

# Śāntarakṣita's Modification/ Evolution of the *Apoha* theory

---

In the preceding chapter, it has been examined that, how Uddyotakara and Kumārila misunderstood the real significance of Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's doctrine and the objections raised by them were uncalled for and shown irrelevant by Śāntarakṣita. Now, in this chapter I will delve into the important contributions of Śāntarakṣita and his direct disciple Kamalaśīla, as presented in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of his magnum opus *Tattvasaṃgraha*. The main motive behind this is to bring to the lime light the fact that, 'when Dignāga declared that the word imports a negation and neither an objective universal nor a particular, he only emphasized the negative implication of verbal import and denied positive import on the ground that word had not, from the logical stand point, any reference to an objective reality.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, he did not mean that negation was the primary and apparent connotation so the opponents objection, do not affect the central position of the master and they are only fighting with a shadow of their own creation. And in order to show this my procedure would be the following: Firstly, I will look at some of the theories of import of word, as mentioned in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* in the *Kārikās*. 867-909 and Śāntarakṣita's response to it. Secondly, I will probe into the Śāntarakṣita's modifications of *Apoha* theory (*TS*, K.1003 onwards), which will embrace the following issues: (i) three types of negation (eliminations or *Apoha*). (ii)

nature of concept, (iii) role of representation (reflection/*pratibimba*) in a conceptual process, (iv) four reasons of calling a conceptual representation an elimination/*Apoha*, (v) relation between word & meaning, and (vi) direct (primary) and indirect (secondary) import of word. And lastly, towards the end, I will brood over the difference between Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's doctrine of *Apoha* on one side and Śāntarakṣita's doctrine of *Apoha* on the other. Śāntarakṣita, in the opening verse of the *Śabdārthaparīkṣā* of his *Tattvasaṃgraha*, begins with the realist objection against his view that 'word is an expression of illusory construction of thought, thus what is expressed by words is `apoha' (the negation of others)', in the following manner:

*Realist objection*

'If the categories,<sup>2</sup> which are known in our daily life and are designated by words, were not really existing (ontologically), then what will be the cause of cognitions and words such as the ascetic, while, going, existent or sentences like, 'the cloth is in the thread', 'the man with the stick', 'horned animals', etc, which are really caused in our opinion by the categories i.e., substance, quality, action, generality, inherence, etc.'<sup>3</sup> Moreover, these expressions and notions should not be regarded as entirely baseless (objectless) otherwise they would appear everywhere. That means, things would appear in all places without distinction, but it is believed that specific word refers to a specific referent.<sup>4</sup> So, the upshot of all this is- what is signified by a word?

*Śāntarakṣita's reply:*

Regarding the realist objection mentioned above, Śāntarakṣita replied that there is no real basis (referent) for these expressions and notions in the

external word. It is the 'Vāsanā' (latent embedded impressions) which is in the individual consciousness (*manovijñāna*), that is the referent of a word.<sup>5</sup> Further, in support of above reply Śāntarakṣita says that whatever is said to be the object of a verbal expression i.e., by whatever name a thing is spoken of, that thing is not really cognized there, such is the very essence of things. This point can be explained in the following manner: 'If words refers to *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* (*Dharma*) then it cannot be real because *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is a conceptual construction created by the mind, therefore unreal. And, if words refers to *svalakṣaṇa* (which is real), then it cannot be grasped by our language, because it is beyond our thought and language. In this way, whatever either *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* or *svalakṣaṇa* be the object of verbal expression, that is never really cognized, because it is the very nature/essence of entities.<sup>6</sup>

In the forthcoming *Kārikās*, Śāntarakṣita discusses some of the cases like specific individuality, universal, relation to universal, something endowed with the universal, form of the cognition of the object, which cannot be the import of word, because convention is not possible in all these cases.<sup>7</sup> We will examined these cases one by one in detail in the following manner:

1. *Specific Individuality (Svalakṣaṇa) cannot be the import of word*

Śāntarakṣita authentically presents the Buddhist's view that specific individuality cannot be known by words because there can be no temporal & spatial relation with it. Hence convention is not possible because it can only be used or applied with reference to things which have relation with time and space. Moreover, as the Buddhist believes that specific individuality is momentary it induces only for a moment, whereas we speak

of a thing to be existing only when it exist at least for three moments, which is not the case with *svalakṣaṇa*, hence, convention is not possible, due to the absence of specific individuality at the time of convention and usage.<sup>8</sup> Because, according to the realist, for usage there must be some commonality whereas in case of specific individuality there can be no commonality due its distinct nature i.e., differs with respect to time, place, action, potency, manifestation, etc. Therefore convention used in regard to one individual could not be carry on usage, on that basis, in regard to other individuals otherwise, it would lead to infinite regress.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, according to Śāntarakṣita there is a time gap between usage & convection of a word i.e., convention is different at the time of usage and at the time of experience. What is meant as follows: The convention established or determined with reference to individual, cannot express the individual at other moment because the thing belonging to a different moment is different from that of the proceeding moment. And with reference to that second moment no convention has been established. The conventional relation can be apprehended only after the name-relation is remembered and the name-relation is remembered after the individual has been perceived but the individual being momentary will have passed out of existence when the conventional relation can be apprehended. This can be explained with the help of an example, the term 'existing' is frequently applied to things endowed with existence, but the same word is not applicable to unseen things of the same kind like past & future things. Thus, there can be no ontological basis for past and future things.<sup>10</sup> Further, realist might raised an argument against the above mentioned view that, there are certain things like the Himalaya mountain, which remains permanently in one and the

same form & not differ due to time, place, and distinction. Consequently, they are present at the time of convention and usage. Śāntarakṣita says that, even in such things there are atoms, which are diverse and momentary, because of which they are different. Moreover, as all these things are destroyed, thus there can be no presence, at the time of the usage, of the character that was present at the time of the making of the convention.<sup>11</sup>

So far we have discussed that specific individuality cannot be an import of word, because it is not present at the time of convention & usage. Now, we are going to discuss that, convention is not possible in regard to it also because 'action is not possible' in it.

