Śāntaraksita's Criticism on the Paramāṇuvāda in the Tattvasaṃgraha

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Śāntaraksita (680–740) quotes many realistic views that insist upon the realistic existence of the external object and criticizes them in the *Bahirarthaparīkṣā* or 'the examination of the external object' of the *Tattvasaṃgraha*. He aims at pointing out their absurdity and establishing Vijñaptimātratā. The argument between *Śāntaraksita* and other realists is divided into two classes: one is on the atom-theory (paramāṇuvāda) and the other is on the cognition-theory (vijñānavāda). Of these two, I will treat of the former subject.

Preceding to treat of this problem, we need to understand *Śāntaraksita*'s standpoint in the Indian Buddhist history. I treated that the most basic standpoint of *Śāntaraksita* found in the *Bahirarthaparīkṣā* belonged to one of the *Vijñānavādins*.⁽¹⁾ Vijñāna held by him is that which is endless and impure for persons who have cut off their obstacles. It is one on which all beings depend, and which is destroyed at every moment.⁽²⁾ The whole world is only such vijñāna. It is summarized by *Kamalaśīla* into following argument:

Every cognition (jñāna) is devoid of both the recognized (grāhya) and the recognizer (grāhaka).

Because it is cognition (jñānatva).

Just like the cognition of the reflected image (pratibimbajñāna).⁽³⁾

From the above ground, *Śāntaraksita* criticizes paramāṇuvādas or the atom-

(1) Cf. My "The examination of the External Object in the *Tattvasaṃgraha*." (Journal of Indian & Buddhist Studies. Vol. X, No. 2).

(2) *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* p. 550.

(3) *ibid.*

theory.

Many realists (paramāṇuvādin) assert here their paramāṇuvādas in order to prove the realistic existence of the external object (bāhyārtha). But their views must be criticized respectively by Śāntarakṣita. First of all, the general atom-theory is examined by him, secondly the assertion of Śubhagupta,⁽⁴⁾ thirdly that of Sumati of Jaina,⁽⁵⁾ and fourthly that of Kumārila of Mīmāṃsā. As referred to above, Śāntarakṣita's most basic viewpoint stands upon 'vijñaptimātratā', in which he never admits any external objects except cognition (vijñāna).

Opposing to Śāntarakṣita's view, the realists point out that his proposition (pratijñā, dam-bcaḥ-ba) becomes contradiction of the immediate perception, etc. (pratyakṣādiviruddha, mñon-sum la-sogs-pa dañ ḡgal-ba). They say as follows: If the four material elements (bhūtacatuṣṭaya, ḥbyuñ-ba bshi-ba) do not exist apart from cognition (jñāna, śes-pa), then, how are they distinctly and clearly perceived? If they are held to be non-existence (nāstitā, med-pa-ñid), for you, what would be the means of correct cognition (pramāṇa, tshad-ma)⁽⁶⁾ for the existence of cognition? According to the realists the four material elements, etc. are distinctly and clearly perceived, only because the atoms (paramāṇu) exist as the recognized (grāhya) and they are perceived by means of the immediate perception (pratyakṣa).

To the above, Śāntarakṣita answers. If the external object (bāhyo'rthaḥ, phyi-rol don) were recognised by perception, it could be either (1) as the one which is non-different from the atom (nānyaḥ paramāṇutaḥ) or (2) as one in the form of a composite whole composed of the atoms (tair ārabdho'vayavī sthūlaḥ)⁽⁸⁾, or (3) as a single object not composed of them

(4) As to Śubhagupta's realism, see Prof. Hattori, M.; "Bāhyārthasiddhi of Śubhagupta" (Journal of Indian & Buddhist studies. Vol. VIII. No. 1).

(5) As to Sumati, see *Tattvaśaṃgraha*, Foreword. p. xcii.

(6) TS. k. 1965-6.

(7) Tib. rdul-phra-rab tha-dad-pa du ma ḡam.

(8) Tib. de-dag gis brtsams-paḥi yam-lag-can rags-pa gcig.

(anārabdha, ma-brtsams-pa). These alternatives (pakṣa, phyogs) could be possible under the condition held by realists.⁽⁹⁾ We find that his establishment of these alternatives almost corresponds to that in the *Vimśatika* of Vasubandhu and in the *Ālambanaparīkṣā* of Dignāga and the rest.⁽¹⁰⁾

Śāntarakṣita criticizes the first alternative of these. He says: The form (ākāra, rnam-pa) of the atom is not recognized, because the form of several impartible corporeal things cannot be recognized in the cognition (pratyayāprativedana, śes la mi-snañ). If the atoms had appeared in the cognition, they would have appeared as devoid of distinction of component parts (vyapetabhāgabhedā, chags dbye-ba dañ bral-ba). Otherwise they would not be perceptible, because cognition of their own form (ātmākāra, rañ gi rnam-pa)⁽¹¹⁾ is impossible.

