

Abstract No 44

A little survey about the attitude of Viññānavādins on the concept of Sense Perception

Ven. Walasmulle Bhaddhiya Thero

wbhaddhiya@gmail.com

The sense perception is the experience taken through the senses about the external objects. The same experience is known as the evident knowledge in the texts like Tarka Śāstra, Nyāya Bindu etc... As well it is said that knowledge should be free from hallucinations. Especially here sensual experiences are considered as empiricism. The term “empiricism” is derived from the Latin term “Empiricus” and defines as the knowledge that is gained through the experiences of the senses. The well known teaching of Viññānavādins is nothing else but the eight types of consciousness (In Sanskrit- Aṣṭha Viññāna). Yogācāra Viññānavādins defined three basic modes by which we perceive our world. These are explained in Yogācāra as the three natures of perception. *Parikalpita* (literally, “fully conceptualized”), “imaginary nature” where in things are incorrectly apprehended based on conceptual construction, through attachment and erroneous discrimination. *Paratantra* (literally, “other dependent”), “dependent nature” by which the correct understanding of the dependently originated nature of things understood. *Pariniṣpanna* (literally, “fully accomplished”), “absolute nature”, through which one apprehends things as they are in themselves, uninfluenced by any conceptualization at all. Viññānavādins have not rejected about the existence of the external world. They discuss about two types of causality as external and internal. The main task of mind is to contemplate the thoughts. Accordingly the objects which are taken through the senses are contemplated and conveyey to the mind to investigate them. Madhupindika Sutta gives a clear explanation about the consciousness that received through the senses up to the eradication of defilements. The view of Viññānavādins about the procedure of senses matches with the early Buddhist doctrines too. In Buddhist contexts the terms Citta, Mano and Viññāna have been used in both senses to define as one meaning as well three meanings. No one can escape from the five skhandhās until the Viññāna exists.

Key words: perception, empiricism, parikalpita, paratantra, pariniṣpanna