

Introduction

The primary objective of the present work is to offer a fresh, in-depth exposition of the Buddhist theory of meaning (*Apohavāda*) with special reference to Śāntarakṣita's *Śabdārthaparīkṣā* as contained in his magnum opus *Tattvasaṃgraha* and Kamalaśīla's commentary on it and secondarily try to answer to the various questions and elaborate common issues that arise in our discourse.

Common Issues related to Word-Meaning can be listed as below:

1. What is language?
2. What is the nature of linguistic denotation?
3. Is *Śabda* the articulated sound, or the phoneme (*varṇa*) or the word (*pada*), or the linguistic utterance, or the meaning-bearing unit, or the conventional sign (uttered or written strings of words having a syntax and a meaning), or the language that is referred to by the term *Śabda*?
4. What is the relationship, which holds between the *śabda* and *artha* i.e, word and meaning?
5. Does the word refer to a universal, or particular class, or individual, form, or substratum?
6. What is the relationship between language and thought on the one hand and language and reality on the other?

7. How we derive knowledge from linguistic utterance, i.e., how does a linguistic utterance, through the communication of its meaning, impart knowledge to the hearer (*śābdabodha*)?
8. Does language represent reality or fashion it out?
9. To what extent is verbal cognition reliable?
10. Whether every meaningful expression has to refer to something external?
11. How general terms can be meaningful in a world of individuals?
12. What is to be considered part of the fabric of Reality and what is to be excluded from this category?
13. What does it mean for an object to exist?
14. What to accept as real, in the full sence of the word, and what to considered as conceptually constructed?
15. How conceptual thought can apply to reality?
16. What does a word refer to?
17. What is the object of the word?
18. What is the criterion of Reality?
19. What is sensed (i.e., the pure-particular) cannot be thought or spoken of, and what is spoken or thought of (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) does not really exist? Then how is it that we manage to use language to deal with particular world we live in?
20. How can we speak of types of things, since the particular things themselves (i.e., the pure-particulars) are not available to our awareness and thus cannot be classified or described by us?
21. Can we know the external world directly?

22. Is it possible for people to have experiences even in the absence of external stimuli?
23. How to relate the word with the reality, in order to bridge the gap between real and conceptual?
24. What is the status of conceptual construct: Is it ontological or nominal?
25. Whether language functions at mental/conceptual level or at sensuous level?
26. Is there any difference between what we see and what is given?
27. What is the difference between appearance and reality?
28. If words do not signify any real objects, then what is its signification?
29. How mind-created, fictional and pseudo-entities can nonetheless lead us to knowledge about the real world?
30. What there is in reality that is directly and entirely perceivable?
31. How is it that the objects of *Prayakṣa*, which are supposed to be in themselves (*svalakṣaṇa*) unconceptualizable, relate to conceptualization and the validity of inference?
32. What precisely is it about something's being that connects it with right cognition or knowledge?
33. How is it that momentariness, in addition to the notion of the particularity of things, is key to the distinction between the objects of sensation and conceptualization?
34. Whether Dignāga accepts only three kinds of *pratyakṣābhāsa*, namely: Erroneous cognition (*bhrāntijñāna*), cognition of empirical

reality (*saṃvṛttijñāna*), and inference (*anumānādi*); the *taimira jñāna* as a fourth *pratyakṣābhāsa*?

35. When we are said to be seeing an external thing, do we perceive what it is that we think we perceive?
36. Whether the external things are at all what we tend to believe that they are, and further whether there is any external world at all?
37. What justification do we have for grouping many different things under the same general term?
38. Can we invent an independent term for any perceptible group of things?
39. Should there be a universal rule that everything must belong to a particular group, to which a perceiver can relate it?
40. Is there any entity which is in some sense, present in all things?
41. Reality is external and concepts are internal, then how can one account for reference to actual external things?
42. What is the status of what appears in our cognition?
43. How do we cognize or conceive that there are external objects?
44. How is language related to reality?
45. What relation does our language bear to our perceptual cognition?
46. Whether what we grasp in perception is exactly represented in our verbalization?
47. How does a word serve the purpose of referring to a particular?
48. As to whether the tangible world that we perceive and experience really exists or is a mere construction of the mind is as old an ontological question as is human thought itself?

49. Whether the object exists or not, in the manner it is cognized or apprehended?
50. Is reality independent of perception, or does perception define reality?
51. Is there any contribution of our mind to our knowledge of the external world?

Before venturing to delineate the pros and cons of the aforesaid plethora of common issues related to the concept of meaning, it's essential to put the concept in the proper perspective.