

Synopsis of the points raised and discussed in

CHAPTER II

We shall now focus our attention on the controversy over the nature of perceptual and inferential knowledge Svalakṣaṇa and Sāmānyalakṣaṇa, and consider the following issues -

- A) Etymology of the term 'Svalakṣaṇa' the definition and elucidation of it. Svalakṣaṇa alone is reality and ground for it. Buddhist criterion of reality.
- B) Object of inference - universal (sāmānyalakṣaṇa), ground for discussing Sāmānyalakṣaṇa under chapter 'perception'.
- C) Definition of 'pratyakṣa'. Svalakṣaṇa denotes mere sensation which is real and cannot turn into 'savikalpaka' due to the acceptance of momentariness.

'sāmānyalakṣaṇa' denotes 'savikalpaka'. The conceptual elements like cowness etc. are superimposed (kalpanā) by mind, hence they are inferred.

- D) The ontological presupposition of the Buddhist and the Nyāya-Vaisesika theories of knowledge. The concepts of svalakṣaṇa and sāmānyalakṣaṇa are related to the theory of momentariness. If the Buddhists do not accept the theory of momentariness, the concepts of svalakṣaṇa and sāmānyalakṣaṇa could be inexplicable. Arguments for the doctrine of momentariness of the real.
- E) The acceptance of the theory of momentariness implies to the rejection of sāmānya or jāti.

SECTION A

In the previous chapter, we have seen that for the Buddhists, there are two sources of right knowledge - perception (pratyakṣa) and inference (anumāna). The object of the two sources of knowledge are svalakṣaṇas and sāmānyalakṣaṇas respectively. Right knowledge is that which has some purpose, some causal efficacy (arthakriyākāritva). The Buddhists hold the pragmatic theory of knowledge. Since perception and inference are two totally distinct sources of knowledge, the relative cognition are also totally distinct from each other. In order to have a clear understanding of these two terms (svalakṣaṇa and sāmānyalakṣaṇa) let us first explain these two terms thoroughly.

Svalakṣaṇa is a Buddhist concept which maps on both the domains of the theory of knowledge and ontology. The term 'svalakṣaṇa' literally means 'individual characteristic' and it has several meanings. Some of this may be noted in this connection. Svalakṣaṇa is a characteristic which is peculiar to a particular thing, as heat is a special characteristic of fire, or it may mean condition of existence independent of time and space. A thing's natural and independent characteristics are svalakṣaṇas, by denying which the truth of voidness, nairātmya is

established. Sāmānyalakṣaṇa has also more than one meaning. A characteristic common to all is a general characteristic, as is impermanence etc. (sarvam anittam) of all conditioned things. But the terms have accrued specialized meanings as well. In philosophical discourse, svalakṣaṇa is the object of perception when it is unsullied by determinations of thought (vikalpa). A Sāmānyalakṣaṇa is what is inferred with the aid of common features pertaining to more than one object.

Svalakṣaṇa as a point instant, discrete particular characterizes the ontology of the Buddhist thought, and the awareness of that point instant marks the theory of knowledge. The ontological presupposition of the Buddhists is that only the point instant, svalakṣaṇas are real, and sāmānyalakṣaṇa is the kalpanā imposed upon svalakṣaṇa and so sāmānyalakṣaṇa is not real. Perception or pratyakṣa gives us the awareness of svalakṣaṇa. Thus it covers the domain of the theory of knowledge as well. The main thesis of the Buddhists which underlie all their philosophical views is that all existence is momentary, it is made up of discrete particulars in various conglomerations. The discrete particulars which make up existence are 'point instants', ~~of~~ force or energy which are in constant flux. Arising (utpāda) and ceasing (nirodhā) are inherent in existence and the criterion for being real is the ability to have effects, that can be

admitted to be real which produces effects; that which does not produce effects could never be known to be real; for realities are known by their effects. Perception gives us the real knowledge of an object. Perception is defined as Kalpanāpodham abhrāntam; i.e. it is free from conceptual content and non-erroneous. Perception is indeterminate (nirvikalpaka). For the Buddhists, 'determinate perception' is a contradictory term; it is nothing but inference which gives us the conceptual content of an object. From the later Buddhistic philosophical point of view, the expression 'determinate perception' should be considered a logically uneasy term, even contradictory. Because as has already been said, all determinations are conceptual, involving thought and inference. Perception qua bare awareness of a bare particular is logically indeterminate. Its object is what it is and not another thing. This conceptual content presents the object as associated with vague verbal expressions and exists only in the subjective form, appears in the mind of the infant also, by virtue of which in their later life they become capable of comprehending the relevant conventions. This existence of conceptual content is vouched for by perception and is proved by inference from its effect in the shape of verbal usage. The perceptual object (svalakṣana) must be devoid of all sorts of conceptual contents. Awareness of svalakṣana

could then be a kind of pure sensation; it is a bare particular, a piece of cognition, by which the object is revealed only in its simple and pure nature, bare of all attitudes and associations. Therefore, svalakṣaṇa strictly corresponds to pure sensation alone. It is an entity or an essence which is unique, which is shared by nothing else, which is the thing in itself. This spans utmost a single moment (kṣaṇa), it has no extension in space, no duration in time, it is similar to nothing, it is unique. It is transcendent reality, since it cannot be realized in a definite representation. Only the generalities and similarities, relations, co-ordinations are cognized by a synthesis of moments. It is the absolute reality, 'thing-in-itself', which underlies every efficient empirical reality. Dharmakīrti evidently uses the term svalakṣaṇa in more than one sense. In the Sarvādarsanasamgraha it is stated that (a) svalakṣaṇa is absolutely indefinite, not even differentiated into subject and object, it is then grāhya-grāhaka kalpanā apodha - it is the Absolute of the Yogācāra the Śūnyatā in its idealistic conception. Svalakṣaṇa also means (b) the extreme concrete and the particular, the pure ālambana, existence localized in time and space (kṣaṇa), the limit of all mental constructions (nāma-jātyā-dī -kalpanā-apodha but not grāhya-grāhaka-kalpanā-apodha), the point instant of efficiency capable of affecting our

sensibility (artha-kriyāsāmarthya); it then already contains what Kant would have called the a-priori forms of our sensibility, the possibility of co-ordination (sārupya). This meaning of svalakṣaṇa is found in Nyāyabindutikātippani.

As has already been pointed out in the previous chapter that this reality or svalakṣaṇa is unutterable. It can only be defined ostensively, therefore it is inexpressible; since anything that is expressed involves certain relations, and relations are always the object of conceptual content. "Conceptual content is idea associated with verbal expression; but it is not (perception) regarded as the basis of verbal expression"¹. Like the sensation of a young child or that of the dumb, such a piece of cognition can never be verbally communicated, since any kind of verbal expression (abhilāpa) would necessarily involve an element of conceptual content. A conception and a name thus always refer to many moments; whereas pure reality or svalakṣaṇa refers only to a single moment. Hence it is unutterable. Therefore, the awareness of svalakṣaṇa can perhaps be a kind of mystical silence because it can in no way be expressed by our worldly language. It can only be termed as a kind of recognition that a presence is being felt out there.

Svalakṣaṇa has the special characteristic of vivid image of an object, this has reference to kṣāṇikavāda.

Since according to kṣāṇikavāda, we have at every moment 'another' object. One and the same real object cannot produce a vivid image in one case and a vague one in another case, which would then be a contradiction. Therefore, according to the proximity or remoteness of an object, perception of it varies. This is the peculiar characteristic of an object of perception and this characteristic proves the object to be absolutely real (paramārtha sat), as it shows that it possesses some practical efficiency, and this characteristic also shows that perception is a source of valid knowledge for it exactly corresponds to the object perceived. Thus svalakṣana alone is efficient, the essence of reality is just only its capacity to be efficient.

Thus from the considerations made above on the notion of svalakṣana we can understand what exactly svalakṣana means. It is the point instant in the stream of existence, pure existence, the ultimate reality paramārtha sat, it imparts vividness to the image, it is unutterable i.e. inexpressible.

This term 'svalakṣana' is not an isolated term; but has some counterparts in the Western world also. We may now take the case of Kant's noumena and compare his view about the nature of reality with that of the Buddhist theory of reality.

