

Asvabhāva's Commentary on *Ālokamālā*

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In the Tibetan *bsTan 'Gyur*, there are three texts ascribed to Asvabhāva:

- (1) *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāraṭīkā* [MST]
- (2) *Mahāyānasamgrahopanibandha* [MSU]
- (3) *Ālokamālāhṛdānandajananiṭīkā* [AMT]

Among these three texts, little research has been done on AMT. One of the reasons is that until recently there was no critical edition of *Ālokamālā* [AM] or AMT. In 1985, a critical Sanskrit and Tibetan edition of AM was published by Christian Lindtner in Copenhagen¹⁾. We may expect to see more research on this topic.

One of the main controversial issues is whether Asvabhāva, the author of AMT, wrote the other two works, MST and MSU. Lindtner believes that all three works were written by one person. According to him, the period of Asvabhāva, the commentator on AM, was as early as 500 AD²⁾.

However, some scholars do not agree with Lindtner. They suspect³⁾ or believe⁴⁾ according to the Tibetan Buddhist historian, Tāranātha, that there were two Asvabhāvas. One was the author of MST and MSU, while the other was the author of AMT. But the following question remains unanswered: When was the period of AMT's author?

Careful reading of AMT provides a hint of great importance concerning this chronological issue: AMT's author knew some original theories of Dharmakīrti (600-660), one of the greatest Buddhist logicians. Consequently, the period of AMT's author must be later than that of Dharmakīrti. The theories of Dharmakīrti which I call here are:

- (1) the two logical relations (*pratibandha*): identity (*tadātmya*) and causality (*tadutpatti*).
- (2) successive or simultaneous [accomplishment of] causal efficiency

(*kramayaugapadyārthakriyā*).

AMT's author comments on AM using these theories⁵), as we shall clearly see in the following examples.

(1) *tādātmya* and *tadutpatti*

From the standpoint of Vijñaptimātratā, Asvabhāva denies *pratibandha* between a word (*śabda*) and its external object (*bāhyārtha*).

"[There is no *pratibandha* between a word and its object.] In fact, *pratibandha* is of two kinds : *tādātmya* and *tadutpatti*. Among these [two *pratibandhas*, first, there is] no *tādātmya* [between a word and its object,] because [their] essential properties (*svabhāva*) are different. [Secondly, there is] no *tadutpatti*. [If there were, one would fall into] the absurdity that the one-moment-previous consciousness (*samanantarapratyaya*) does not exist."⁶

First, just as the word "fire" does not burn our lips, a word and its object are by no means identical. Consequently, there is no *tādātmya* between them. Secondly, Asvabhāva, as a Vijñānavādin, asserts that a word as content of present consciousness arises from its *samanantarapratyaya*, and not from its external object. Consequently, there is no *tadutpatti* between them. In this way, Asvabhāva negates both *tādātmya* and *tadutpatti*.

It is originally Dharmakīrti who uses the alternative of *tādātmya* and *tadutpatti* for *pratibandha*. Here Asvabhāva uses these terms in the same way as Dharmakīrti does.

(2) *kramayaugapadyārthakriyā*

Asvabhāva uses this term in order to deny the doctrine of the Bāhyārthavādins that God (*Īśvara*) created the world with atoms (*paramāṇu*), in the following way :

"Because he (=God) is permanent, he cannot accomplish the causal efficiency (*arthakriyā*) neither successively (*krama*) nor simultaneously (*yaugapadya*). Hence God is not the cause for the variety [of the world]."⁷

God, according to the Bāhyārthavādins, is immutable, and performs *arthakriyā*, which is his function as the Creator. On the contrary, according to Asvabhāva and, of course, Dharmakīrti, immutability and *arthak-*

riyā are mutually contradictory. Dharmakīrti used *kramayaugapadyārthakriyā* in *Pramāṇaviniścaya* for the first time⁸. In this paper, however, let us examine his later work, *Vādanyāya*, where he concisely takes up this term in his proof which shows that the reason does not occur, where the contrary of the property to be inferred occurs (*sādhya viparyaye bādhakapramāṇa*). Dharmakīrti presents the *prayoga* as follows :

"All that is existing or produced is impermanent, such as a pot and so on. Sound is [what is existing or produced]." ⁹

It is in order to fix the pervasion (*vyāpti*) of this *prayoga* that he uses *sādhya viparyaye bādhakapramāṇa*. Though this *prayoga* contains two reasons (*hetu*), I shall examine here only one, "existence," hereafter for lack of space.

