Bāhyārthasiddhikārikā of Śubhagupta

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In his History of Indian Logic, S. C. Vidyabhusana gave the Sanskrit name for Dge-sruṇs, the author of the Sarvajña-siddhi-kārikā and four other treatises preserved in the Tibetan Tripitaka, as Kalyāṇagupta; while he identified Śubhagupta, who is called a follower of Dharmakīrti (vārttikānusārin) by Haribhadrasūri, with Śubhākaraṇagupta who flourished late in the 11th century. This theory, however, was criticised by B. Bhattacharya in the foreword of G. O. S. edition of the Tattva-saṃgraha. He set forth the opinion that Haribhadrasūri must have referred to Bhadanta Śubhagupta, whose views were mentioned several times in the Bahir-artha-parīkṣā of the Tattva-saṃgraha, and doubted whether Śubhākaraṇagupta, who was a Tāntrika, ever wrote any work on logic wherein he closely followed Dharmakīrti. Y. Miyasaka has recently disclosed, in his article on Śubhagupta’s theory of the word, the view that Dge-sruṇs must be the Tibetan name for Śubhagupta. His view is grounded on 1) that ‘dge’ is considered as an equivalent for ‘śubha’, 2) that Śubhagupta’s theory of ‘conventional designation’ (sāṃketa) alluded to by Haribhadrasūri is similar to Dge-sruṇs’ theory expounded in his Śruti-parīkṣā-kārikā and 3) that Śubhākaraṇagupta cannot be referred to by Haribhadrasūri, who, according to the recognized theory set up by H. Jacobi, is assigned to ca. 750 A. D. The writer of the present paper agrees with Y. Miyasaka in regarding Dge-sruṇs and Śubhagupta as being the same person, for this view can be verified by identifying quotations from Bhadanta Śubhagupta in the Bahir-artha-parīkṣā of the Tattva-saṃgraha (pañjika) with verses in the Bāhyārtha-siddhi-kārikā of Dge-sruṇs. The writer has prepared the following list of identification. (Skt.: Tattva-saṃgraha, Tib.

(1) Śubhagupta no Kotoba-ron, Chizan Gakuho, No. 22, pp. 54–55.
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1) dhi-mātratveṣam samādhayay... (p. 582, 1–2) = k. 25 (201 a, 3): blo tsam ŋid du......
2) tulyāpara-kṣanōtpādād... (p. 552, 6–7), cf. k. 31 (201 a, 8): ḫdra baḥi skad cig......
3) pratyeka-paramāṇūnām... (p. 551, 21–22) = k. 40 (201 b, 6): rdul phran rnam......
4) Bhadanta-Śubhaguptas tv āha......kevalam aṇava eva.......na sāvyavatvam.

(p. 556, 16 ff), cf. k. 42 (201 b, 7): de phyir phyogs chaḥi......
5) nānyo 'sti grāhaka...... (p. 569, 14–15) = k. 62 (202 b, 4–5): šes pa las gṣan......
6) punaḥ sa ev'āha—atha saha-sābda eka-kāla vivakṣayā...... (p. 567, 25 ff), cf. k. 64
(202 b, 6): dus gcig tu ni......
7) saha-sāvdaša ca loke...... (p. 567, 17–18) = k. 67 (202 b, 8): ḫjig rtën ḫdi na......
8) yadā ca sarva-praṇabhṛtām...... (p. 568, 1–2), cf. k. 69 (203 a, 1–2): gal te thams cad......
9) kim cānyāḍrāmbha...... (p. 568, 2–7), cf. k. 70 (203 a, 2–3) gṣan kyis dmigs pa......
10) pūrvaikaiva tu...... (p. 569, 15–16) = k. 77 (203 a, 6–7): gaṅ gis lhan cig......
11) syād etat—na hi mukhyato yāḍrśam...... (p. 570, 18 ff), cf. k. 80–81 (203 a, 8–b, 2):
     šes pa moṅ bar......
12) sākāra-jñāna-pakṣe...... (p. 570, 23–24) = k. 83 (203 b, 3): šes pa rnam bcas......
13) katham tad-grāhakam...... (p. 561, 11–12) = k. 85 (203 b, 4–5): de ḫdzin byed de......
14) sākāraṁ tan nirākāram...... (p. 573, 7–8) = k. 91 (203 b, 8): rnam pa bcas sam......
15) sa hy āha—yathaiva bhavatām vijñāna-vādināṁ...... (p. 572, 10–12), cf. k. 97
(204 a, 4–5): ji ltar khzyod kyi......
16) atra Bhadanta-Śubhaguptaḥ pramāṇayati—yo jñāna-ākāraḥ sa saṁvāditve sati ......(p. 574, 20–22), cf. k. 7 (200 a, 6) šes pa mi bsļu......

