Karṇakagomin’s Interpretation of Pramāṇavārttika I 48

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1. Introduction

In Pramāṇavārttika (PV) I 43–58 Dharmakīrti who characterizes an inference and a perceptual judgment as a determinate cognition (niścaya) argues that the determinate cognition has for its object the exclusion of superimposition (samāropavyavaccheda). In PV I 48 he deals especially with the exclusion of superimposition that takes place in a perceptual judgment. This verse is variously interpreted by his commentators. Among the various interpretations, the first of the two interpretations Karṇakagomin gives is unique in that it is made from the point of view of the theory of adhyavasāya. This paper is thus to consider the interpretation of PV I 48 by Karṇakagomin.

2. Dharmakīrti on PV I 48

In Nakasuka 2015 I have offered the following interpretation of PV I 48 strictly on the basis of Pramāṇavārttikasvavṛtti:

\[
\text{kvacid dṛṣte 'pi yaj jñānamānām sāmānyārthaṁ vikalpakam} \]
\[
\text{asamāropitānāṁśe tannātrāpohagocaram} //
\]

Even when a certain [reality] has been perceived, a cognition arises which has a universal for its object and which is conceptual. [This cognition arises] with respect to the [reality’s] part (i.e., difference x) on which a part (non-x) different from it is not superimposed, [is characterized as] what has for its object the exclusion only of that [part non-x].

Dharmakīrti here makes the following points: There arises a perceptual judgment immediately after the perception of a reality; the perceptual judgment arises with respect to a part x on which another part non-x is not superimposed; saying that the
perceptual judgment has for its object such a part x amounts to saying that it has for its object the exclusion only of the superimposition of the part non-x, namely that the perceptual judgment partially determines the reality. According to Dharmakīrti, the word mātra here means “restriction” (avadhāraṇa).

3. Karṇākagomin on tanmātrāpohagocaram

Now let us consider Śākyabuddhi’s and Karṇākagomin’s interpretations of the second line of the present verse. As said above, Karṇākagomin gives two interpretations, the second of which is left out of consideration here. 1)

Śākyabuddhi: PVṬ (D 63b6–7, P 75a4–5): rnam pa gang la gzhan gi cha ste / zla bo rnam pa sgro ma btags pa de ni gzhan gyi cha sgro ma btags pa'o / de la 'jug pa de yang de tsam sel ba'i spyod yul can cha sgro ma btags pa gang yin pa de tsam gyi rnam par gcod pa'i yul can yin no //

The compound *āsamāropitānyāṃśa is a bahuvrihi, referring to an image (rnam pa, *ākāra) on which a different part, i.e., an image contradictory to it, is not superimposed. The [cognition] which arises with respect to the [image], too, has for its object the exclusion only of that, i.e., the exclusion only of the part which is not superimposed.

Karṇākagomin: PVSVṬ 128.4–6: asamāropitāḥ anyāṃśāḥ pratiyogyākāro yasmin viṣaye sa tathā / tatra pravarttamānan tad api tanmātrāpohagocaram /

Both Śākyabuddhi and Karṇākagomin interpret the compound asamāropitānyāṃśa as a bahuvrihi formed from asamāropita and anyāṃśa, paraphrasing anyāṃśa as pratiyogyākāra “an opposing image.” Moreover, they take the locative form as viṣayasaptamī (a locative ending to signify a domain). A difference, however, can be noticed between their interpretations of asamāropitānyāṃśa: Śākyabuddhi takes the compound to refer to *ākāra, while Karṇākagomin takes it to refer to viṣaya. The reason for this difference becomes clear from the following passage:

PVSVṬ 128.6–9: tenāyaṃ artho bhavati / samāroparahaṁ samvakṣaṇam svākārabhedena grhṇad* vikalpakaṁ jñānam bhrāntavatī tatasmatāvyahitabāhyādhyavasāyakam eva na tu bhāvyasvarūpa-grāhakam / atas tanmātram eva nityabāhyāvāsyā evānyasya samāropasyāpohagocaram vikalpakaṁ jñānam / * grhṇad Ms; grhṇam PVSVṬ

Therefore, [by the present verse] is meant the following: Since [a conceptual cognition] grasps an individual which is devoid of superimposition through its own image, it is an erroneous cognition. Therefore, the conceptual cognition is a mere judgment about the external object which is devoid of superimposition and does not grasp the external object in itself. Accordingly, [the cognition] is a conceptual cognition in the form of [a cognition] that has a part...
related to the [external object], i.e., in the form of a judgment about a specific external object, whose object is the exclusion of what is other, i.e., superimposition.

It is important to note that the compound asamāropitānyāṁśa is taken as referring to “an object on which an image contradictory to it is not super-imposed” (asamāropitapratiyogāyākāra-viṣaya) and that such an object is said to be none other than “an individual which is devoid of superimposition” (samāroparaha-tasvālākṣaṇa). The expressions tanmātra and vikalpam jñānam are in apposition, so that the former expression refers to a conceptual cognition. Thus this expression is paraphrased as niyatabāhyāvasāya “judgment on a specific external object.” As a matter of course, it is hard to say that in this case the word mātra means “restriction.”