According to Śāntarakṣita, convention is possible only of those things which are in existence (i.e., which are in action, present before hand) and not of those which are not in existence (i.e., past & future things). On this basis, there can be no assumption of convention in regard to the born or to the unborn things. Regarding the latter, Śāntarakṣita says that just as no real convention is possible with reference to the 'horse's horn' in the same manner with it, because what does not exist (still unborn) can have no character at all and hence cannot be the substratum of any thing.<sup>12</sup> And, regarding the former, because convention is made only on the recalling to the mind of things apprehended before hand, it is not possible to have real convention in it.<sup>13</sup>

Further, realist in order to prove their point says that, because of 'similarity' (*sādrśya*) between moments, we can postulate unitary nature on specific individuality and give it a name. Śāntarakṣita continues that, specific individuality is something that cannot be named at all, because the

basis of naming process i.e., similarity (according to realist) itself is only imaginary, illusory, and unreal. What is meant is as follows.

‘All that the maker of convention does is to apply to a particular thing a particular name which has been recalled to memory, while memory cannot recall the name that has been really apprehended previously, because that ceased to exist long ago, and the name that he actually pronounces is not the one that he has known previously. So that there could be no real remembrance of it and what has not been apprehended by the memory cannot be recalled by it. Hence it follows that what is recalled by memory & remembered is only a creation of fancy and not the specific individuality of the word.’<sup>14</sup>

Coming back to the statement that, ‘specific individuality cannot be the import of word’; Śāntarakṣita gave another point in support of it. He says that according to the Buddhist, the knowledge that we get through words is not so clear and distinct like the idea of ‘Heat’ when we utter the word ‘hot’, then the knowledge that we get through *indriyas* (sense-organs). For example, the man who has been burnt by fire has the idea of having been burnt, on the contact of fire, which idea is entirely different from the idea of burning arising on the utterance of the word burn.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, there is neither any connection between the specific individuality and the word, nor does it appear in the cognition, Just as taste does not appear in the cognition of color.<sup>16</sup>

2. *All three, the individual (vyākṛti), the configuration (ākṛti) and the universal (jāti) can not be the import of word*<sup>17</sup>

Śāntarakṣita says ‘individual’ in the shape of substance, quality and particular qualities, ‘configuration’ in the shape of contact, all these being

of the nature of specific individuality also may be rejected on the ground of no convention bearing upon it, just as specific individuality is rejected above. And, universal being already rejected in the preceding chapter, so the relation to universal and something endowed with the universal no longer remain possible, because all these are formless, featureless, devoid of character. Thus, for these reasons, Śāntarākṣita says that the Naiyāyika's contention falls to the ground, because these conceptual vagaries are unsubstantial fictions, pure and simple.<sup>18</sup>

3. *Form of cognition can not be the import of word*

According to the realist, the form of cognition<sup>19</sup>, it is of the same essence as the cognition itself and as such rest there in. That is, mental image of the object does not differ from the mind (just as the reflection is not different from the mirror) and exist within the mind itself. The form of cognition is identified with the intellect of the self.<sup>20</sup> But, according to Śāntarākṣita 'form of cognition' can't be denoted by words because of the following reasons:

- Form of cognition has no reflection with the ontological object (*pratipādhmartha*).
- Secondly, because of its momentary nature it can not be present at the time of the convention and usage, just as specific individuality.
- Thirdly, mental image of one individual is different from the mental image of other and if we suppose, mental image to be the import of word then the meaning used by one individual would be different from the other.

- Fourthly, if another form of cognition or another object relating that form of cognition is present at the time of establishing a convention with regard to the form of cognition of the person who intends to establish a convention with reference to his own mental form, can not logically used the same convention with regard to the other form of cognition at the time of such convention being established.<sup>21</sup>

Now, in the forthcoming *kārikās* of *Tattvasaṃgraha*, Śāntarakṣita and his disciple Kamalaśīla presents some of the other theories of import of words, which they have taken from the Bhartṛhari's *magnum opus* 'Vākyapadīya', *Kāṇḍa-II*. 119-135 and examined them from the Buddhist point of view in the following manner:

i. 'To be' (*astyartha*, mere existence) cannot be the import of word

According to some theorist what is denoted by a word is pure, unqualified, undefined, and unspecified existence (*astyartha*) and not any specific individuality. In support of above view, they say, when the word 'cow' is heard it simply connotes that something exists to which the name 'cow' is affixed and no form or determination enters as a content into this purely existential reference. The determinate content of this reference is purely a matter of belief or pre-conception of the subject in question. So, even words which have a reference to visible and perceptible objects are on the same level with words which refer to unknown and unverifiable objects.<sup>22</sup> Thus, for instance such expressions as Unseen force (*Apūrva*), Deity (*Devātā*), and Heaven (*Svarga*) does not introduce into the cognition the form of any object, but only convey a vague existential reference and similarly our ordinary expression too do not connote any thing more than this.<sup>23</sup>



