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## DHARMAKĪRTI

by Eli Franco

*Frauwallner's Sketch of Dharmakīrti's Work*<sup>1</sup>

In his path-breaking paper, *Die Reihenfolge und Entstehung der Werke Dharmakīrti's* ("The Sequence and the Arising of Dharmakīrti's Works"), Frauwallner (1954) sketched for the first time the broad outlines of Dharmakīrti's entire oeuvre. Frauwallner begins with the number of chapters in the *Pramāṇavārttika* (hereafter PV) and their unusual order. The PV is a commentary on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (hereafter PS) which contains six chapters<sup>2</sup>; Dharmakīrti's commentary, however, has only four. The *Pramāṇasiddhi*<sup>3</sup> chapter consists in a detailed commentary on Dignāga's introductory verse (*maṅgalaśloka*), and the other three chapters deal with perception, inference for oneself, and inference for another (or in Frauwallner's terminology: inference and proof; hereafter I will use the terms inference for oneself and for another, which are now more commonly used). The Buddhist tradition, however, transmitted these chapters in an unusual order, namely, *Svārthānumāna*, *Pramāṇasiddhi*, *Pratyakṣa*, and *Parārthānumāna*. Further, only the first chapter was commented upon by Dharmakīrti. This unusual order was already discussed by Stcherbatsky,<sup>4</sup> the founder of modern scholarship on the Buddhist epistemological tradition, who

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<sup>2</sup>These are *pratyakṣa*, *svārthānumāna*, *parārthānumāna*, *dṛṣṭānta* and *dṛṣṭāntābhāsa*, *anyāpoha* and *jāti*.

<sup>3</sup>As I suggested elsewhere, this title should not be understood as "Establishment of the means of knowledge [namely perception and inference]", but as "Establishment [that the Buddha is] a means of knowledge."

<sup>4</sup>BL, vol. II, p. 38ff., with reference to a lecture by Vostrikov. See also Kellner 2004.

reports the traditional explanations by the commentators on this issue. The commentators, however, attempt to find rational reasons for this state of affairs, whereas Frauwallner looks for personal reasons.

He begins by observing that chapters two to four are truly a commentary (*vārttika*) on the PS. Chapter two explains the five epithets of the Buddha in the *maṅgalaśloka* of the PS. Chapter three elucidates point by point Dignāga's theory of perception (i.e., the *svamata* part in the PS I, vv. 1-12). It deals with the two means of knowledge which correspond to two kinds of objects (vv. 1ff. on PS I v. 2), rejects the attempt to prove further means and objects of knowledge (vv. 76ff.<sup>5</sup> on PS I v. 2b-3a), elaborates on Dignāga's definition of perception (vv. 123ff. on PS I v. 3b), answers the question why perception (*pratyakṣa*) is called after the senses (*akṣa*) (vv. 191ff. on PS I v. 4a), and so forth till the end of v. 12.<sup>6</sup> In the same manner, chapter four of the PV begins with extensive comments on chapter three of the PS. It explains the definitions of inference for oneself (vv. 1ff. on PS III v. 1) and thesis (vv. 15ff. on PS III v. 2), and summarizes the theory of reason (vv. 189ff.). The work then ends abruptly.

The first chapter of the PV, on the other hand, does not relate directly to the PS. It begins with a programmatic verse:

*pakṣadharmas tadamśena vyāpto hetus tridhaiva saḥ /*  
*avinābhāvānīyamād dhetvābhāsāt tato 'pare //*

The reason is a property of the subject [of inference]  
pervaded by a part of it. It is only of three kinds  
because of the restriction of the invariable relation.  
Those different from it are pseudo-reasons.<sup>7</sup>

This verse has no relation to PS II, which begins with a division of inference into inference for oneself and for another, and proceeds with an explanation of the former. In his own commentary, Dharmakīrti defends in great detail the use of the

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<sup>5</sup>I am not quite sure why Frauwallner considers this section to begin at v.76. As far as I can see it begins already at v.64.

<sup>6</sup>For a more detailed correspondence see below.

<sup>7</sup>For a recent German translation with rich annotation see Steinkellner 2013: 4.

word *pakṣadharmā* by Dignāga against the criticism of Íśvarasena, and Dignāga's words are quoted. Thus, one may have the impression that there is a relation between Dharmakīrti's verse and PS II. However, such an impression would be deceiving, for Dignāga uses the word *pakṣadharmā* in PS III (v. 8, and its explanation in a metonymical usage, *upacāra*, in v. 9). The reference to PS III is also clear from the discussion in *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (hereafter PVin) III. Further, the words *trividhaiva saḥ* and *avinābhāvaniyamāt* do not refer to Dignāga's theory, but to Dharmakīrti's own division of reasons into effect, own nature and non-perception. After the explanation of the term *pakṣadharmā*, Dharmakīrti explains in detail his theory of reason (*hetu*). Only the above-mentioned three are valid reasons because only in them is there a firm relation (*avinābhāva*) between reason and consequence. In the case of *svabhāva* *hetu*, the relation rests on the identity of nature. The question is raised as to how reason and consequence could be distinguished if they have the same nature, and is answered that the two are only concepts that refer to the same thing in reality. In the case of reason as effect (*kārya* *hetu*), the firm connection is based on the fact that an effect would not be possible without a cause. Verses 5-8 discuss various types of non-perception. The next section (vv. 9-13) deals with some special cases and shows how they are subsumed under the one or the other of the three types of reason. Crucial to Dharmakīrti's theory is that mere non-perception of the reason in the dissimilar instances is not sufficient to establish the validity of the reason (vv. 14-32). In the subsequent section, the three reasons are discussed in more detail. Reason as result is examined in vv. 33ff. The discussion of reason as own nature (v. 41ff.) leads to an extensive digression (vv. 42-186) on the theory of concept (*anyāpoha*). Finally non-perception is dealt with in vv. 199ff. In this connection the reliability of tradition or "sacred writings" (*āgama*) is discussed in great detail (vv. 215-342). The structure of this chapter seems chaotic ("wirr"), but it is clear that it does not follow the presentation of the PS, even though Dignāga's words are sometimes quoted in justification of Dharmakīrti's own theories. The commentator Karṇakagomin

points out several times (PVSVT, pp. 58, 78, 79) that some of the quotations refer to Dignāga's lost work *Hetumukha*. Thus, in content and structure the first chapter of the PV is unlike the others inasmuch as it is not based on the PS. Further, it actually does not deal with inference, but with reason, as is clearly stated in the programmatic verse quoted above. This is also clear from a comparison with Dharmakīrti's later work, the PVin. Although based on the PV, the PVin is an independent presentation of Dharmakīrti's ideas. It consists of three chapters: Perception, Inference for oneself, and Inference for another. While chapters one and three repeat with some modifications chapters three and four of the PV, this is not the case with chapter two, which begins, just like PS II, with the two kinds of inference and the nature of inference for oneself, followed by a discussion of the three characteristics of valid reason (*trairūpya*), which were extensively discussed by Dignāga. Many of the verses come from PV IV (190-194, 223-236). Only then is the doctrine of firm relation and the three kinds of reasons presented on the basis of PV I,<sup>8</sup> followed by a detailed discussion of each of the three kinds. The comprehensive presentation in the PVin II confirms that PV I is not a *Vārttika* on Dignāga's PS II, but an independent work.

Why did Dharmakīrti connect an independent work to the other three chapters of the PV? Frauwallner assumes that this independent work already existed before Dharmakīrti began writing the PV, and this is also the reason why he placed it at the beginning of the work. This assumption also explains why PV I is the only chapter with auto-commentary. On the PV itself (i.e., the other three chapters), Dharmakīrti never composed a commentary.

The question now arises as to why Dharmakīrti was content with such a loose connection and has not attempted to bring his earlier work up to date and reshape it to fit the context of the PV as a commentary on the PS. Frauwallner's answer is that the PV is an incomplete work. This is clear from the fact that chapter four ends abruptly, and several other

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<sup>8</sup> For non-perception see PV I (together with the Vrtti) vv. 6-8, 201 and 203, for own nature vv. 4b, 188, 194-198, and for result vv. 4, 36-40, 33-35.

chapters of the PS are not commented on at all. The same is also clear from the comparison of PV IV with PVin III. Both begin with a discussion of the word *pakṣa* (thesis) and continue with the doctrine of reason on the basis of PS III v. 8f., where Dignāga discusses the wheel of reasons. It is characteristic of Dharmakīrti that he reads his own theory of three reasons into Dignāga's statements. But here the similarity between the two chapters ends. First, two passages from PV I are introduced (vv. 207-214, 189-193; also 9-12), but more importantly a new section on pseudo-reasons (*hetvābhāsa*) begins, in which unestablished, inconclusive and contradictory reasons are discussed. The section is concluded by a few remarks on the example (*dṛṣṭānta*) and its flaws (*dṛṣṭāntadoṣa*), refutation (*dūṣaṇa*) and false objections (*jāti*). Here too verses from the PV are used, mostly from PV IV (181-188, 206-222, 237-244), occasionally from other chapters (PV II 11-19), but the presentation as a whole is new. This proves that the PV IV is incomplete.

What caused Dharmakīrti to abandon his work cannot be said with certainty, but there are some indications. From the final verse of the PV (PV 4.286) it is clear that Dharmakīrti did not enjoy the success he had expected, and perhaps for this reason he stopped his work on the PV and began a new, shorter, but more effective work, the PVin.<sup>9</sup> Concerning Dharmakīrti's other works, the *Nyāyabindu* (NB) is close to the PVin. Like the latter, it is divided into three chapters; and also its structure is the closest to it. Thus, chapter two, just as in the PVin and in contradistinction to the PV, begins with the division of inference into *svārtha*- and *parārthānumāna* (vv. 1-2), defines *svārthānumāna* (vv. 3-4), discusses the three characteristics of the reason (vv. 5-10), and continues with a detailed description of the three kinds of reason. Furthermore, there is a long section on pseudo-reasons (vv. 57-141), which corresponds closely to PVin III, and which is absent in PV IV.

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<sup>9</sup> While the mood of frustration and bitterness is clear in the above verse, and also in another verse attributed to Dharmakīrti (SRK 50.29, p. 297), it is not clear where he expected this success to come from. Obviously not from the PV itself which was still unfinished. Perhaps from some lost works? See Lindtner 1980 and Steinkellner 1991.

Most of the verses of this section match word for word sentences in PVin III. The NB, Frauwallner says, is obviously a later work, for the textbook presupposes a conception of the system. And it is understandable that Dharmakīrti relies here on the PVin, in which his system received its final form.

Next to the NB stands the *Hetubindu* (HB). Already their names show that they belong to the same period in Dharmakīrti's life. Frauwallner draws an analogy here to the titles of Dignāga's two works, *Hetumukha* and *Nyāyamukha*. Further, the PVin is referred to in the HB, which thus must be of a later date. In the HB Dharmakīrti takes up again the subject of his oldest work, PV I, namely the three kinds of reason. The same programmatic verse is used at the beginning of the work, and the subject matter is dealt with more systematically and in a tighter order without losing itself in abstruse problems.

Finally, the *Vādanyāya* (VN) seems to be Dharmakīrti's last work. Dharmakīrti criticizes here the Nyāya teachings on "points of defeat" (*nigrahasthāna*) and presents his own theory. This is a topic that has not been dealt with in the PVin or the NB, although it would have been appropriate to discuss it there. Further, Dharmakīrti's fully developed system is presupposed in the VN, which indicates a later date for this composition. New is also the detailed and thoughtful manner in which he deals with the opponents' teachings.

To sum up, Dharmakīrti's oldest work deals with the theory of reason, and Frauwallner suggested calling it *Hetuprakaraṇa*. It was later integrated into the PV as its first chapter. Dharmakīrti's essential contribution on the topic of inference is included in it, namely, concerning the firm connection (*avinābhāva*) and the three kinds of reason that rest on it. It has the characteristics of a work of youth ("Jugendwerk"). It is rich in new ideas and tends to get lost in digressions. Everything in it is still chaotic ("wirr") and immature.

After this oldest work, according to Frauwallner, Dharmakīrti decided to write an extensive commentary on the PS. He began his work on the grandest scale ("im größten Stil"). He explained Dignāga's words extensively and discussed everything connected to them. He compressed a surprising

abundance of ideas into the work, but slowly began to languish. He overtaxed himself and the work grew out of size. Furthermore, Dignāga's work restricted him and he felt obliged to come back again and again to topics that he had already dealt with in a different context, and thus the presentation became disrupted and confusing. Consequently it seemed preferable to him to present his thought independently without being bound to Dignāga's text. So he decided to stop his work. The chapters on the *maṅgala* verse and on perception were already finished. The chapter on *svārthānumāna* he left aside because it would have required too much repetition of what he already said in the *Hetuprakaraṇa*. "At that moment he was just working on the chapter on proof" (p. 153 = Kl. Schr., p.688: "Augenblicklich arbeitete er gerade am Kapitel über den Beweis." I quote this as a good example of Frauwallner's vivid and engaging style, but also of the easy-going way with which he presents his speculations as a matter of fact). In lieu of the missing chapter, Dharmakīrti put the old *Hetuprakaraṇa* at the head of the work, placed some bitter verses at the beginning and the end, and put an end to this work ("machte einen Strich unter dieses Werk"), so boldly planned, so hopefully begun.

Again he started a new large work, which would present his own ideas independently, the PVin. He used here materials from his older works, but gave them a new form. He structured the whole presentation in three chapters on Perception, Inference for oneself and Inference for another. Unlike the PV, which was entirely in verse, the new work was in prose with interspersed verses. Only a small part of it was new, but the arrangement of the material is tight and transparent. Where it seems necessary, additions and improvements were introduced. Thus, a new valuable work has arisen, which unified the formless abundance of the PV into a rich, well-structured whole, in form and content an unparalleled masterpiece.

