

BOOK REVIEW -I

Hetu-bindu of Dharmakī rti. Sanskrit text, English translation, Introduction and detailed Notes by Pradeep P Gokhale. Sri Satguru Publication/Indian Books Centre, Delhi, 1997; pp. i-xxxv, 1-146.

The original Sanskrit text of Dharmakī rti's *Hetu-bindu* is lost in the antiquity. Rahula Sanskritayana and Ernest Steinkellner have brought out independently two versions of the text in Sanskrit using the available Tibetan materials. Pradeep Gokhale's edition is a reconstruction of the text based on Rahula Sanskritayana's and Ernest Steinkellner's versions supported by his own independent research on the authenticity and correctness of the text. Gokhale's is the first English translation of *Hetu-bindu*. The work is enriched further with his 20 page Introduction, 45 page extensive Notes, and 4 page Glossary of technical terms. All this makes the book really an impressive production, and I am sure it will certainly become a proud possession of the scholars of Buddhist logic and epistemology the world over.

Gokhale's English translation is literal and readable, although at places it seems to do violence to the common sense. For instance, "*Hetu-bindu*" is translated as "A Point on Probans", and "svabhā va" is rendered as "self-nature". I am not a Sanskritist, but given a choice I would have translated "*Hetu-bindu*" as "The Nature of Arguments" and deleted "self" as redundant serving no useful communicative purpose from the rendering of "svabhā va" as "self nature". However, literality of the translation preserves textual fidelity of the work, and this itself is worth having.

Apart from the text, Gokhale's extensive Introduction and detailed Notes contain rich material on Dharmakī rti's theory of *hetu* (arguments, justification) and also on his theory of knowledge and reality.

In the Introduction and the Notes Gokhale's interpretation of Dharmakīrti's *trairūpya* makes me much uncomfortable. He seems to hold that *kārya-hetu* and *anupalabdhi-hetu* are "explainable in terms of *svabhāva (-hetu)*" (p.xxiii). He appears to use the expression "explainable" in the strong sense in which his view turns out to be a reductionist interpretation of *trairūpya*, a reductionism of *kārya* and *anupalabdhi* to *svabhāva-hetu*. I do not know why he suggests this. His gloss on it (pp. xxiii-xxv) does not help much; for it requires acceptance of another set of assumption, e.g., (p. xxiii) *uniformity* and *indivisibility (svabhāva)* of a thing, which themselves are in need of clarification and substantiation. I believe that Gokhale's motivation to explain *trairūpya* in terms of *svabhāva-hetu* lies in his ambitious program to show that the "doctrine of *svabhāva* (self-nature, essence) is central to Dharmakīrti's philosophy", that Dharmakīrti "presents his doctrine of momentariness in terms of this concept" (p.xxii). He adds: "One of the important features of Dharmakīrti's acceptance of *svabhāva* is that he accepts it in a logical sense and not a metaphysical sense (p.xxv). On Gokhale's construction, *svabhāva* in its logical sense takes the form of the law of identity and double negation..... "Every thing is such that it is what it is.....symbolically, "All A is A". The other side of the same coin is "Everything is such that it is other than what it is not", symbolically, "All A is not not A" (p.xxv). Thus, on his view, "*svabhāva* as accepted by Dharmakīrti, can be called logical essentialism". (p.xxv). One need not go into the argument for this thesis. One would like, however, to remark that this thesis does not go well with Dharmakīrti's Buddhist world view of *sarvam antīyam* and *sarvam kṣaṇikam*. Dharmakīrti defines *vastutvam in terms of kṣaṇikatvam (Yet sat tat Kṣaṇikam)* p.11), and not the other way round. The principle of *kṣaṇikatvam* is conceptually primitive to Dharmakīrti's philosophical framework, and the principle of *sattvam* is derivative within the framework. This quotidian understanding of Dharmakīrti is quite recalcitrant to accepting Gokhale's interpretation that Dharmakīrti presents his doctrine of momentariness in terms of *svabhāva* (logical essentialism). In effect, his interpretation turns out to be anti-Buddhist and equally false of Dharmakīrti's overall theoretical framework and its intuitive presuppositions.

Again, I am not sure if Dharmakīrti formulates *svabhāva-hetu* as the law of identity "A is A", or as the law of double negation. "A is not not- A". I am

afraid he does not do this. Not in *Pramāṇa vārtika* not in *Nyāya-bindu*, not even in *Hetu-bindu*. For him, *hetu* has to be synthetic and significant statement. It is conceptually significant as in *svabhāva-hetu*, causally significant as in *Kārya-hetu*, and contrafactually significant as in *anupalabdhi hetu*. A law of logic, e.g., identity or double negation, may not be synthetic; and as such it is of no use to Dharmakīrti, particularly when he regards *anumāna* explicitly as an instrument of knowing facts in and about the world.

Dharmakīrti clearly specifies the meaning of *svabhāva* when he speaks of *svabhāva-hetu*. We have *svabhāva-hetu* when *sādhya-dharmasya vastutas - tadbhāvata yā sādhanā-dharma-bhāvānānubandha-siddhiḥ* (p.11). Thus, the conceptual relation between *kṣaṇikatvam* and *vastutvam* instantiates *svabhāva-hetu* (*antitye kasmīnsī dhya sattvamiti* (p.14). To show that something is *anityam*, one cites the *hetu* (argument) that it is *kṣaṇikam* (or *sattvam* where *sattvam* is defined in terms of *Kṣaṇikam*). Alternatively, we have *svabhāva-hetu* when there is *tādātmya* relationship between *sādhana* and *sādhya* as between 'being a *simṣapā*' and 'being a tree'. To justify that something is a tree one has only to show that it is a *simṣapā*.