The realists (paramāṇuvādin), recognizing the realistic existence of the atoms apart from the cognition (jñāna), hold that on the contrary these bring about the cognition. Śāntarakṣita's criticism on it consists of pointing out that the impartible atoms cannot be perceptible in the cognition of the cognizer. This argument is formulated by Kamalaśīla also as follows:

That which does not appear as its own form (svenākārena, rañ gis rnam-pas) in the cognition that is held to be immediate perception⁽¹²⁾ (pratyakṣābhimate pratyaye) should not be perceived as 'the one which is perceptible by immediate perception' (pratyakṣatva, mñon-sum-ñid). Just like the sky-lotus.

Many and corporeal atoms do not appear in the cognition that is held to be the immediate perception, which apprehends the gross form.⁽¹³⁾

It seems that this view of Śāntarakṣita,—“all that which does not appear with its form in the cognition of the recognizer is only non-existence”, has

(9) TS. k. 1967

(10) Cf. *Vimśatika* 11 and *Ālambanaparīkṣā* 1, etc.

(11) TS. k. 1968-9.

(12) Tib. mñon-sum du mñon-par ḥdod-paḥi śes-pa la.

(13) TSP. p. 551

closer relation to his vijñāna-theory. According to his vijñāna-theory, if the external object is recognized, it may be recognized either by the formless cognition (nirākākāravijñāna), or by the cognition having similar form of object (sākāravijñāna), or by the cognition endowed with a different form from the object (anyākāravijñāna). He defined nirākāravijñāna as one which has no form of the object while the external objects have⁽¹⁴⁾ it, sākāravijñāna as one which is envisaged by the form of the external objects, and anyākāravijñāna as one which has different form from the external objects.⁽¹⁶⁾ Having examined each of them, he concluded that it could not be established in any case. It is clear that the same idea with which he criticized many other vijñāna-theories is used in his criticism on the paramāṇuvāda also. Thus the first paramāṇuvāda is denied.

The second alternative which is said to be Śubhagupta's insistence by the commentaor, cannot be proved also. Bhadanta Śubhagupta says that the atoms (paramāṇu, rdul-phra-rab) cannot come about one by one independently by itself (svātantryena, rañ-dbañ du); therefore the atoms do not appear singly in the cognition. Pointing out that the above assertion is no answer to the argument, Śāntarakṣita says as follows: Even if they come into existence in the aggregated form (sāhityena, lhan-cig-tu), the atoms would appear only in their own form (svarūpenaiva, rañ-bshin-du); because, even if they were under these conditions, they do not give up their impartible form (anaṃśārūpatva, cha-med ño-bo-ñid). If they says that their form is of the lowest limit of diminution which has reached (labd-hāpacayaparyanta, ḥgrib-paḥi mthar-thug-pa), why should not they be regarded as incorporeal (amūrta, lus-med)⁽¹⁷⁾ like sensation (vedanā, tshor-ba), etc.? According to Śāntarakṣita, if the atoms are held to be indivisible,⁽¹⁸⁾ they should not be regarded as corporeal (mūrta, lus-can). Therefore he concludes that the proposition of the opponent involves a self-contradiction (svavacanavirodha, rañ gi tshig dan ḥgal-ba).

(14) TS. k. 2020 (15) TS. k. 2006 (16) TS. k. 2007

(17) Read te'mūrta for te mūrta. (18) TS. k. 1970-1.

But Śubhagupta refutes Śāntarakṣita's assertion. He contends as follows : Just as an uninterrupted succession of similar moments generates the illusion of permanence (nityatvavibhrama, rtag-pa-ñid du ḥkhrul-pa), so when there is cognition of an uninterrupted series of atoms, there is the illusion of the gross objects (sthūlavibhrama, rags-pa ḥkhrul-pa). For example, when the sound (śabda, sgra) and the other thing come into existence one after the other there is the illusion of permanence, even if they were perceived by perception. In the same way, when the indivisible and homogeneous atoms are perceived simultaneously (yugapadgrahaṇe, cig-car ḥdsin-pa na), there is the mental illusion (mānaso vibhramaḥ, yid kyi ḥkhrul-pa) of the gross objects⁽¹⁹⁾. Therefore the reason, 'because the form of several impartible corporeal things cannot be recognized in the cognition'⁽²⁰⁾ in the previous argument is 'non-proved' (asiddha, ma-grub-pa).

To the above Śāntarakṣita urges that, if the immediate perception did not cause to happen cognition (jñāna, śes-pa) of the indivisible atoms by its own function (svavyāpārabalena, raṅ gi bya-ba yi stobs ñid kyis), it could not be regarded as 'being in perception'. It is ascertained by means of right cognition (pramāṇa)⁽²¹⁾ that all things are momentary. But it is not ascertained that the atoms are recognized as 'white' and 'yellow' and the rest.⁽²²⁾ Further he criticizes 'the mental illusion of the gross objects' (sthūla iti mānaso vibhramaḥ) form by the opponent. If the existence of atoms is already proved, then cognition of the gross objects (sthūla, rags-pa) may be regarded as the illusion. But the existence of atoms cannot be regarded as a proved fact. It is rather 'illusory' what the opponent holds 'the atoms are proved by pramāṇa'. Thus he concludes that insistence of the opponent is not correct.