The Bāhyārthā-siddhi-kārika consists of 183 couplets. Judging from the fact that prose fragments commencing with "Bhadanta Śubhaguptas tv āha..." etc. are often quoted by Kamalaśīla, it appears that there was originally its prose commentary, which, however, was not translated into Tibetan. It is quite obvious that this treatise is intended for refuting the Vijñānavāda theory and proving the objective reality of external object. It

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(1') Text reads 'ṭvena.
(2) For jñānac cākṣuṣair read jñānān nākṣa-dhir.
(3) For loke 'nyon ('ṣyān) naivānena (-dnyena) vīṇā read loke 'smin naivānyena vīṇā.
(4) Text reads sattvam prāṇa-, perhaps incorrectly.
(5) For praṇjānam read sajñānam.
starts with stating the Vijñānavāda doctrine that the object of eyes and other
senses does not exist in the external world independently of the consciousness,
just as the object seen in a dream or the second moon seen by those who are
afflicted with eye-disease are not really existent, and this doctrine is criticized
through various arguments. It is noteworthy that Šubhagupta evidently
directs his attack toward the views of Vasubandhu and Dignāga. In the
Vimśatika-vijnaptimātratā-siddhi, realists assail the Vijñānavādins, arguing
that if the object were not real, then our purposive action tending toward
it would not be fulfilled, as for instance we cannot be satisfied with meals
and drinks seen in a dream. In vindication of the Vijñānavāda theory,
Vasubandhu, citing an instance of nocturnal emission which is caused in
spite of the absence of real woman, asserts that an action toward the
object is possible even though the object is unreal. This thought of
Vasubandhu is retorted by Šubhagupta. He is of the opinion that the reality
of an external object is proved not through the fulfilment of an action
tending toward it, but through the ascertainment of the object (arthanisçaya).
Man can act upon an illusory cognition, but he can not get then
the ascertainment of the object. It might be argued that a man would not
discharge semen during a dream if he had not ascertained that he is with
a woman. In anticipation of this argument, Šubhagupta states that the
seminal emission is the result of the carnal desire which may be aroused
whether there is a real object or not. If it should be maintained that an
object is unreal, then the object seen in a dream would not be distinguished
from the object seen through the actual sense, both being existent only in
the consciousness. But the fact is that a man does not find the child whom
he got in a dream, while, if he really got a child, he can ascertain its
objective reality. The above arguments are recognized as being levelled
against Vasubandhu's theory.

Šubhagupta holds the view that the external object is the union of atoms.

(6) Cf. Vimśatika, k. 4 & Comm.
(7) Cf. Bahyārtha-siddhi-k., kk. 124–133 (205 a, 6- b, 4).
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As an atom does not exist independently by itself, a single atom can never be reflected in the image. We recognize the union of many homogeneous atoms as a single substance, just as we form the idea of continuance on really a series of similar moments. In the course of his discussion on atoms, Śubhagupta refers to the following view: — the presentation of a certain form is not produced from that (= external object), because (the external object which is supposed to have a visible form) is not a real substance.