Kant has proposed the notion of a thing-in itself, the noumenon. The noumenon of Kant and svalakṣaṇas of the Buddhists have a great many resembling features. Both are ungraspable by the understanding. Kant only helps us to reveal the apparent nature of reality, the phenomenon. In the case of the Buddhists also, by kalpanā (or the content of the understanding i.e. the conceptual content) one is able to know the reality, not the paramārtha sat but only the samvṛti or empirical reality. But whereas in the case of the Buddhists, the svalakṣaṇa is known through perception, therefore it cannot be said to be unknown and unknowable like the Kantian conception of noumenon. Kant has never said that noumenon can be known through intuition. But the word noumenon can be interpreted in this way. 'Appearances, in so far as they are thought as objects according to the unity of the categories, are called phenomena. But if the existence of things are assumed which are simply objects of the understanding and which at the same time can be given as objects to intuition, although not to sense but to intellectual intuition, things of this kind would be called noumena'². But although the word noumena can be used in this way, the notion that human beings enjoy or can enjoy intellectual intuition of noumena has not been referred to by Kant. For him at least all intuition is sense intuition. The concept of noumenon is indispensable, according to Kant; for it is bound up with his whole

theory of experience. The idea of things conforming to the a-priori condition of experience involves the idea of the thing-in-itself. According to Kant, the understanding limits sensibility by giving the name noumena to things considered in themselves and not as phenomena. But it at the same time sets limit to itself, that is, of not knowing them by means of any categories and of thinking them simply as an unknown something. We can think of noumena as existing, but the application of the categories beyond their proper range of application does not yield knowledge. The existence of noumena thus remains problematical; and the idea of noumena or thing-in-itself becomes a limiting concept. Thus it can be pointed out that the similarity which we try to draw between the svalakṣaṇa of the Buddhists and the Kantian notion of noumena may not always be justified.

SECTION B

Dinnāga in his Paramāṇasamuccaya had admitted only two sources of valid knowledge-perception and inference i.e. pratyakṣa and anumāna. These two sources of knowledge have two corresponding sorts of cognitions - svalakṣaṇa and sāmānyalakṣaṇa. But it has already been pointed out in the earlier section that Nāgārjuna in his

Upāyahṛdayam has stated categorically that pramanas are of four types - pratyaksa, anumāna, upamāna and āgama. But here we are mainly concerned with Dinnāga's theory of knowledge, Santaraksita in his Tattvasamgraha also admitted perception and inference as the two valid sources of knowledge.

The point for the Buddhists is to argue that in cognizing X as a cow, one does not cognize cowness along with X-ness. The X characterized as it is by X-ness (Svalaksana) is one thing and the very X characterized by cowness is another thing. Cowness is a universal essence, an instance of jāti-kalpanā as well as nāma kalpanā. To say 'X is a cow' is a predication of thought, which obscures the initial bareness of the perceptual content of X as X. The Naiyāyikas, on the other hand, argue that if X is a cow, then the 'cowness' of X is perceived along with perceiving X, because X cannot subsist without 'cowness'; for a dravya without a guṇa is an impossibility; nor is the subsistence of guṇa without a substratum or dravya is thinkable. But the Buddhist might argue that impossibility of thinking something does not imply the impossibility of being. And this is precisely the point at issue.

The world can be known or experienced in two ways - either through a set of presuppositions or without any

presuppositions. To experience the world as the things are, without any presuppositions is to have the perceptions of svalakṣaṇa. This term 'svalakṣaṇa' has been dealt with in the previous section. The knowledge of svalakṣaṇa is purely perceptual. It is known through samyagdr̥sti, there is no metaphysical presupposition in it. It is a kind of perception which is not loaded by any theory. Ordinary people may not see the truth behind this statement. They cannot perceive anything without a dravya or a gūṇa, for example, X as a cow and not as bare X. But if a person has 'samyagdr̥sti' right view point, he can know that perceptual objects are only svalakṣaṇas. Thus in astāṅgika-mārga Buddha has given importance to these mārgas and samyagdr̥sti has a direct correlation with the concept of svalakṣaṇa. When an object is known to be real through perception it is also known at the same time that the object is different from other objects that A is not not - A (apohavāda). It also means that knowledge of cow is known from the awareness of non cow.

Let us now explain the term sāmānyalakṣaṇa. Though sāmānyalakṣaṇa is the object of inference, yet Dharmakīrti has discussed this under the chapter perception. The reason seems to be that when perception cognizes an object as svalakṣaṇa, it also reveals the same as distinct from sāmānyalakṣaṇa and thus the two classes of objects are established.

The objects of knowledge (prameya) which are different from the objects possessing the nature of the unique particular are the universal or sāmānya. In other words, the universal is an object, irrespective of the proximity or non-proximity of which, the knowledge remains the same. It has already been stated that this universal essence or the conceptual content has been termed by the Buddhists as Kalpanā. An imagined fire owes its existence to imagination and it is imagination that makes it near or remote. When it is imagined, may it be as near or as remote, there is no different impression on the mind in regard of vividness. Therefore, it is different from svalakṣaṇa. The universal character of something is that the essence belongs equally to an indifferent number of reality. Indeed, the fire existing in imagination refers equally to every possible fires. Therefore, it represents the universal essence.

Different views about the reality of the universals can be found in philosophy - Realism, Conceptualism, Nominalism etc. Of these, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika upheld the theory of 'realism' in the sense that universals are real, i.e. these have their separate external reality apart from the particulars in which they reside; whereas the Buddhists propound the Nominalistic view of the universals i.e. the universals are nothing but the names, the fictions of our understanding, the kalpanā. Only the

particulars are real for them. Nominalism consists specially in the refusal to recognize classes; that abstract entities do not exist, that whatever exists must be construed as an individual. The Buddhists view of nominalism is known as apohavāda, which consists in a kind of negative description of an object, e.g. if X is a cow, then it is not non-cow. The name 'cow' is only empirically real, not paramārtha-sat. It is a word, which has only conventional meaning, the meaning which is used according to its use. But sāmānyalakṣaṇa is not totally unreal, its basis lies in perception. It is only conceptualized particular. Nominalism follows from an empirical outlook. No universal is known by itself; all that is known is only the negative character of the universal. All the datum of perception is absolutely characterless, unspeakable and indefinable. These by their power of arthakriyākāritva, make possible all the determinable relations.

Therefore, universals are nothing but the names which have been imposed on the particular (real) objects according to its use. These have only practical value. It is a kind of 'language game'. Corresponding to these names, we cannot say that there are actual real objects.

According to the Buddhists, 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. Thus the word has its value in its use, in its function i.e. by its

existence, by being present.

According to the realists, what is apprehended by word and cognition is a real entity; hence, what words express by means of affirmation and denial is only the real state of things. But according to the Buddhists, there is nothing real that is expressed by words. A word has only the negative character of expressing something i.e. apoha. The things conceived by conventions is never met with in actual usage.

The svalakṣaṇa is the only reality and it only gives us the real jñāna, which is freedom from conceptualization. Svalakṣaṇa is inexpressible, since expression needs the use of words which are not real.

With regard to the Buddhists emphasis on the meaning of words in use, the conventional game being played, it may be worth-while to make some comparative remarks about some similarities as between the theory of language presupposed by the Buddhists and that held by Wittgenstein.

According to the Buddhism, the freedom from the conceptualism i.e. kalpanā can lead to the attainment of jñāna i.e. the true knowledge of reality or the svalakṣaṇa. Since svalakṣaṇa is the only reality and it only gives us the real jñāna, therefore it means the freedom from the

conceptualism. Despite significant divergences in presuppositions - especially in regard to our everyday cognizing of the world, and the range of application of the language analysis - Wittgenstein's philosophical method bears strong resemblances to that found in Buddhism. Therefore, this particular comparison would be a useful tool in understanding Buddhism.

Wittgenstein in that oft-quoted passage from the Tractatus tells us that, at a point, the philosopher must revert to 'silence'³. For Buddhism this silence is not the mere absence of verbiage, but a way of liberating language from its metaphysical uses to heuristic, pedagogical ones. He refuses to answer certain metaphysical questions and kept silence.

Secondly, Wittgenstein repeatedly pointed out in his 'Philosophical Investigations' that a word is not necessarily the name of a thing and that philosophic problems arise when one abstracts a word from its context - i.e. from the everyday workings of language - and tries to understand that word apart from its functional matrix. Buddhism also tells us that our words and concepts neither adequately explain nor describe reality. There are similarities and differences in just these two statements. Both would imply that the proper business of philosophy would be a criticism of language, which is what

in fact both do. But Wittgenstein maintains that language describes reality just fine - it works in our business of conducting life (pragmatic view). We get into difficulties only when we abstract words from this working language and try to do philosophy. So is the view of Buddhism.

