अतः अर्थापत्तिः अनैकान्तिकी, न शास्त्रस्य अङ्गम् इति चेत्, न । यावत् अर्थः अपेक्षते तावत् एव आपद्यते, न अधिकम् । दिवा भोजनस्य विधिः न आपद्यते, निषेधाभावः तु आपद्यते — "भुञ्जीत" इति अत्र अनुज्ञा, न नियोगः । "ओदनं भोक्ष्ये" इत्यत्र अपि प्रकरणेन नियमः: रुग्णं प्रति पृच्छतः वैद्यस्य "किं भोक्ष्यसे" इति प्रश्ने ओदनवरणं यवागूनिरपेक्षतां सूचयति । अनैकान्तिकत्वं तु अर्थापत्त्याभासस्य, यत्र अर्थात् अधिकम् आरोप्यते — "अनर्थापत्तावर्थापत्त्यभिमानात्" ।

Objection: when "I shall eat rice" is said, it does not necessarily follow that he does not want gruel — one may want both. When "no curd at night" is said, it does not follow that curd must be eaten by day. So arthāpatti is inconclusive and not a proper part of a śāstra. **Reply:** No. Only as much follows as the sense requires, and no more. What follows is not an injunction to eat curd by day but the absence of a prohibition — "one may eat" is here a permission, not a command. In "I shall eat rice", too, the context sets the limit: when a physician asks a patient "what will you eat?", the choice of rice indicates that he has no need of gruel. Inconclusiveness belongs to the semblance of arthāpatti, where more is imposed than the sense yields — as the sūtra says, "because it takes as arthāpatti what is not arthāpatti".

Śaṅkā–samādhāna composed for this article.

4.2 Is arthāpatti not just inference?

ननु न्यायसूत्रे "अनुमाने ऽर्थापत्तिसम्भवाभावानर्थान्तरभावात्" इति अर्थापत्तिः अनुमाने अन्तर्भाविता। अतः पृथक् तन्त्रयुक्तित्वेन गणना व्यर्था इति चेत्, न। प्रमाणविभागः अन्यः, तन्त्रयुक्तिविभागः अन्यः। प्रमाणशास्त्रं ज्ञानस्य करणं विचारयति; तन्त्रयुक्तिः ग्रन्थस्य रचनां। अनुमानम् अन्तर्भावितम् अपि, ग्रन्थकारः "इदम् अर्थात् गम्यते, न वक्ष्यामि" इति बुद्ध्या वाक्यानि लघूकरोति — सः रचनाधर्मः। पाठकः अपि "किम् अत्र अनुक्तम् अपि विवक्षितम्" इति पृच्छति — सः पठनधर्मः। उभयम् अर्थापत्तियुक्त्या नियम्यते, प्रमाणवादः यथा तथा भवतु।

Objection: the Nyāyasūtra includes arthāpatti within inference — "because arthāpatti, inclusion and absence do not differ from inference". So counting it separately as a tantrayukti is pointless. **Reply:** No. The division of means of knowledge is one thing; the division of tantrayuktis another. Epistemology examines the instrument of knowledge; tantrayukti examines the composition of a text. Even if it is included in inference, an author shortens his sentences with the thought "this follows by sense; I shall not state it" — that is a property of composition. The reader too asks, "what is intended here though unstated?" — that is a property of reading. Both are governed by the device of arthāpatti, however the epistemological question is settled.

Śaṅkā–samādhāna composed for this article.

