Recollection as *pramāṇa*

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The aim of this paper is to show the unique position and value of *smṛti* (recollection) in the Jaina theory of *pramāṇa*. This is done through analyzing the some arguments between Jainism and other schools of Indian philosophy. Jaina logicians admit two types of *pramāṇas*, viz. *pratyakṣa* and *parokṣa*. The latter can be divided into *smṛti*, *pratyabhijñāna*, *tarka* and *anumāna*. Among these four the last is regarded as *pramāṇa* even by other schools while the remaining three are denied by them.¹⁾

Many Jaina philosophers like Prabhācandra define *smṛti* as knowledge which arises through a particular mental impression and whose object has been grasped once and which is in a form of “that one”.²⁾ In this definition a mental impression means *dhāraṇa* (retention) which is the last *pratyakṣa* in the Jaina epistemology. Thus it can be said that *smṛti* is a result of *dhāraṇa*. And as its object has been grasped once *smṛti* is distinguished from *pratyakṣa* whose object has never been grasped before. Moreover it must be noticed that *smṛti* has a form of “that one” because this character distinguishes it from other knowledge such as *pratyabhijñāna* which has a form of “This is that one.”

As mentioned above, other schools do not admit *smṛti* as *pramāṇa*. There are many different reasons for their denial. Buddhist philosophers and Mimāṃsākās, to whom *pramāṇa* must have object which has never been grasped, refute *smṛti* as *pramāṇa* because it is knowledge of an object once known. In Buddhism Dignāga seems to be the first to deny *smṛti*. He declares in his *Pramāṇasamuccaya* 1–3 “Nor [is there any need for a separate means of cognition] in the case of recognizing (*abhiññāna*) [an object] again and again ; because there would occur the fallacy of infinity (*aniṣṭhā*) for instance, [such mental faculties as] recollection (*smṛta*).” And in the autocommentary the word *smṛta* is put in *smṛti*.³⁾ Dharma-kīrti does not clearly deny *smṛti* as *pramāṇa*. But his statement as follows makes us believe that he is opposed to Jainism ; he says, “Conventional knowledge is not

regarded as valid one, because it grasps what has already been grasped.”⁴⁾ Kama-lāśīla, again, clearly denies *smṛti* as *pramāṇa* by saying “Any cognition which cognizes an object once grasped is not *pramāṇa* like *smṛti*.”⁵⁾ Among the Mīmāṃsakas we have Kumāhira Bhaṭṭa as a typical philosopher refuting *smṛti*. He reads; “There (in the case of *smṛti*) the character of *pramāṇa* belongs to the previous cognition [which is the origin of *smṛti*. And thus *smṛti* has no *pramāṇa*-hood.]”⁶⁾

For the Jaina epistemology, not only *smṛti* but each and every *pramāṇa* cognizes an object once grasped. Thus to refutations by Buddhists and Mīmāṃsakas on *smṛti*, Jaina logicians must make rejoinder to defend their theory of *pramāṇa*. The fundamental idea which insures that *smṛti* is *pramāṇa* can be formulated as “The result of *pramāṇa* as well as its cause must be valid knowledge”.⁷⁾ In the connection with *smṛti* let us take *anumāna* which is regarded as *pramāṇa* even by schools other than Jainism.

According to Jainism, *anumāna* presupposes *tarka* which establishes the universal concomitance. And this *tarka* also requires the existence of *pratyabhiññāna* (recognition). Again, this *pratyabhiññāna* can not occur without *smṛti*. Therefore if this *smṛti* is not valid knowledge at all, *anumāna* could not be valid because the former is the indirect cause of the latter.

The great Jaina logician Akalaṅka divides *smṛti* into two types viz. valid one and invalid. The valid *smṛti* may have an object once known but it must give new information about the object.⁸⁾ This theory depends on the Jaina metaphysics of *Anekāntavāda*. Akalaṅka’s contention is that many *pramāṇas* can recognize one and the same object but each of them must grasp the different aspect of it.

Vidyānandin shares the same opinion when he comments on the Akalaṅka’s statement. Besides he proposes us another reason why *smṛti* can be *pramāṇa*; if a cognition which grasps an already known object can not be valid, then we must exclude *dhārāvāhijñāna* (a series of perceptions) from valid knowledge because it is also a kind of knowledge which cognizes an already known object.⁹⁾ Most of all the Jaina philosophers admit this as valid knowledge while it is not clear whether philosophers of other schools, especially of Buddhism, regard this knowledge as valid.¹⁰⁾

The second reason put forth by other schools to deny *smṛti* as *pramāṇa* is the fact that its object belongs to the past and is not real. Jayanta Bhaṭṭa points out that *smṛti* is not *pramāṇa* not because it grasps an object once known but because it occurs from the object which does not exist. He also says that if one of the criteria of valid knowledge is to recognize a never known object, then a series of perceptions would be invalid and this is absurd.¹¹⁾ The Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti, who does not admit *smṛti* as *pramāṇa*, maintains that *smṛti* is knowledge concerning the past and does not occur from a real object because the object has vanished when *smṛti* occurs.¹²⁾

