

Conclusion

Buddhist theory of meaning has acquired a very conspicuous position in the whole intellectual discussion of language and meaning. The theory has been in constant debate in the tradition for its unique theoretical position. The various aspects of this theory have been studied and examined in the previous chapters. Now, we are at the end of our journey and it will not be without profit if we cast a glance over the ground that we have covered in the preceding pages. The examination of the problem of the import of word (i.e., what does a word signify?), that we undertook to discuss in these pages, has given us a valuable solution in the form of a doctrine of ‘*Apohavāda*’ and also as to why the problem was found insoluble by many competent thinkers who had to improvise novel methods to achieve what turned out to be impossible. We may now recapitulate the results of our inquire. We would only state the general conclusion of each chapter without repeating the arguments in the following manner:

The Second chapter of this work mainly deals with the three marks of reality, namely: *Anityatā* (impermanence or transiency), *anātman* (no-self or non-substantiality) and *duḥkha* (suffering or unsatisfactoriness). It has been shown that all these three characteristics are interlinked and interdependent. Moreover realization of these three marks leads to liberation. And finally it is concluded that the nature of reality is that of

continuous becoming which means it is dynamic. This fluxional aspect of reality is equated to impermanence, which with regard to phenomenality at least denotes non-substantiality.

The third chapter discusses the two sided principle of *Pratītyasamutpāda* (the first side of which is the causal principle that literally states that every phenomenon is dependently arisen and the second side is the semantic principle that the very meaning of the term/concept is constituted by its place in a web of other concepts and beliefs.) in order to abandoned the search for ultimate objectivity of reality i.e., the erroneous search for the permanent metaphysical principle like self in that that inherently is impermanent and dependently arising. And finally, the chapter concludes by saying that in reality all things exist in a constant flow or flux. Each and every component part comes into being due to the break up or disintegration of other component parts; and each of these parts does not have its own essence and arises and passes away one after the other in an unending succession, without absolute certainty or stability. This flows of course because all of the component parts have a connected and interdependent causal relationship and because each component has no essence of its own and is, therefore, in constant flux. All of this goes in accordance with nature and depends upon the relationship of combined and dependent effects; there are no other forces coming into play dependent on a creator or mysterious power. And one, who realizes this truth, attains Enlightenment.

The Fourth chapter seeks to explore the short and relatively simple treatise of Dignāga's Phenomenalism called '*Ālambanaparīkṣā*'. According to which, we cannot directly know the external world and it is possible for

us to have experiences even in the absence of external stimuli, as there is a discrepancy between what we see and what is given. It demystifies the false presumption that Dignāga's idealistic position is well established by his categorical refutation of the external world in the *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, where the term 'ā*lambana*' is translated as 'external object' and the work is taken to refute the external world. But, it has been shown that, the treatment of *ālambana*, if carefully analyzed, relates to the object in the sense of the object of consciousness (*vijñānā*lambana**) not that of the object of the senses (*indriya-*viṣaya**, unique particulars=*svalakṣaṇa*). So, Dignāga criticized *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* concept of *ālambana* in *Ālambanaparīkṣā* as being external and not the existence of external reality. According to realist, we can directly perceive the external reality and it exists independent of perceiving mind. So, according to them object is external therefore its immediate source is also external, which is criticized by Dignāga as mentioned above. Thus, this treatise is commenced in order to refute the external objectivity and to establish the internal subjectivity. Moreover, it has been concluded that once we understand this difference of *ālambana* (internal-external) then we can understand the difference of the concept of reality, according to Buddhist and realist. Realist gives explanation at ontological level, whereas according to Buddhist there is no need of externality or ontological commitment, even without it we can have explanation.

The Fifth chapter of this work, examined in detail the two diametrically opposed views regarding 'the nature of reality: given or constructed, i.e., realism versus idealism. So, the question which is mainly highlighted in this chapter was: 'What exactly is it that we are immediately

aware of in our perception? That is, what is given in perception? (What can we know?)'. It has been shown that the whole controversy between the realist and the Buddhist nominalist was a clash between two radically opposed metaphysical standpoints. All their disputes over logical and epistemological issues are traceable to their respective metaphysical presuppositions. The metaphysical assumption underlying the realist's position is the conception of the real as determinately knowable and expressible. Thus, universals are not fictions of thought but objective features existing in the extra mental world. The realist, therefore, sees no need of distinguishing between the objects of direct and indirect knowledge. There are different ways of knowing one and the same kind of reality. The assumption underlying the Buddhist position, on the other hand, is the conception of the real as the unique particular of causal efficiency. Thus, in reality, there is neither recurrence nor similarity. The non-recurring, absolutely dissimilar particulars are the objects given in pure perception. The Buddhist accordingly defines perception as an apprehension free from thought constructions. This implies that universals and resemblances are not given facts but fictions of thought projected on the extra mental reality. Hence, the need for the dichotomy of the objects of direct and indirect knowledge arises. The former is real and the later is thought construction. Thus, it is evident that we habitually and incessantly misinterpret our own experience, due to lack of insight into the conditions of experience. Moreover, realist gives explanation at ontological level, whereas according to Buddhist there is no need of externality or ontological commitment, even without it we can have explanation. And, finally in this chapter it is concluded that the Buddhists are not interested in disproving or proving as

to what reality is or not as much they are in disclosing that reality per se is not amenable to linguistic discourse or conceptualization. They have recognized the limits of human knowledge and so accordingly came to the conclusion that conceptual knowledge does not exactly depict as to what reality is in itself.