Thirdly, in a very important sense, neither the Buddha (nor his followers) nor Wittgenstein could be considered 'philosophers' at all-if we take 'philosopher' to mean one who goes about developing philosophic systems. Rather, both are critics of philosophy; both would want to render philosophy an impossibility. Wittgenstein writes - "My aim is to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense"⁴. A statement which could serve as a very fine characterization of Nāgārjuna's prasāṅga methodology of refutation as well.

In order to have a clear view of language analysis of both Wittgenstein and Buddhism let us first explain Wittgenstein's view of language i.e. words and its meaning. According to Wittgenstein, words do not refer, that they do not have a 'meaning' or 'stand for' things. This is precisely the point made by some later Buddhists, especially Candrakīrti, in their encounters with Nyāya realism (bāhyārthavāda) which we find to be an analogue

to what Strawson calls 'logical atomism'⁵. The fundamental misconception about the way our language works is the belief that a word has a 'meaning', a reference that words 'stand for' things according to Wittgenstein.

One of the ways by which he analyzes how language works, is by imagining a very simple language indeed; that of a builder and his assistant who get along very well pointing and saying 'slab', 'pillar' and 'block' and specifying numbers⁶. This system of language, or 'language game' is offered as an alternative to our more common belief that we learn the word 'slab' by ostensive definition, by pointing to the 'meaning' of the word. What Wittgenstein is telling us is that when the builder says 'slab' he is not conveying information or 'communicating' with his assistant; rather he wants him to bring the slab. Therefore, the idea that the words have meanings and that language is the communication of these meanings is shown to be absurd. Therefore, here we see that the words are used to tell us to do something. Thus, according to Wittgenstein, the meaning of a word is its use in the language.

According to Buddha, language is an imperative, not a proposition. It is unencumbered from any referential models of language. That is, the truth or falsity of any given religious statement is not to be determined by any external criterion of truth and falsity, such as a

principle of verification, but by an existential analysis of the context or situation in which that language is expressed (contextually of a statement). The purpose of language, therefore, is to get us to do something.

Belief in some external, that is, non-contextual criterion for evaluating language, such as a correspondence theory of truth (Nyāya theory of truth) which would entail a referential model of language is just the mistaken type of assumption that leads us into philosophical dilemmas, e.g. the word 'time'. We all know what time is, but it is difficult to define it. The word 'time' is a technique we learn for quite a variety of purposes - lunch-time, time to sleep etc. Similarly there are other words, e.g. knowledge, being, object, I, name etc, which are difficult to define as a referential model of language. Therefore, what we do is to bring back words from their metaphysical to their everyday use.

Buddhism is also highly critical of the assumption that all words have meanings and refer to things. The case in point is anātmavāda. Ātmā or the modes of personality in past, present and future is nothing but merely names, expressions, turns of speech, designations in the common use of the world. It does not refer to any entity, and does not carry any 'meaning' beyond these everyday usages. Buddha does not, of course, like the cārvakās, merely negate the view of the ātmavādins and

claim that the self is identical with the body and does not exist beyond the body after death. Neither does he hold a sceptical position by refusing to affirm or deny any thesis about the self. The Buddha rather skilfully examines the language of talking about the self and finds that the mistake is grammatical; that learning to use the word 'I' does not entail an entity corresponding to it. Of course, the Buddha goes on to psychoanalyze the conditions given which one claims there to be an 'I' in terms of paticca-samuppada, and goes on to teach a therapy (magga) for quieting these psychoses. We find a sort of similarity between Buddha's way of analyzing the language of talking about 'I' with that of Wittgenstein.

Nāgasena explains to king Milinda with the help of the famous analogy of chariot (about the anātmavāda theory) wherein the term 'chariot' is found to be a convention for speaking about the functioning of certain parts, but not the name of an entity (essence). Therefore language is not necessarily referential, but it is useful. Wittgenstein wants to return a word from its metaphysical to its everyday use. Similarly, in the above instance, Nāgasena de-metaphysicalizes the term 'chariot' and shows that a convenient designation does not imply a metaphysical entity. One of the powers of the powers of an arhat is his grammatical skilfulness. Thus Buddha declares that all grief, woe, lamentation

and despair could be traced to a naively understood grammar of 'I'.

The type of position which Wittgenstein has been criticizing is called 'logical atomism' by Strawson and has as its counterpart in India the Nyaya school. Fundamentally, the Nyāya holds that, that which could be meaningfully asserted in terms of 'is' and 'is not' (asti and nāsti) alone is real, that which could not be so asserted is nonsense. According to them, the sickness of life (duḥkha) is due to a sick understanding of life, and this sickness could be remedied by appropriate, healthy, referential language. It is precisely against this school that later Buddhists, most notably Nāgārjuna and Dinnāga launch their most telling arguments. Just as Wittgenstein has pointed out that time cannot be separated from the characteristic of time, similarly Nāgārjuna in criticizing Nyāya theory has pointed out that space cannot be separated from the characteristic of space (ākāśalakṣaṇa). He then employs a temporal argument - if space is said to precede its characteristic, then we would be left with a characteristicless element - an impossibility according to Nyāya epistemology, since substance and attributes are always related to each other as samavāya sambandha. Similarly, if the characteristic precedes the element, then there would be no place for

the characteristic to reside - this point also contradicts the Nyāya tenet that 'so long as the properties exist, they can only exist as residing in their substance'⁷ and if the element and its characteristics are said to be simultaneous, then we are at a loss to explain from where the characteristic has come. What is behind this argument is the invitation for the Naiyāyikas to see that simply because one may speak about elements and characteristics does not give one the right to speak about them metaphysically. These concepts take on meaning only when used in counterposition to each other. The error of Nyāya is to attribute to each svabhāva i.e. being.

With the help of this argument, Nāgārjuna disproves all the attempts of the Naiyāyikas about the real entity of each word. Time cannot be spoken of in abstract i.e. in metaphysical rather than everyday language. Thus according to Buddha, the dukkha, suffering is not something abstract i.e. not theoretical, but it was lived suffering that is the point of the Buddhists. Dukkha, therefore, is not a proposition; it is an invitation to see clearly our human condition. To treat dukkha as propositional is to engage in worthless disputation. When the Buddha's invitational language about dukkha is taken as propositional, philosophic problems arise. Buddha, therefore, is a being free from suffering; and a being free from metaphysics.

In this way by analysing the language we can find that no entity corresponding to the word can be found in world. Language have meaning only according to its use. In recent time also, the stress has been made on the language of philosophy. Philosophy has its language entirely a different one than any branches of knowledge "Much of philosophical argument is concerned not so much with setting a philosophical dispute as with clarifying an insight"⁸. (Chatterjee Margaret - Languages of Philosophy). And this is done by means of language, which is generally influenced by one's motivation.

If that be the case, then one could say that the Buddhist argument for svalakṣaṇa and the Naiyāyikas case for sāmānyalakṣaṇa are motivationally different. Much of the controversy about the priority of these two notions may be said to arise from two different insights. It should be futile to look for the fact who refutes whom, because the case of refutation does not arise in this case at all. All that we should notice is how does the respective parties decide upon the issue; whether what one perceives is svalakṣaṇa or sāmānyalakṣaṇa and how far each of them consistent.

The Buddhist ontological position is expressed in terms of the triratna, viz. that the nature of existence is sorrowful (duhkha), that it is non-permanent (anitya),

and that it is devoid of any unchanging nature (anātma). The Brahmajālasūtra steers clear between the two extreme position of eternalists and non-eternalists (śasvatavāda and uchhedavāda). The samyagdṛṣṭi consisting non being caught in the net of Brahma i.e. the net concerning the speculations about the ultimate nature of things. The samannaphala sutra makes it clear that the human body is mind-made and everything by its nature is impermanent, subject to total destruction and so is consciousness bound up with the body and dependent on it. "In short, whatever things have an uprising these also must have a passing away". The Buddhist ontological position lies in the middle way. The Mahāparinibbana Suttanta brings home the idea of a vigilant and mindful virtuous life, based on an ontological views described above. Buddha's last words may be quoted from the Suttanta, "for all things dear and pleasing, there is change and separation ... that which is born, produced, conditioned is a thing of decay. Surely there does not exist here anything that does not dissolve away ... conditioned things are things of decay, with vigilance try to accomplish"⁹.