In the next place Śāntarakṣita quotes Sumati's view. Sumati of Digambara, Jaina, urges as follows : All things have two forms (dvirūpa, gñis kyi ño-bo-ñid), general (tulya, mtshuñs) and particular (atulya, mi-

(19) TS. k. 1972 (20) Cf. TS. k. 1968.

(21) Tib. rjes-su-dpag-pa (anumāṇa). (22) TS. k. 1973-4.

(31) Śāntarakṣita's Criticism on the Paramāṇuvāda (A. Suganuma)

mtshuñs). An atom also has these two forms. Of these two, the general form is perceived by the sense, while the particular form is perceived only by perception of yogin. Consequently we can recognize only one form (ekā-kāra, rnam-gcig⁽²³⁾) of the atoms. Therefore the atoms become established by perception.

Śāntarakṣita makes cutting criticism on Sumati's assertion. How is it possible that a thing (eka-vastu, dños-po gcig) has two forms (dve rūpe, ño-bo gñis)? If it were as held, there would be two things, each differing from the other in form. If they were of the same form as one another (parasparātmata, phan-tshun bdag-ñid), the duality of forms (dvairūpya, ño-bo gñis) would be contradictory.⁽²⁴⁾ For instance, if there were two forms of a thing which is different from one another, then there are two things; because a thing cannot have two forms at the same time. Therefore it is not correct to say that a thing has two forms. Further the particular form of a thing is not different from the general form. Consequently so-called particular form also would be apprehended by the senses, and in that case there could not be the clear distinction that the general form is perceptible by the sense-perception and the particular form is perceptible by yogi-perception (yogipratyakṣa, rnal-ḥbyor mñon-sum).

But Kumārila, Mīmāṃsaka, does not accept Śāntarakṣita's assertion. He says: It is not impossible for one and the same thing to have two contradictory characters, because we find it to be the case actually. It is not royal edict (īśvarabhāṣita, dbaṅ-phyug-bkaḥ) that one thing should have only one form. Everything has to be accepted as it is perceived.⁽²⁵⁾

Śāntarakṣita answers to the above. Kumārila's insistence is not right, because if it were as insisted, there would be cognition of the non-existence (asat, med). It is just like that of yellowness of the conch-shell. There is no other characteristic of difference (bhedasya lakṣaṇam, tha-dad mtshan-ñid) except the presence of contradictory properties (viruddhadharma, ḥgal-baḥi⁽²⁶⁾ ño-bo). In a word, if it were asserted, then no cognition would

(23) TS. k. 1980-3

(24) TS. k. 1984-5

(25) TS. k. 1986-7. Cf. Ślokavārttika, Śūnyavāda. 219.

(26) TS. k. 1988.

be wrong and there would happen 'putting an end to all notions of difference'. Thus he concludes that the existence of atoms cannot be proved either by perception (pratyakṣa) or by inference (anumāna). Consequently his proposition (pratijñā) does not involve the contradiction of perception (pratyakṣavirodha) and his reason (hetu) is not inadmissible (asiddha).

In following the opponents raise the objection about the construction of an atom, the combination of the atoms and the rest. But we have no space to treat of them here.

For him, the external object is an unreal appearance. What is manifested as the external object is only cognition (jñāna or vijñāna⁽²⁷⁾). Primarily cognition does not apprehend any object at all, abiding within its own self. The cognition manifests itself. It is 'self-cognition' (svasaṃvedana, ātmasaṃvid, etc.) that consist in the essential nature of cognition. In other words it does not depend upon anything for its own cognition, and as referred to, it is devoid of the recognized and the recognizer. In actuality it apprehends falsehood, while in reality it does not apprehend any external objects.⁽²⁸⁾ Therefore it is inevitable that, standing on such vijñāna-theory, Śāntarakṣita denies the existence of the atom (paramāṇu) as 'the recognized' (grāhya).

Thus Śāntarakṣita's criticism on the paramāṇuvāda has an important place in order to establish Vijñaptimātratā from the other side in this chapter called *Bahirarthaparīkṣā*. His affirmative assertion of vijñāna-theory and his criticism on the paramāṇuvāda are correlative to prove Vijñaptimātra. It seems that, in this sense, the content in the *Bahirarthaparīkṣā* corresponds to both that in the *Triṃśikā* and the *Viṃśatikā* of *Vasubandhu* in which he summarized his whole vijñāna-theory.

(27) Jñāna and vijñāna are used as synonym in this chapter, while in other Buddhist schools these two terms are almost distinctly distinguished.

(28) As to Śāntarakṣita's vijñānavāda, see my "On self-cognition (svasaṃvedana) in the *Tattvasaṃgraha*" (Journal of Indian & Buddhist Studies. Vol. XI. No. 2).