With the PVin, Dharmakīrti's accomplishment reached its zenith. His philosophical system was complete. His next work was for the benefit of students. Dharmakīrti now had a circle of students, and a manual was required as a basis for the oral instruction. So he wrote the NB, in which he summarized the PVin. (Again we see sheer speculation presented as a matter of



fact, and again it seems so seductive and convincing.) This work shows that Dharmakīrti had gradually become successful, had disciples; indeed, there are no bitter words as in the PV. But his success was still limited. In Nālandā, the great center of Buddhist learning, Dignāga's works were still used. One seems to feel that Dharmakīrti's disappointment and bitterness continued to have an effect. He increasingly withdrew into pure logic, and his tone became harsher and sharper. He wrote two more large works, the *Hetubindu* and the *Vādanyāya*. In the former he returned to the work of his youth on the three types of reasons. In the latter he brought about an important supplement to his system and polemicized with an unusual sharpness against the rival Nyāya school.

These are the broad outlines of Dharmakīrti's work and its development as described by Frauwallner some sixty years ago, surely speculative, but still unsurpassed, and still presupposed to a greater or lesser degree by all scholars of Dharmakīrti's work, and to my knowledge, never critically assessed.<sup>10</sup>

Now, to understand the details of Dharmakīrti's contribution to Indian and Buddhist philosophy, we have to contrast his work with that of his predecessors, especially Dignāga and Kumāṛila. Clearly, his innovation lies in two major areas: in logic, that is, in the conception and development of the three kinds of reasons, and in his dealing with religious issues, which seem to be largely if not entirely absent in Dignāga's work.<sup>11</sup> I shall try to show that these two areas are not disconnected from each other. Dharmakīrti's contribution

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<sup>10</sup> Is the PV I really a work of youth? Was the VN written by an angry old man? (For the former, see for instance the title of Steinkellner 2013.)

<sup>11</sup> The latter area was somewhat neglected by Frauwallner and early scholarship on the *pramāṇa* tradition. However, in the last 20-30 years a strong shift in this direction has occurred. In the last Dharmakīrti conference, about half the contributions were on religious topics and the title we chose for the proceedings clearly reflects this: *Religion and Logic in Buddhist Philosophical Analysis*.

Was Dharmakīrti primarily a logician as Frauwallner (and before him Stcherbatsky) presented him? Or did he primarily develop his logic in order to defend the Buddhist religion as others (myself included) tend to think? These are questions that will continue to be debated by Dharmakīrti scholars in the foreseeable future.

to the theory of perception is perhaps less decisive, but here too he made some important revisions and supplements to Dignāga's work. Two major parts in Dharmakīrti's philosophy that are still not sufficiently understood are his philosophy of language (*apoha*) and his doctrine of the relation between the means of knowledge and its result (*pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*), where the topic of self-perception plays a decisive role, and to which the greater part of PV III is dedicated. Accordingly, I will not deal with them here, for important studies on these areas are now in progress. It is remarkable that after some eighty years of intense scholarship, the PV is still far from being completely translated.

*Trairūpya before Dharmakīrti*

To understand what Dharmakīrti was trying to do in the theory of inference, we must look at the historical development of the theory of *trairūpya*, which purports to specify the three conditions that a successful reason must satisfy. As I shall show, he was facing problems in at least three major areas: first and foremost, valid inferences that are detrimental to the Buddhist religion; second, sophisms that comply with the rules of *trairūpya* but establish absurd consequences, in fact any consequence; and third, inferences of everyday practice. The latter were perhaps not of paramount importance to Dharmakīrti, but nevertheless had to be addressed as the indispensable basis for his overriding concern of making inferences reliable; no theory of inference in classical South Asia would be taken seriously if it were incapable of establishing the paradigmatic inference of fire from smoke.

One of the obvious problems in the theory of *trairūpya* is that in many cases one cannot know whether a reason fulfils the third condition, which requires that the reason (*hetu*) be absent from everything that lacks the property to be proved (*sādhya*).<sup>12</sup> While a single observation may suffice to establish the presence of the reason in the subject of inference and in the similar examples, in order to know that it never occurs in

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<sup>12</sup> In what follows I repeat parts of F 1990.

dissimilar instances one would have to know all dissimilar instances at all times and all places, and determine that the reason does not occur in them. In other words, one would have to be omniscient. Take for example the inference *par excellence* from smoke to fire. Can we really be sure, as popular wisdom teaches us, that there is no smoke without fire? Granted that we have observed smoke and fire together thousands of times and that we have never seen, nor heard of anybody else having seen, smoke without fire, does this imply that smoke always arises from fire? The answer is obviously no. Here is a way of producing smoke without fire. As the chemistry department at the University of Tel Aviv informs us, smoke is not a precise scientific term. The closest definition would be: small particles floating in the air which are perceived by the naked eye as a cloud and not as separate particles. There is also a well-known way to obtain smoke without fire: Take a bottle of concentrated salicylic acid and a bottle of concentrated ammoniac; open up the two bottles and you will see smoke without fire. The vapours of the acid and the vapours of the ammoniac react to each other in the air, and the product of the reaction is chloride of ammonium, or smoke without fire.

Dignāga does not deal with the problem of the determination of a valid reason. At least I fail to see that he said anything explicitly, or even implicitly, on this topic.<sup>13</sup> What seems to interest him is a clarification and systematisation of all possible relations between the three conditions (he takes into account altogether 27 permutations, of which 9 are of interest). Why Dignāga had nothing to say on the practical difficulty of determining that a reason is always absent in the *vipakṣa* must remain a matter of speculation. (This is not the only place where we expect Dignāga to say more than he actually does.) It is worth pointing out that for the illustration of the *hetucakra*, Dignāga goes, so to speak, against his own metaphysical presuppositions and uses the ontology of the Vaiśeṣika. This is clear from use of atoms and space (*ākāśa*) as examples for

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<sup>13</sup>PS 2.11 (= PVSV 95.8-9) speaks of the invariable relation (*avyabhicāra*) between the *liṅga* and the (*sādhya*)*dharmā*, but says nothing on the question of how such relation is to be determined.

eternal entities. Perhaps he used this ontology because it makes up a world with a relatively small and definitive number of entities with clear relationships among them, and is thus better suited to illustrate all possible combinations of the three conditions.

As is well known, Dignāga was not the first to use the theory of *trairūpya*. Among the texts which have come down to us, the theory appears for the first time in the *Shun Zhong Lun* attributed to Asaṅga,<sup>14</sup> the *Tarkaśāstra*<sup>15</sup> and in the *Vāda-vidhāna* of Vasubandhu. The work of Vasubandhu is more likely to have exercised a direct influence on Dignāga, considering that Dignāga is supposed to have written a commentary on the *Vāda-vidhāna*. Whatever the case may be, it is worthwhile noting that in all three works the triple-form reason is not related to inference (*anumāna*). The *Vāda-vidhāna*—as its title indicates—is a work on debate (*vāda*). Vasubandhu, who rejected certain types of sophistic debate such as *jalpa* and *vitandā*, mentions that *vāda* is the only type of acceptable debate,<sup>16</sup> and defined it as proving one's own thesis and criticising the opponent's thesis.<sup>17</sup> In this connection, he also provides definitions for the different parts of proof in debate, which—in opposition to the five-membered proof in Nyāya—he reduced to three: thesis (*pratijñā*), reason (*hetu*), and example (*dṛṣṭānta*).<sup>18</sup> Commenting on his own definition of *hetu*, he says that it is a property of the subject which is established in similar instances and which does not occur in dissimilar instances: *yo dharmah pakṣasya sapakṣe siddho vipakṣe nāsti*.<sup>19</sup> But as mentioned

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<sup>14</sup> Taisho, vol. 30, No. 1565, p. 42a, quoted by Katsura 1985: 166.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Tucci 1929: 13, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. fragment A I 2: *traividhyānabhyupagamāt. eka evāyam kathāmārgaḥ, tasya prayojanaṁ tattvābodho lābhādayaś ca* (“wording doubtful” according to Frauwallner). The numbers of the fragments here and in the following notes refer to Frauwallner 1933: 300ff. (Kl. Schr. pp. 479ff.).

<sup>17</sup> Fragment A I 3: *svaparapakṣayoḥ siddhyasiddhyartham vacanam vādaḥ*.

<sup>18</sup> Fragment A I 5-8.

<sup>19</sup> Fragment A I 7a; cf also A II 9.

above, these definitions have nothing to do with inference. Frauwallner, who analysed the content of the *Vāḍavidhāna* from fragments presumably quoted by Uddyotakara, raised some arguments to show that the *Vāḍavidhāna* did not contain any discussion of the *pramāṇas*, which means that it did not contain any discussion of inference (*anumāna*).<sup>20</sup> The dissociation of inference and proof in public debate, however, is not as surprising as it may seem when we look at other ancient works on debate. The most famous example is that of the *Nyāyasūtra*, whose Books One and Five presumably formed originally a manual of debate. When we look at the topics of the *Nyāyasūtra*, we find that the *avayavas* and the *pramāṇas* (which include inference) form different categories (*padārtha*). In other words, the *avayavas* which are the constituent parts of a proof in debate (it is never stated in the *Nyāyasūtras* what they are parts of; one may assume that the presupposed term is *sādhana*, or perhaps as in the *Carakasamhitā*, *sthāpanā*) and which contain such elements as thesis, reason, example, etc., are not parts of inference. And indeed, the old inferences, such as those mentioned in the old manuals of debate, did not contain them, for they were based mainly on analogies.<sup>21</sup> For instance, having tasted the salty taste of one drop of sea-water, one infers that the other drops of sea-water as well are salty; one infers rain upstream because the water is abundant downstream; or having observed that a man who changes his place has moved, one infers that the sun has likewise moved because it has changed its place in the sky, even though its movement is imperceptible. The formulation of these inferences certainly does not conform to the relatively rigid scheme of the *avayavas*. Furthermore, it is significant, I believe, that the reasoning and conclusions of the old inferences, such as the movement of the sun, the rain upstream, etc., are not, or at least were not meant to be, controversial, but were presented rather as conclusions about which everybody would agree. On

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<sup>20</sup> Frauwallner 1933: 297-298 (Kl. Schr., p. 476-477).

<sup>21</sup> I wonder whether the original meaning of the word *anumāna* as *pramāṇa* was analogy or similarity (cf. Apte s.v., meaning 3; cf. also *upamāna*).

the other hand, the topics that are used to illustrate proofs in debate, such as “sound is/is not eternal”, are immediately recognized as subjects of controversy among the different philosophical traditions. This indicates that the concepts of inference and proof in debate have arisen within different sets of questions, and were meant to solve different problems. Although the meagerness of the surviving materials does not allow a definitive conclusion, it seems that Vasubandhu was the first—or at least the first we know of—to have established an intimate relation between proof in debate and inference, and that this step was taken in the *Vādaśāstra*. We can see a connection between proof and inference in the *Vādaśāstra* when we compare the definitions of reason and inference (not of proof and inference, for inference is conceived here as the instrument by which one infers). The definition of reason is “the showing of a property which is not without that which has to be proved” (fragment B5: *tādṛgavinābhāvidharmopadarśanaṃ hetuḥ; tādṛś = sādhyā*). And the definition of inference is “seeing an object which is not without that which has to be inferred for someone who knows it” (fragment B2: *nāntarīyakārthadarśanaṃ tadvido 'numānaṃ*). Since *avinābhāva* and *nāntarīyakatva* are practically interchangeable, the main difference between the two definitions lies in their last words: *darśana* for inference, and *upadarśana* for reason. In other words, one can say that what is seen or cognized by an inference is shown or communicated by the reason or proof in a debate. The establishment of this basic identity between reason and inference is undoubtedly one of the most important contributions ever made in the history of Indian logic. From Vasubandhu’s time onwards, the basic identity between inference and proof in debate was accepted as a matter of course by all Indian philosophers—not only Buddhist, but Brahmanic and Jaina as well—and as far as I know has never been challenged. Furthermore, Vasubandhu has also set up the pattern—although he doesn’t use the terms—for what came to be called *svārtha*- and *parārthānumāna*. Vasubandhu’s inferential process corresponds to *svārthānumāna* and his proof in debate to *parārthānumāna*. The fact that Vasubandhu brought together two things which were originally treated separately may also

account for a certain overlapping of common inferential terms. For instance, it is possible that *hetu* and *sādhya* were originally used for proof, whereas *liṅga* was used for inference. This, however, is a supposition which needs more evidence than can be gained from the meager materials that survived of this and the preceding periods.<sup>22</sup> It is also interesting to observe a certain reversal of the relationship between inference and proof in debate. For if Vasubandhu started with the model of proof and changed the structure of inference to conform with the structure of proof, then when we are faced with the crystallized definitions, it is now proof which logically presupposes and seems to be fashioned after the model of inference, for proof consists in showing someone else what is inferred by inference.

Returning to the subject of the *trairūpya*, it does not appear in any of the fragments we have of the *Vādaśāstra*, and it seems that Vasubandhu introduced it only in the *Vādaśāstrā*.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, Dignāga's commentary on this work is lost, but an early dealing with the theory of *trairūpya* can be seen in the *Nyāyamukha*. The *Nyāyamukha* consists

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<sup>22</sup> As corroborative evidence cf. the use of *liṅga* and *hetu* in the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*: *hetu* is always used as a part of proof (*upadeśa*), whereas *liṅga* is still used in its literal meaning of "sign," for instance, temperature is the sign of wind.

