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# KAMALAŚĪLA'S INTERPRETATION OF SOME VERSES IN THE VĀKYAKĀṆḌA OF BHARTRHARI'S VĀKYAPADĪYA

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In the *Tattvasamgraha* (abbrev.: *TS*) of Śāntarakṣita (ca. 725-788 A.D.), various views maintained by scholars of different schools are critically examined and repudiated. For the purpose of examination the author Śāntarakṣita often introduces the view of others by the citation from their works.

The 16th chapter of *TS*, viz., Śabdārthaparīkṣā, is devoted to the problem of meaning. As a follower of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, Śāntarakṣita maintains the *apoha*-theory, i.e., the theory that the function of a word consists not in the direct reference to a real object but in the differentiation (*apoha*) of an object from other things. He begins this chapter with the discussions that a word does not directly denote a specific feature (*svalakṣaṇa*), nor an individual (*vyakti*), nor a universal (*jāti*), nor the relation (*sambandha*) between an individual and a universal, and firmly establishes his theory through severe criticism on the views put forward by Bhāmaha, Kumārila and Uddyotakara against the *apoha*-theory. Before introducing their arguments, the author makes reference to some views which recognize something other than *svalakṣaṇa*, etc. as the meaning of a word, and criticizes these views. In that portion he quotes the following six verses (*TS*, 886-891) from the Vākyakāṇḍa of Bhartrhari's Vākyapadīya (abbrev.: *VP*).<sup>1</sup>

886      asty arthaḥ sarvaśabdānām iti pratyāyylakṣanam /  
            apūrvadevatāsvargaih samam āhur gavādisu // (*VP*, II.119)

1      The editions used are as below.

*TS*:      Bauddha Bharati Ser., 1, vol. 1. Varanasi 1968. (GOS edition gives exactly the same reading. The verse-numbers in it are 887-892.)

*VP*:      (1) R = Rau, W. (ed.), *Bhartrharis Vākyapadīya*. Wiesbaden 1977 (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, XLII, 4).

            (2) I = Iyer, K.A. Subramania (ed.), *The Vākyapadīya of Bhartrhari, Kāṇḍa II, with the Commentary of Punyarāja and the Ancient Vṛtti*. Delhi, etc.: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983.

The quotations of *VP*, II.119, 126-128, 132 in *TS* are pointed out in K.V. Abhyankar and V.P. Limaye (ed.), *Vākyapadīya of Bhartrhari*, Poona 1965 (Univ. of Poona Skt. and Pkt. Ser., 2), Appendix III, pp. 220-223.

- 887 samudāyo 'bhidheyo vāpy avikalpasamuccayah /  
asatyō vāpi samsargah śabdārthah kaiś cid iṣyate // (126)
- 888 asatyopādhi yat satyam tad vā śabdanibandhanam /  
śabdo vāpy abhijalpatvam āgato yāti vācyatām // (127)  
b: nibandhanām R d: vācyatam R
- 889 so 'yam ity abhisambandhād rūpam ekīkṛtam yadā /  
śabdasyārthena tam śabdam abhijalpam pracaksate // (128)
- 890 yo vārtho buddhiviśayo bāhyavastunibandhanah /  
sa bāhyam vastv iti jñātaḥ śabdārthah kaiś cid iṣyate // (132)  
d: śabdārtha iti gamyate R
- 891 abhyāsāt pratibhāhetuḥ sarvaḥ śabdaḥ samāsataḥ /  
bālānām ca tiraścām ca yathārthapratipādane // (117)  
b: sarvaḥ śabdo (śabdaḥ sarvo) 'paraiḥ smṛtaḥ R (I)

Seven views are referred to in these six verses. (1) 886: All words simply mean that 'something exists'. Such words as *apūrva*, *devatā* and *svarga* do not produce a form of any particular object in the mind of a hearer. They simply make him understand that there exists something which is called '*apūrva*', etc. It is known by extension that the word 'go' (cow) and the like also mean only that 'something exists'. (2) 887ab: An aggregate free from option (*vikalpa*) and accumulation (*samuccya*) is the denotation of a word. (3) 887cd: The unreal relation of a thing with its universal is the meaning of a word. (4) 888ab: The real with unreal adjuncts is the cause of the application of a word. (5) 888cd, 889: When the form of a word becomes identified with the object, this word is called *abhijalpa*. The meaning of a word is nothing other than the word in the state of *abhijalpa*. (6) 890: When the image of a thing, which is caused by an external object, is externalized, it is recognized as the meaning of a word. (7) 891: All words are the cause of *pratibhā* (intuition) through repeated practice, as in the case of making things understood to infants and animals. This *pratibhā* is the meaning of a word.