*Śāntarakṣita's reply*

Regarding the above contention, Śāntarakṣita replied that, if what is expressed by the verb 'to be' is said to be denoted by words, then whether 'to be' means *svalakṣaṇa* or the universal, or the contact or something else which reflects the conjunction, then all the objections raised against these alternatives should also be applicable to 'to be', if it is taken as the import of word.<sup>24</sup> And if it is held that words do not present any definite meaning but only a vague reference to mere existence, then linguistic usage would become absolutely absorptive, as there will be no variation in meaning and the content. The word 'cow' and the word 'horse' would mean the same thing, if they mean nothing more than existence, pure and simple.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, if it is conceded that two more elements, the universal (cowness) and the word (cow) are also added to it, even then the individual characteristics are not referred to. Moreover, this interpretation only restates the position of the Naiyāyika who holds that words have a reference to the universal-in-the-individual, the individual as defined and determined by the universal. But universal have been proved to be unreal intellectual fictions and so this theory shares in the absurdity of the Nyāya theory in toto.<sup>26</sup>

ii. *Aggregate (samudāya) cannot be the import of word*

According to another school of thinkers again, the denotation of a word is an aggregate having neither distributive (*vikalpa*) nor collective reference (*samucchaya*). It is held by these thinkers that it is no use of viewing some of the elements of the denotation as more important than the rest. On the contrary, each element claims exactly the same status which is enjoyed by another. But, it should be noted that there is absolutely no emphases on the distributive or the collective character of the elements forming the group or

totality. So, the meaning of a word is a group or totality without reference to the units severally or collectively.<sup>27</sup>

In order to understand this theory, we have to first of all understand these three terms i.e., *Samudāya*, *Samucchaya*, and *Vikalpa* separately one by one in detail.

The term '*vikalpa*' in the text stands for the distinct conception of any one individual from among a group consisting of an indefinite number of individuals. Conception of a definite number of individuals related together. '*Samudāya*' stands for general aggregate (group/totality) of qualities which does not have any definite form. To make the point clear take an example of words like forest, Brahmin, etc. When we utter a word 'forest' it does not refer to any clearly distinguished or determinate, well defined form either of the *Dhava*, or *Khadira*, or *Palāsh*, or any other particular tree (distributively i.e., *vikalpa*), or of the *Dhava*, the *Khadira* and the *Palāsh* and other trees (collectively i.e., *samucchaya*), it is only a vague indefinite conception of the *Dhava* and other trees in general (*samudāya*). Similarly the word 'Brahman' denotes an aggregate of austerity, purely, caste, birth, learning, etc. without any *samucchaya* and *vikalpa*. Thus, the designation is a collection, but without choice or combination (*avikalpasamuccaya*).

*Śāntarakṣita's reply*

Śāntarakṣita regarding the above theory says that this 'group or totality' is nothing but the well-known universal of the realists hidden under a different verbal expression and as such is liable to all the objections attaching to the universal.<sup>28</sup>

iii. *Unreal relationship, either between the substance and the substancehood or between the real substance and the unreal adjuncts cannot be the import of word*

There are some other thinkers who maintain that the denotation of all words is an unreal relationship between the substance and the substancehood. This relation is said to be 'unreal', firstly, because it has no independent ontological status i.e., it is dependent on individual and universal for its existence (*satta*) and secondly, because we never separately perceived this relationship apart from the terms between which it subsists in reality.<sup>29</sup>

Further, according to another school of theorists the denotation of a word is not a fiction, but a reality with unreal adjuncts.<sup>30</sup> It is common knowledge that in our inter-social communications reference is frequently made to particular forms and not to generic forms alone. Hence, there arises the necessity of including the particular form in the denotation of a word. But, as the particular forms are not anything more than unreal fictions, it is held by these theorists that the denotation of a word which includes the generic form with the specific determinations as its adjuncts is a reality with unreal adjuncts. Though, Bhartṛhari and Puṅyarāja have not elucidated this view, we find Kamalaśīla explaining it with illustrations. Kamalaśīla represents the view point of these theorists by pointing out that in their opinion a substance like, gold has a generic form which permeates all the different things made of it, i.e., bracelet, ring and earring. The generic or the universal form is uniform and unchanging and as such held to be real, while the individual forms that are of varying character are believed to be unreal fictions. And as both the generic and the specific forms are signified by a word, its denotation is regarded as a reality with unreal adjuncts. What is

meant is as follows: Words mean only the real substance which though it passes through many unreal changes yet continues to remain the same in every change, just as gold remains the same even though it undergoes changes in the forms of different ornaments, such as bangles, earrings, etc. Thus, meaning is the relation with a linguistic form of something existent as obstructed (or conditioned, *upādhi*) by what is non-existent.<sup>31</sup>

