

**THE CONCEPT OF *SĀMĀNYALAKṢĀNA PRATYĀSATTI*
IN *NAVYA NYĀYA****
INDRANI CHOUDHURY

The present paper deals with the concept of *sāmānyalakṣāna* as a super-normal means of knowing with special reference to Navya Nyaya. It is one among the three types of super-normal connection technically called *pratyāsatti* or *alaukika sannikarṣa*. The term *sāmānyalakṣāna* may be explained as something whose essential character is universal or *sāmānya*. In other words, it is a kind of connection, which is in the form of universal (*sāmānya*). When our eyes are conjoined with smoke, we acquire the cognition of smoke in which the chief qualifier (*prakāra*) is smokiness (*dhūmatva*). By virtue of being a qualified cognition (*jñāna viśiṣṭa*) the smoke which is a qualificand (*viśeṣya*) is having its chief qualifier (*prakāra*) i.e. smokiness. Through this universal smokiness (*dhūmatva*) which serves here as a supernormal contact, the cognition of all smokes is attained. The contact of our sense organ with the object is normal (*laukika*). The universal i.e. *dhūmatva* which has become a qualifier to the knowledge of the object i.e. *dhūma* which is a qualificand serves as the supernormal connection called *sāmānyalakṣāna* (*dhūmatvam pratyāsatti*). Due to the acceptance of such *pratyāsatti* the problem of induction, which arises in connection with inference, can easily be solved. This provides certainty about the future prediction that all smokes existing in different space (*deśāntarīya*) and time (*kālāntarīya*) will be associated with fire. In other words, though we have not been presented with all smoky things, we are in a position to assert a true judgement about that class. Since whatever inference provides us is grounded on relation between two universals-smokiness and fireness. The Naiyayikas claim that we see the newly observed instances of a smoky thing as possessing fire, though the basis of our perception lies in the previously ascertained inference about the universals.

In this context the term ‘*lakṣāna*’ means ‘*svarūpa*’ or nature. The connection in which universal becomes the nature of the object is called *sāmānyalakṣāna*.¹ If this definition is admitted, each and every person would have cognition of all smokes through the connection of smokiness which is eternal and remains through inherence (*samavāya*) in all smokes. From smokiness we can get the knowledge of all smokes, had it been taken as a form of our cognition. In the practical life it does not always

happen due to fact that one attains a particular knowledge of an object from a particular universal. In fact, there is an object i.e., smoke connected with our sense-organ which is taken as a *viśeṣya* or qualificand and there is universal ‘smokeness’ as a qualifier. Keeping this thing in view the Navya Naiyayikas have proposed a different type of definition of the same which runs as follows. The word ‘*sāmānyalakṣaṇa sannikarṣa*’ means the universal becoming a qualifier of a cognition where the object connected with sense-organ becomes a qualificand (*indriya-sambaddha-viśeṣyaka-jñānaprakāribhūta*)². In the context of knowledge of a particular smoke the smoke has become a qualificand connected with sense-organ. In such smoke the universal ‘smokeness’ inheres as a qualifier (*prakāribhūta*). In fact, ‘smokeness’ is to be known as a qualifier and ‘smoke’ as a qualificand in a cognition which is taken as a qualified cognition (*viśiṣṭa-jñāna*). All individual manifestations of smoke existing in past, present and future can be perceived with the help of super-normal connection through smokeness existing in a particular smoke.³ Without the acceptance of this type of *sannikarṣa* the doubt regarding the invariable connection with fire which is beyond the reach of sense-organs cannot be explained. When a particular smoke, a particular fire and their co-existence are known, the corresponding universals of them like smokeness and fireness are known simultaneously. Through the universals all individuals having these universals become the object of knowledge.⁴

When someone is going to ascertain *vyāpti* between smoke and fire, he might have doubt in the following form: ‘Whether all cases of smoke are cases of fire’. This doubt does not arise at all in the observed case of *vyāpti*. But it may arise concerning all cases of smoke and fire existing in different place and time that are beyond the range of sense-organ.⁵ Any type of doubt presupposes the knowledge of the object. Hence in order to justify doubt in the previous form (i.e., whether all cases of smoke are cases of fire), the prior knowledge of all cases of smoke is essential. This is possible through universal i.e., smokeness in this case. This is another need for admitting *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* as a form of connection, which ultimately assists in ascertaining *vyāpti*.

From the above standpoint of the Navya Naiyayikas one could raise the following questions. First, the case mentioned by the Navya Naiyayikas may be

justified with the help of an ordinary contact called *samyukta-samavāya* (conjoined inherence) in which ‘smokeness’ in smoke is apprehended directly. What is the utility of admitting *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* as a super-normal connection? In reply, the Navya Nyaiyayikas may defend themselves by pointing out the fact that when a particular smoke is known through smokeness both are connected with our sense-organs. But in the case of knowing smoke remaining in different time and space as having smokeness is not connected with our sense-organs. Hence, through the universals only the relation between smoke and fire existing in different time and space which is not in proximity of the sense-organs can easily be known, because any type of ordinary perception fails to reveal such truth.