SECTION C

The concept of perception or pratyakṣa plays an important role in the Buddhist theory of knowledge. In the previous section we have seen how and why sāmānyalaksana can be discussed under the chapter perception. The importance of perception can be traced since early Buddhist literature. Buddha is reported to have said - "I am one of those who profess the basis of a religion after finding a final and ultimate insight in this life by gaining a higher knowledge personally of a doctrine among doctrines not traditionally heard of before"¹⁰. According to him knowledge is a matter of directly 'seeing' or intuiting ultimate reality, which is usually described by the word 'jñāna'. The 'knowing' and 'seeing' one (jānatā-passatā) is a characteristic description of the Buddha and it is usually said of what he claims to know that he both 'knows' and 'sees'. The central truths of Buddhism are 'seen'. One comprehends the noble truths and sees them. Even nirvāṇa is seen in a sense analogous to the seeing of a man born blind after a physician has treated him.

Considerations such as the above might make one naturally expect a strong empirical bias favoured in Buddhist theory of knowledge. The empirical basis of the

theory results in the view of the primacy of perception. As has already been stated, the Buddhist theory of knowledge acknowledges two pramānas or means of knowledge, of which the importance of pratyakṣa is crucial. It is on the basis of pratyakṣa, the Buddhist epistemologist expects to propose his metaphysical assumption concerning the world as composed of discrete particulars or svalakṣaṇa as they call it.

The object of pratyakṣa is svalakṣaṇa i.e. the ultimate point-instants or reality. Only samyagdr̥sti or right view can enable one to understand svalakṣaṇas. Thus through perception or pratyakṣa higher knowledge is attainable. But this pratyakṣa is quite other than reasoning of the discursive type and this mystic potency is quite incapable of verification in any empirical manner, since it does not last more than one moment and cannot be explained by means of words. Words have always some conceptual element (kalpanā) whereas pratyakṣa is defined as kalpanāpodham abhrāntam. The knowledge of svalakṣaṇa is to be had directly by 'seeing for oneself' and not indirectly by hearing it from some other sources (as in the Vedic tradition). This knowledge is to be had personally or individually and herein lies the importance of perception. But at the same time it is not incommunicable or subjective i.e. purely private experience. The Buddha emphasizes the fact that as Buddha himself has

experienced the truth, themselves and not by hearing from others.

According to the Buddhists, truth (paramārtha sat) and therefore knowledge is objective as telling us the nature of 'things-as-they-are. The knowledge of 'things-as-they-are' consists in 'knowing' what exists as existing and what does not exist as non-existing. The knowledge of the highest importance is knowledge of the fundamental truth.

The concept of svalakṣaṇa is a cognate of the concept of svabhāva or own nature - as it is translated by A.K.Warder in Indian Buddhism. Prof. Warder borrowed apparently from the Lokāyata system or the doctrine called svabhāvavada. If this is so, then svalakṣaṇa is the paramārthasat grasped through perception. The svalakṣaṇa is a reminder of the reality being pāramārthika, characterized by its own nature or svabhāva.

We may in passing, note in brief, the history of Buddhist epistemological views with reference to perception. Within the Buddhist's philosophical practice, it has been a long tradition to produce critique of Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika, and Nyāya doctrine. Beginning with Dinnāga, we have a critique of the universal (Sāmānya-parikṣā i.e. the critique of the real, objectively existing universal of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school). In another work called

Nyāya-Mukha, which is lost in the original but survives in Chinese translation, we are told that there are only two means of knowledge—perception and inference.

Vasubandhu also accepted this view of Dinnāga. In the Nyāya-Mukha it is said that perception is knowledge without imagining. This is explained as the knowledge (jñāna) without imagining (avikalpaka) not through the metaphor (upacāra) of dividing (bheda) by classification (a viśesana) distinguishing or distinction of words, (abhidhāyaka) or wording, naming, which happens in each of the senses with reference to objects (artha) visible objects etc.

On the other hand, inference is knowledge through middle term (hetu). It cognizes a subject as belonging to a class. The subject will belong to other classes also if other characteristics are selected. Whereas inference cognizes only the characteristics of classes, perception cognizes only the characteristic of the object itself, of the object in itself, not classified (which presupposes imagining), classes are imagined by the intellect. They do not exist objectively.

Dinnāga says that excepting these two i.e. objects in themselves (svalakṣaṇa) and classes (jāti or sāmānya) there is no other kinds of knowledge. Each of the two has its own separate means of being known and as against

the Naiyāyikas (who believe in the pramāna samplava i.e. the object of knowledge can be known by any of the means of knowledge), the Buddhists hold that these two means of knowledge are completely distinct and they cognize two entirely different things, which is known as pramāna -vyavasthā.

Perception relates to objective reality and cannot go further, because it cannot classify or even name its objects which would necessitate imagining. Real objects remain unclassifiable particulars. Inference is restricted to imagining (word and classification) and deals in classes having no objective reality, it cannot reach real object.

In his final work, called Pramānasamuccaya, Dinnāga has developed these doctrines further. There he states, that there are two and only two means of knowledge. The Pramānasamuccaya opens with a salutation to the Buddha as the personification of the means of knowledge. This idea is also present in the Nyāyabindutikā of Vinitadeva. In explaining this, Dinnāga says that the acquisition of what is knowable depends on the means of knowledge, therefore he must refute the erroneous views on this subject and demonstrate the true means. In fact, it is perception and

inference which alone are to be relied on the Buddha being the illustrations of these two and his authority derives from them.

The Pramāṇasamuccaya accounts of the matter may be stated a little further. Corresponding to perception and inference, we have two kinds of objects, of the senses and of the intellect (recall Hume's distinction between matters of fact and the relation of ideas or impressions of sensations and impressions of reflections), particulars and universals. Dinnāga mentions that there are five kinds of imagining (in connection with inference) i.e. constructions by consciousness, viz. names (nāma), classes (jāti), qualities (guṇa), action (karma), and substance (dravya). The essential characteristics of perception is that it excludes imagining (kalpanāpoḍham). It gives simply the direct, vivid particularity of an object (visaya). This is inexpressible in speech. It relates directly to real objects, to ultimate reality. The sensation of one-self (svasamvṛti, own sensation or own experience) in the mind, of desire and aversion for an object may also be without imagining. The supposed errors or illusion of perception are all due to imagining. These are all intellectual misinterpretation of the sense-data. Every act of perception is new. It cannot be repeated (since it lasts only for a moment); the supposition of repetition (identifying a datum with a

previous datum) be in due to imagining.

Thus perception, as a source of knowledge, has immense value in Buddhist theory of knowledge. In a sense, the whole of Buddhist philosophy is based on perception. The process of perception which the Upanisadic thinkers also explained, in the basis of a metaphysical self (ātman i.e. by positing an immutable and enduring self, the permanent self) received a causal explanation in the hands of the Buddha. This is a kind of subject-object relation; but the eternal and unchanging entity (like the ātman) has been replaced by a momentary sensation. On the arising of the object there is a sensation, which cannot be explained. Of the four noble truths discovered by the Buddha, the second and the third refer to the theory of causation. According to the early Buddhism, causation is not a category of relation among ideas but a category of connection and determination corresponding to a feature of the actual world, both subjective and objective, so it has an ontological status. It is a component of experience because it is an objective form of interdependence in the realm of nature. Causation, thus, is an idea that corresponds to what is found in nature.

According to the Buddhists, all the misery and unhappiness in the world were due to the evils associated

with sense-perception. So the Buddhists think that a proper understanding of the sensory process would give insight into the origin of suffering as well as into the way one can attain freedom from suffering. Hence, Buddha says that it is the sense perception which leads to suffering¹¹. People are apparently inclined to believe everything which they see, they are attached to these things and thus they suffer. So, if we can understand that the object of perception is svalakṣaṇas and these cannot be explained, since explanation leads to errors and illusions, then it would be easier for one to know the paramārtha sat. This is the view of the Buddhists. This is far off from the empirical truth. And thus suffering also would cease.

Perception can neither be prior to, nor posterior of, nor simultaneous with the objects of sense. If it is prior, then it cannot be the result of the contacts of sense with its object; if it is posterior, then it cannot be said that the object of sense is established by perception. If perception were simultaneous with its object, then there need not be any order of succession in our cognitions, since there is no such order in their corresponding objects. Everything lasts only for a moment, thus it always presupposes momentariness. Perception is always nirvikalpaka.