*Śāntarakṣita's reply*

Śāntarakṣita against the objections regarding 'the unreal contact' says that, in the '*Prakṛtiparīkṣā*' they have already refuted that there is nothing real which continues to be the same in all its unreal changes. And in the '*Padārthaparīkṣā*' any such relation as conjunction and inherence has been rejected. Hence, the import of words can not consist either of 'the conjunction of the unreal', or of 'the real universal with unreal adjuncts'.<sup>32</sup>

iv. *Coalescence (Abhijalpa) cannot be the import of word*

Another class of theorists opines that what is denoted by a word is its own form coalescing with an objective fact (i.e., word itself in the state of coalescence- the state in which the word has owned the form of meaning or no difference, union, fusion, superimposition, identification, or mixing up of word and referent). Reference to an objective fact is almost invariably made through the machinery of words, and so it is held that word stands in the relation of identity with fact. This relation of identity (*adhyāsa* as it is described by Puṇyarāja) is responsible for presenting an objective fact not in its own character but as though coalescence with the form of a word. And this form of a word which is, as it were, unified with an objective fact is maintained to be the denotation of a word.<sup>33</sup>

*Śāntarakṣita's reply*

Regarding above contention, Śāntarakṣita replied that, in so far as it has been proved that 'denotation of word' in the form of 'specific individuality' or universal and the rest is not possible, then how could there be any coalescing with it? i.e., this view is based on a confusion of a subjective idea with an objective fact, which is absurd on the face of it. Moreover, coalescence is related to mental and has no relation with external i.e., coalescence must reside in the cognition itself, whereas word is used to give an external meaning, therefore, there is no union between the two. If the upholder of this theory holds that both the word and the objective fact are subjective ideas and reside in the cognition itself, then only the unification of the two is possible. But then, this view does not make any difference on the theory of those who hold the subjective ideal content to be the meaning of words. None at all, in both cases the denotation would be pure subjective, the only difference being that the word and the denotation has coalesced and become one.<sup>34</sup>

v. *'Form of idea' cannot be the import of word*

There is another theory which holds that the denotation of words is an idea or a mental image which is occasioned by an external object and comes to be cognized as the external object itself by being impinged upon it. But, so long as the idea is not superimposed upon the objective reality but remains as the idea only, it is not recognized as the import of word, because what is purely subjective can have no connection with any form of activity (i.e., subjective ideas are not actionable) and so, unless they are hypostatized as objective facts, it is hardly of any practical utility to recognize them as the denotation of words. For example, action spoken of in such words as 'Bring

the cow', 'Eat the curd', are not possible for the mere idea because what words denote is a thing capable of action. Further, it is due to an error that the idea is apprehended as something external. Thus, according to this theory, only when the form of idea is illusory apprehended as something external i.e., 'this is that', that only is the import of word.

It is important to note that neither Bhartṛhari nor Puṅyarāja has thrown any hint about the possibility of a confusion that may arise between this view and the doctrines of *apoha* as sponsored by the Buddhists. Kamalaśīla, however has taken special pains to prove that there is substantial disagreement between the two views. Buddhist hold neither the form of idea, nor the external object (objective fact) to be real, because according to them, the denotation is nothing more than an illusory projection, whereas the upholder of this theory hold both to be real i.e., the idea is a correct measure of the reality and actually superimposed upon an objective datum to which it refers.<sup>35</sup>

*Śāntarakṣita's reply*

This view has been thoroughly demolished, because as an idea is not anything different from consciousness and being momentary alike, it fails to synthesize the different individuals, supposed to be denoted by a word. What is meant is as follows: Śāntarakṣita says that, the form of the mind cannot be said to be the meaning of the word because one form of mind will not remain in other moments when the word may next be used. Without knowing there power of the word, how can it be used in the different form of the mind? Moreover, it can not encompass the whole reality.<sup>36</sup>

vi. *Intuition (flash of understanding, pratibhā) cannot be the import of word*

There is still another theory which holds that words do not signify any real at all, nor do they convey any determinate idea. Words are but symbolic values and stand on the same level with signs and gestures. They produce an indeterminate and content less intuition (*pratibhā*), which comes too associated with objective facts by repeated usage. They are destitute of definite presentative context and are only vaguely suggestive of facts and actions, as is seen in the case of children and animals. And even this suggestive has no direct bearing on definite objective data. What is meant is as follows: By means of repetitive continuous training all words give rise to intuition in children and animals in a manner that they comprehend the right meaning of the words through that intuition.<sup>37</sup>

*Śāntarakṣita's reply*

Śāntarakṣita replied to the above objection by raising the following counter arguments: If this suggestion (*pratibhā*) is supposed to have reference to an objective fact, then how can a particular word give rise to various suggestions in various minds, when the objective reality is uniform in character? What is meant is as follows: If the import of word is *pratibhā* which refers to external object which is one (i.e., has one particular character) then due to the difference of time and circumstance, the *pratibhā* should be different i.e., the meaning experienced by one person at one time and circumstances is different from the other persons. It can be understood with the help of an example, if the word 'cow' for instance is the only cause of the knowledge of a cow and if this knowledge really depends on the external object then the word can not reasonably be the cause of the

different kinds of knowledge such as grief, joy, etc. in different person, because an object the knowledge of which is produced by the word can not have so many forms.<sup>38</sup> Further, if intuition aroused from the ‘*vāsanā*’ which is embedded in the *manovijñāna* and not from the external object i.e., intuition be held to be objectless, existing only in the form of faculties then volitional activity in connection with objects should not be possible, as the word would have no connection with objects.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, if it is believed that it is due to illusion, then this illusion must be due to some cause, because if it is baseless (objectless), then it must be present everywhere.<sup>40</sup> And, if the cause of illusion be held to be ‘mutual exclusion’ (the negation of the opposite), then you support our own view and as such your argument become superfluous.<sup>41</sup>