Secondly, the Buddhists do not believe in universal which is eternal and inhered with many (*nityatve sati aneka-samavetatva*). The above-mentioned case of *vyāpti* may easily be explained with the help the rule of cause-effect relation technically called *tadutpatti*. A relation of invariable concomitance can be established between smoke and fire remaining in different space and time with the help of causality, but not through universal. The trust on causality may empower us to tell that if smoke as an effect remains in future fire as cause also will remain without taking help of the universal. In reply, the Navya Naiyayikas might argue that though ‘smoke’ has been taken as an effect caused by fire, all smokes and fires in the womb of future can be known through universal ‘smokeness’ and ‘fireness’ only, but not through causeness and effectness. It should also be kept in mind that the smokeness is to be taken as universal or *sāmānya* binding all individuals of the same class being eternal, but the properties called causeness (*kāraṇatā*) or effectness (*kāryatā*) are limiting adjuncts (*upādhi-s*) and hence they, being acquired properties, can bind others of the same class temporarily but not eternally (*nityatayā*). For this reason for attaining a connection between two things remaining in different space and time these *upādhi-s* are inadequate.

Lastly, in the context cited earlier ‘smoke’ (*dhūma*) may have at least three limiting adjuncts (*avachchedaka-s*)-‘smokeness’ (*dhūmatva*), ‘pervadedness’ (*vyāpyatva*) and ‘effectness’ (*kāryatva*). Among these only smoke limited by smokeness (*dhūmatvāvachhinna dhūma*) may be the super-normal connector of apprehending all cases of smoke remaining in different space and time due to its

eternal character , but other limiters, being inherited properties and non-eternal in character can bind only non-eternal things, i.e., smokes limited by the property of effectness (*kāryatāvachhedakāvachhina kārya* i.e., *dhūma*). If smoke remains as a *kārya* or effect then effectness may be a connector of all smokes having property of effectness, which is not taken as smoke-in-general (*dhūmasāmānya*) and hence universal or *sāmānya* is essential for having all smokes as a super-normal connection. For the Buddhists such problems do not arise due to the fact that the very notion of inference in Buddhism is completely different from that of the Naiyayikas. To them any determinate cognition which is associated with mental ascriptions or description called *kalpanā* is inference, which is determinate perception (*savikalpaka pratyakṣa*) in Nyaya. Hence the concept of universal (*sāmānya*) and having connection with all individuals remaining different space and time with this is not admitted by them. Under this circumstance the relation of identity (*tādātmya*) and causality (*tadutpatti*) may act as relation between smoke and fire, which is true in the phenomenon level (*samvṛti-sat*), but not ultimately (*paramārtha-sat*)⁶. But the Navya Naiyayikas, being realists, do not believe in such dichotomy and hence for them *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is needed as a form super-normal connection (*alaukika sannikarṣa* or *pratyāsatti*).

References:

1. “*Sāmānyam lakṣaṇam yasya ityarthah*” *Siddhāntamuktāvalī* on verse-63.
2. *Ibid.*
3. “*Tatra dhūmatvena sannikarṣeṇa dhūmā ityevam rūpam sakaladhūmaviṣayakam jñānam jāyate.*” *Ibid.*
4. “*Vyāptigrahaśca sāmānyalakṣaṇa-pratyāsattyā sakaladhūmādi-viṣayakah.*” *Tattvacintāmaṇi* with *Māthūrī* (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa-prakarana*), edited by Kamakhyanath Tarkavagisha, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1962, p.200. Henceforth, *Tattvacintāmaṇi*.
5. “*Manmate tu sakaladhūmopasthitau kālāntarīya-deśāntarīya-dhūme vahnivyāpyyatva-sandehah sambhavati.*” *Siddhāntamuktāvalī* on Verse no.63
6. “*Prasiddhadhūme vahnisambandhāvagamāt kālāntarīya-deśāntarīya-dhūmasya mānābhāvenājñānāt. Sāmānyena tu sakaladhūmopasthitau dhūmāntare viśeṣādarśane samśayo yujyate.*” *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, p.200
7. Sayanamadhava: *Sarvadarśana-samgraha*, Bengali trs by Satyajyoti Chakraborty, Sahityasri, Kalikata, 1996, pp.16-31.
8. Raghunath Ghosh: *Relation as Real: A Critique of Dharmakirti*, Satguru, Delhi,2001, pp. 70-80.