To fix this *vyāpti* is to exclude the *hetu* "existence" from "immutability," which is the contrary of the property to be inferred (*sādhya*), "mutability." For Dharmakīrti, existence means *arthakriyā*. In conclusion, all he has to do is to prove that immutability is not connected with *arthakriyā*. Here he examines *arthakriyā* in two ways: *krama* and *yaugapadya*. He says :

"What can accomplish the causal efficiency neither successively nor simultaneously does not have any capacity (*samarthyā*) [on result. Consequently, it does not exist]. What is permanent is that." ¹⁰

In this way, it is proved that immutability is not connected with *arthakriyā* in any way. Thus the *vyāpti* mentioned above, "All that is existing is impermanent," is successfully fixed.

In AMṬ, Asvabhāva uses these two ways of examining *arthakriyā*, both of which are clearly derived from Dharmakīrti. It is therefore quite certain that Asvabhāva knew Dharmakīrti's *sādhya viparyaye bādhakapramāṇa*.

From this evidence, our conclusion is as follows :

Asvabhāva, a commentator on AM, must have lived after Dharmakīrti. Accordingly, his period was later than the middle of the seventh century.

Still remaining is the question whether the three works ascribed to

Asvabhāva were all written by one person. More research, both philological and historical, is required to answer this question.

TEXTS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMṬ : *Āloka-mālāhrdānandajananiṭikā* (Asvabhāva)

(Tib.) D (3896) ha62a4-108b7

N (3861) ño337a6-390b7

P [146] (5869) ño357a5-419a3

C ha62a4-108b7

VN : *Vādanyāya* (Dharmakīrti)

(Skt.) "Dharmakīrti's *Vādanyāya*, with the Commentary of Śāntarakṣita," ed. R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana, Appendix to *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 21, Patna, 1935-36.

- 1) Lindtner, Christian. "A Treatise on Buddhist Idealism," *Indiske Studier* 5, Copenhagen, 1985, pp. 108-221.
 - 2) *ibid.* p. 115.
 - 3) Ruegg, D.S. *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School of Philosophy in India*, Wiesbaden, 1981, p. 107.
 - 4) Saegusa, M., et al., *Indo Bukkyo Jinmei Jiten*, Kyoto, 1987, pp. 10-11.
 - 5) In addition to these two, we find another term of Dharmakīrti's, *vyāpakānu-palabdhi*, mentioned in AMṬ D 70a4 : *mñon par 'dod pa'i rnam par bcas pa yañ med pa ni khyab par byed pa mi dmigs pa ma yin no ||*
 - 6) AMṬ D 91a3 : *gañ gi phyir 'brel pa ni gñis te | de'i bdag ñid dañ de las byuñ ba'o || de la de'i bdag ñid ni ma yin te | ño bo tha dad pa'i phyir ro || de las byuñ ba yañ ma yin te | de ma thag pa'i rkyen med par thar bar 'gyur ro ||*
 - 7) AMṬ D 78b2 : *gañ gi phyir de rtag pa'i phyir rim mam cig car gyi don byed par mi rigs so || de lta bas na sna tshogs pa skye ba ñid kyi rgyu dbañ phyug ma yin pa'i phyir |*
 - 8) Steinkellner, E. ed. *Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇavinīśayaḥ*, zweites Kapitel : Svārthānumānam. Wien, 1973 p. 78 (P f. 277a4-7).
 - 9) VN p. 6, ll. 1-2.
 - 10) VN p. 9, ll. 3-4.
- <Key Words> Asvabhāva, Dharmakīrti, *tādātmya*, *taḍutpatti*, *kramayaugapadyār-thakriyā*.

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