After this, Śāntarakṣita says that, all these different theories can be summarily dismissed by the following dialectic: Is the import of words a reality or not? If it be a reality, is it momentary or not? If the former, it can not have the synthetic reference, and if the latter, then how can there be sequential relation of word and meaning?<sup>42</sup>

4. *Intention (desire) of the speaker cannot be the import of word*

There are some other theorists again, who maintain that the subjective idea and the objective fact are structurally and qualitatively close analogies like two twin brother’s and though the objective reality is not the significance of a word, still the subjective idea leads to the objective fact by reason of its close analogy. The idea is that ‘there is some sort of similarity between what appears in the ‘intention of the speaker’ and the external object. On the basis of this similarity, the word may be applied to the external object.<sup>43</sup>



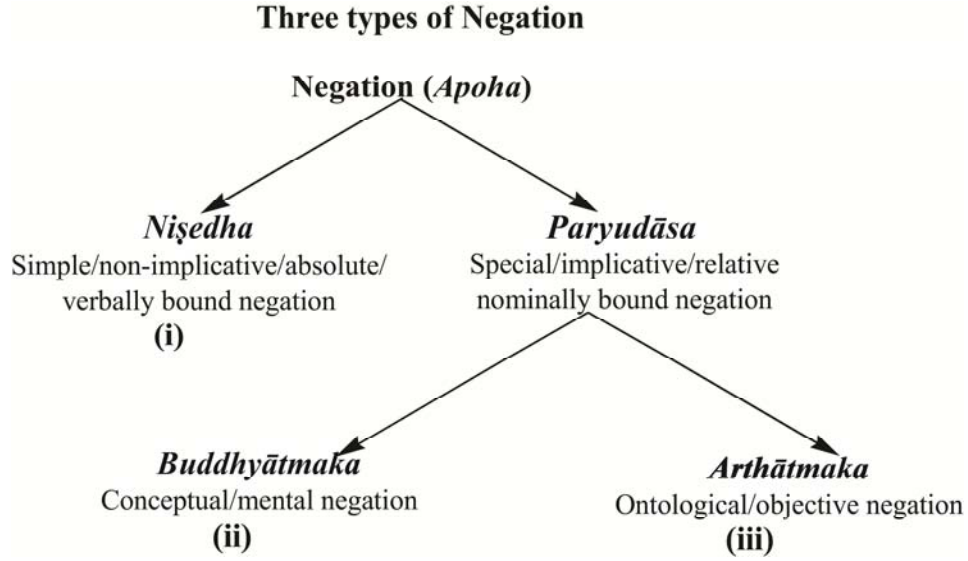
*Śāntarakṣita's reply*

Regarding the above contention, Śāntarakṣita replied that, if it is held that the 'intention of the speaker' is the real import of word, then it is unproven. Because, when nothing exist (i.e., specific individuality, universal and the rest) then how can the nothing become the object of the speaker's intention i.e., when the denotative meaning does not exist, then how can its desire exists.<sup>44</sup> And, regarding the concept of similarity, it is not possible because, this theory fails to explain the invariable objective reference of verbal cognition. The analogy of twin brothers does not help the issue. It is not a fact that one twin will be invariably confused with the other. The real person intended may be understood and so the subjective image may not be invariably confounded with the objective fact and sometimes may be correctly apprehended as subjective and in that case the activity bearing on the objective fact will be impossible of explanation.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, from all this, it follows that all that is brought about by words is the '*apoha*' (exclusion of others). Now, we have reached to the second part which is the 'soul' of the chapter, Śāntarakṣita's theory of meaning'. In the second place, *apoha* was given all together a new interpretation. Śāntarakṣita admits that a word denotes a positive meaning. What is denoted by a word is the image of a thing (*artha-pratibimba*), but he also argued that the negative aspect of the meaning can not be totally ignored. In order to understand this, we have to ponder over all the issues comprise in this part, one by one in detail.

### **Śāntarakṣita's theory of meaning**

Śāntarakṣita exhaustively records the criticism against the *apoha* theory of meaning from the schools of Poetics (Bhāmaha), Mīmāṃsā (Kumārila), and Nyāya (Uddyotakara) in more than hundred verses in his *Tattvasaṃgraha* as shown in the preceding chapter. From the verse 1003 onwards he starts formulating and reinterpreting *apoha* theory. Śāntarakṣita argues that the criticism of the orthodox philosophers directed against the concept of *apoha* is an outcome of their muddle thought and want of appreciation of the fundamentals of the Buddhist hypothesis. He turns bitter towards his critics as he states, 'people who are themselves damned damn others also' i.e., mislead as they are themselves they try to mislead others by means of their vitiated ratiinations.<sup>46</sup> So, in order to respond to them, he establishes that *apoha* is of two kinds due to the difference between relative and absolute negation. Again the relative negation is also of two kinds due to the difference of conception of idea and object.<sup>47</sup> We may present these three types of negation with the help of the following diagram:



Through this division, Śāntarakṣita prove the point that eliminations are not solely negative in import, but can also have positive, implications. To support his point, Śāntarakṣita distinguishes those negations that are exclusively negative in import, which he calls *Niṣedha* (non-implicative negation) from those that have a positive import called *paryudāsa* (implicative negation). Let us discuss them one by one in detail.