<sup>23</sup> I follow here the allocation of fragments by Frauwallner; it would certainly be worthwhile examining the identification and allocation of fragments anew (especially as we know now how intuitively Frauwallner worked), but constraints of time prevent me from doing so. It is somewhat speculative, of course, to argue that something is absent in a work of which we only have a few fragments, but at least we can see that no mention of the *trairūpya* is made, neither in the definition of proof, nor in the definition of thesis, nor in the definition of reason, nor in the definition of inference, and also not in the few lines of commentary we have on these definitions. In F 1990 I followed Frauwallner and assumed that the *Vādaśāstra* was the later and more mature work. And I went into some unnecessary twists to explain why Vasubandhu first accepted the *trairūpya* in the *Vādaśāstrā* and then rejected it in the *Vādaśāstra*. This assumption seems to me untenable now and I consider the *Vādaśāstrā* to be the later work. In any case, it is clear that the *Vādaśāstrā* was the more important and authoritative work. This assumption is supported by the fact that Dignāga doubted the authenticity of the *Vādaśāstra*. Note also that when Śāntaraksita refers to the important works on *vāda*, he mentions the *Vādaśāstrā*, not the *Vādaśāstra*; cf. VNT, p. 142, translated in VN II, p. xiv.

mainly of two portions, the one dealing with proof, the other with criticism (*dūṣaṇa*) which includes false objections (*jāti*, *dūṣaṇābhāsa*), and a short discussion of the means of valid cognition (perception and inference) is inserted between the two sections. Thus, in the *Nyāyamukha*, unlike the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, it is still debate and proof which are prominent, whereas inference is dealt with briefly, as a sort of appendix to the exposé of proof (*sādhana*). In the *Nyāyamukha* the concepts of *sapakṣa* and *vipakṣa* are made more precise, objections are raised and answered, but above all we have the Wheel of Reasons in which the three characteristics and all their possible combinations are enumerated and analysed, so that we get a clear picture under which conditions any reason must be valid, contradictory, or inconclusive.

What then is Dignāga's contribution to the theory of *trairūpya*? Was it only in its systematisation as presented in the Wheel of Reasons? Even if his theoretical contribution was negligible, it seems that the systematisation has contributed to the dissemination and wide acceptance of the *trairūpya*, which was accepted by all philosophical traditions, sometimes with modifications as in the *Nyāyavārttika*. Note also that the origin of the theory may not have been Buddhist. Praśastapāda (PDhS §247) seems to attribute it to a certain Kāśyapa.<sup>24</sup>

Many details of the historical development of the *trairūpya* theory elude us, but nevertheless we have strong enough evidence to conclude that this theory was originally developed in the context of public philosophical and religious debate, and was later on adapted into inference. This, I think, can explain some of the problems involved in this theory, for the *trairūpya* is indeed appropriate for debate, but not for inference, as debate and inference have different purposes. The purpose of the debate is to win the argument, while the purpose of inference is to gain knowledge. If a Buddhist and a Naiyāyika

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<sup>24</sup>However, Katsura (1986: 73) argues that only lines 6-7 on the *hetvābhāsa* are to be attributed to Kāśyapa. This idea appears to be supported by the *Vyomavati* 567.25-29. Kāśyapa is also sometimes referred to as the author of the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*; cf. NV 94: 14-15, which precedes a quote of VS 2.2.19 with *yathā kāśyapīyam*.



engage in a debate, one can assume that they are already persuaded of the rightness of their respective systems. What they would try to do is not to gain new knowledge, but to convince their opponent and the audience that they are right. Thus, when one engages in a debate, proposes a thesis, and states a reason and an example to substantiate one's thesis, one would be only too glad if one's opponent cannot find a counter-example to refute one's thesis. But this does not mean that one debater is right and the other is wrong. The Taoist philosopher Chuang Tzu made this point nicely and clearly (Watson 1968: 48): "Suppose you and I have an argument. If you have beaten me instead of my beating you, then are you necessarily right and am I necessarily wrong? If I have beaten you instead of your beating me, then am I necessarily right and are you necessarily wrong? Is one of us right and the other wrong? Are both of us right or are both of us wrong? If you and I don't know the answer, then other people are bound to be even more in the dark. Whom shall we get to decide what is right? Shall we get someone who agrees with you to decide? But if he already agrees with you, how can he decide fairly? Shall we get someone who agrees with me? But if he already agrees with me how can he decide? Shall we get someone who disagrees with both of us? But if he already disagrees with both of us, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who agrees with both of us? But if he already agrees with both of us, how can he decide? Obviously then, neither you nor I nor anyone else can decide for each other. Shall we wait for still another person?"

Perhaps it was not immediately clear that what was good enough for debate was not good enough for inference. In any case, it is clear that the PS does not contain any deliberations about the problems of determining the absence of a reason in all dissimilar instances. Even in the NV, composed a generation or so after the PS, the problem of determination of valid reason in inference is still absent. First signs of trying to come to grips with it are found in the logic of Īśvarasena (570-630?), whom the Tibetan tradition considers to have been Dharmakīrti's teacher in matters of logic. As mentioned above, the problematic part of the *trairūpya* was the third condition: How is the absence in dissimilar cases to be determined? Is it by non-

perception of the reason in these cases? But what is non-perception? It is obviously not perception. Is it inference? If so, we need an inference before we make an inference, and thus fall into infinite regress. But if it is neither perception nor inference, what else could it be? For Dignāga allowed only these two means of valid cognition. This is perhaps the reason why Īśvarasena rejected Dignāga's theory of two means of valid cognition and added a third one, *anupalabdhi* or non-perception, which he may have borrowed from the Mīmāṃsā. However, this did not solve the problem, for even if non-perception is a means of valid cognition, its realm is quite limited; it is as limited as the realm of perception, and thus one couldn't possibly know that the reason is absent in all dissimilar instances in the world. Īśvarasena seems to have proposed further modifications to the theory of *trairūpya*; to the three characteristics he added a fourth one, namely, that the object of inference should not be sublated (*abādhitaviṣayatva*); and this characteristic, too, he seems to have borrowed from the Mīmāṃsā. However, this was obviously an *ad hoc* solution, and its shortcomings are so obvious that we need not dwell upon them here. More characteristics were added to the requirement of valid reason either by Īśvarasena himself or by some of his contemporaries. Thus, Dharmakīrti refers to a theory of six characteristics, which contained in addition to the four mentioned above a fifth characteristic according to which the reason must always be in the singular. Interestingly, although to my knowledge this requirement has never been formally accepted, it remained in place all through the classical period up to the latest development of Navya Nyāya. When the Indian logicians want to use a reason with more than one property, they do not put the two properties side by side (in which case the reason would not be in the singular), but add to the reason "an additional qualification" (cf. *saviśeṣa-* or *saviśeṣaṇa-hetu*), which then appears in locative absolute. In other words, Indian logicians never say "p is S because it is X and Y", but "p is S because it is X, while being Y". Further, a sixth characteristic was added to a valid reason, according to which the reason has

to be cognized.<sup>25</sup> As Dharmakīrti pointed out, this is already implied and need not be mentioned. Yet Dharmakīrti himself added the term *niścita* (“determined”) in his formulation of the *trairūpya* (cf. Steinkellner 1998). Another, somewhat rudimentary attempt to establish the presence of the reason only in similar instances was made by Kumārila in the *Ślokavārttika*. He suggested that this could be achieved by *bhūyodarśana*, that is, by seeing repeatedly/many times. The term may have been understood to include the “seeing”, i.e., the repeated observation of the absence of the reason in dissimilar instances (see also Steinkellner 2013: 173-174 and further references therein).

*Dharmakīrti's Recasting of the Trairūpya Theory*

Dharmakīrti objected to the addition of further characteristics to the definition of valid reason, perhaps because he saw that this would be a never ending story. Probably out of deference for Dignāga, he maintained that a valid reason has only three characteristics. But in fact the *trairūpya* ended its career with Dharmakīrti. For according to Dharmakīrti, the invariable concomitance between two things cannot be determined by observing their co-presence and co-absence, but only by the ascertainment of a necessary connection of causality or identity of nature. Cf. PV I, v. 31:

*kāryakāraṇabhāvād vā svabhāvād vā niyāmakāt /  
avinābhāvānīyamā 'darśanān na na darśanāt //*

The [logical] restriction of invariable concomitance is due to the restrictive [relation] of cause and effect or to the [restrictive relation of identity of] nature. It is neither due to the observation [of two things together] nor to non-observation [of two things together].

Of course this also did not solve the problem, for the problem is insoluble, and inferences are indeed either uncertain or tautological. There are at least two ways to render the

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. HB vol. I, 85.21, vol II, pp. 70ff.

inference from smoke to fire true, but tautological. Either one says that whatever produces smoke is fire, or that whatever is produced by fire is smoke. Referring to our experiment again, one may say that what was produced may look like smoke, may smell like smoke, but it is not smoke because it was not produced by fire. Or one may say that what we see is definitely smoke and that therefore the substance producing it must be fire, even though it is not manifested in its usual form. Dharmakīrti would probably opt for the second alternative; cf. PVSV v. 136 (p. 23):

*agnisvabhāvaḥ śakrasya mūrdhā yady agnir eva saḥ /*  
*athānagnisvabhāvo 'sau dhūmas tatra katham bhavet //*  
 If the [smoky] ant-hill<sup>26</sup> has the nature of fire, it is  
 nothing but fire. If it does not have the nature of fire,  
 how could smoke arise there?

Thus, the core of Dharmakīrti's inferences are the essential and necessary relations of *tadutpatti* and *tādātmya*. Yet even though the *trairūpya* doctrine was of little or no relevance for Dharmakīrti, he formally defended this doctrine. He classifies the nine reasons of the *hetucakra* in the following programmatic verse<sup>27</sup> (PVin III 34, trans. Iwata 2002: 228):

[Of the nine types of reason] two [valid] reasons  
 (the second and eighth reasons) and two

<sup>26</sup>This is probably a reference to the fire ritual. On the roll of an ant-hill or termite mound in the "establishing of fire" (*agnyādheya*), see Krick 1982: 139ff., esp. 141-142.

<sup>27</sup> The use of programmatic verses is one of the conspicuous stylistic features in Dharmakīrti's work. It can be seen, e.g., in PV I and in the *Hetubindu* (the same verse is used in both works); further, as already pointed out by Frauwallner (1954: 149, repr. Kl. Schr. 684), Dharmakīrti uses a programmatic verse in PV IV 195 in the section where he interprets the nine reasons of the *hetucakra* as his own doctrine of the three types of reasons, and in the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (PVin III 68) to introduce the section *hetvābhāsa*. At least in my eyes PV III 1-2 are programmatic verses for the section on the duality of *prameya* and *pramāṇa* (PV I 1-63; see Franco/Notake 2014: 3ff.). The most spectacular use of a programmatic verse is no doubt the one in the *Vādanyāya*, where Dharmakīrti provides nine different interpretations to the compound *asāadhanāṅgavacana*. Finally, as is well known, in the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter Dharmakīrti uses the *maṅgalaśloka* of the PS as a programmatic verse.

contradictory [reasons (the fourth and sixth reasons)] are [indicated in the Wheel of Reasons] for the purpose of establishing that [only] essential property (*svabhāva*) and effect (*kārya*) [are valid reasons]; a specific [reason (the fifth reason)] and a common [reason (the first reason)] are indicated in order to show that these are inconclusive reasons], because [opponents] dispute [that these are valid reasons]; the rest (the third, seventh and ninth reasons) [are indicated in order to] establish that [the valid reasons] are excluded [from all of the dissimilar instances].

Table of the Hetucakra\*

\*From R.S.Y. Chi, *Buddhist Formal Logic*, London 1969, p. 4.  
The numerals are added for the sake of clarity, and are not included in the original text.

I	II	III
1. Sound is permanent	1. Sound is impermanent	1. Sound is produced by effort
2. It is knowable	2. It is produced	2. It is impermanent
3. space	3. pot	3. pot
4. pot	4. space	4. lightning, space
5. presence in <i>sapakṣa</i>	5. presence in <i>sapakṣa</i>	5. presence in <i>sapakṣa</i>
6. presence in <i>vipakṣa</i>	6. absence in <i>vipakṣa</i>	6. both presence and absence in <i>vipakṣa</i>
7. inconclusive too broad	7. valid	7. inconclusive too broad
IV	V	VI
1. Sound is permanent	1. Sound is permanent	1. Sound is permanent
2. It is produced	2. It is audible	2. It is produced by effort
3. space	3. space	3. space
4. pot	4. pot	4. pot, lightning
5. absence in <i>sapakṣa</i>	5. absence in <i>sapakṣa</i>	5. absence in <i>sapakṣa</i>
6. presence in <i>vipakṣa</i>	6. absence in <i>vipakṣa</i>	6. both presence and absence in <i>vipakṣa</i>
7. contradictory	7. inconclusive too narrow	7. contradictory

VII	VIII	IX
1. Sound is not produced by effort	1. Sound is impermanent	1. Sound is permanent
2. It is impermanent	2. It is produced by effort	2. It is incorporeal
3. lightning, space	3. pot, lightning	3. atom, space
4. pot	4. space	4. action, pot
5. both presence and absence in <i>sapakṣa</i>	5. both presence and absence in <i>sapakṣa</i>	5. both presence and absence in <i>sapakṣa</i>
6. presence in <i>vipakṣa</i>	6. absence in <i>vipakṣa</i>	6. both presence and absence in <i>vipakṣa</i>
7. inconclusive too broad	7. valid	7. inconclusive too broad

The two important innovations in the above quoted verse are the identification of Dignāga's two valid reasons (2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>) with *svabhāva*hetu (which includes *anupalabdhi*hetu) and *kārya*hetu, and a different division of Dignāga's inconclusive reasons. Instead of the division into common (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>) and uncommon (5<sup>th</sup>), Dharmakīrti maintains a division into particular and common (5<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>) as inconclusive, and the rest (3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>) as present in the *vipakṣa*. Further, since the cause can exist without the effect, the effect cannot pervade its cause entirely and is thus present only in part of the *sapakṣa* (or in other words, it is both present and absent in the *sapakṣa*). Consequently *kārya*hetu corresponds to Dignāga's 8<sup>th</sup> reason. *Svabhāva*hetu, on the other hand, can be present in some or all of the similar instances, and thus can correspond to the 2<sup>nd</sup> or to the 8<sup>th</sup> reason.