These seven views are among those which are enumerated by Bhartrhari in *VP*, *Vākyakāṇḍa*, 116ff.<sup>2</sup> It is not known by whom these views were advocated. The seventh view seems to represent Bhartrhari's own idea, since the concept of *pratibhā* is peculiar to his theory of meaning. However, while Bhartrhari considers *pratibhā* as the meaning of a sentence

2 In *VP*, II.116, Bhartrhari states: *avikalpe 'pi vākyārthe vikalpā bhāvanāśrayāḥ / atrādhi-  
karane vādāḥ pūrvesām bahudhā matāḥ (gatāḥ I)* (Although the meaning of a sentence is not diversified, there arises diversification [into the meanings of component words] on the basis of *bhāvanā* [of different persons]. Concerning this subject, the discussions of ancient scholars took place variously.) Then he introduces thirteen views concerning the meaning of a word.

(*vākya*), the idea expressed in *TS*, 891 (*VP*, II.117) is that *pratibhā* is caused by any word, whether it is a single word or a sentence. It may be either that Bhartrhari admitted that *pratibhā* is caused even by a single word or that *TS*, 891 represents a view maintained by some unknown predecessor of Bhartrhari.<sup>3</sup>

An elaborate commentary on *TS*, viz., the *TS-Pañjikā* (abbrev.: *TSP*), was written by Kamalaśīla (ca. 740-745 A.D.), a direct disciple of Śāntaraksita. In this commentary we find a clear and intelligible explanation of each verse quoted above. There is a *tīkā* on the *Vākyakānda* of *VP* (abbrev.: *VPT*), which is usually ascribed to Puṇyarāja<sup>4</sup>, who is supposed to have lived in the first half of the 10th century<sup>5</sup>, that is, much later than Kamalaśīla. The explanation of the above-cited verses in *VPT* is not always clear enough to make the meaning of the verse understandable. This deficiency is covered by the appropriate interpretation of the verses presented in *TSP*. I shall cite two examples.

Introducing the verse 127ab which states that *satya* possessing *asatya* as an adjunct (*upādhi*) is the cause of *śabda*, *VPT* states: “*atha satyam evāsatyopādhivicitritam śabdavācyam iti saṣṭham pakṣam āha*,” and gives no further explanation. This *tīkā* does not help us understand what is meant by ‘*satya*’ and ‘*asatya*’. A clear explanation on this verse is furnished in *TSP*: “When the adjuncts, i.e., the particulars such as bracelet, ring, and so on, which are unreal (*asatya*) as the denotation of a word, belong to the real (*satya*), i.e., gold (*suvarna*) which is of generic character and permeates all the particulars, then it is called ‘real with unreal adjuncts’ (*satyam asatyopādhi*).”

Kamalaśīla’s interpretation of this verse is based on *VP*, III.2 (*Dravyasamuddeśa*), kk. 2-4:<sup>6</sup>

- 3 Dr. J. Houben suggested me in personal communication that Bhartrhari might have admitted that *pratibhā* is produced even by a single word. He may discuss this point in one of his future articles.
- 4 At the end of *VPT* there are sixty verses, in which the author mentions his name as Puṇyarāja. However, A. Aklujkar expresses some doubt upon Puṇyarāja’s authorship of *VPT*, mentioning that the two older manuscripts ascribe *VPT* to Helārāja, and some other reasons, cf. A. Aklujkar, “The Authorship of the *Vākya-kānda-tīkā*,” *Charudeva Shastri Felicitation Volume*, vol. I, Delhi 1974, pp. 165-188. His view is criticized in Peri Sarveswara Sharma, “Puṇyarāja’s *Tīkā* on the *Vākya-kānda* of the *Vākyapadiya* of Bhartrhari,” *Bhāratīya Vidyā*, 42 (1983), pp. 1-21. I should like to express my thanks to Dr. J. Houben for his kindness to make this latter article accessible to me.
- 5 Cf. P.S. Sharma, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
- 6 This has been suggested to me by Professor A. Aklujkar on the occasion of the Bhartrhari Conference in 1992. The idea presented in these verses is close to that refer-

satyaṃ vastu tadākārair asatyair avadhāryate /  
 asatyopādhibhiḥ śabdaiḥ satyaṃ evābhidhīyate // 2  
 adhruvena nimittena devadattagrham yathā /  
 grhītaṃ grhaśabdena śuddham evābhidhīyate // 3  
 suvarṇādi yathā bhinnam svair ākārair apāyibhiḥ /  
 rucakādyabhidhānānām śuddham evaiti vācyatām // 4

“A real substance is ascertained through its unreal forms. It is in fact what is real that is expressed by the words with unreal adjuncts. Just as Devadatta’s house, which is cognized through an impermanent mark, is expressed in its pure form by the word ‘house’, [or,] just as gold, for instance, which is differentiated by its own impermanent forms, becomes in its pure form the object of such words as ‘*rucaka*’ (golden necklace) and the like.” From afar Devadatta’s house may be indicated by a crow resting on the roof with the words: “His house is that one with a crow on the roof.” However, what is really expressed by the word ‘house’ is not the house with a crow on the roof, but it is only the house which remains unchanged even after the crow flies away. Similar is the case with such words as ‘*rucaka*’ etc., which are used to indicate gold in the form of necklace, etc. What is expressed by these words is in fact gold as the real substance, which subsists under the change of impermanent, unreal forms.