Dharmakīrti, in his Nyāyabindu has defined perception as 'kalpanāpōdham abhrāntam', i.e. it is a presentation which is generated by the object alone, unassociated by any names or relations (kalpanā) and which is non-erroneous. The real with which we come into contact is inexpressible, only concepts can be expressed. The real lasts only for a moment. The object of perception is the unique, the particular and the momentary; the object of inference is the typical, the universal and the lasting. Metaphysical presuppositions for both the Naiyāyikas and the Buddhists are different. Dinnāga can be taken to believe that all knowledge to be mental. For the Naiyāyikas, universals are as real as the particulars in which these subsist by the relation of samavāya.

According to Dharmakīrti, the indeterminate knowledge (nirvikalpaka-jñānam) consists only in the pure awareness of the sense-data and it is this awareness which validating the element of the means of knowledge called perception. Now this is only the first moment of perception. Next moment when one realizes the real nature of the object, i.e. when it is conceptualized, it becomes determinate knowledge (savikalpaka-jñānam). It is formed by the conceptual activity of the mind identifying the object with what has been experienced before; therefore it cannot be regarded as truly representing

what is really presented to the senses. Thus nirvikalpa-ka-jñānam is followed by the savikalpaka-jñānam. So Dharmakīrti defines pratyakṣa as kalpānāpoḍham abhrāntam. Thus pratyakṣa is devoid of conceptual activity and at the same time it is non-erroneous. Therefore, perception is a kind of pure sensation - a piece of cognition by which the object is revealed only in its simple and pure nature, bare of all attributes and associations. Like the sensation of a young child or of the dumb, such a piece of cognition can never be verbally communicated since it always requires some element of constructions (kalpanā). The definition given by Dharmakīrti does not indeed represent the actual nature of perception, but only shows the condition which must be fulfilled in order that anything may be valid perception. The second characteristic feature of sense perception is that it must be non-erroneous (abhrāntam). Perception must be devoid of all sorts of mental and sensuous illusions. Generally illusions are caused by colour blindness, rapid motion, travelling on a boat, sickness or other causes¹². Thus perception can be distinguished from illusion and hallucinations. In an illusory perception, it is the sense which is affected either by extraneous or by inherent physiological causes. If the senses are not free from defects, they are bound to present the object correctly. Perception thus means the correct presentation

through the senses of an object in its own uniqueness as containing only those features which are its and its alone (svalakṣaṇas).

In Buddhist philosophy, therefore, svalakṣaṇa alone is the object of pure perception, it is momentary (kṣanika). It is kalpanāpodham; devoid of any conceptual content. As against this, the Vaiśeṣikas argue that there are two moments in perception - one containing in bare intuition (ālocana mātra) of the unrelated character (svarūpa); the other consisting in determinate perception i.e. perception of the object as qualified by the characters. This teaching was first found in the Bhāṣya of Prasastapada. Then it was adopted by the Nyāya in the form of the distinction between nirvakalpaka pratyakṣa (approximately equivalent to what may be called simple apprehension) and savikalpaka pratyakṣa (or perception of the object as qualified by the characters previously apprehended in the moment of nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa).

The Vaiśeṣikas admit the existence of the reality of the universals (sāmānya). The universal was treated as a separate category, co-ordinate with substance, quality, action etc. and was asserted to be eternal and perceptible (aindritaka). Dinnāga points out the difficulties in such a position. The first premise of the Buddhist philosophy is that - Yat sat tat kṣanikam, momentary

things only exist and existence is arthakriyākāritva, potential efficiency (Buddhist believe in the pragmatic theory of truth). The argument is in the following form -

The existence is what does something.

The permanent can do nothing.

Therefore the permanent does not exist (in the ultimate sense of course). Thus causality is inconsistent with permanence. Therefore the existence is non-permanent, momentary. (A permanent cause would produce its effect all at once, there being no reason why it should postpone the production of its effects. And if it is said that it will produce a given effect, when an auxiliary circumstance (sahakārin) is added to it, then the notion of permanent causal entities should be given up and the Buddha doctrine of Kurvadrūpa i.e. of a momentary collection of circumstance as the cause, should be adopted). The Buddhist, therefore, reducing reality to unique momentary existence, which have nothing in common with each other and of which the identity is constituted merely by the negative conception of excluding what is other (apoha) could not of course admit real and permanent universals.

Svalaksana or the unique particulars denote mere sensations which are real and cannot turn into savikalpaka due to the acceptance of momentariness. Sāmānyalaksana denotes savikalpaka. This sāmānyalaksana is not the

object of perception, but that of conception. Its notion arises purely due to subjective activity consisting in the revival of past impressions. Svalaksana is solely the object of perception. Its cognition does not arise unless there is the particular object, while that of the universal, it depends on mental activity in the form of comparison, recollection of the conventional name etc.

Thus according to the Buddhists indeterminate perception (nirvikalpaka pratyaksa) is the first stage of any perceptual activity and it apprehends only the real nature (svalaksana) of an object, only the mere 'bareness' of an object. It is an antecedent and indispensable conditions for a determinate perception (savikalpaka pratyaksa) which is the conceptual activity of the mind. Savikalpaka pratyaksa involves relations between things already apprehended. If there is no nirvikalpaka pratyaksa which apprehends something, the existence of the determinate knowledge (savikalpaka jñānam) will become impossible.

The Naiyāyikas are disinclined to accept this view. According to them, perception is not, as the Buddhist think, an unmeaning sensation of an indeterminate real called svalaksana. It has a definite meaning and refers to a determinate object as that is revealed through sensation. It is only because the Buddhists arbitrarily

deny the meaning element in perception that they are forced to exclude the complex cognition of a jar, tree etc. from the range of perception. As a matter of fact, these are as good perception as any other. Jayanta in his Nyāya-Manjari has criticized the Buddhist's view points in details. But if we hold the theory of momentariness as the basic presupposition, then it is very difficult to underplay ~~the Buddhist~~ the Buddhist view of perception. Most of the arguments of the opponents (of Buddhism) are based on the misunderstanding of the Buddhist meaning of inference. They have not taken 'inference' in the sense of imagination, conception or understanding. They have taken it in the sense of deduction. That is why, the refutation of the Buddhist theory that the determinate perception is inference and not perception are vitiated by gross misunderstanding of the genuine problem.

Buddhists are on much better logical position in maintaining that the perception is only indeterminate and the so-called determinate perception is not perception but imagination or conception, since no amount of words can prove that the determinate perception is devoid of the construction of understanding or imagination. Then opponents make contradictory statements by accepting both indeterminate and determinate perception.

There are a lot of things in the logic of Buddhism that bear comparison with the extensional semantic of Frege in Western Philosophy. Thought co-arises with polar contraries. One limit of thought is exterior as consciousness reaches out to actual immediately presented particular objects. Hence the extension consists in the logical relation between thought and the immediately given entity. The concern of thought is truth. The two polar features of thought, Sense or perception (pratyakṣa) on the one hand and truth (or svalakṣana) on the other hand need to be explained in as much as they come together and are complementary. Truth consists in reference which are actual individual objects. Thus it may be said that one of the common features of Buddhists and the Fregean Logic is that both of them seem to formulate a semantic of truth condition, reference and existence.

SECTION D

In the previous sections, we have seen how in their theory of knowledge, Dinnāga and Dharmakīrti have formulated a rigorous and revolutionary logic and epistemology on Kantian lines.

Pramāṇas (valid avenues of knowledge) is the subject

of enquiry. Pramāna is defined as that source of knowledge which is not at variance with the real, further it is the cognition of the uncognised¹³. In Pramānavartikā, Dharmakīrti defines right knowledge as that which is uncontradicted, that it does not mislead one, i.e. an object as indicated by pramāna in a particular place and a particular time can actually be attained by one. Pramāna thus only reveals the nature of an object as it is and this indication correctly leads one to the attainment of the desired object or the avoidance of the undesirable ones. And false knowledge, which is not pramā is contradicted by experience.

There are certain preliminary conditions for knowledge. According to Dharmakīrti, as interpreted by Vinitadeva, these are four in number¹⁴. These are .

- 1) subject matter (right knowledge) 2) purpose (viz. proper comprehension of the nature of right knowledge),
- 3) relation (viz. the relation of being the means to an end) and 4) purpose of the purpose (viz. involvement of right knowledge in all human activities).