The Naiyāyikas used two further reasons, (*kevala*-) *anvayin* and (*kevala*-) *vyatirekin*.<sup>28</sup> These reasons appear for the first time in the NV; and although Uddyotakara was probably not the first to conceive them, it is generally assumed that this doctrine was developed after Dignāga, perhaps even in response to Dignāga. However Dharmakīrti claims, probably anachronistically, that these two reasons appear in Dignāga's *hetucakra* in order to reject this opinion (*vivādāt*; cf. PV 4. 195

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<sup>28</sup>One has to distinguish the *kevalavyatirekin* reason from Dignāga's reasons that are absent in the *sapakṣa*; here it is the *sapakṣa* itself which does not exist. Similarly, in the *kevalānvayin* reason the *vipakṣa* itself does not exist.

= PVin 3.34). Unlike Dignāga, Dharmakīrti does not interpret the 5<sup>th</sup> reason as absent in the *sapakṣa* and the *vipakṣa*, but as doubtful regarding its presence. As we shall see below, Dharmakīrti didn't claim that the *ātman* being present only in living bodies is absent in both *sapakṣa* and *vipakṣa*, but that the *ātman* being imperceptible, one does not know whether it is present or not in them; perhaps the *ātman* does exist in pots which do not breath. As for the 1<sup>st</sup> reason, Dharmakīrti argues that absence of the reason in dissimilar instances can be established by *prasajyapratishedha* even when no such instances exist. Non-existing things can be denied to possess a certain property, and this denial itself is a property of the non-existing things. This is possible because the *vipakṣa* (just like the *pakṣa* and *sapakṣa*) does not consist of particulars, but is a conceptual construction/universal, and the latter can be based on existence, non-existence or both. The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> reasons are indicated because they exist in the *vipakṣa* (this is true of course for the 1<sup>st</sup> reason as well, but according to Dharmakīrti it was stated for a different reason).

### *Sophisms*

In addition to the above-mentioned problem of determination of an invariable relation between two entities, the *trairūpya* doctrine contained two further “structural problems”, which opened the door to a large number of sophisms, that is, inferences that comply with the requirements of the *trairūpya*, but culminate in unacceptable or absurd conclusions. One was that the theory of *trairūpya* does not prescribe any specific relations between the *hetu* and the *sādhya*. Iwata (2002: 226-227) even sees in this feature of the *trairūpya* one of Dignāga's major contributions to the history of Indian logic, “[r]ejecting the traditional Indian logical idea that real relations such as contact (*saṃyoga*) and inherence (*samavāya*) have to be presupposed as the basis for the establishment of a logical relation between reason and consequence...” The absence of any prescribed relations can again be understood against the background of debate where the protagonists held different ontological presuppositions. A

common ground had to be devised which would not give an advantage or a bias to one of the protagonists. A clear example to the contrary can be seen in the seven inferential relations of the Sāṃkhya, all too obviously conceived with the proof of the *prakṛti* in mind. No disputant of any other school would have accepted them, just as no one would have engaged in a debate with a Naiyāyika or a Vaiśeṣika on the basis of the *samavāya*. Thus, one may assume that since no ontological relation was acceptable as common to all or even to the main philosophical traditions, the authors and users of the *trairūpya* doctrine did not prescribe any. It was left to the disputant to find positive and negative examples that were accepted by both parties in a given debate.

The other important feature of the *trairūpya* doctrine before Dharmakīrti was that the *pakṣa*, *sapakṣa* and *vipakṣa* consisted in mutually exclusive domains.<sup>29</sup> In other words, each inference divides the world into three parts: all the things that possess the property to be proved (and thus can serve as positive examples for the *sapakṣa*), all things that do not possess the property to be proved (and can be used as examples for the *vipakṣa*), and the subject of inference about which one does not yet know whether it possesses this property or not.<sup>30</sup> This division is indeed understandable, but as we shall see, caused serious problems, which were later exploited by the author of the *sadvitīyaprayoga* and still later by Xuanzang (cf. F 2004).

That *pakṣa* was excluded from the *sapakṣa* is clear from Dignāga's *Hetucakra*. Consider the *asādhāraṇahetu*, exemplified by the inference "sound is permanent because it is audible." The reason is said to be "uncommon" because it is present neither in the *sapakṣa* nor in the *vipakṣa*. However, if the *sapakṣa* and the *vipakṣa* were considered to exhaust the entire realm of

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<sup>29</sup> This was probably pointed out for the first time by Tachikawa in his translation of the *Nyāyapraveśa* (JIP 1, 1971: 135, n. 33), referred to by Tillemans 1999, p. 107, n. 6.

<sup>30</sup> See Kano 2011: 399. "As is pointed out by Katsura, in Dignāga's system the difference between *pakṣa* and *sapakṣa* is not ontological but only epistemological. Dharmakīrti's idea can be interpreted as an explicit logical interpretation of Dignāga's framework from the ontological point of view."



discussion, i.e., if the *pakṣa* were to be included in the *sapakṣa* or the *vipakṣa*, as was the case from Dharmakīrti's time onwards, the reason could not have been stated to be absent in both. As we saw above, Dharmakīrti gave a new interpretation to this inference.

As mentioned above, the wide acceptance of the *trairūpya* theory brought about a considerable number of sophisms that attempted to construe inferences which comply with the required three conditions and yet arrived at quite unacceptable consequences. Perhaps the best known is the *Sadvitīyaprayoga*, which was criticized by Dharmakīrti in the PV IV 34-35 and PVin III 14.5-17.2, and can be safely allocated to the time between Dignāga and Dharmakīrti.<sup>31</sup> It reads like nonsense:

*abhivvyaktacaitanyaśarīralakṣaṇapurusaḥghaṭānyatara-sadvitīyo ghataḥ, anutpalatvāt, kuḍyavat.*

The pot is accompanied either by a man who is characterized as a body where consciousness is manifested or by a pot because it is not a lotus, just like a wall.

The Cārvāka ingenious stratagem in this sophism was to relate the first member of the disjunction (the person) to the subject of the inference (*pakṣa*), and the second (the pot) to the group of similar examples (*sapakṣa*). To understand this move, one has to remember that the somewhat unusual term *sadvitīya*, lit., “with a second,” presupposes or implies here that something or someone can only be accompanied by a second, different thing. In other words, “to be accompanied” has the same extension as “to be different.” Further, the subject has to be interpreted in such a way as to include all pots.<sup>32</sup> The terms of this inference which determine the validity of the reason are clear:

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<sup>31</sup> This fragment was discussed in several studies, notably by Tillemans 1991 and 2000, and Iwata 2007. For a recent debate see F 2012a, Oetke 2013, and F 2013.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Śākyabuddhi's explanation in Steinkellner (1981, p. 293): ...*sādhyadharmino 'śeṣaghaṭapakṣīkaraṇe* ...

Subject: pot.

Similar example: a wall, that is, whatever is accompanied by a man who is characterized as a body where consciousness is manifested or by a pot. (While the opponent may dispute the first member of the disjunction, he cannot deny the second, namely, that a wall is accompanied by [= is different from] a pot).

Dissimilar example: Whatever is accompanied by neither a man who is characterized as a body where consciousness is manifested, nor by a pot; no concrete example is given.

Thus,

- (a) The first condition of a valid reason, namely being a property of the subject of inference, obviously holds because the property of not being a lotus is present in a pot (since the pot is not a lotus).
- (b) The second condition, namely to be present in the similar example, holds too because the property of not being a lotus is present in a wall (since the wall is not a lotus).
- (c) Concerning, the third condition, namely absence in dissimilar examples, we can assume that the *vipakṣa* was considered to be empty, at least for the opponent.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the presence of the reason in the *vipakṣa* could be denied by *prasajyapratishedha* according to Dignāga's doctrine or perhaps be interpreted as a *kevalānvayi-hetu* along the Naiyāyika doctrine.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>As for the reason why there are no instances in the *vipakṣa*, this is the case either because nothing is both pot and person, or because the pot is excluded from the *vipakṣa* for it is the subject of inference and the materialistic person cannot be used as an example because its existence is contested by the opponent. Thus, the inference is actually valid only from the point of view of the opponent and should probably be considered as a kind of *prasaṅga* argument. This is compatible with the Lokāyata doctrine that inference is not a means of knowledge. Another well known inference, where the Cārvāka uses an example that he himself does not accept, involves the cognition of the Arhat at the time of death; cf. the discussion below.

<sup>34</sup>On Dignāga's treatment of empty *sapakṣas* and *vipakṣas*, see Iwata 2004.

Thus, the three conditions of a valid reason are fulfilled and the disjunctive property “being accompanied either by a man who is characterized as a body where consciousness is manifested or by a pot” is correctly attributed to a pot. However, as mentioned above, the pot is not accompanied by a pot. Therefore the second member of the disjunction has to be excluded in this case. Consequently, the pot is accompanied by a man who is characterized as a body where consciousness is manifested. In other words, while a wall, if the opponent so wills, may not be accompanied by “a man who is characterized as a body where consciousness is manifested,” but can be accompanied by (=be different from) a pot, the pot itself cannot be accompanied by (= be different from) a pot and thus has to be accompanied by “a person defined as body where consciousness is manifested.”

The purpose of the Cārvāka in this inference was probably not really to establish that a person is nothing but a body in which consciousness is manifested, for this inference can easily be countered with the opposite inference (cf. *viruddhāvyabhicāri-hetu*), but to show a serious deficiency in the structure of inference that allows any odd thesis to be established, and consequently that inference should not be considered a reliable means of knowledge, especially not for establishing metaphysical entities such as God and Soul.

The grave problems of the *trairūpya* doctrine are also apparent in another inference referred to by Dharmakīrti, which seems to have been inspired by the *Sadvitīyaprayoga*:

Sound is permanent because it is either the *pakṣa* or the *sapakṣa*.<sup>35</sup>

(a) The first condition obtains because being either *pakṣa* or *sapakṣa* is present in sound (for sound is the *pakṣa*).

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. PVin III 17.3: *etena pakṣasapakṣānyataratvam api pratyuktam*.

- (b) The second condition obtains because being either *pakṣa* or *sapakṣa* is present in the *sapakṣa* (= some permanent thing).<sup>36</sup>
- (c) The third condition obtains because both being *pakṣa* and *sapakṣa* are absent (by definition) in the *vipakṣa* (all impermanent things).

Here too it is obvious that the inference could be annulled by its opposite and that the same reason could prove that sound is impermanent. It seems probable, therefore, that the author used this inference to show that the doctrine of *trairūpya*, and inferences in general, are unreliable and perhaps, being a Mīmāṃsaka, used the argument to strengthen the authority of the Veda, which could not be assailed by such an unreliable and arbitrary so-called means of knowledge. One can easily imagine a Mīmāṃsaka and a Cārvāka joining forces in such an endeavour, each for his own purpose.

The trick in both inferences (viz., the *sadvitīyaprayoga* and the *pakṣasapakṣānyataratva*) is the usage of what one may call “an alternating disjunction.” Only one of the disjuncts is true, but not always the same one. In the latter case, when the first *trairūpya* condition is examined, the left side of the disjunction holds true; when the second condition is examined, the right.<sup>37</sup>

Dharmakīrti’s response to both inferences is the same, that is, he deals directly with the *Sadvitīyaprayoga* and adds a remark that by the same arguments the *pakṣa-sapakṣānyataratva*-inference is also rejected.<sup>38</sup> The criticism is quite lengthy, but the upshot of Dharmakīrti’s argument is that the usage of a disjunction is acceptable only if both sides of it

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<sup>36</sup>Assuming that such exists. Otherwise one has to take recourse to *kevalavyatireki-hetu*, and so on.

<sup>37</sup>This is a bit problematic in the *sadvitīyaprayoga* because, at least for the proponent, the materialistic person exists. This problem can be avoided either by saying that the disjunction is used “in general” (*sāmānyena*) (no matter which one or both holds good); or by claiming that since the Cārvāka does not accept inference as *pramāṇa*, the argument is used only from the perspective of the opponent as a kind of *prasaṅga*.

<sup>38</sup>in the PVin III 17.3 quoted above n. 35.

are possible. For instance when one says: “Food should be given to Devadatta or Yajñadatta,” this means that each of the two can be given food. So the Cārvāka has, so to speak, to reveal his cards. Which side of the disjunction should hold true? If it is the right side (the pot), then he is guilty of a contradiction, for the pot is not different from a pot. If the left member is true, there is no *anvaya*, for one cannot claim that wherever there is non-lotus, there is an accompaniment with a materialistic person.<sup>39</sup> And if none of the alternatives is established, the disjunction cannot be established in general (i.e., sometimes the one, sometimes the other).<sup>40</sup>

Dharmakīrti was probably not the first to object to such usage of the disjunction,<sup>41</sup> and the objections may have been persuasive. In any case, in the PVin III, 100.11f., he mentions another variation of the same inference, which eliminates the disjunction:

Thesis: Sound is permanent

Reason: Because it is different from the *vipakṣa* (*vipakṣavyatirekatva*).<sup>42</sup>

Here too it is clear that the three conditions hold good. The property “being different from the *vipakṣa*” is obviously present in the *pakṣa* as well as the *sapakṣa*, and is absent in the *vipakṣa*.

Dharmakīrti rejects this and similar inferences<sup>43</sup> by saying that they beg the question, or more precisely, that their reasons are false inasmuch as they are part of the thesis

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<sup>39</sup>When one takes *sadvitīyatva* as *arthāntaratva*, the *anvaya* means that wherever there is no lotus, there is no materialistic person. In other words, the *anvaya* would hold good only for those who deny such a person, not for those who affirm it.