From what I have said so far it follows that Gokhale's interpretation of *svabhāva-hetu* is quite at variance with Dharmakīrti's analysis of it besides it carries conceptual encumbrances which Dharmakīrti's theory does not.

Dharmakīrti distinguishes sharply *svabhāva-hetu* from *kārya* and *anupalabdhi hetu* (pp. 11 -14). All three are different types of arguments, different kinds of reasons. If *svabhāva-hetu* is based on *tādātmya* relation, *kārya-hetu* is a statement of causal relationship, and *anupalabdhi-hetu* requires a contrafactual conditional as indicated in its definition, viz., *upalabdhi-lakṣaṇa-pṛthivānupalabdhiḥ* (p. 14). For example, an inference that something is not there is justified if all the conditions of its visibility are satisfied and yet the thing is not visible. To reduce these three logically distinct types of *hetu-s* to one type, I suggest, is a mistake. While *tādātmya* may be understood, other things being equal, in terms of class inclusion, or in terms of what the Jaina logicians say *lakṣaṇāt* (definitionally), *taddutpati* is neither class inclusion, nor a matter of definition (*lakṣaṇā*), it has to be an empirically ascertainable causal relationship, and *anupalabdhi* conceptually excludes both *tādātmya* and *taddutpati*. To understand *anupalabdhi* one has to

explain the relevant argument structure involving a contrafactual conditional. The argument, then, would read like this: Something is not the case. (Thesis). All the conditions under which this would be the case are satisfied, and yet this is not the case. (*Hetu*). (Therefore, that thing is not the case). If I am right in this thinking, it follows then that Gokhale's attempt to show that *trairūpya* is explainable in terms of *svabhāva-hetu* alone is not only tenuous but it is false of Dharmakīrti's account of it.

In his Notes, Gokhale comments at length on *anupalabdhi* and *anupalabdhi-hetu*. He observes that Dharmakīrti rejects the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika view that non-existence (*abhāva*) is a separate category, and also the Mīmamsaka thesis that non-apprehension (*anupalabdhi*) is an independent *pramāṇa*. I believe that Gokhale is right in this observation. But, then he adds: "Non-existence is the existence of the other and non-apprehension is apprehension of the other. So, basically, non-apprehension (i.e., non-perception) is a kind of perception, a kind of *pratyakṣa*". (p. 124). Thus, on Gokhale's view, Dharmakīrti "reduces 'perception of non-existence' to 'perception of existence (of the other alone)" (p.124). I'm afraid Gokhale invites an argument here. If I am reading him right, he appears to suggest that, for Dharmakīrti, *anupalabdhi* is indeed a matter of perception (*pratyakṣa*), although it is perception of the existence of the other. If this is so then Gokhale's interpretation becomes, more or less, akin to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika position. Dharmakīrti would be the last person to buy this argument. It seems to me that Gokhale unwittingly isolates *anupalabdhi* from its natural context of justification of negation asserting statements, and he gives in to the temptation of treating it as a metaphysical category. But, he need not do this if he keeps in focus the context of justification in which Dharmakīrti discusses *anupalabdhi*. Dharmakīrti regards *anupalabdhi* as a type of *hetu* which a Buddhist of Dharmakīrti's persuasion cites for theses like "there is no vase on this table", "the table is not brown", "the soul is not eternal," "there does not exist a sky-flower". He does not consider it as an item on the list of *padārtha*-s or as one of the *pramāṇa*-s. He examines *anupalabdhi* as a type of *hetu*, an argument. We would do pretty well if we consider it in the justification context, and do not make it a part of *pratyakṣa* as the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣikas do. Making it one or the other form of *pratyakṣa* would be simply false of Dharmakīrti theory of *anupalabdhi*, it may well be true of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika,

though.

In discussing *trairūpya*, Dharmakīrti considers the questions of justification (*pramāṇa*) and how these can be answered within his theoretical framework. He defines the different kinds of *hetu-s* (arguments) in support of different types of theses - one to which *svabhāva-hetu* applies; second, to which *kārya-hetu* is relevant; and third, for which *anupalabdhi-hetu* alone is acceptable. In his statement of *trairūpya*, he legislates the kinds of *hetu* which could be said to be relevant and acceptable justification within his methodological framework. How the *hetu* statements themselves are validated and why these and no others are acceptable are questions at a different level of empirical and conceptual inquiry. The questions, e.g., how *vyapti-s* (generalities) are reached, what are the conditions to formulate them, and what are the criteria by which we accept them as reliable for purposes of *anumana* are questions asked at this higher level. Dharmakīrti examines these and other related questions in his discussions on the methodology of *anvaya* and *vyatireka*. But that's another issue, and. I need not go into it in this short review.

Despite some of these difficulties, the careful reader will find Pradeep Gokhale's book very rewarding in widening one's perspective on and understanding of Dharmakīrti's theory of reasoning epistemology and metaphysics.

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