1. *Niṣedha* (Non-implicative/absolute/total negation) - do not imply a commitment to the existence of any positive entity (i.e., there is no implied affirmation in it), merely negating the assertion to be negated.<sup>48</sup> For example, the negation of the existence of the horn of a rabbit does not imply the existence of any positive entity whatsoever and in the statement like, 'The cow is not non-cow', there is complete negation of 'non-cow' which is very clearly apprehended.<sup>49</sup>
2. *Paryudāsa* (Implicative/negation for affirmation) - one may negate everything in order to affirm something. That is, they have a positive

import in that they imply a commitment to the existence of some positive entity. For example, ‘*anātman*’. It denies the existence of atman on one hand and on the other it posits the existence of dharma.<sup>50</sup> Now, this type of negation may either be the negation of the notion of things in the mind or it may be the negation of physical things. The former, mental/conceptual implicative negation, relates to the ideational meaning (*pratibhā*) proposed by Dignāga and here in the Śāntarakṣita’s context of *apoha* theory it is nothing other than a conceptual representation/reflection (*pratibimba*). The latter, objective negation of a thing is the thing itself, when it is negatively characterized. Let us first consider objective elimination.

- i. *Arthātmaka* (objective elimination) - the negation of the physical universal, things i.e., it consists in the all-exclusive particularity of the real. Through a conceptual reflection of an object, a person indirectly apprehends a real object. For Śāntarakṣita this real object is a negation in as much as it is distinguished from its contradictory i.e., an object X is X because it is not non-X. This type of negation is called an objective elimination.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, for Śāntarakṣita, an objective elimination is elimination even though it is a real thing. There are two reasons in support of this statement: (i) He does not hold all elimination to be conceptual like the conceptual representation even though real mental event is elimination for him. And, (ii) Śāntarakṣita himself asserts that to a specific individuality, elimination is applicable in its primary sense.<sup>52</sup> Therefore, that something is real is no reason in itself for excluding it from the purview of Śāntarakṣita’s *apoha* theory.<sup>53</sup>
- ii. *Buddhyātmaka* (conceptual/mental elimination) - the negation of the ideal universal or mental/conceptual image which we have in our perceptual

judgment i.e., it consists in the comprehension of different things under one class concept by negating their mutual differences. Just as herbal ingredients (*harītaki*) though distinct from each other and without any commonality among them (universal) perform the same function of curing fever,<sup>54</sup> in the same manner different properties of a thing, can also be responsible for unitary conception/determinate cognition. To this cognition a reflection of the object appears as being in reality the object, even though the objective character is absent in it. He designate this conception of reflected image as *apoha*.<sup>55</sup> But, now the question arises: How are these representations/conceptual reflection (*pratibimba*), which are real called *apoha*?

There are four reasons behind this:

- (1) Because the idea itself differentiates itself from other ideas.
- (2) Because it is the basis of the cognition of the thing excluded (through imposing the character of the effect upon the cause).
- (3) Because that idea in the mind is identified through the excluded object (through imposing the character of the cause upon the object).
- (4) Because the idea is superimposed on *svalakṣaṇa* and consequently because of the illusory identification of *svalakṣaṇa* with the idea, that idea is designated as *apoha*.<sup>56</sup>

The first three reasons are based on empirical level, whereas the fourth is on ontological level.<sup>57</sup> Hence, there are three kinds of *apoha*:

- (1) Ideal - no external reality, subjective, discrete, and self contained, negative implication; it functions/excludes at two levels- (a) at the level of class, cow and non-cow (horse, ox,

etc.); (b) at the level of individual which excludes cow<sub>1</sub> from cow<sub>2</sub>, cow<sub>3</sub> . . . cow<sub>n</sub>.

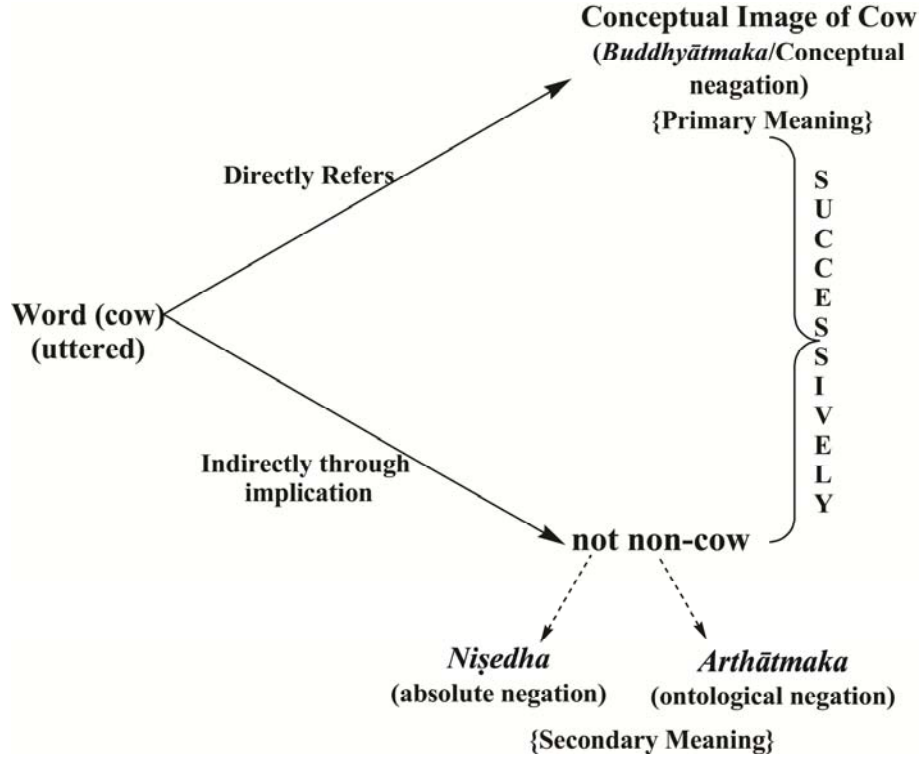
(2) Objective - another name for the particular instance in question.