Jaina philosophers, naturally, make objections to these ideas. Most of them point out the inconsistency of Dharmakīrti's idea with Buddhist theory of *kṣaṇabhaṅga*. Akalaṅka demonstrates the contradiction as follows ; if perceptual knowledge grasps an object in the past and still it is valid knowledge, then why can not *smṛti* be valid ? You Buddhists may say that there is a causal relation between memorial knowledge and its object, therefore *pratyakṣa* has validity. But this is not good. In such a case *pratyakṣa* can not have real object because the object which is the cause of *pratyakṣa* does not have the character of *pratyakṣa*.¹³⁾ To the Naiyāyikas Ratnaprabhā points out their difficulties. He says ; in the inferences such as "there was a shower of rain," "the constellation of Śakaṭa will arise" the objects of inferences do not exist at present but they are past and future.¹⁴⁾

Now let us consider the relation between *pramāṇa* in general and *smṛti* as a part of it. As it is well known Akalaṅka was the first in Jainism to systematize the theory of epistemology and put *smṛti* into it. We can safely say that *smṛti* has been given a stable position in the Jaina epistemology by Akalaṅka. But he gives the definition of *pramāṇa* as knowledge which grasps an unknown object.¹⁵⁾ Now it is clear from our previous discussion that this definition is contradictory with each and every *pramāṇa*, at least with *smṛti*. To avoid this difficulty he seems to have introduced the metaphysical method as seen above ; one and the same object has innumerable aspects and one of them may be grasped by one *pramāṇa* while other by other *pramāṇa*. The Jaina logician Māṇikyanandin, who is an immediate successor to Akalaṅka, also gives the modifier "to grasp an unknown object" to *pramāṇa* and explains the word "unknown" as "to have not been

ascertained".¹⁶) It was not before Vidyānandin's time that this modifier had gotten away from the definition of *pramāṇa* in Jainism. For him *pramāṇa* is nothing but knowledge that ascertains its object as well as itself.¹⁷) This means that the object of *pramāṇa* can be either known one or unknown so far as it is not ascertained.

If we want to put *smṛti* under the category of *pramāṇa* or valid knowledge, it is unavoidable to admit that *pramāṇa* may recognize an already known object. This is especially in the case with Jaina logicians because for them each *pramāṇa* is the result of the preceeding one and the cause of the succeeding one.

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- 1) There are some Naiyāyikas who admit *smṛti* as *pramāṇa*. See N. J. Shah, *Nyāya Vaiśeṣika* pp. 558-95. But as a school they put *smṛti* out of *pramāṇa*.
 - 2) *Nyāyakumudacandra*, (ed. M. K. Jain, Bombay, 1941), p. 406
 - 3) See Hattori, M., *Dignāga, On Perception*, Cambridge, Mass. Harvard Univ. Press. 1968, pp. 24-25.
 - 4) *Pramāṇavārtika* II-5, (ed. D. Shastri, Varanasi 1968), p. 5.
 - 5) *Tattvasaṃgraha Pāñjikā* on *Tattvasaṃgraha* (ed. Embar Krishnamacharya Baroda 1984) p. 388, verse 1298.
 - 6) *Ślokaavārtika* (ed. Svāmī Dvārikādāsa Śāstrī, Varanasi 1978), p. 281, verse 158.
 - 7) Cf. Akalaṅka's *Laghīyastra* (ed. with *Nyāyakumudacandra*) verse 10 and his autocommentary on it.
 - 8) *Aṣṭaśati* with *Aṣṭasaḥsri* of Vidyānandin, (ed. Vamśidhar, Bombay 1915), p. 279
 - 9) *Tattvārthaślokaavārtika* I-13-15, (ed. Manoharlāl Bombay, 1918), p. 189
 - 10) Among Buddhists Arcaṭa admits this as *pramāṇa* in the case of yogin. See Hetubinduṭṭikā, (ed. Sanghavi and Jinavijaya, Baroda 1949), p. 47.
 - 11) *Nyāyamañjari*, (ed. K. S. Varadacharya, Mysore 1969), vol. 2. pp. 58-59
 - 12) Cf. *Pramāṇavārtika*, Ch. III-374 and 375 (p. 210-211).
 - 13) *Laghīyastra* verse 45 ab and autocommentary on it.
 - 14) *Ratnākaraśāstrīkā* on *Pramāṇanayatatvāloka* III-4-2, (ed. Dalsukh Malvania, Ahmedabad 1968), Part II, p. 3.
 - 15) *Aṣṭaśati* p. 135. But this is not exclusive definition of *pramāṇa* given by Akalaṅka. See *Laghīyastraya* verse 60.
 - 16) *Parīkṣamukhasūtra*, (ed. S. Ch. Ghoshal, Luknow 1940), sūtras I-1 and 4.
 - 17) Cf. *Tattvārthaślokaavārtika*, I-1-77 (p. 174).

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