4.3 Does arthāpatti not license reading in?

> ननु यदि अनुक्तम् अपि शास्त्रार्थः, तर्हि यः कोऽपि स्वेच्छया अनुक्तम् आरोपयेत् — “इदम् अपि शास्त्रकारस्य अभिप्रेतम्” इति। अतः अर्थापत्तिः शास्त्रस्य दूषणाय भवति इति चेत्, न। “अर्थात्” इति पदं नियामकम् — वाक्यार्थस्य उपपत्तये यत् अवश्यं कल्प्यं, तत् एव, न पाठकस्य इच्छया। तस्य परीक्षा — यदि आपादितः अर्थः न स्वीक्रियेत, तर्हि उक्तं वाक्यं निरर्थकं विरुद्धं वा भवेत् किम्? “प्रियहितद्वारेण” इति विशेषणं, यदि अप्रियाहितद्वारम् अपि अनुज्ञातं स्यात्, तर्हि व्यर्थम्। अतः तत्र अर्थापत्तिः। यत्र तु अनापादिते अपि वाक्यं सार्थकं, तत्र आरोपः, न अर्थापत्तिः। ऊह्यं तु पाठकस्य प्रज्ञया अनुक्तस्य कल्पना — सा अन्या युक्तिः।
>
> **Objection:** if what is unstated is also the meaning of a śāstra, anyone could impose whatever he wishes as unstated — “this too was the author’s intention”. So arthāpatti would serve to corrupt a śāstra. **Reply:** No. The word *arthāt*, “from the sense”, is the restraint: only what must be supposed for the sentence to make sense, not what the reader wishes. The test is this: if the implied matter were not accepted, would the stated sentence become pointless or self-contradictory? The qualification “through what is pleasing and beneficial” would be idle if approach through the unpleasant and harmful were also allowed; so there arthāpatti applies. Where the sentence makes full sense without the implied matter, what is added is imposition, not arthāpatti. The supposition of the unstated by the reader’s own insight is *ūhya* (TY-33), a different device.
>
> Śaṅkā–samādhāna composed for this article.

5. सिद्धान्तः · The settled view

> उक्तस्य वाक्यस्य विशेषणं निरर्थकं मा भूत्, वक्तुः वरणं वा अनुपपन्नं मा भूत् इति, यावत् अवश्यं कल्पनीयं तावत् अनुक्तस्य अर्थस्य प्रतिपत्तिः, सा अर्थापत्तिः।
>
> “Arthāpatti is the understanding of an unstated matter, to the extent that it must be supposed so that a qualification in the stated sentence is not idle, or the speaker’s choice is not unaccountable.”
>
> Definition composed for this article.

The two clauses correspond to the two forms in the examples — by the contrary (Kauṭilya, Caraka) and from a choice (Suśruta). The measure “to the extent that it must be supposed” incorporates the Nyāya warning and Vātsyāyana’s correction: draw exactly what the sense requires.

6. आधुनिकसंवादः · The modern counterpart

Classical form	Modern counterpart
Kauṭilya, Caraka: implication by the contrary	Reasoning **a contrario** in law (*expressio unius est exclusio alterius*); scalar and quantity implicature in linguistics
Suśruta: implication from a choice	**Revealed preference** in economics; Grice's conversational implicature
Mīmāṃsā: postulation to reconcile known facts	**Abduction**, inference to the best explanation; resolving an anomaly in data by postulating an unobserved factor
Nyāya's warning (clouds and rain)	The fallacy of denying the antecedent; the distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions

The "implications" section of a research paper is arthāpatti in name and in kind: what follows from the findings though the study did not test it. Vātsyāyana's correction applies there too: what follows is usually a possibility, not a certainty.

7. प्रयोगाः · Uses

7.1 In research

In reading sources, distinguish what a text states, what it implies by sense, and what a modern reader imposes. Apply the test of §4.3: would the stated sentence be idle without the implication? In writing implications, draw only what the findings require, and mark possibility as possibility. When data contain an anomaly, use the Mīmāṃsā form deliberately: state the two facts that conflict and the postulate that reconciles them, and then seek independent evidence for the postulate.

7.2 In teaching

Give students a set of rules and ask what each implies by the contrary. Then give cases like "no clouds, no rain" and ask what does *not* follow. The pair of exercises teaches both the reach and the limit of implication.