This is exactly the Dignāga’s view set forth in his criticism of the Vasubandhu’s definition of perception as being produced by that external object (9) (tato’rthād vijnānam pratyakṣam). A visible object must be the aggregation of many atoms, but, according to Dignāga, the aggregation is able to be apprehended by unifying through the conceptual construction a multiplicity of perception produced by each of its constituents. Hence, being a product of the conceptual construction, the aggregation is not a real substance and is incapable of producing the mental reflex of its own form. Śubhagupta contradicts the above-stated view of Dignāga, asserting that the aggregation of atoms is to be regarded as a simple substance existing objectively. His theory may well be identified with the realist doctrine ascribed to Vāgbhaṭa in the Ālambana-parikṣa-ṭikā of Vinitadeva.

As stated above, Śubhagupta is called by Haribhadrasūri a follower of Dharmakīrti. However, the following is mentioned evidently in opposition to Dharmakīrti’s theory: — there is no apprehender other than the cognition, and the cognition through senses is not produced without an object; it is on this ground that the blue (object) and its cognition are considered as being apprehended together (saha-saṁwitti) and not on the ground of their

(8) ibid., k. 40 (201 b, 6).
(9) ibid., kk. 31-32 (201 a, 8-9, 1).
(10) ibid., k. 34 (201 b, 2).
(12) Bāhyārtha-siddhi-k., kk. 35-36 (201 b, 2-4).
non-difference. In the Pramaṇa-viniścaya, Dharmakīrti propounds the theory that [proposition:] the blue (object) and its cognition are not different, [reason:] because they are invariably found together (sahāpalambha-niyama). Šubhagupta examines the meaning of the term ‘together’ (saha). If it is taken as implying simultaneity (eka-kāla), then the reason is inconclusive, for the Buddha’s intellect is not without a difference from the mind of living beings, although the former is operative simultaneously with the latter, or the mind is considered as being different from other subordinate mental activities which operate simultaneously with it. If, on the other hand, the term ‘together’ is to mean the sameness, then the reason is contradictory, because it is generally admitted that the term ‘together’ presupposes ‘difference’ (anyā). Moreover, we should recognize the fact that the object which is cognized by one person is cognized also by another. Accordingly, if the term ‘together’ is interpreted as ‘one’ (eka) in the sense of ‘by one person’, then the reason is inadmissible (asiddha). Even when ‘one’ is taken in the sense of ‘as one’, the reason contradicts the fact that the omniscience who has insight into the minds of all living beings does not regard them ‘as one’.

We have to omit, in this short paper, to enter further into details of the arguments developed in the Bāhyārtha-siddhi-kārikā. It, however, should not be overlooked that Šubhagupta’s interpretation of ‘sahāpalambha-niyama’ as the necessary relation of the cognition with the external object is undoubtedly realistic, while the above-mentioned theory of Dharmakīrti is probative of his being a Vijñānavādin. We learn from this fact that Šubhagupta was not a faithful successor of Dharmakīrti’s thought. It seems likely that Šubhagupta was a teacher of Dharmottara, for the latter

(14) Bāhyārtha-siddhi-k., k. 62 (202 b, 4–5).
(16) Bāhyārtha-siddhi-k., k. 64 (202 b, 6).
(17) ibid., kk. 67–69 (202 b, 8–203 a, 2).
and his successors are known to have interpreted Dharmakīrti’s theory from the Sautrāntika viewpoint; but no conclusive evidence in support of the guru-siṃhya relation between the two has been obtained so far. All we can say quite safely is that Śubhagupta flourished after Dharmakīrti and before Śāntarakṣita and Haribhadrasūri: that is to say, his date can be fixed at ca. 650–750 A. D.

While this paper was being printed, I was presented by Dr. E. Frauwallner with an article published in WZKSOA, Bd. I, a footnote of which urged me to refer to his another article “Dignaga und anderes” published in the Festschrift Moriz Winternitz. He proved therein already the identity of Śubhagupta with Dge-sruṅs, basing upon the same sources that I made reference to. I regret for my inattention to this article. However, the list of identification and brief accounts of Śubhagupta’s arguments, which were left unpublished by Dr. Frauwallner, may not be of no value.