

BOOK REVIEW - II

Svabhā va, Svabhā vahetu etc. : A clarification

I am thankful to Prof. Vijay Bharadwaja for his compassionate and careful reading of my work on *Hetubindu*. I take this opportunity to clarify my position on some of the points raised by the reviewer.

While translating the *Hetubindu* of Dharmakīrti I was always in search of apt words and even today I cannot say that I am fully satisfied with my translation. I can very well understand the dissatisfaction of Prof. Bharadwaja. So far, I have not been able to convince myself of any better translation of the title 'Hetubindu' than the one I have provided. (For my reasons vide pp. 95-96 of the book.) The translation of '*svabhā va*' as 'self-nature' could be reconsidered, though translating it as 'nature' can be misleading if we compare '*svabhā va*' and '*Parabhā va*'.

Bharadwaja's objections to my treatment of Dharmakīrti's doctrine of *svabhā va*, however, seems to rest on some misunderstanding. I have said that the concept of *svabhā va* operates as a central concept in both ontology and epistemology of Dharmakīrti. I have also pointed out that according to him not only *svabhā va-hetu* but also *Kārya-hetu* and *anupalabdhi-hetu* are explainable in terms of *svabhā va* (-not in terms of *svabhā va-hetu* as misquoted or alleged by Prof. Bharadwaja in his review). Here my approach is not reductionist. I have never wanted to suggest for instance, that *Kārya-hetu* according to Dharmakīrti is reducible to *svabhā va-hetu*. My simple claim is that the notion of *Kāryahetu* when analysed, can be seen to contain the notion of *svabhā va*. It is not reducible to *svabhā va-hetu* because it is more complex than that. Apart from the notion of *svabhā va*, the notion of *Kāryahetu* contains another notion as its essential element viz. cause-effect relation. Secondly *svabhā va-hetu* is concerned with the inferential knowledge of an aspect of a thing based on the knowledge of another

aspect of the same thing. *Kāryahetu* on the other hand is concerned with the knowledge of one thing or event on the basis of the knowledge of another thing or event which is caused by it. A basic variety of *anupalabdhi* viz. *svabhāvānupalabdhi*, it may be urged, can be considered as a special variety of *svabhāv-hetu* because it is concerned with two (negative) aspects of one and the same thing. But we need not dilate on this point here.

In my Introduction to *Hetubindu of Dharmakīrti*, I have maintained the distinction between what I call *svabhāvavāda* (The doctrine of *svabhāva*) and ascribe to Dharmakīrti and *svabhāvā-hetu* (self-nature as probans) which Dharmakīrti talks about. That Dharmakīrti upholds a general theory of *svabhāva* is clear from many of his statements. It is clear from *Pramāṇavartika* (svārthānumāna-pariccheda, 40) and also *Hetubindu* (Vide section 4.11 of the book and my note on it -p. 128). Dharmakīrti's *svabhāv-hetu* can be understood as an application of *svabhāvavāda*, where the law of identity, involved in the latter is applied in one direction, i.e. in the form of partial identity. But I have nowhere identified *svabhāvavāda* which is a general theory and *svabhāvahetu* which is an application of it. I don't know what gave Prof. Bharadwaja such a wrong impression.

Prof. Bharadwaja also seems to think that *sat* for Dharmakīrti is defined as *kṣaṇika*. This, I think, is a wrong interpretation of the statement viz. '*Yat saṭtat Kṣaṇikam*' which is not a definition but a thesis which Dharmakīrti tries to prove. *Sat* according to Dharmakīrti is defined as *arthakriyā kāri* (i.e. that which has a concrete function) from which Dharmakīrti tries to derive momentariness. What I have observed is that Dharmakīrti's essentialism which is not metaphysical like the one which eternalists hold, but is logical, is compatible with his doctrine of momentariness.

Prof. Bharadwaja is also unhappy about my statement that non-apprehension (i.e. non-perception) is a kind of perception, a kind of *pratyakṣa*. I only urge him to concentrate on Dharmakīrti's own explanation of *anupalabdhi-hetu*. Why should otherwise Dharmakīrti say: "The absence of a thing is proved by the very proof of the existence of the other, because the exclusion of the other thing is proved by the same means of knowledge which establishes the thatness of the thing" (p.61)? 'The potless table' ('the other thing'), for example, is established by perception which does nothing but establishes the absence of a pot from the table. The absence of a pot from the table is not a separate entity from 'the potless table'. Similarly the non-perception (i.e. absence of perception)

of the pot on the table is not a separate entity from the perception of a pot-less table. So non-perception (which is a kind of perception) does not act as a probans (i.e. means to indirect knowledge) for the absence of a pot from the table (i.e. for the potless table) but as a means to direct knowledge. This is the reason why Dharmakīrti maintains that *svābhāvānupalabdhi* is a probans not for proving *abhāva* but *abhi vavyavahāra*, as the former is directly and the latter is indirectly known by it. This is not a place to go into more details. But Prof. Bhardawaja's fear that my explanation of non-perception as a kind of perception is akin to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika position, is baseless, because Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas do not reduce 'absence of a thing' to 'existence of another thing' as Buddhists do. Nor do they identify non-perception with a kind of perception as the latter do.

Prof. Bharadwaja seems to be hesitant to appreciate this epistemology of perception and non-perception as found in *Hetubindu*, because Dharmakīrti, according to him, was concerned in this work with justification and not with cognitive epistemology. Though, I admit, Dharmakīrti is *primarily* concerned with the problem of justification in this work, he is not isolating this problem from that of cognition. His views on perception and non-perception as explained above may be taken as a part of his cognitive epistemology which is at the background of and hence inseparable from his justificatory epistemology.

PRADEEP. P. GOKHALE

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 University of Poona,
 Pune 411 007