On the verse 126ab which states that an aggregate (*samudāya*) free from option (*vikalpa*) and accumulation (*samuccaya*) is the denotation of a word, *VPT* states: “*nanu yady ākārasamudāyaṃ samuccitam eva pratyāyayati tarhi bahuvacanam eva tatra syāt. atha vikalpitaṃ pratyāyayati tadā vacanavikalpam syād ity āśaṅkyāha - ‘avikalpasamuccayah’ iti.* (If [a word] causes to apprehend the aggregate of forms simply as accumulated, then only plural may be used for it. If it causes to apprehend the same as optional, then there may be alternation of number. - Anticipating this [question, the author] says: “free from option and accumulation”.) This explanation is not unintelligible, but a far clearer understanding is obtained from the example given in *TSP*: “When the word ‘forest’ (*vana*) is uttered, the notion arises not through option as: ‘*dhava* tree or *khadira* tree or *palāśa* tree’, nor through accumulation as: ‘*dhava* tree and *khadira* tree and *palāśa* tree’, but *dhava* tree, etc. are apprehended generally. In the same way, when the word ‘*brāhmaṇa*’ is uttered, the apprehension is not in the form: ‘austerity (*tapas*) or birth (*jāti*) or learning (*śruta*)’, nor is

red to by Patañjali in *Mahābhāṣya* (ed. Kielhorn), Vol. I, p. 7.11-18. Cf. also J. Bronkhorst, *Mahābhāṣyadīpikā of Bhartrhari*, Fasc. IV: Ahnika I. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Inst., 1987, pp. 22 (text), 78-79 (translation).

it in the form: 'austerity and birth and learning'; but austerity, etc. distinguished from other correlatives are apprehended in entirety as an assembled whole."<sup>7</sup>

All these seven views are repudiated by Śāntaraksita. Neither *TSP* nor *VPT* inform us to whom or to which school these views are to be attributed. It draws our attention that the concept of *pratibhā* presented in the verse 891 (*VP*, II.117) is also criticized in *TS*. I have shown elsewhere that Dignāga, who advocated the *apoha*-theory, adopted the concept of *pratibhā* from Bhartrhari in his discussion on the meaning of a sentence.<sup>8</sup> Śāntaraksita also accepts the view that *pratibhā* is the meaning of a sentence. He is known to have modified Dignāga's *apoha*-theory by laying emphasis on the fact that a word produces a positive mental image (*prati-bimba*) in the mind of the hearer. In the process of his counter-attack against Kumārila who criticized Dignāga for the inconsistency of admitting *apoha* as the meaning of a word and *pratibhā* as the meaning of a sentence, Śāntaraksita considers the term *pratibhā* as synonymous with *apoha* which, according to him, is of the nature of *pratibimba*.<sup>9</sup> When he criticizes the doctrine of *pratibhā* in *VP*, II.117, his discussion is focussed on the problem concerning the relation between *pratibhā* and external object: "*Pratibhā* has also been regarded as the meaning of a word. If it takes an external thing for its object, then, inasmuch as the external thing has only one particular character, how could there be various *pratibhā*-s for different persons who take one and the same thing for their object? If *pratibhā* be held to be objectless, being produced only by dint of the impression of previous experiences (*vāsanā*), then how could there be either apprehension or activity pertaining to external things? It is not appropriate to say that *pratibhā* is baseless, since in that case there would follow an absurd conclusion that it is produced anywhere. If its basis consists in the mutual difference [among things], then that is exactly our view."<sup>10</sup> Thus it is understood that Śāntaraksita does not totally reject the

7 *TSP*, p. 350.9-13.

8 M. Hattori, "Apoha and Pratibhā," *Sanskrit and Indian Studies: Essays in Honour of Daniel H.H. Ingalls*, ed. by M. Nagatomi, et al. Dordrecht, etc.: D. Reidel Publ. Co., 1979, pp. 61-73.

9 Cf. *TS*, 1027: *pratibimbātmako 'pohaḥ padād apy upajāyate / pratibhākyo jhaṭ ity eva padārtho 'py ayam eva nah //*

10 *TS*, 901-904: *pratibhāpi ca śabdārtho bahyārthavisayā yadi / ekātmaniyate bāhye vicitrāḥ pratibhāḥ katham // atha nirvisayā etā vāsanāmātrabhāvataḥ / pratipattih pravrttir vā bahyārthesu katham bhavet // ... nirbījā na ca sā yuktā sarvatraiva prasaṅgataḥ / itaretarabhedo 'syā bījāni cet pakṣa eṣa nah //*

doctrine of *pratibhā*. To be criticized is the view that *pratibhā* pertains to some real thing in the external world. It is his thought that *pratibhā* does not go beyond the mental realm and has nothing to do with external objects. On this point he is close to Bhartrhari who maintains that words pertain only to mentally constructed secondary being (*aupacārikī sattā*) and not to the real entity in the external world.<sup>11</sup>

11 Cf. *VP*, III.3 (Sambandha-samuddeśa), k. 39ff.