The entire logic of the Buddhists is based on the acceptance of two modes of knowledge - immediate (pratyakṣa) and mediate (anumāna); they are mutually exclusive and exhaustive taken together. The function of the one is to receive (grahana) or acquaint us with the

given, of the other is to think¹⁵ (adhyavasāya) it according to some pattern. A remarkable similarity can be found with Kantian philosophy. " ... there are two stems of human knowledge, viz. sensibility and understanding, which perhaps spring from a common, but to an unknown root. Through the former, the objects are given to us, through the latter, they are thought"¹⁶.

Thus, by means of perception or pratyakṣa the particulars are given to us and inference or anumāna helps us in synthesizing or universalizing the particulars. This does not mean that there are two coordinate realities - the particular and the universal. The particular alone is real (svalakṣanam). But it is cognized in a two fold ways, one as it is in-itself (svarūpa) in perception and second through forms imposed to it by means of understanding. Of the two sources, pratyakṣa presents the reality as it is in-itself and anumāna elaborates it by means of understanding (or images, the ideal construction, kalpanā). The particular alone is unconditionally real (paramārtha sat), the universal (sāmānyalakṣaṇa) is ultimately unreal (a-vastu); inference is essentially misapprehension (bhrāntam anumānam)¹⁷. Ultimately unreal, it is however, empirical veridical.

Thus in the logic of Buddhism, as explained by

Dinnāga and Dharmakīrti, it is found that they admit only two sources of valid knowledge, by means of which the particular and the universal are known. But in Nyāya-sūtra, it is found that the Naiyāyikas believe in four pramānas - perception, inference, comparison and testimony.

According to the Naiyāyikas, perception is the knowledge which arises from the contact of the sense organ with its object, being determinate, unnameable and non-eratic. Senses include the mind also. The knowledge of the soul's pleasure, pain etc. is produced by their contact with the mind, which according to Vātsāyana, is a sense organ. It is determinate in the sense that it is free from doubt (i.e. savikalpaka). But according to the Naiyāyikas, perception is determinate as well as indeterminate (nirvikalpaka). It is unnameable in the sense that the knowledge of a thing derived through perception has no connection with the name which the thing bears. It arises, in fact, without the aid of language. Name of a thing is not necessarily present and operative at the time when the thing is perceived.

Inference is knowledge which is preceded by perception and is of three kinds, according to the Naiyāyikas, viz. a-priori pūrvavat, a-posteriori (śeṣavat) and commonly seen (sāmānyato-drṣṭa).

Comparison is the knowledge of a thing through its similarity to another thing previously well known.

Word or verbal testimony is the instructive assertion of a reliable person.

'Pratyakṣa' signifies, etymologically 'present to sense' but the essential factor underlying such knowledge may be taken as immediacy pure acquaintance. As is said in the previous sections that Dinnāga, in his Pramāna-samuccaya defines pratyakṣa as knowledge free from construction (kalpanā), i.e. name and generality etc. The definition is necessarily negative as excluding thought-construction, it only serves to distinguish perception from what it is not from the nameable. It is not valid to urge that nothing is left over when the thought forms are abstracted from a thing, for there must be in experience the irreducible core of the given the 'that' on which the thought forms are overlaid. If the 'that' were not experienced, thought cannot be stimulated to begin its interpretation. That the ~~subjection~~ in a judgement is not reducible to the predicate does not warrant its rejection. The real subject falls outside the judgement which is the ideal content predicated of it. 'Thought would be empty without percept', the given in intuition. Its presence or absence marks all the difference to experience.

Intuition, according to the Buddhists, is essentially true, non-discrepant from its object. The possibility of error is ruled out as there is no judgement, interpretation. Dinnāga, therefore, does not find it necessary to define pratyakṣa, so as to exclude the illusory. Dharmakīrti, however, defines it as knowledge that is free from construction and error (kalpanāpodham and abhrāntam). This is done to exclude errors that are engendered not by thought-construction but by purely physical and physiological factors, e.g. swift motion, distance, injury and disease of the sense-organ. The object of perception is the thing-in-itself (paramārtha sat), which is the unique point instant (svalakṣanam)¹⁸. Some Advaitins, too, assert that in perception we intuit the thing-in-itself, but here it is the universal differenceless Identity (Brahman).

For the Buddhists, the determinate perception (savikalpaka pratyakṣa) of the Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā is not perception, as it is complicated with thought (vikalpa). As synthesizing the thing with the one seen earlier, as in recognition, it is not confined to the immediately given. Vikalpa is the knowledge that is identified with verbal designation or fit to be so. Dinnāga defined it as the application of name and universal.

Thus it is clear so far that for the Buddhists, there

are only these two sources of knowledge and they bring others like verbal testimony (sabda) under inference. But if one clearly analyzes the Buddhist theory of knowledge, one is sure to find some metaphysical or ontological presuppositions underlying their theory of knowledge. There is hardly any philosophical system which is found without any presupposition, though in recent times phenomenologists have tried to establish such philosophical system. In order to follow any philosophical argument one should try to understand the motivation behind that argument. Generally one philosophical theory tries to refute (khandana) other philosophical theories, not because these are logically inconsistent but because there are certain motivations which ultimately ~~form~~ stem from the presupposition in any philosophical argument. In this connection, following K.C.Bhattacharya¹⁹ we can say that no philosophical argument can be contradicted by other philosophical arguments. Every system is logically consistent in its own realm. The difference between the Buddhists and the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theories of knowledge is based on their respective ontological standpoints. The age-old controversy between the two schools of thought should be studied in the light of their ontology. Evaluation of their theories should be based on the evaluation of ontological theories.

There are certain theories which form the ontological presupposition in the philosophy of Buddhism, e.g., four noble truths and the theory of momentariness. These are the edifice on which the whole of Buddhism stands. The concepts of svalaksana and sāmānyalaksana are related to the theory of momentariness. If the Buddhists do not accept the theory of momentariness, the concepts of svalaksana and sāmānyalaksana could be inexplicable. Thus the Buddhists theory of perception is the epistemological counterpart of the doctrine of anityavāda (impermanence) because through perception we have the knowledge of svalaksana or the point instants which exist for a moment, i.e. the real exists only for a moment. Herein lies the importance of the doctrine of momentariness.

Change is ordinarily understood to imply something that endures through it, that a changing object persists among varying features. This is not what is understood by momentariness in Buddhism. He maintains that all change is necessarily total. That is, change means revolution, not evolution. It is not only total; it is perpetual. Realizing the truth that nothing in this world is permanent, that whatever has an origin, has an end too, Buddha says that Reality is becoming. It consists in causal efficiency i.e. the capacity to effect something. Whatever capacity a thing has, is at once and fully manifested; and since a thing exists only when it

acts, it must be momentary. As stated earlier that Yat sat tat ksanikam. (The doctrine of momentariness is the later development of the doctrine of impermanence).

The svalaksanas or unique particulars are such that each exists for one moment only and that each is a bare or pure particular. Each particular is its own essence (svalaksana). They have no properties or qualities by which they can be characterized and be put into words. Hence the unique particulars are unutterable. This ontology is based on the principle that to be real is to exist uniquely i.e. to be of the nature of affirmation and to be efficient (arthakriyākāritva). The arthakriyākāritva means that knowledge is true which confirms the expectation it raises. But here the practical verification of knowledge which is possible is held to be only approximate because of the unusual way in which it conceives of reality. Even in the nirvikalpaka where the svalaksana is actually given that very svalaksana cannot be reached for, it ceases to be in a moment. So, the utmost that knowledge can do is to direct us to the series of which the svalaksana cognizes was a member. That is, what is presented is a particular but what is attained is not that particular but the corresponding series. This is what is meant by approximate verification. And this is quite adequate to meet the demands of practical life. Knowledge merely lights

up the path of action and so long as it successfully does so, it is regarded as true. In inference the objects are invariably sāmānyalakṣaṇa which are by hypothesis, unreal in the ultimate sense of course. Yet it can be serviceable in life by leading us to an object series with which its content is associated.