<sup>40</sup>PVin III, 16.7-8: *sa* [scil. *anyatarāthāntarabhāvaḥ*] *ca na śarīrasya ananvayaśaṅkayā, na ghaṭasya virodhād iti sāmānyenāpi na sambhavati.*

<sup>41</sup>It is possible of course that the *vipakṣavyatirekatva* inference was developed in response to the criticism in the *Pramāṇavārttika*. In any case, I was unable to find an equivalent discussion in PV IV.

<sup>42</sup>This inference is discussed by Toshikazu Watanabe in a forthcoming paper, “Dharmakīrti on *pratijñārthakadeśa*.” I thank Dr. Watanabe for sending me the unpublished manuscript of his valuable paper.

<sup>43</sup>A similar inference was advocated by the Sāṃkhya.

(*pratijñārthaikadeśa*). “The absence of the *sādhya* is the *vipakṣa*. What is different from it (i.e., from the *vipakṣa*) is nothing but the *sādhya*. Thus, [the reason] is not established.” (PVin III 100.11-12)

The opponent objects that since the *pakṣa*, *sapakṣa* and *vipakṣa* are mutually exclusive, the property “not being the *vipakṣa*” is indeed present in the *pakṣa*.<sup>44</sup> What the objection amounts to is that since the *pakṣa* and the *sapakṣa* are different, the negation of the *vipakṣa* covers both *pakṣa* and *sapakṣa*, and thus is not equivalent to the *sādhya*; consequently, unlike the *sādhya*, whose existence in the subject of inference is yet to be established, the reason is established as a property of the subject. Therefore, the inference is valid.

Dharmakīrti, however, rejects the tripartite division into *pakṣa*, *sapakṣa* and *vipakṣa*. The *sapakṣa* and the *vipakṣa* are mutually exclusive and cover the entire realm of discourse. The *pakṣa* must therefore be included in the one or the other (in the latter case, the inference is false of course). PVin III 102.3-4: “Therefore, the occurrence and absence of the properties [to be proved], both of which are established as independent of the *pakṣa*, are characterized by mutual exclusion. They do not leave out a third domain.” (*tasmād anapekṣitapakṣavyavasthitau dharmāṇāṃ vṛttivyatirekau parasparaparihārasthīlakṣaṇau na tr̥tīyaṃ rāśiṃ vyatirecataḥ*.)

This move by Dharmakīrti has brought about a major change in the nature of inferences. Although the use of the terms is problematic, one may say that Dharmakīrti changed inferences from being inductive to deductive. Using Aristotelian terms, Dharmakīrti’s inferences conform closely to the *Darii* form. Of course this did not solve the problem of induction or of the reliability of inferences, for the insoluble problem remains how to determine the universal concomitance between the *sādhya* and the *hetu*.

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<sup>44</sup> PVin III 101.1: *nanu pakṣādīnāṃ parasparato bhedaḥ avipakṣatvaṃ pakṣe ’sty eva*.

*Inferences on Doctrinal Matters*

A considerable number of further sophisms that indicate genuine weaknesses in the *trairūpya* theory could be enumerated, but I think the above is enough to show that the theory of *trairūpya* was in serious trouble already before Dharmakīrti's time. However, as far as we can tell, it is not such sophisms that caused Dharmakīrti to develop his theory of essential relation and three kinds of reasons. It seems rather that inferences concerning religious matters were on Dharmakīrti's mind when developing his new theory of reasons. Three such inferences appear in the beginning of his first surviving work, the PV I. Consider, for instance, the following (PV I 11).

Thesis: The Buddha had desires

Reason: Because he had a body

Example: Like a common man.

It is clear that the three conditions of *trairūpya* are fulfilled.

- (a) The first condition is fulfilled because the Buddha had a body (body here means the body of a living being, which is support of consciousness, connected to sense faculties and so on).
- (b) The second condition is fulfilled because a common man who is not free from desires has a body.
- (c) The third condition is fulfilled for instance in a stone which does not have desires and also does not have a body.

Further, the Buddhist cannot use the Buddha himself as an example, since he is the subject of inference, about which there is doubt. As long as the Buddhist and the Mīmāṃsaka<sup>45</sup> cannot agree on any other person who has body and is free from desires, the argument has to be decided in favour of the Mīmāṃsaka.

Dharmakīrti rejects the argument by saying that it involves an inference from an effect (desire) to an incomplete

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<sup>45</sup> The author of this inference (as well as the one in PV I 12) is probably Kumāṛila in the *Bṛhātīkā*; cf. Taber 2011.

cause (body). Even though the body may be part of a causal complex that produces desires, the body alone cannot produce them, for desires do not arise without clinging to the false notions of “I” and “mine”. Therefore, even though the presence of the reason (“having a body”) is never observed in the dissimilar instances (non-living things that do not have desires), the inference remains doubtful.

More problematic was the following inference, which was discussed by Dharmakīrti at a greater length<sup>46</sup>:

Thesis: The Buddha was not free from desires (*vītarāga*)

Reason: Because he spoke

Example: Like a common man.

Here too it is clear that the three conditions of *trairūpya* are fulfilled. The first condition is fulfilled because the Buddha spoke, notably, when teaching the dharma. The second condition is fulfilled because a common man who is not free from desires is observed to speak. The third condition is fulfilled, for instance, in a stone which does not have desires and also does not speak. And here too, the Buddhist cannot use the Buddha himself as an example, since he is the subject of the inference. Again, as long as the three conditions of *trairūpya* are accepted as the rules of the debate, the argument has to be decided in favour of the Mīmāṃsaka.

The above inference is not a mere sophism, but points in fact at a genuine contradiction within the Buddhist tradition. On the one hand, the Buddha was considered the supreme ascetic, devoid of any desires whatsoever; on the other hand, he was considered to be infinitely compassionate. Dharmakīrti's rejection of this inference is different from the previous one: It is false because it involves a general result (*kāryasāmānya*). That is, the phenomenon of speech is common to those who have desires and those who do not. Therefore one cannot infer that if someone speaks, he has desires. One may also speak out of compassion (as is the case of the Buddha).

Dharmakīrti was aware, however, that his statement is problematic. For compassion includes wish or desire in its very

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<sup>46</sup> The interpretation of this inference has been an object of some debate; see Dunne 1996, F 2004a, Pecchia 2008, Taber 2011 and F 2012b.



core. Indeed, what is compassion if not the desire that other living beings should not suffer.<sup>47</sup> Thus, even the desire to speak, which stands here for the desire to teach the dharma, is a desire. Further, even if one rejects the exclusion of the *pakṣa* from the *sapakṣa* and *vipakṣa*, and even if one adopts Dharmakīrti's theory of reasons, it would still be easy enough to establish an inference based on *svabhāva* and a *vyāpti* between compassion and desire (wherever there is a desire to help other living beings, there is desire). It is probably for this reason that Dharmakīrti added to the discussion a new meaning for the word "desire". He admitted that if one uses the word desire in its usual sense (i.e., as a cognitive event taking the form "I want X"), one has to admit that the Buddha had desires because he indeed had a desire to talk (*vaktukāmatā*). However, Dharmakīrti claims that this is not the sense of desire meant by the Buddhists when they say that the Buddha lacks desires. To put it bluntly, as long as desire is not accompanied by error, it is not desire (PVSV 9.10-20):

[Objection: One who is completely free of desires] does not speak, because he has no motivation [to speak].

[Reply:] No, [he is motivated] because [he speaks] for the sake of others.

[Objection:] He does not engage himself [in speaking for the sake of others, because he has no attachment for others, precisely] because he is free of desires.

[Reply:] No, because [engagement for the sake of others] occurs out of compassion, too.

[Objection:] Precisely that [compassion] is desire.

[Reply:] Agreed. [However] it is not a blemish [in the Buddha], because it does not arise from an error. ... In any case, [the Buddha] is without fault,

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<sup>47</sup>Cf., for instance, PVA 53.11: *duḥkha*hetos tathāduḥkhādvīyogecchā parasya yā, sā kṛpā. "Compassion is the wish that someone else be disconnected from the cause of suffering as well as from suffering." PVA 53:15: *karuṇā sarvatrāṇecchālakṣaṇā*. "Compassion is characterized by the wish to protect everybody."

because he does not superimpose [something real] on something unreal. If one proves the faultiness of [the Buddha] by anything other than that [superimposition], there is nothing unacceptable [to us].

To see how arbitrary this concept of desire is, think of the final scene of Romeo and Juliet. Romeo, wrongly believing Juliet to be dead, has the desire to end his life and drinks poison. Juliet, rightly knowing Romeo to be dead, has the desire to end her life and stabs herself with his dagger. According to Dharmakīrti's usage of "desire" (*kāma*), Romeo's wish to stop living is desire because it is based on an error. Juliet's same wish, on the other hand, would not be desire because it is not based on error.

Yet another inference that must have been on Dharmakīrti's mind while conceiving the theory of three reasons is the following (PV I 18c):

Thesis: The living body is not without a soul

Reason: Because otherwise it would not have breath and so forth.

The Naiyāyika uses here<sup>48</sup> a *kevalavyatireki-hetu*, that is, a reason that fulfils only two of the required three conditions of *trairūpya*: It is present in the *pakṣa* (the living body) and is absent in the *vipakṣa* (e.g., an inanimate object which has not soul like a pot), but it cannot be present in the *sapakṣa* because there is no *sapakṣa*, for there is nothing except the living body that is assumed to possess a soul. Dharmakīrti's main point against this inference is that mere non-perception (*adarśanamātra*) is not enough to establish the absence of the reason in the dissimilar instances. This point is crucial for Dharmakīrti and is repeated several times.<sup>49</sup> In the present case the non-perception is all the more uncertain since the *ātman* is

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<sup>48</sup>Dharmakīrti most probably refer to the NV (see NV 43.12 and 116.10f.) also Kano 2001, Iwata 2004, Steinkellner 2013: 32 and notes thereon, Eltschinger/Ratié 2013: 117ff. The same argument occurs in PVin II; Steinkellner 1979: 124-126.

<sup>49</sup>PV IV 205ff., PVin II 96, 12-15, PVin III 115.7-124.5, NB 3.96-108, Steinkellner 1979: 128, Eltschinger/Ratié 2013: 118.

a non-perceptible entity. Thus, one cannot know that it is not present, for instance, in a pot just because it is not perceived there.

In this response of Dharmakīrti, we can see his modification of Dignāga's doctrine of *trairūpya*. For according to Dignāga's theory, since the living body is the only thing to possess breath, the reason can be present neither in the *sapakṣa* nor in the *vipakṣa*, i.e., it is an uncommon reason, like the audibility of sound. Dharmakīrti argues instead that the co-presence and co-absence cannot be ascertained. As Iwata rightly pointed out (2004: 123), Dharmakīrti reduces the uncommon reason to a doubtful reason. And the reason why it cannot be ascertained is precisely because the two relations allowed by Dharmakīrti (*tādātmya* and *tadutpatti*) are not ascertained. The breath and the soul do not have the same nature (as the Naiyāyika himself would admit), nor can they be ascertained to stand in causal relation because a non-perceptible entity cannot be known to be a cause.

The introduction of an inference based on *svabhāva-hetu* and using *tādātmya* relation was at least partly motivated by the desire of proving another important Buddhist tenet, namely momentariness (*kṣaṇikatva*). Dharmakīrti dedicated several discussions to this inference which appears in two closely related forms:

- a) Everything is momentary because it is produced (in this form the inference is usually called *vināśitvānumāna*).
- b) Everything is momentary because it exists (in this form the inference is usually called *sattvānumāna*).

The first inference, as well as some components of the second, go back to Vasubandhu,<sup>50</sup> if not before. The basic argument claims that if transience is the own nature of things, then the fact that things perish cannot depend on some contingent causes of destruction, but must come, so to say, from the perishable things themselves. And since the own

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<sup>50</sup>Von Rospatt 1995: 162, n. 362b and Yoshimizu 1999: 232, n. 6; Eltschinger 2010: 423 considers that the entire second inference goes back to Vasubandhu.

nature of things causes destruction, and their own nature is present as soon as things arise, it must cause their destruction immediately. Or if it would not cause the destruction immediately, it would not cause it ever, and things would be permanent. Unlike the Sarvāstivāda, which consider “destruction” (*vināśa*) to be an entity causing destruction, the Sautrāntika claim that no such entity exists and that destruction is nothing but the fact that an entity no longer exists. However, non-existence is not a thing, and a non-thing cannot be caused. Thus, destruction must come without a cause, i.e., automatically and spontaneously. Dharmakīrti claims that destruction depends on the very causes which produce a thing as transient, not on any further so-called cause of destruction (such as a hammer smashing a pot). For destruction is necessary, but causes do not necessarily produce their effect.

This argument, however, may be considered non-conclusive inasmuch as some things could be produced without being momentary (e.g., a mountain), thus the reason could be present in the *vipakṣa*. Therefore Dharmakīrti attempted to establish a concomitance between momentariness and existence. The argument presupposes Dharmakīrti’s definition of existence as the capacity of efficient action (*arthakriyā*). Dharmakīrti uses here a negative mode of argument which consists in proving that the reason does not occur in the domain opposite to the property to be proved (*sādhya viparyaya-bādhakapramāṇa*), i.e., that it does not occur in the *vipakṣa*. Something non-momentary cannot produce an effect, neither gradually nor at once. It does not produce an effect at once, for one observes that this is not the case; nor can it produce it gradually because its dependence on other co-producers cannot be established. Thus, it has no efficient action at all, and therefore does not exist.<sup>51</sup> Unlike the inference based on reason as effect, which involves two entities, the one based on own nature establishes a concomitance between two properties of the same entity.

As mentioned above, Dignāga’s theory of *trairūpya* contains neither ontological nor logical relation as a foundation

<sup>51</sup> See Steinkellner 1968, Yoshimizu 1999, Eltschinger 2010: 423-424, Tillemans 2011a.

for the second and third conditions. It is Dharmakīrti who introduces the two relations of *tādātmya* and *tadutpatti* for the entailment of the *sādhya* by the reason; to what extent these relations should be considered ontological, logical or conceptual is still a very much contested issue which is not likely to be resolved any time soon.