That cognitive image which was that of the subjective nature now amounts to becoming objective.

(3) Absolute - attested by our own experience and introspection, this particular is 'not non-cow' (= cow and nothing else).

The point to be noticed is that, it is only first of these *apoha* i.e., '*Buddhyātmaka*' that *apoha* theory corresponds to. It is neither the simple negation nor the ontological negation (i.e., neither the difference of its meaning from that of its contrary, nor the external thing itself). The main reason why '*Buddhyātmaka*' is regarded as *apoha* is that every thought image appears in the form distinct from other thought image. Moreover, when a word is spoken, it is the thought image of an object which is directly evoked in our mind, therefore it is the principle meaning of a word.<sup>58</sup> Neither absolute negation nor specific individuality constitute the form of verbal cognition. It is so because the cognition generated by the words refers to all intents and purposes, the external objects (virtually) the reflection of which is brought into an existence by the word. It also brings the reality between the denotative and the denotation. Moreover, the word is called the denotative, because it gives rise to the reflection of the object denoted and the reflection is called the denotation, because it is produced by the comprehension of the word. So, the relation between denotative and denoted which subsists between the word and its meaning is none other than the relation of cause and effect.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, according to Śāntarākṣita, the primary/direct import of word is the ideal/conceptual image and the secondary/indirect imports of word are the absolute and objective negations. It is noteworthy that all these three types of *apoha* are successive stages of determinate cognition (*savikalpka jñāna*). This can be explained with the help of the following diagram:



The point to be noticed is that, the conceptual image (*pratibimba*) is not positive (but it is only a kind of special negation *pariyudāsa*, *Buddhyātmaka*) but felt as positive i.e., positive at conceptual level.<sup>60</sup> It is not really positive, i.e., an existent, since it is not an object of sense-apprehension. The positivity, externality and identity attributed to the meanings of words are, according to Śāntarākṣita illusory. This illusion springs from the innate constructive tendency of the human intellect. Even

though, the conceptual cognition is illusory, it leads to successful activity. Regarding secondary meaning, Śāntarakṣita asserts that, absolute negation is apprehended by implication in the form that the nature of a thing is constituted by the exclusion of the nature of other thing and therefore when it is related in this manner with other things, then the comprehension of the ‘excluded object’ (*svalakṣaṇa*) also takes place through implication. Hence, this also is spoken of as the denotation of the word in a secondary sense.<sup>61</sup> Thus, a word in Śāntarakṣita’s view performs two functions, one of denoting directly the conceptual image and the other of implying the negation of the contrary in succession.

Now, we have reached to the last part of our chapter to ponder over the difference between the Dignāga’s and Dharmakīrti’s theory of *apoha* on one side and Śāntarakṣita’s theory of *apoha* on the other. First we will examine the difference between the Dignāga and Śāntarakṣita theory of meaning then the Dharmakīrti and the Śāntarakṣita.

#### **Difference between Dignāga’s and Śāntarakṣita’s *Apoha* theory**

1. For Dignāga, the whole meaning of a word is exhausted in ‘the negation of the contrary’. Śāntarakṣita, on the other hand, distinguished between the direct and the indirect meanings of words.
2. The apprehension of the negative meaning was direct for Dignāga, while it is indirect for Śāntarakṣita.
3. *Apoha*, for the former is negative, while for the latter, it has a felt positivity.
4. Dignāga does not provide any indication of secondary meaning by implication.



**Difference between Dharmakīrti's and Śāntarakṣita's *Apoha* theory**

1. Dharmakīrti presents elimination from an epistemological point of view i.e., a construct is an elimination not because it negates some putative object but because it is conceptual and, hence, unreal. Whereas Śāntarakṣita presents from a psychological point of view.<sup>62</sup>
2. Both emphasize the role of representation in the *apoha* theory, but for Dharmakīrti, such representations do not seem to be actual eliminations. Since they are real (unlike Śāntarakṣita), these elements play a central role as the support of fictional entities, thus establishing a bridge between the conceptual and the real domains.<sup>63</sup>
3. They differ on the nature of concepts. Dharmakīrti stresses that concepts take universals as their objects whereas; Śāntarakṣita emphasizes concepts as mental events.

### **Concluding Remarks**

To sum up, the theory of *apoha* propounded by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla through the explicit recognition of the felt positive element in the import of words, the distinction between direct and indirect meaning, the restatement of the relation between concepts and reality and the theory of non-apprehension of difference (*bhedāgraha*) serve to make the theory of *apoha* more clear and intelligible. This extension and interpretation of the theory proceeds in the same direction as it was taken up by their masters. Śāntarakṣita continues the same mentalist line of thought but, in the process, come as to modify the theory quite considerably. Moreover, his attempt is also a response to opponent's criticisms, an attempt to vindicate Dignāga's theory. In his hands, theory is less a way to explain how the Buddhists can have a valid epistemology in a world of individuals than a psychologically oriented explanation focusing on the nature of actual entities involved in the conceptual process. Hence, Śāntarakṣita uses extensively the concept of negation to explain *apoha* and his theory marks an imperative stage in the evolution of *apoha* theory.