The question arises: What is referred to by the pronominal tan-? On the assumption that the expression niyatabāhyāvasāya is synonymous with the expression tatasamāroparaha-tasvālākṣaṇa-vikalpam jñānam, it is proper to say that the pronominal tan- refers to the external object which is devoid of superimposition (samāroparaha-tasvālākṣaṇa), that is, the individual (svalākṣaṇa) which is referred to by the expression samāropitānyāṁśa in pāda c. All this shows that the expression tanmātra is a bahuvṛhi whose second member mātrā means a “part, portion,” or to be more precise, a part of a conceptual cognition. The part of a conceptual cognition is properly said to be an image (ākāra) appearing in the conceptual cognition, which is referred to by the expression svākāra used by Karnākagomin here in the commentary. Thus the bahuvṛhi compound tanmātra, paraphrased as tasya [svālākṣaṇasya] mātrā asya [vikalpakasya jñānasya]. If this interpretation of Karnākagomin’s is accepted, the expression tanmātṛapahagocaram in pāda d refers to a conceptual cognition (vikalpakam jñānam) whose part (mātrā), or whose image (ākāra), is related to an individual (tan-; svalākṣaṇa) and which has for its object (gocara) the exclusion (apoha) of the superimposition. In this interpretation the following three factors are explicitly mentioned: An object (viṣaya) on which judgment is made, i.e., an individual (svalākṣaṇa) or an external reality (bāhyā); a conceptual cognition’s own image (svākāra) to be grasped; that image contradictory to the image (pratiyogyākāra) which is to be excluded. According to this interpretation, a perceptual judgment is that which judges its own image as an external reality which lacks in the superimposition of an image contradictory to its own image.
4. Kānṭakagomin on apoha

As shown in Nakasuka 2014, in Dharmakirti’s view there are three kinds of conceptual cognitions: an inference, a perceptual judgment, and an erroneous cognition; adhyavasāya is involved in all of them, whereas niścaya in an inference and a perceptual judgment. To speak of the conceptual cognition “This is an x,” the cognition, determinate, has the function of determining the x (pariccheda) and at the same time excluding things other than it (non-x) (vyavaccheda) and also that of judging the x, which is merely its own image, as an external reality. The exclusion of superimposition (samāropavyavaccheda) is involved in the determinate cognition. In this connection it is useful to note that in Kānṭakagomin’s view what is referred to by the word apoha is twofold: an individual and that image appearing in a conceptual cognition which is superimposed on an external object (bāhyarūpatayā-āropitākāra). He takes the positivist view that apoha or exclusion is not only negative but has positive elements as well. According to this view, exclusion has no directly operative force in a conceptual cognition working. In the context where Dharmakirti discusses samāropavyavaccheda, which he identifies with apoha, it is imperative for Kānṭakagomin to introduce adhyavasāya. For he can account for its structure without resorting directly to exclusion. The point is that vyavaccheda is directly involved not in adhyavasāya but in niścaya.

5. Conclusion

According to Kānṭakagomin’s first interpretation of PV I 48, the second line asamāropitānyāṃśe tanmātrāpohagocaram means “[that cognition, arising] with respect to [an object (viṣaya), i.e., an individual (svalakṣaṇa), on which] another part is not superimposed, is [a cognition] whose object is the exclusion [of the superimposition of the part] and which is in essence [a cognition] whose part is related to the object.” He takes the expression asamāropitānyāṃśa to refer not to the part of a reality which is the object of a determinate cognition but to the individual which is the object of judgment; the expression tanmātra not to what is to be excluded but to the perceptual judgment itself. He thereby makes an attempt to interpret PV I 48 from the point of view of the theory of adhyavasāya. We may say that Kānṭakagomin’s positivistic view of apoha is reflected in his interpretation of PV I 48.
Karnakagomin’s Interpretation of Pramanavarttika I 48 (NAKASUKA)

Notes
1) In the second interpretation, the compound asamāropitānāṃśa is a karmadhāraya and the locative form is satisaptami (locative absolute); the pronominal tan- refers to asamāropitānāṃśa. On this interpretation, see Nakasuka 2015: 370–371.

2) We should not overlook that in commenting on PV I 75 Karnakagomin states that one takes action towards an external object through judging a part (āmsa) of a conceptual cognition (vikalpa) as the external object. PVST 181.28–28, 182.6–6: tathādhyavasāyeti vikāpāṃśam eva bāhyatvanaiaktve nārthakriyākāritvendhavyāsaṣyā vaivavārīnāṃ pravrtteḥ /

3) PVST 120.26–28, 121.8–9. Karnakagomin’s view of apoha is under the influence of Sāntarakṣita. On the latter’s interpretation of apoha, see Ishida 2005.

4) This can be gathered from the fact that Karnakagomin characterizes an inference as adhyavasāya, saying that the exclusion of superimposition is indirectly (artha) understood. PVST ad PV I 46 (125.20–22): yadā punar anumānena vastadhyavasāyaṃ kurvatārthāt samāropavyavacchedaḥ kriyate na tu sāksāj jñāpakatvād asya / See Nakasuka 2014: 408.

Abbreviations


PVṬ  Pramanavārttikāṭikā. D no. 4220, P no. 5718.

Bibliography


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