Thus existence and efficiency (arthakriyākāritva) are the two criteria of paramārtha sat, or ultimate reality i.e. svalakṣaṇa which exist for a moment and its existence is its efficiency. Thus svalakṣaṇa or unique particulars are not static, they exist for a moment and are dynamic. Hence the ksanikatva comes. On the contrary everything that is not svalakṣaṇa are empirical and practically real. It is a thought construction (kalpitam) or a concept, a universal (sāmānyalakṣaṇa). These are not ultimately real, because these do not exist for a moment only like the svalakṣaṇas but are durable in time and extended in space. These have the status of the image objectively projected in the world. These are not pure existences but can be both affirmed and denied. As Vācaspati Misra puts it, the possibility of affirmation and negation is a mark of contingency and of relativity of these phenomenal objects. Thus phenomenal objects, being of the nature of conceptual products, are not ultimately real.

From both epistemic and logical grounds Buddhism has proved the ontological basicness of the unique particulars (Svalakṣanas). Epistemically, sensation and conception are not only different in type, but also sensing precedes conceiving. In bare sensation (nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa) there is no trace of conception and svalakṣanas are apprehended only in bare sensation, without any conceptual significance. But in Savikalpaka Pratyakṣa, one can apprehend only the thought constructs or universals. Thus for the Buddhists there is a type of difference between sensation and conception which is otherwise known as pramanā vyavasthā. Thus Svalakṣanas are different in type from the empirical objects. Logically, the unique particulars are primary in the sense that, in order to be projected into the world as the empirical objects, the image and thought constructions depend on the sensation of particulars (Svalakṣanas). This projection occurs because of a sārupya or coordination between the particular and its image. A perceptual judgement is possible only because of this sārupya. e.g. in the perceptual judgement 'This is a book' there is a sārupya between 'this' representing a Svalakṣana and 'book' representing an image. Thus coordination or sārupya is the real source of cognition in the form of a judgement because unless and until a coordination or sārupya is formed between the Svalakṣana and sāmānyalakṣana, no perceptual judgement can be formed.

Dharmatta²⁰ commenting on Nyāya-bindu writes -

'Direct cognition of an object in the form of a perceptive judgement is possible i.e. (the object is really) being cognized owing to the coordination (of an image with a point of external reality) and its contrast with the correlative images. Indeed as soon as our awareness (begins to present itself as) an image of something blue, only then can we judge that we have a distinct cognition of it (in the form of 'this is blue', this is not non-blue).

It follows from this that all the perceptual objects (Sāmānyalakṣaṇa) are explained only on a secondary level ontologically because of their dependence on pragmatic grounds rather than on logical grounds. Their objectivity is grounded only on the level of thought and language. These do not have any reality since these are not Svalakṣaṇas. These are only the names and put into propositions as being thought - construction. The Buddhists also argue that these objects or thought - construction are universal because they illusorily present a unity in difference or identity among different objects. This identity is presented by the names which stand for universals. Thus universals, being the products of imagination and have only a linguistic or conceptual origin are not ultimately real.

By analyzing the ontological presupposition of Buddhism, it is found that the name theory (nāma vāda), the apoha-vāda, the theory of meaning and the theory of universals are all based on their theory of momentariness.

The Buddhists have certain presuppositions regarding the names. They have advanced two important thesis on name - viz.

- a) that names stand only for universal and
- b) that names are meaningful by way of repudiating the opposite meaning (apoha).

The first presupposition points to the logical nature of names which follows from the Buddhist nominalistic ontology, Names denote only the objects which are thought - construction, the universals, which stand for a set of characteristics or common essence conventionally attributable to these objects nameable in language. These names cannot denote or designate the unique particulars, since the latter are momentary and so unutterable. Dharmakīrti says²¹ names can note the universals only by excluding the opposition, e.g. the name 'cow' in the proposition 'This is a cow' connotes the universal or the class 'cow' by excluding the class of 'non-cow'. Thus a name determines the class-essence of things by way of presenting a set of negative characterization and not by pointing to any externally essence called sāmānya. This has been

discussed in the previous section also.

From this it follows that for the Buddhists, names including proper names are connotative of characteristics and therefore all name in a way are description. Names are only the negative description of objects. To name an entity is to relate it to its opposite and to affirm characteristics of it which differentiate it from the latter. Naming is thus not simply the activity of pointing to a particular but of describing it by setting forth its negative characteristics. Thus the logical construction (or the thought construction, the universal, whatever may be said) are nothing over and above the set of these negative attributes which are true of them. There is no substratum of essential nature of the objects other than the set of negative characteristics. Negative description exhaust all the description of an object or a logical construction. The name is a shorthand of all these description.

Their emphasis on the negative description for explaining the significance of names, however is the logical consequence of the principle that what can be signified by a name can be both affirmed and denied. E.g. 'This is a book' and 'this is not a book'. Secondly, they believe that there is no affirmation without negation. Therefore, they have laid down that the negative description must be

satisfied if an entity described is said to exist.

The second thesis which relates to the meaning of names brings out the semantic importance of the exclusion of the opposite meaning (apoha). As Dinnāga says - Indeed the name can express its meaning only by repudiating the opposite meaning, as for instance the words 'to have an origin (designate their own meaning only through a contrast with things having no origin or eternal)²². This exclusion or denial of the opposite is called 'apoha' by the Buddhists which not only make all universals or thought-constructions negatively determinate, but also accounts for the negative significance of the names.

Names are significant, according to the Buddhists, only as parts of a propositional structure, i.e. as parts of a linguistic system wherein the thought-construction are made intelligible. And satisfaction of the negative description is the primary condition of the meaningfulness of names. The so called positive description are without significance unless qualified by the negative descriptions, which for the Buddhists, constitute a fundamental component of any description set. Meaning no doubt is positive, but it has to be explained by the negative description. And meaning for the Buddhists is only conventional and not eternal or timeless in character. Names are meaningful by virtue of designating a particular.

Realists (Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika) also have certain presupposition. For them, particulars as well as universals both are real. Like the Buddhist they do not claim that the universals are nothing but thought - construction. For them, universals also have their own existences. They claim that names designate particulars independently of the description of their attributes and that the particulars exist as distinguished from their attributes. Therefore according to them, descriptions do not determine the meaning of names since all ^{names} ~~means~~ are not description though description are necessary to fix the reference of names. But it is quite obvious from the difference of their (Buddhist and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika) ontological presupposition that the Buddhists do not accept this view at all, because for them all names are descriptions.

SECTION E

In the previous section we have seen that one of the ontological presupposition in Buddhist theory of knowledge is the doctrine of momentariness which signifies that everything in this world is impermanent (anitya) or more specifically momentary i.e. ksaṇika. Nothing is permanent. If anything is to exist, that must be momentary. The real

is svalakṣaṇa, discrete particulars which are but momentary flashes of energy. The perdurable, eternal pervasive matter which is imagined as their support or substratum is a fiction of most of the realist schools. According to Kamalāsīla, by a single stroke (eka prahāreṇa eva), we could have repudiated the God (of the theists); the eternal matter (of the Sāṃkhyas) and all the wealth of the metaphysical entities of their opponents.

About arthakriyākāritva, Kamalāsīla says - "We maintain that an object can produce something only when it has reached the last moment of its existence (which is also its unique real moments), its other moments are non-efficient"²³. When a seed is turned into a sprout, this is done by the last moment of the seed, not by those moments when it lay placidly in the granary. The preceding moments of the seed cannot be the indirect cause of the sprout, because if the seed cannot be the indirect cause of the sprout, ~~because if~~ ^{then} the seed would not change every moment, its nature would be ^{to} endure and never to change. Neither can it be said that the moment of the sprout is produced by a totality of causes and conditions because then the same will apply to every moment since every moment has its own totality of causes and condition to which it exists.

From the doctrine of momentariness, it follows that

the essence of Reality is always motion since no single action is finished in any single moment, it is always followed by another moment and so on. Causality i.e. the interdependence of the moments following one another (pratityasamutpāda Vāda) evokes the illusion of stability or duration, but they are nothing but the samskāras flashing into existence without any real enduring substance in them. By advocating this doctrine of momentariness, the Buddhists have proved the ideality of space and time. These two are the receptacles of things and they are not arthakriyākārin i.e. these have no separate efficiency. Owing to our Kalpanā, we take the different views of things. Also by this doctrine, it is proved that duration and extension are not real. Parts are real and not the whole i.e. sāmānya is not the reality, reality is only the particular. Ultimate reality is thus spaceless timeless and motionless. It is a mathematical point -instant, the moment of our action's efficiency. That all objects have momentary being is also proved by direct perception. Only the present moment is seized by sensation; E.g. when we perceive a patch of blue colour in a momentary sensation, we perceive just the thing which corresponds to that sensation, i.e. the blue and nothing else. All external objects are reduceble to sense data and the corresponding sensation are always conferred to a single moment. But if all things are momentary how can recognition be explained ? This is the objection raised by the

Realists ? Recognition does prove duration. But the Buddhist's answer is in the negative, since in the statement, "This is the same object "two utterly heterogeneous elements which have nothing in common, have been combined or associated. The element 'this' refers to be present, to a sensation and to a real object.