### Notes and References

1. *TS*, k. 1097.
2. Synonyms are adjuncts, locus, referent, receptacle, basis, substratum, *upādhi*.
3. *TS*, k. 867.
4. *Ibid.*, k. 868.
5. *Ibid.*, k. 869. That is, we use words propelled by our own *vāsanā* which exist in individual consciousness.
6. *Ibid.*, k. 870.
7. *Ibid.*, k. 871.
8. *Ibid.*, k. 872.
9. *Ibid.*, k. 873. That is, because of the non-eternal nature of the object and because of the infinity of the individual, convention can not be established with reference to the specific individuality.
10. *Ibid.*, k. 874.
11. *Ibid.*, k. 875.
12. *Ibid.*, k. 876.
13. *Ibid.*, k. 877.
14. *Ibid.*, k. 878.
15. *Ibid.*, k. 879.
16. *Ibid.*, k. 880. What is meant is as follows: The knowledge that is generated by form (color) does not show up or express the taste; hence the taste is not the object of cognition. In the same manner *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is the object of cognition in which *svalakṣaṇa* does not appear hence *svalakṣaṇa* can't be the denotation of words. Comparison

or *Upamāṇa* is made only in order to show the difference of cognition between the two.

17. *Nyāyasūtra*, II. II. 63.
18. *TS*, *kk*. 881-884.
19. 'Form of cognition' means when the cognition is colored by the hollow gram (picture or image) of the ontological object.
20. Moreover, the same position is also favored by grammarians, according to them the word and meaning both are mental but because of our habit we are force to relate the meaning with the external object.
21. *TS*, *k*. 885.
22. *Ibid.*, *k*. 886/*VP*, II. *k*. 119.
23. *Ibid.*, *k*. 887/*Ibid.*, II. *k*. 119.
24. *Ibid.*, *k*. 893.
25. *Ibid.*, *k*. 894. That is, all our inter social communication through the medium of words would become fruitless. For we can no longer make a distinction between the denotations of different words. Therefore, 'to be' should be something which has determinate form, and then only differentiation is possible.
26. *Ibid.*, *kk*. 895-896.
27. *Ibid.*, *k*. 888a/*VP*, II. *k*. 126a.
28. *Ibid.*, *k*. 897.
29. *Ibid.*, *k*. 888b/*VP*, II. *k*. 126b. This can be understood by the following examples, like in 'dark complexion', we never cognized the combination/relation between the different components in it but only an aggregate of colors, which gives an impression of dark color. Similarly in the 'whirling fire-band', in reality there is no circle but still we

perceive it, therefore, it is an unreal relationship. It may be noted that these theorist like the Vedantin do not admit such as inherence (*samavāya*) as having a separate existence beyond that of the relata between which that relation is supposed to subsist.

30. Real substance i.e., real at empirical level, because real at ultimate level is only Brahmana.
31. *TS, k. 889/VP, II.k. 127a.*
32. *Ibid., k. 898.*
33. *Ibid., k. 890/VP, II.k. 127b.* This view is also shared by Yoga darshan.
34. *TS, kk. 899-900.*
35. *Ibid., k. 891/VP, II.k. 132.* Moreover, there is also a point of difference between this theory and the theory which holds coalescence to be the import of word, according to the former, it is due to error that the idea is apprehended as something external whereas, according to the latter, it is not due to an error, but because of the relation of identity (*adhyāsa*) there is an unification of word and objective fact, this unification, coalescence is the import of word.
36. *TS, k. 901.*
37. *Ibid., k. 892/VP, II. kk.143-152.*
38. *Ibid., k. 902.*
39. *Ibid., k. 903.*
40. *Ibid., k. 904.*
41. *Ibid., k. 905.*
42. *Ibid., k. 906.*
43. *Ibid., k. 908.*
44. *Ibid., k. 907.*

45. Ibid., k. 909.
46. Ibid., k. 1003.
47. Ibid., k. 1004. For him, elimination and negation are equivalent and even synonymous.
48. A negation does not need to negate an existing object. A negation negates an object of negation, which does not need to exist, as the case of the absence of the son of a barren woman.
49. *TS*, k. 1010.
50. The ignorance of this type of negation lies behind opponent's critique.
51. *TS*, k. 1009.
52. Ibid., k. 1009.
53. For detail, see Dreyfus (1997), p. 237.
54. *TS*, Ch. *Sāmānyaparīkṣā*, k. 723.
55. *TS*, *kk*. 1005-1006.
56. It is the common illusion of human beings to identify the unique particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) with the generalized thought image.
57. *TS*, *kk*. 1007-1008.
58. Ibid., k. 1011. Concept or idea, mental construct is constructed in the mind of the speaker (*śrotā*) and the reflection of that constructed concept is produced in the mind of the listener.
59. Ibid., k. 1012.
60. The idea which is created by the *vāsanās* embedded in the mind is the primary meaning of the word, which though reflected as an object outside due to illusion, is not ontologically real.
61. *TS*, *kk*. 1013-1015.

62. He is chiefly concerned with the psychological fact that the image of an object appears immediately in the mind of the man who hears a word.

For detail, see Hattori, '*Apoha*', p. 68.

63. For detail, see Dreyfus (1997), pp. 239-243.