### *The Determination of Causation*<sup>52</sup>

As we have seen, the core of Dharmakīrti's inferences are the essential and necessary relations of *tadutpatti* and *tādātmya*. However, this did not solve the problem of the reliability of inferences. Granted that the effect is not possible without a cause, how can one know that two things stand in the relation of cause and effect?<sup>53</sup> Dharmakīrti repeatedly emphasized that the mere seeing of two things together and not seeing the one without the other are not enough to determine causal relations. His solution for the determination of causality between smoke and fire (PV I 34 and *Vṛtti* thereon) consists in isolating a cause in a given situation. Given that all other conditions remain the same, and upon the introduction of a certain new element, the effect arises, and if when any one of these elements is removed, the effect does not arise, one can determine that the one is the (or a) cause of the other (PVSV 22.3-5): *yeṣāṃ upalambhe tallakṣaṇam anupalabdham yad upalabhyate, tatraikābhāve 'pi nopalabhyate, tat tasya kāryam*. "When a perceptible thing unperceived [before] is perceived when several [other things] are perceived, and is not perceived when even one among these [things] is absent, it is the effect of that [one of these things]/of these [several things]." No matter whether one understands *tat* to refer to *tatra* or to *eka*, the straightforward reading of this statement does not single out one thing such as fire as the cause of smoke. The same formulation is repeated in the PVin 85.6-7. However, in the later formulation in the HB I 37.8-12, Dharmakīrti

<sup>52</sup>I repeat in this section parts of F forthcoming b.

<sup>53</sup>The literature on this subject is voluminous; see Inami 1999, Lasic 1999, Dunne 2004: 191 Tillemans 2004, 258, 267-274, Watanabe 2004, Steinkellner 2013: 183, 201ff., and further references therein.

distinguishes, so to speak, one main cause from all the other causes (i.e., in the case of smoke, fire).<sup>54</sup>

Dharmakīrti's successors interpreted this process to involve either three or five cognitions.<sup>55</sup> It goes without saying that Dharmakīrti did not solve "the problem of induction." It would be naïve to expect him to solve what is clearly an insoluble problem. However, this should not detract from our appreciation of Dharmakīrti's enormous advance upon the doctrine of his predecessors (Kumārila, Īśvarasena and presumably others), who, like many philosophers in the Western tradition, seem to have regarded the inductive process as merely or basically cumulative. While sporadic accumulation of experience is certainly used in everyday practice to form general judgements, Dharmakīrti's method resembles the one used (of course with much more elaboration and refinement) in scientific determination of causality, for instance, by pharmaceutical companies to determine the causes of pathologies, the effect(s) of particular substances, and so on.<sup>56</sup>

PVSV 22.3-5 is one of the most discussed statements of Dharmakīrti. Curiously, no one seems to have noticed that Dharmakīrti's practice in determining causation is far more complex than his statement here would suggest. When one takes this into consideration, it is clear that what Dharmakīrti states at the beginning of PV I (and in the parallel passages in his later works) was not meant as a complete doctrine of determination of causality, but a discussion of certain particular cases such as smoke and fire, cases which are important and to some extent paradigmatic, but certainly do not account for the determination of causation in general. Let us consider some further aspects here.

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<sup>54</sup>Dharmakīrti in fact revives an old Abhidharma idea; cf. AKBh 461.8-9.

<sup>55</sup>See Lasic 2004.

<sup>56</sup>See for instance the often quoted Austin Bradford Hill 1965. Among the criteria specified, Hill mentions the strength of the association, its consistency, specificity, temporality, biological gradient (for which Dharmakīrti uses the terms increase and decrease), plausibility, coherence, experiment and analogy. As far as I can see, plausibility and coherence are not used by Dharmakīrti or in Indian philosophy in general. All the other criteria are used by Dharmakīrti on one occasion or another.

### Determining permanent causes

According to the above sketched theory, one will not be able to determine causation if an entity is constantly present, for one is unable to observe whether the effect is absent when the cause is absent. Yet Dharmakīrti admits that the earth (of course along with other factors) is a cause of a sprout. For all practical purposes, earth is eternal and always present. How could it be determined as a cause of sprouts? Dharmakīrti's reply indicates that presence and absence are indeed not necessary to determine causation in all cases. In the case of the earth, it suffices to observe a transformation that brings about changes in the result. For instance, by perfecting the earth with manure, ploughing it, and so forth, one observes changes in the quality of the sprout (PV II 25). These changes allow one to determine that the earth is part of the causal complex of the sprout. (So when it comes to God, the reason why he cannot be determined as a cause is not because she is eternal and all-pervasive, but because she is changeless.)

### Determining a "permanent" material cause

Similarly, one would hardly expect the process of introducing and removing the cause in the case of a material cause (*upādāna*). In this case, just like the case of the earth and the seed, it is the transformation in the material cause which allows its identification. This is stated several times and in various forms, for instance (PV II 60-61): Without transformation in the material cause (*upādāna*), there is no transformation in the effect, just as a plate does not change without transformation in the clay. One would not seriously expect the enquirer, I believe, to remove the clay in order to observe whether its plate continues to exist.

### Determining a "permanent" non-material cause

Dharmakīrti's notion of causation is often apparent when he denies causal connection in specific cases and we must pay close attention to such cases as well. For instance, cognition and body are always present together, at least throughout one's life. How can one deny that the body is the cause of cognition or that they are causes of each other? In this case too

Dharmakīrti relies on the same principle: a transformation of a cause must bring about a transformation in the effect. Thus, if we observe a transformation of the one without a transformation in the other, we can exclude the possibility that the two are causally related. Thus, when we observe a change in the cognition without a change in the body, we can conclude, as Dharmakīrti does, that the cognition does not produce the body and vice versa.

### Temporality

Cause and effect are also connected by a temporal aspect: The effect must last as long as its cause. For instance, if the body were the cause of cognition, the cognition would last as long as the body, and thus there would be no dead body (PV II 51).

Further, temporality allows one to distinguish between material/main cause and auxiliary cause (*upakāra*). The distinction is important to Dharmakīrti's doctrine of causation, and the temporal aspect allows one to distinguish between these two kinds of causes. Fire may change the color of a pot, but the pot and its new color, unlike smoke, continue to exist when the fire ceases (PV II 50). The auxiliary cause is responsible for some specific aspect of the result, not for the result as such.

The influence of the body on cognition is explained by Dharmakīrti in this way, that is, as an auxiliary cause, although the argument is not quite convincing. For instance, the transformation of the body due to poison causes a mental transformation in the form of pain. Dharmakīrti claims that in this case the body is only the object of cognition and the pain results from perceiving the body, not directly from the body (PV II 48).

### Gradation (in time)

Another important aspect to which cause and effect have to conform involves gradual arising. If the cause does not change, the effect cannot arise gradually (or after a time). Thus, lack in gradation allows one to exclude causal relation between breath and body: How can breath be gradual without its cause



being gradual? (PV II 107) Similarly, if the body is constant throughout one's life, cognitions cannot arise from it one after the other. They would have to arise all at once. The gradual arising cannot be due to co-producers unless they bring about changes in the cause (e.g., the body) PV II 43. Here too I am not sure how Dharmakīrti would justify this statement in some cases. For instance, light, senses and object, which are co-producers of a cognition, do not bring about changes in the previous cognition.

Locative or locating cause (a special case of auxiliary cause)

Dharmakīrti's causal theory also uses the concept of *ādhāra/āśraya*, which may be translated as locating cause. Dharmakīrti considers this cause from two aspects. If things are momentary, the *ādhāra* causes them to be located in the same place. For instance, the plate causes the berries, which would tend to fall on the floor and disperse in all directions, to be produced in the same place. Similarly, the jug keeps the water from spilling (PV I 144, see also PV II 67-68, 74). If things are not momentary, the *ādhāra* is the cause that prevents their movement. In this manner (i.e., by considering the body as the locating cause of cognition), Dharmakīrti explains the role of the body in mental phenomena such as amnesia.

Reversibility of process

Reversibility of process also allows one to determine a causal relation or the lack thereof. The Cārvāka argues that changes in the humours can account for the changing capacity of the body to produce cognitions, i.e., when the humours are in strong disequilibrium which causes death, the body is no longer capable of producing cognitions, just like a wick becomes incapable to produce a flame; but Dharmakīrti retorts that when the humours of a dead body regain their equilibrium, just as they do when fever is cured, life would arise again (PV II 54-55). If the Cārvāka argues that the process is not reversible, like the transformation of wood into charcoal, this is not correct because one applies medicine to reverse the transformation of humours.

## Increase and decrease

An important aspect for the determination of something as a cause is whether its increase and decrease brings about a corresponding increase and decrease in the result. For instance, lamp and light. But one observes increase in the properties of cognition such as wisdom, compassion, etc., without increase or decrease in the body. Therefore, the body cannot be the support/cause of cognition (PV II 73). It is impossible that the effect would be destroyed when the cause increases, e.g., when *pitta* increases, fever does not go away (PV II 151). (The anomaly of water would have presented a challenge in this case.)

The Cārvāka claims that when the humours are balanced, the production of sperm increases, which causes the increase of desire. This would be a valid argument but Dharmakīrti retorts that a sick person may have strong desires and a healthy person none. Further, one may have strong desires even without sperm. Increase in desire arises from increase in pleasure, even when there is no increase in the humours (PV II 151). According to the Cārvāka, when the humours are balanced, sperm increases; when sperm increases, desire increases. But one observes sick persons with unbalanced humours and strong desires, and also that one ejaculates blood when sperm is exhausted (PV II 152-153).

Even if the material elements were the cause of consciousness, they cannot be the cause of desire. The causal mode of the elements is not characterized by increase and decrease because one cannot say that one living being is more alive or less alive than another, but some living beings have strong desires and some weak. Therefore the cause of desire must be characterized by increase and decrease (PV II 167-169).

## Generality and specificity

This is an argument that I have only seen once. The modal correspondence between cause and effect presupposed by Dharmakīrti is so strong that if the cause is general, the effect cannot be specific. Sperm does not explain the nature of desire which is directed towards a specific woman. If the Cārvāka

claims that the beauty of the woman also plays a role, this is not correct because one desires also ugly women. The argument looks like an aside; but if we take it seriously, Dharmakīrti claims that if the effect is specific, the cause must be specific. The degree of required specificity remains, however, unspecified (PV II 154).

#### The Numerical Aspect

If the cause, or causal complex, is one, the effect is one; if the causes are many, the effects are also many: If each atom is capable of producing a cognition, there would be as many cognitions as there are atoms in the body. Similarly, if breath is a product of the atoms of the body singly, there would be as many breaths as atoms (PV II 103-104).

#### Restricting, Hindering and Regulating Aspects of Causality

It is theoretically possible that although each atom of the body is capable of producing a cognition, and thus there would be as many cognitions as atoms, the breath in the body restricts the capacity of atoms to produce only one cognition at a time (PV II 103-104). Dharmakīrti is not explicit about how this could work, but one can assume that breath, being a part of the causal complex with one atom, cannot be a part of a causal complex with another atom. The possibility is of course rejected by Dharmakīrti. There is no restriction that one breath produces one cognition because one observes that many cognitions arise during one long breath.

Mental properties such as compassion grow out of their own seed (*svabīja*); consequently since *saṃsāra* has no beginning, everyone should have become a Buddha by now. This would indeed be the case if the same did not apply to the opposite negative properties as well. Just as compassion arises from its own seed, so do hatred or aversion (*dveṣa*), etc. Thus, compassion and aversion obstruct each other's development. It is for this reason that a great effort is needed to suppress aversion, etc., by means of their antidotes (*pratipakṣa*) so that compassion can flow unhindered and reach its utmost degree, as in the case of the Buddha (PV II 131).

### Limited and unlimited causal processes

Interesting is Dharmakīrti's distinction between limited and unlimited causal process. The distinction depends on whether or not the causal process has a stable or an unstable result. Certain results continue by themselves, by their own essence (*svarasena pravartate*), e.g., the change of color in burned wood or the increase in mental properties such as compassion. Certain are limited because their causes are limited, like jumping and its causes e.g., force and effort. Others like boiling water have unstable support. Some are reversible, like heating gold. (PV II 124-126)

### Presence and absence

Finally, we should not forget our starting point. As long as the cause remains, the result does not cease to exist (PV III 133cd). This is indeed the principle discussed in PVSV 34 and applied to smoke and fire.

To conclude this section, we see all kinds of correspondences between cause and effect. For lack of a better word, I would like to call them modal correspondences. Existence and inexistence, or presence and absence, are just one of them; others are transformation, gradation in time, increase and decrease, reversibility and non-reversibility, generality and specificity, temporal aspects, numerical aspects and so on, and I do not pretend to be exhaustive here. If we would like to generalise the underlying principle behind the different modalities, we could say that a change in the cause must bring about a change in the effect. PV II 111 puts it explicitly: if A is the cause of B, B changes when A changes. Or more literally: "What does not change because of the change of something else is not the result of that thing" (*na hi tat tasya kāryam yad yasya bhedād na bhidyate*).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>The above, of course, is not meant to deny Dharmakīrti's acceptance of momentariness and Abhidharma causality in general. The discussion above deals with inference on the level of everyday practice, as I believe, was intended by Dharmakīrti.