The element 'that' refers to the past to something surviving exclusively to imagination and memory. They are as different as heat and cold. Thus these two cannot be united. Recognition thus does not prove duration, but it is only a chain of momentary existence following one another.

"Existence means efficiency" - truth which has been accepted by the Buddhists as the first principle. And by accepting this as the fundamental principle, the doctrine of momentariness can easily be deduced. Efficiency means change, because an object which is efficient must have some utility, it should have the power to produce something, which is not possible by a perdurable and a static object. Static means non-efficient, i.e., not producing any effects. Inefficient means non-existing. Thus the same thing which is characterized as existent, can also be characterized as efficient and as changing. These three terms are connected by 'existential identity', that is to say, they can be without contradiction applied to one and

the same point of reality to a real fact. There are characteristics which are connected with them by the same tie of Existential Identity viz. 'whatsoever has an origin is always changing'²⁴, 'Whatsoever is produced by causes is impermanent'²⁵. 'Whatsoever is variable in dependence on a variation of its cause is subject to momentary change'²⁶. 'Whatsoever is produced by a conscious effort is impermanent' - all these characteristics, although they may have a different extension are called existentially identical", because they may, without contradiction, be applied to one and the same reality. Thus the deduction of momentariness is an analytical deduction.

As against the Realists, the Buddhists deny the non-existence as having a separate reality. According to them, the only reality is the efficient point instant, all the rest is interpretation and thought - construction.

Thus according to the doctrine of momentariness the ultimate reality belongs only to the mathematical point instant, to a time-unit which contains no parts standing in the relation of antecedent and sequence, or more precisely, to the infinitesimal differential points of reality, out of which our intellect constructs the empirical world as it appears to an understanding in manifold images. It is obvious, then, that this theory is at that

time founded on epistemological investigation. It is the direct consequence of the theory of two heterogeneous sources of our knowledge, the senses which supply merely the detached point-instants of pure reality and the intellect which constructs these infinitesimals a manifold and ordered world.

Now, Buddhist's acceptance of the theory of momentariness implies to the rejection of sāmānyā or jāti. But the question is how ?

Sāmānyā generally means the class essence, the common factor residing in many individuals, of the same class - nityam sati anekānuḡatam. This universal is not sense-datum, e.g. 'cowness' or gotva (universal) which is not the object of our perception, because an act of perception reveals only an exclusively particular point of reality which does not endure enough the past and the future. The 'cowness' or gotva is the common feature which is shared by all individual cows. Perception is immediate, it is momentary. It does not last for more than one moment. It presupposes no prior knowledge for its existence. But the comprehension of a universal is not immediate as it has a relatives being or dependent character. It presupposes the knowledge of similarity which is due to the act of comparing different particulars of the same class. The knowledge of universal of jāti is only due to

our imagination or Kalpanā. According to the Naiyāyikas, the idea of universals arise immediately on the operation of the sense-object contact; but it is not true, because such ideas can emerge only after the name relations are remembered. Thus it cannot have the reality according to the Buddhists. It has arisen only after a series of psychical operation, viz. the presentation of the sense-datum, then recalling the verbal association and the remembrance of the name. Thus it has little bearing on the immediate objective datum.

In the Pramānasamuccaya, Dinnāga states that logic should not have any metaphysical axes to grind and therefore it should not take sides either with the realists or with the idealists. Keeping this end in view, he takes care to define sense perception in such a manner that definition will be acceptable to both the realists as well as to the idealists. Sense perception is defined neither in terms of the internal nor in terms of the external. It can never be wrong and for that matter it cannot be regarded as right. It is indefinable, and if we try to define it, we must define it only in terms of the contrast from the judgemental knowledge which can be significantly called either right or wrong. Since, the sense-perception is neither right nor wrong, it is not constructive and thought-dependant, whereas the judgemental knowledge which can be both right and wrong is

constructive and thought dependant. Thus this definition of senseperception is equally acceptable to both the realists as well as the idealist, and is therefore metaphysically non-committal. It also does not mention anything about its being either internal or external. And at the same time, the rightness and wrongness of knowledge is defined in terms of success or failure in action. Arthakriyākāritva or capacity for successful action is the mark of right knowledge and this is in view of any thorough going pragmatist.

According to the Buddhists, every cognitively significant judgement contains two parts - a referring and a descriptive one; e.g. in the judgement 'This is a table', 'this' is the referring part and 'table' is the descriptive part. Thus it follows from the above example that the function of a referring word can be understood only by contrast from the function of the descriptive words; the function of the referring word is just to refer and do nothing else, and the referring word can neither be negated nor affirmed. 'This is' and 'This is not' do not make any sense. Thus the referent here is the bare logical referent. The referent is always an existing thing. It is a Bhāva-Vastu. Since it does not carry the supposition of its negative, it is a svalaksana. As a bare logical referent, it is a bare particular, devoid of all characters. The production and destruction belongs to the

descriptive part and have no place in referring parts. Causality, the doctrine of pratityasamutpādavāda is applicable only to the sphere of the temporal. Thus causality belongs to the world of relative only in the sense that any causal statement can both be affirmed and denied without contradiction and that is the mark of the descriptive language. Herein comes the Buddhist theory of apohavāda. The two statements 'This is a cow' and 'this is not a cow' are equally significant. The word 'cow' can both be significantly affirmed and denied; they are both positive and negative. Hence descriptive words are always relative. They are not self-contained and therefore are not svalakṣanas. Any descriptive word can be defined in terms of its negative word, E.g, 'cow' is defined in contrast to the 'non-cow' i.e. a 'cow' is not 'non-cow'. The different individual cows are absolutely dissimilar. This group of dissimilar individuals are brought under the class 'cow' by reason of their contrast from all these which are called non-cows. As absolutely dissimilar individuals, viz. horses, donkeys etc. can be brought under the class 'non-cow', so also the absolutely dissimilar individuals called 'cow' are brought under one class. The absolutely dissimilar individuals are brought under a class by reason of our overlooking the difference among them. Buddhists do not admit that the universals do have any separate essence of their own. Kalpanā, which is superimposed on the particulars in order to make an

universal is of five types; i.e. the descriptive words signify either a substance, an attribute, an action, a name or a class (dravya, guna, karma, nāme and jāti).

According to the Buddhists, words and meanings are inseparable, just as the body of a stature is not something over and above the stature itself. The formulation of the word 'meaning' makes them very particular about some metaphysical words like God, soul etc., which are nothing but noises because they cannot be confined with any referring words in the form of the sentence 'this is God'. Meanings are derived from their use; differentiation, assimilation are related to human purpose.

Arthakriyākāritva or the successful action is the right use of language. The apoha theory is the philosophy of language as a whole and not simply of any of its parts. Any affirmative significant proposition implies the significance of its corresponding negative one. Difference is the basis of unification. Thus, according to the Buddhists, the words, phrases and sentences do not mean anything definite and positive. The doctrine of positive meaning of words creates a negative attitude towards life and owes man towards, the myth of the transcendental world. Being a thoroughgoing empiricist, Buddha wanted man to be more human and take interest in human affairs rather than wasting his time over speculation about a transcendent world beyond.

After analyzing the doctrine of momentariness and the doctrine of apohavāda, it is clear that the concept of Sāmānya or jāti cannot be accepted as real. This is the object of inference the savikalpaka perception of the Naiyāyikas. Reality is given only in the Nirvikalpaka perception, therefore it cannot be sāmānya because the object of nirvikalpaka perception is always a particular. The particular is the svalakṣaṇa which is always momentary; whereas universal is the sāmānyalakṣaṇa which is durable in time and space and is not momentary. All non-eternal entities are momentary as they are perishable by their very nature and constitution.

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Concept of Svalaksanas vis-a-vis Western thought - a paper presented by me in the Jabbalpur Congress (Indian Philosophical Congress) in December 1984. Some of the points from this paper have been discussed in Section C.