In the Sixth chapter it has been shown in a comparative manner, the historical development of the notion of perception in both the traditions – early and later schools of Buddhism as well as the historical influence, interrelation, and inheritance from the Ābhidharmika tradition into Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda tradition. And in support of above, this chapter also probed into the Dignāga's theory of perception as presented in his *Pramāṇasamuccaya* text. This chapter also shows the sternly criticism against this doctrine, among which the most important one was: How to bridge the gap between the real perceptual and the constructed conceptual? And finally, concluded that Dignāga made mistakes (i.e., tries to win the war by losing a battle) and in order to make his theory acceptable, Dharmakīrti corrected them (i.e., Dignāga's work attained its final purpose only in Dharmakīrti tradition).

The Seventh chapter undertakes a full length study of Dharmakīrti's tradition (as presented in his *Pramāṇavarttika*) as well as highlighted the Dharmakīrti's improvement upon Dignāga's work. This chapter also elucidates in detail, Dharmakīrti's solution to coordinate perception and conception, despite the limitation of sense-perception, through his concept of 'Arthakriyākāritva'. Moreover, it has been shown that in his tradition, the concept of *arthakriyā* is being used in two senses/aspects, namely: Ontological sense (causal efficiency) and epistemological sense (useful

action). Because, this chapter has drawn our attention to the fact that, an account of the validity of cognition requires a normative element, which perception cannot provide. It also requires a relation with reality so that normative concepts can be connected with the real. Conception alone cannot provide such a link. Hence, Dharmakīrti's only solution is to coordinate the two with the help of the concept of *arthakriyā*.

The Eighth chapter highlighted the ongoing debate between language and reality in Indian philosophy and critically examined two diametrically opposed outlooks regarding the relation between language and reality, i.e., (i) cognition is followed by language and (ii) cognition is possible without language. So, the fundamental question dealt in this chapter was: How does language function? In this sense, various theories of meaning in western as well as in Indian philosophy form a complex array and each of them are in tune to their metaphysical commitments. And at the end, the chapter summarized the Buddhist solution as to how to get rid of unwanted crowding of ontological commitments through his unique device of double negation theory '*Apohavāda*', which denies any corresponding relation between language and reality. And finally, concluded by saying that almost each philosophical system has something to articulate on language as per the basic framework of their philosophical system adding thereby to the richness of the Indian philosophy of language.

The last four chapters (i.e., 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th) are very imperative to this work. They devote themselves to the study of the Buddhist theory of meaning on the basis of primary source materials, like *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, *Pramāṇavārttika*, *Tattvasaṃgraha* and *Apohasiddhi*. It demystifies many false assumptions associated with the theory. Both the

related to that of the opponents and exponents have been presented. It has been argued there that this theory was not changed under the constant attack from the realist. Later scholars who reinterpreted the theory in the light of opponent's criticism were also consistent with the whole system. Thus, this theory is presented in three distinguishable stages. The first stage of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti emphasizes the negative aspect of the meaning of words. A word expresses its meaning only through the negation of the opposite meaning. The 'negation of the opposite' is the concept constructed by thought and exhausted in that negation. Moreover, this chapter (i.e., 9th) has drawn our attention to the fact that Dignāga himself places the emphasis mostly on the logical aspect of *apoha*. This is reflected in his existence to connect his *apoha* theory to the analysis of inference. In using the notion of elimination, Dignāga always insists on the inferential model. Whereas, Dharmakīrti emphasizes a different aspect of *apoha* theory, namely: its Epistemological dimension. That is, insists on the importance of concepts as mental phenomena whose objects are the fictional universals to which thought and language relate. The second stage of Śāntarakṣita continues with the same mentalist line of thought, but in the process, comes to modify the theory quite considerably. Śāntarakṣita's attempt is also a response to Kumāriḷa's criticisms, an attempt to vindicate Dignāga's theory (as presented in chapter 10th). But, in the process, Śāntarakṣita further transforms the concept of elimination by including the concept/mental event in it. The conceptual elimination is not just the objective support of necessarily conceptual eliminations, as it is for Dharmakīrti, but becomes an actual elimination. That is, a word only generates a conceptual image in the mind of the subject and this conceptual image is hypostatized as an external

fact due to illusion. Even though the conceptual cognitions are illusory, it leads to successful activity (as presented in chapter 11th). Hence, it has been shown that Śāntarakṣita presented elimination from psychological point of view i.e., 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. And, the third stage of Ratnakīrti emphasizes the simultaneous apprehension of positive and negative meaning (presented in chapter 11th). It has been shown that they reject Śāntarakṣita's theory of direct and indirect meanings apprehended successively. Such a succession, he maintain, is not psychologically felt. And finally, conclude the chapter by asserting that, Ratnakīrti through his reinterpreted theory of *apoha* established the master's original ideas as sound and valid.

Thus, finally it is evident that the three stages in which the Buddhist theory of import of words is presented differ only in their emphasis concerning the positive and negative significations of words. Essentially all of them maintain that words signify concepts or thought construction and not the real entity and they do so by the exclusion of the opposite. The fact of the matter is that both the speaker and the hearer apprehended in fact and reality a mental image, a subjective content and not any objective fact, but the speaker thinks that he presents an objective fact to the hearer and the hearer too is deluded in to thinking that the presented meaning is not a mental image, but an objective verity. The speaker and the hearer are both laboring under a common delusion like two ophthalmic patients who see two moons and communicate their experience to each other. So, the connotation of words is but a subjective idea, a mental image, which however, is hypostatized as an objective reality existing in its own right

independently of the thinking mind. And as this mental image is found to have destructive character of its own which marks it out from other such mental representations and thus to contain a negative implication, we characterized it by a negative expression, i.e., negation of another (*anyāpoha*). Thus, the function of a word is to exclude that to which the word does not apply. i.e., cow= not non-cow. This view is known as ‘*Apohavāda*’, which denies any corresponding relation between language and ultimate reality or universal as a reality and language.