Dharmakīrti recognizes that the determination of causation is not always possible. In a case of a so-called general effect, or effect common to more than one causal complex (*kāryasāmānya*), the determination of the cause may not be possible, for instance, as we saw above, the fact that one speaks may be based on desire or on compassion. Similarly, activity after rest, a special configuration (*saṁsthānaviśeṣa*, see PV II 10f.) and so on may prove a conscious agent, but not that this agent is an eternal God and not a human being. Further, there are cases where different causes can produce very similar results. Dharmakīrti refers to the common belief, which he accepts, that lotuses can arise from cow dung. However, he claims that the lotuses produced by cow dung look a bit different from the lotuses produced by seeds (and apparently the specialists can distinguish between them). In this connection I should note that I do not share the opinion, voiced by Steinkellner and others,<sup>58</sup> that according to Dharmakīrti the cause should be similar or be of the same kind as the effect. The example of the cow dung speaks clearly against it. A related prevalent belief, not mentioned by Dharmakīrti, but by his commentator Karṇakagomin, maintains that scorpions (*vr̥ścikāḥ*) can also arise from cow dung.

### *The Proof of the Possibility of Rebirth*

Arguably the most important application of Dharmakīrti's theory of causation applies to the proof of rebirth in general, and more specifically to the proof that rebirth as a Buddha is possible. His main opponent is, of course, a Cārvāka materialist, whom I tentatively identified as Kambalāśvatara.<sup>59</sup> In this connection Dharmakīrti also deals with some Brahmanic philosophers who claim that rebirth is unexplainable without the assumption of a permanent soul.

The programmatic verse PV II 34 comprises the entire discussion in a nut-shell: The proof for the Buddha's authority

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<sup>58</sup>Steinkellner 2013: II 211-213, n. 366.

<sup>59</sup>See F 1997: 102. I repeat here parts of F 1997, chapter 4.

or reliability is compassion, and this compassion arises from repeated practice for many life-times. The materialist opponent objects that repeated practice for more than one life is impossible because the body is the support (*āśraya*) of cognition and consequently, when the body is destroyed, the cognition is destroyed. Dharmakīrti rejects the objection by denying that the relationship between support and supported can obtain between the body and cognition. The commentators explain that the relationship of support and supported can be interpreted in three ways:

- 1) a relation between substance and quality (*dravya* and *guṇa*),
- 2) a relation between cause and effect,
- 3) a relation between capacity (*śakti*) and possessor of capacity.

Manorathanandin conveniently construes three inferences for the three interpretations of support (PVV 20.18-21):

Thesis: The cognition rests on the body,  
Reason: Because it is its effect,  
Example: Like light that rests on a lamp.

Thesis: The cognition rests on the body,  
Reason: Because it is its capacity,  
Example: Like the capacity of intoxication that rests on the intoxicating substance.

Thesis: The cognition rests on the body,  
Reason: Because it is its quality,  
Example: Like whiteness that rests on a cloth.

The upshot of these inferences is, of course, that in all three cases when the support is destroyed, the supported is destroyed with it. Therefore, when the body is destroyed, the series of cognitions is interrupted.

Against this position, Dharmakīrti argues that it would be absurd (*atiprasaṅga*) to assume that exhalation, inhalation, senses and cognition arise from the body alone independently of causes of their own kind. If this were the case, life would

arise everywhere, and would have the same form. As Prajñākaragupta comments (PVA 57.26-28), some living beings, fish, etc., are seen to have red heads (*raktaśīras*), others to have yellow bodies (*pītakāya*), etc. Where would this diversity in colour and structure come from if the material elements alone were responsible for life? However, Dharmakīrti is not merely criticizing the Cārvākas without making a positive claim. How should the dependence of cognition and so forth on causes of their own kind be understood? Mainly by elimination, that is, by showing that the cognition is independent of the senses, breaths and body.

Dharmakīrti now turns to a well known Cārvāka inference, probably by Kambalāśvatara, an author of a commentary on the *Brhaspatīsūtras*:

Thesis: The death-cognition (i.e., the cognition at the moment of death, that is, the last cognition in this life) does not connect to another cognition (i.e., does not produce the first cognition in the next life).

Reason: Because it is a death-cognition.

Example: Just like the death-cognition of an Arhat.

Here too, it is clear that the three conditions of *trairūpya* hold good.

- (a) Presence in the *pakṣa*: Being a death-cognition is obviously the property of a death-cognition.
- (b) Presence in the *sapakṣa*: According to the Buddhists the Arhats are not reborn; thus their death-cognition does not connect to another cognition.
- (c) Absence in the *vipakṣa*: What does not connect to another cognition (i.e., what connects to another cognition) is not a death-cognition, just like any cognition throughout one's life.<sup>60</sup>

Dharmakīrti rejects the syllogism with two arguments, the one directed against the reason, the other against the

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<sup>60</sup> Just as in the case of the *Sadvitīyaprayoga*, the inference holds good only from the point of view of the opponent, for the Cārvāka himself does not accept the existence of Arhats.

example. First, there is no contradiction whatsoever between the cognition at death of an Arhat and the production of a further cognition. Rather, it is the disconnection from the defilements (*kleśavisamṃyoga*) which prevents rebirth (*pratisandhāna*). In this explanation Dharmakīrti relies on a long-established Abhidharma tradition, for instance, in the *Abhidharmakośa* 12.1-3 on 1.17cd. Furthermore, the Cārvāka should not use the last cognition of the Arhat merely on the basis of the Buddhist *siddhānta*, for if the example is established by a means of knowledge, it cannot be disputed. And if it is not established, it is simply false and cannot be used to prove anything.

However, the Cārvāka could change his reason and reformulate the inference in the following manner: The cognition at the time of death of a person with desires does not link to another cognition because the cause of linking is incomplete. If this line of argument is adopted, the Cārvāka is then obliged to admit that his original inference was wrongly formulated. Further, the inference would still be false because in this case the Cārvāka uses an unproved reason (*asiddhahetu*): It is not established that the cause is incomplete. The Cārvāka claims that the body with or even without the senses, etc., is the cause of cognition, but this is in no way established. The case is best illustrated with the mental cognition. The mental cognition does not arise from the body with the senses, because if this were the case, it would be like a sense cognition (e.g., limited to certain kinds of objects). Nor does it arise from the body with all the senses taken together because the senses do not cooperate (two or more senses do not produce one cognition; for instance, there is no audio-visual cognition, etc.). Nor does it arise from the body without the senses, because the body is devoid of consciousness (PV II 47-48a). But if the body is not the cause of the mental cognition, why do body and mental cognition subsist together? The answer is that they have the same cause, just as sight and hearing of the same person, or color and flavour of the same object, subsist together without being each other's cause (PV II 48b-c). Dharmakīrti leaves the cause unspecified, but all the commentaries identify it as *karman*.



The Cārvāka further objects that it cannot be explained why the mental cognition is transformed by the body if the body is not its cause. For instance, the transformation of the body by poison, etc., causes a mental transformation in the form of pain. As we mentioned above, Dharmakīrti admits the transformation, but denies that it is caused by the body as support. Rather, the transformation is caused by the apprehension of the body, i.e., by the body as an object. One may admit that the body is sometimes the assisting cause (*upakāra*) of the series of cognition (*cittasantati*), but this does not mean that the series ceases to exist when the body ceases to exist, just as fire may change the color of a pot, etc., but the pot does not cease to exist when the fire stops. If the body were the cause (i.e., the “material” cause, not just an assisting cause) of cognition, the cognition would last as long as the body, in which case there would be no dead body. The Cārvāka objects that the cognition is absent in a dead body because there is no breath in it. This objection is rejected because the cognition is the cause of the breath and not vice versa.

Dharmakīrti gives several reasons why cognition is the cause of breath:

1) One observes that breath is controlled by cognition (e.g., one can consciously stop breathing or breathe quickly), but not the other way around.

2) Breath is impossible without consciousness, because the drawing in and pushing forth of wind cannot be effected without an effort, and effort implies consciousness.<sup>61</sup>

3) If cognition were the result of exhalation and inhalation, it would increase and decrease according to the increase and decrease in breathing (vv. 51-52).

4) If breath were the cause of cognition, the same inadmissible consequence would apply to exhalation and inhalation: the cognition would be present as long as they are present, and they, being caused by the body, would be present

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<sup>61</sup> This implies that consciousness continues also in the state of fainting etc., presumably in the form of *ālayavijñāna*.

as long as the body is present. Consequently there would be no dead body.

All this, however, is not the case if one assumes that cognition is the cause of cognition because there is a further cause for the continuity of a series of cognition in a certain body (presumably *āyus*, the life force or life span).

Dharmakīrti's own doctrine is based on the concept of *samanantarapratyaya*: one cognition produces only one cognition, because its capacity is limited (*śaktiniyama*). As mentioned above, he states that one can observe that this is the case, because as long as one keeps looking at one object, one cannot see another object. The fact that a cognition which could have arisen, at least in principle, does not arise, points at this restriction (PV II 112, see also PV III 522). This does not mean, however, that Dharmakīrti denies the possibility of several cognitions arising at the same time from different senses. Since he accepted the existence of *ālayavijñāna*, he probably accepted the possibility of up to six *pravṛttivijñānas* at the same time (F 1994).

The Cārvāka may try to accommodate the principle that one cognition produces only one cognition. Although the body is capable of producing many cognitions, the cognition that arises first from the body limits the capacity of the body to produce any further cognitions (v. 113). The Cārvāka suggestion, says Prajñākaragupta, is completely unfounded. It would be like saying that the first moment of smoke arises from fire and then limits the capacity of fire to produce more smoke. Further, the causes of the first cognition do not have any intelligence by which they could deliberate: "Now cognition is produced by cognition; no need for us to produce further cognitions."

If the body is not the support of cognition, cognition should be able to exist alone. Dharmakīrti accepts this consequence. And indeed the Buddhists generally accepted the existence of a formless sphere (*ārūpyadhātu*) where there is no matter, and living beings exist with their mental components alone. Under certain other conditions, the cognition (or *karman*?) assists the material cause of the body, and then the two are found together. The trouble is, of course, that none of

this is ever seen. One does not see the five senses producing a new body after death. The *ārupyadhātu* is not even perceptible. However, the Cārvāka bases his negation of a causal nexus on mere non-observation. Dharmakīrti replies that the fact that something is not seen does not mean that it does not exist; mere non-observation does not lead to certainty. As a next step, the Cārvāka could try to construe a syllogism which goes beyond mere non-observation:

Thesis: The senses do not link to another life,

Reason: Because they are senses,

Example: Like the senses of Devadatta which do not link to the senses of Yajñadatta.

However, the reason in this inference, Dharmakīrti says, is not conclusive. He concludes that it is not the case that all last cognitions do not connect to a new life and that the Cārvāka inference based on the last cognition of the Arhat is doubtful (vv. 118cd-119).

Dharmakīrti's proof of rebirth is based above all on proving the independence of consciousness from other factors considered necessary for it, namely, body, breaths and sense faculties. The arguments of the Lokāyata on the one hand and of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā on the other converge in denying that cognition can shift from one body to another. The materialists claim that consciousness is destroyed with the destruction of the body, whereas the Brahmanic schools claim that rebirth is impossible without the assumption of a permanent soul (*ātman*).

The second precondition for the possibility of the Buddha's compassion referred to above, namely, the possibility of an infinite increase of mental properties like compassion, presupposes the first. Even if we assume that the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth is correct, it does not follow that compassion can increase to an infinite degree. Dharmakīrti's opponent (probably Kumāṛila in the *Bṛhattīkā*<sup>62</sup>) claims that there are natural limits to mental properties or moral excellences, just as to physical achievements: no matter how long and how

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<sup>62</sup>See TS 3168.

intensively one practises jumping, one will never jump for several miles; similarly one cannot heat water beyond a certain temperature and turn it into fire. In the same manner, no matter how long the Buddha may practise compassion towards all living beings, he will never attain the infinite compassion postulated by the Buddhists.

According to Dharmakīrti, there are only two conditions that may prevent an unlimited increase of special properties: 1) the special property depends on repeated effort (*punaryatna*), and 2) the special property has an unstable support (*asthirāśraya*). If these two conditions do not obtain, then cultivated properties become the own nature of the person, which means that they “proceed by their own essence” (*svarasena pravartante*), that is, they reproduce themselves (or, more precisely, moments of their own kind) automatically, without any further effort, in the next moments of the succession that makes a person. In the case of jumping and heating water, however, the means that are employed in the past are powerless in respect to jumping and heating water in the future. After one jump is effected, the next jump depends on another effort, and one does not start where the previous jump has stopped. In the case of heating water, the support is unstable, and when the contact with fire is gone the water cools down. Therefore, in such cases the increase is limited to a certain degree.

On the other hand, when something is or becomes the own nature of something and its maintenance does not depend on any further efforts, then further effort produces further increase in the special property and the process can go on indefinitely. This holds good not only for mental properties like compassion, but also for physical processes, like burning wood, or certain chemical reactions. When fire creates a special property in wood, such as black colour, this property proceeds “by its own essence” because it does not require repeated effort to be maintained. Similarly, oxidation (*jāraṇa*), certain chemical reactions with mercury (*cāraṇa*), properties created in gold by *puṭapāka* (i.e., a certain method of preparing drugs: various substances are wrapped in leaves, covered with clay and heated in fire), etc., all proceed by their own essence

because they do not depend on repeated effort. What distinguishes properties which become the own nature of something from those which depend on repeated effort is that the former are not reversible. Once the wood has been blackened by fire, it will not regain its original colour.

Furthermore, the level of compassion reached in the past is not only maintained effortlessly; it also tends to increase naturally. Compassion grows out of its own seed. It does not depend on anything external to it in order to grow. For instance, it does not depend on gratitude (*pratyupakāra*), nor on the proximity of an object, that is, one does not really have to see that all living beings suffer in order to develop compassion towards them; it suffices to hear about it and think or meditate on it. Thus, since compassion, etc., do not have a natural limit, they will keep increasing indefinitely. Jumping, on the other hand, does not arise from jumping. And because its two causes, strength and effort, cannot increase indefinitely, jumping too is limited to a certain degree. If, however, the quality of jumping does not increase by jumping, then how is it that an experienced jumper jumps better than a beginner? Dharmakīrti's theory of sports, in a nut-shell, is that training does not contribute directly to performance. Rather, the body of the beginner is deficient, and the repeated practice of jumping gradually removes its deficiency. Jumping depends on the strength of the body, not on the previous practice of jumping; nor does the strength of the body depend on jumping. The practice of jumping only removes the imperfections of the body that impede its strength.