7.3 In daily life

Much of what people mean is implied: "the shop is open till six" implies it is closed after six. Misunderstandings arise when we draw more than the sense requires ("he did not say no, so he meant yes"). Arthāpatti teaches both to hear what is implied and to stop where the implication stops.

8. अभ्यासः · Exercise

1. Find two prohibitions in an Āyurvedic text that are qualified by time, place or person. State what follows by sense, and whether it is a permission or a command.

2. In your field, find a published "implication" that draws more than the findings require. Rewrite it to draw exactly as much.
3. Construct a Mīmāṃsā-type arthāpatti from your own data or observation: two facts that conflict, and the postulate that reconciles them. How would you test the postulate?

9. उपसंहारः · Conclusion

Arthāpatti lets a śāstra say one thing so that its counterpart need not be said. Kauṭilya and Caraka imply by the contrary, Suśruta from a choice; the Mīmāṃsakas generalise the device into the postulation that reconciles conflicting facts, and the Naiyāyikas warn that it can overreach. The device is not inconclusive when it draws only what the sense requires; it remains a distinct principle of composition whatever its epistemological status; and it does not license reading in, because its test is whether the stated sentence would otherwise be idle. Implicature, a contrario reasoning and abduction are its modern forms.

References

1. Kauṭilya. *Arthaśāstra*, Book 15 (Tantrayukti). E-text as used on sanskritmanthan.in. Ed. and tr. R. P. Kangle, *The Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra*, 3 vols., Bombay: University of Bombay, 1960–1965.
2. Suśruta. *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, Uttaratantra 65. E-text as used on sanskritmanthan.in. Ed. Yādavaji Trikamji Ācārya and Nārāyaṇa Rāma Ācārya, Bombay: Nirṇaya Sāgara Press, 1938.
3. Caraka (completed by Dṛḍhabala). *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Siddhisthāna 12, with the *Āyurvedadīpikā* of Cakrapāṇidatta. E-text as used on sanskritmanthan.in. Ed. Yādavaji Trikamji Ācārya, Bombay: Nirṇaya Sāgara Press, 1941.
4. W. K. Lele. *The Doctrine of the Tantrayukti: Methodology of Theoretico-Scientific Treatises in Sanskrit*. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Surbharati Prakashan, 1981.
5. Mantha Srinivasu. "तन्त्रयुक्तिः — The Method of the Śāstras." *Tantrayukti Studies*, TY-2026/01. Sanskrit Manthan, 4 November 2026. https://sanskritmanthan.in/a/ty-01-tantrayukti
6. Sanskrit Manthan. *Tantrayukti* and *Śāstra-paribhāṣā-kośa*. https://sanskritmanthan.in/tantrayukti; https://sanskritmanthan.in/paribhasha
7. Gautama. *Nyāyasūtra* 2.2.1–4, with Vātsyāyana's *Bhāṣya*. E-text as used on sanskritmanthan.in.
8. Śabara. *Bhāṣya* on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.5. E-text as used on sanskritmanthan.in.
9. Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. *Ślokavārttika*, *arthāpattiparicccheda*.
10. H. P. Grice. "Logic and Conversation." In P. Cole and J. Morgan (eds.), *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts*, New York: Academic Press, 1975, 41–58.

How to cite. Mantha Srinivasu. 2026. "अर्थापत्तिः — What Follows Unsaid: Implication." *तन्त्रयुक्तिविमर्शः · Tantrayukti Studies*, TY-2026/14. Sanskrit Manthan, 10 Nov 2026. https://sanskritmanthan.in/a/ty-14-arthapatti
Author: ORCID 0000-0002-8834-3782 · Google Scholar
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.23947925
Licence: © 2026 Dr. Mantha Srinivasu. Text, translations and figures under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0: share and cite with attribution; no commercial use; no altered versions. Sanskrit passages are quoted verbatim from the e-texts used on sanskritmanthan.in (GRETIL; Digital Corpus of Sanskrit; see /sources). Śaṅkā–samādhāna passages marked "composed" are by the author.