However, if compassion, etc., grow out of their own seed, then, since *saṃsāra* has no beginning, everyone should have become a Buddha by now. This would indeed be the case if the same did not apply to the opposite negative properties as well. Just as compassion arises from its own seed, so does hatred or aversion (*dveṣa*). Thus, compassion and aversion obstruct each other's development. It is for this reason that a great effort is needed to suppress aversion with its antidotes so that compassion can flow unhindered and reach its utmost degree, as in the case of the Buddha.

*On the Lack of a General Definition of Pramāṇa*

The proof of rebirth took us to the main issue of the Pramāṇasiddhi chapter (PV II), namely, the proof that the Buddha was a reliable person. However, before addressing the proof of his reliability, we have to dwell shortly on the general definition of the means of knowledge, or rather on the lack thereof. The beginning of the Pramāṇasiddhi chapter contains what seem to be two definitions of the means of knowledge that are connected with the disjunctive particle *vā*: 1) a cognition which does not belie [its promise] (*avisamvādi jñānam*) or 2) illumination of a [previously] unapprehended object (*ajñātārthaprakāśa*).<sup>63</sup> This disjunction has puzzled not only modern scholars, but also the Buddhist philosophers and commentators of the Dharmakīrti school in both its Indian and Tibetan traditions. The trouble is that if the two so-called definitions are taken separately, then a cognition that belies its promise, but apprehends an unapprehended object, as well as a cognition that does not belie its promise, but apprehends an apprehended object, would have to be considered as *pramāṇa*. Two inadmissible consequences that follow from this interpretation are that an hallucination of an entirely new object on the one hand, and memory or recollection on the other hand, would become means of knowledge.

Dharmakīrti's commentators offer ingenious, but not quite convincing solutions to this problem (Prajñākaragupta, for instance, claims that the first definition is formulated from the point of view of empirical reality and the second from the point of view of absolute reality, see F 1997: 47ff.). However, when we look at the context of Dharmakīrti's own words, it is very clear that his purpose in this passage is not to develop a general theory of means of knowledge, but rather to prove that the Buddha, and not God or any other eternal entity, is the only true means of knowledge (PV II 7-9):

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<sup>63</sup> I repeat and summarize here F 1997: 45ff.

The Exalted One is a means of knowledge that has these [two characteristics of non-belying cognition and illumination of unapprehended object]. [Dignaga] says “*abhūta*” in order to exclude something that has not become [a means of knowledge].) (Or<sup>64</sup>: He proclaims the truth in order to dispel error.) Thus, the fact that [the Buddha] is a means of knowledge is correctly [established] in dependence on a proof. Something eternal [such as God, the Veda, etc.] is not a means of knowledge, (A) because validity [appertains] to a cognition of an [object] that exists as a real thing, [and the cognition of a real object cannot be eternal], for inasmuch as the object to be cognized is not eternal, it (i.e., its cognition) too does not last, (B) because [cognitions] which arise successively cannot be produced by something eternal, for the dependence [of an eternal cause on co-producers] is impossible, since something eternal cannot be helped in any way. Even if [God, etc.] were not eternal, they are not a means of knowledge.

As pointed out elsewhere, the word *pramāṇa* in the title of the chapter does not refer to means of knowledge such as perception and inference, but to the Buddha’s epithet *pramāṇabhūta* that appears in the *maṅgalaśloka* of the PS. If we bear this in mind, the disjunction can be easily understood. Dharmakīrti wants to check whether the Buddha is *pramāṇa*, and this may be done according to one characteristic *or* according to another. Dharmakīrti shows that no matter which characteristic we take, the Buddha (and not God or the Veda) deserves the title of being *pramāṇa*. The fact that Dharmakīrti did not intend to define *pramāṇa* in general becomes quite clear when we look at his two systematic works, the PVin and the NB. Had Dharmakīrti intended to define *pramāṇa* in general, surely such a definition would have appeared in the systematic presentation of his teachings, namely in the PVin

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<sup>64</sup>The former is the interpretation favored by Devendrabuddhi, Manorathanandin, as well as all modern scholars, and it seems indeed to be more probable. Cf., however, PVA 32.10 (on *abhūtanivṛttaye*): *bhrāntinivṛttyartham*.

and the NB, and the fact that it does not appear there indicates quite clearly that no such definition was undertaken, also not in PV II. That a general definition of *pramāṇa* should be absent in Dharmakīrti's writings may seem surprising at first sight, but becomes understandable when we consider that prior to Dharmakīrti's time, Indian philosophers have not attempted to define *pramāṇa* in general. Such a definition was brought forward neither by Vasubandhu nor by Dignāga. Similarly, the *Nyāyasūtra*, *Nyāyabhāṣya* and *Nyāyavārttika* do not present any general definition of *pramāṇas*.<sup>65</sup> The same is true for the Vaiśeṣika. No definition of the means of knowledge is to be found in the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* or in the *Praśastapādabhāṣya*. Similarly, neither the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* nor the *Yuktidīpikā* nor any of the other old commentaries refers to such a definition. A definition is also missing in the *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, *Śābarabhāṣya*, the *Brhatī*, the *Ślokavārttika* and presumably also in the *Brhattikā*.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, we can conclude that the definition of

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<sup>65</sup>This does not mean of course that one finds no general explanations or characterizations of *pramāṇa*, for instance NBh 1.6 on NS 1.1.1: *arthavat pramāṇam*, or 59,17-18 on NS 2.1.11: *upalabdhīhetuś ca pramāṇam*; see also NV 5, 6-8. One also finds etymological explanations such as *pramīyate 'neneti pramāṇam*. Clearly these are not meant as definitions in the rigorous sense of aiming a precise characterization which avoids *avyāpti* and *ativyāpti*.

<sup>66</sup> See the remarks by John Taber quoted in F 1997: 59: "Kumārila himself seems reluctant anywhere to define *pramāṇa*." Taber's judicious remark is confirmed by a fragment of the *Brhattikā* quoted in Taber 2012: 120, n.5: *tatrāpūrvārthavijñānam niścitam bādhavarjitam/ aduṣṭakāraṇābdham pramāṇam lokasammatam//*. Here too the characterization of *pramāṇa* is given as prevalent among the people, not as the Mīmāṃsā's own definition. I find Kataoka's criticism of Taber (Kataoka 2003) unconvincing. Not every general characterization of *pramāṇa* can be taken as a strict definition. Particularly unconvincing is his attempt to explain why, as he assumes, Kumārila gives two different definitions of *pramāṇa* in the *Brhattikā* and the *Ślokavārttika*. One also wonders why (2003: 95) "in the *Ślokavārttika* Kumārila has not reached the point of giving a definition of *pramāṇa* in general as a source of new information, though he does try to give a complete definition relatively independent of a specific context." And yet according to Kataoka himself "the Mīmāṃsā concept of *pramāṇa*" as an apprehension of a new object was firmly established in the Mīmāṃsā long before Kumārila. It is also not clear why the apprehension of a new object should be singled out from the other characterization of *pramāṇa* enumerated in the *Brhattikā*.



*pramāṇa* in general, unlike the definition of each *pramāṇa* in particular, was not undertaken by any Indian philosopher prior to Dharmakīrti's time. Consequently, there is no reason why one should expect Dharmakīrti to do so. However, during the time which separates Dharmakīrti from his commentators, some change in the philosophical requirements must have occurred that produced the expectation that *pramāṇas* be defined in general.

If Dharmakīrti did not attempt a general definition of the *pramāṇas*, but only wanted to prove that the Buddha is *pramāṇa*, it would be reasonable to assume that he would take generally accepted characteristics of *pramāṇa* and test whether the Buddha fulfills their requirements. The apprehension of an unapprehended object seems to have been widely accepted as a characteristic of *pramāṇa* even before Dharmakīrti (see the quote in n. 65); in some form or another, this characteristic was accepted by, or acceptable to, all Brahmanical schools such as Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya, for none of these schools admitted memory or recollection as a means of knowledge; the Jainas stand alone in accepting recollection as a means of knowledge.

As for the first characteristic (*avisaṃvādin*), the idea of correctness was, of course, always associated with the *pramāṇas*. However, the choice of the word *avisaṃvādin* was probably not accidental. The same word is used by Dignāga to designate the validity of inference and verbal testimony.<sup>67</sup> What Dharmakīrti obviously needed was a word that did not have the connotation of truth or correctness in the strong sense of the term, but which would allow a looser, more pragmatic, notion of truth (based on *arthakriyā*). Otherwise, inference, which apprehends only conceptual constructions, could not retain its status of *pramāṇa*. To designate "true" in the stronger and more usual sense Dharmakīrti uses the word *abhrānta* (see the definition of perception discussed below).

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<sup>67</sup> Cf. PS II 8ab: *āptavākyāvisaṃvādasāmānyād anumānatā*.

*The Reliability of the Buddha (Pramāṇabhūta)*

In PV I 214-217<sup>68</sup> Dharmakīrti gives two alternatives as to how to examine the reliability of religious teachings; the first is used negatively, mainly against the Mīmāṃsā, the second positively to establish the Buddhist teachings. A teaching that is worth examining has to state a human aim (*puruṣārtha*), offer an appropriate means (*anugūṇopāya*) to realise this aim, and be coherent (*sambaddha*). When a religious teaching is beyond the scope of regular perception (in contradistinction to yogic perception) and inference, it cannot be directly confirmed and has to be indirectly examined by making sure that at least it is not contradicted by what can be known through the regular means of knowledge. Inference in this connection is of two kinds, dependent and independent on scripture (*āgamāpekṣānumāna* and *anāgamāpekṣānumāna*). An example of the latter are the four noble truths that are inferable independently of scripture, an example of the former is the inference that bathing, sacrificing and so forth cannot eliminate *adharma* and therefore the scripture teaching it, namely the Veda, is a non-teaching (*anupadeśa*), i.e., should not be relied on. The other method to infer the reliability of scripture is introduced as an alternative in PV II 217:

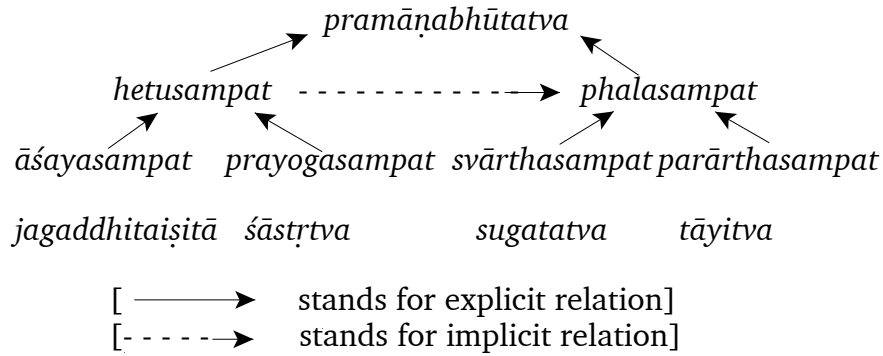
*heyopādeyatattvasya sopāyasya prasiddhitāḥ /  
pradhānārthāviśamvādād anumānaṃ paratra vā //*  
Or because [the truthfulness about] what is to be avoided and what is to be appropriated, as well as [of] the means [thereof], is well established, the main content [e.g., the four noble truths] does not belie [its promise]. Therefore, [it is justified] to infer [also] in respect to other [parts of the teaching such as about karma that they do not belie their promise.]

It is this second method that is used by Dharmakīrti in PV II to prove the reliability of the Buddha. As mentioned above, Dharmakīrti uses the five epithets of the Buddha that

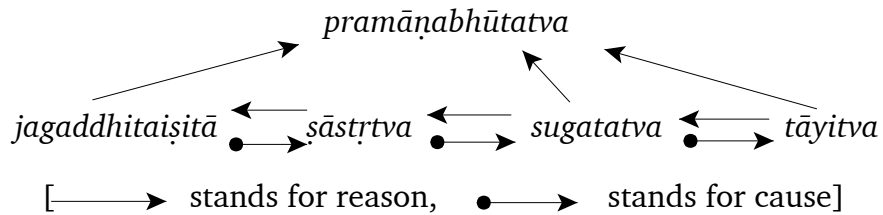
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<sup>68</sup>See Dunne 2004: 361-366, Eltschinger 2007: 217-227, and further references therein.

Dignāga mentions in his *maṅgalaśloka* as a programmatic half verse: *pramāṇabhūta*, *jagaddhitaṣṭin*, *sugata*, *śāstr*, and *tāyin*. Dignāga explains the relationship between these epithets in his own commentary on this verse and we can represent this as follows (cf. F 1997:18):



As usual, Dharmakīrti supplements and modifies Dignāga's words. As I argued elsewhere, according to Dharmakīrti's text we may present these epithets in the following table:



The crucial move here is the arrangement of the four epithets (*jagaddhitaṣṭin* etc.) in a causal relationship. Once this is established, one can infer them in reverse order from effect to cause (i.e., from *tāyin* to *jagaddhitaṣṭin*), and then from three of the epithets, that the Buddha is reliable (*śāstrtva* plays no role in this last move because it is only a preparatory stage for *sugatatva*). The causal relation is formed by interpreting each property as a necessary condition for the subsequent one: The Buddha is full of compassion – this is Dharmakīrti's interpre-

tation of *jagaddhitaṣitā* – and wants to become a protector, but before becoming a protector he has to acquire the adequate knowledge, i.e., to become *sugata*; the root *GAM* is interpreted by Dharmakīrti in the meaning of “knowing,” not in the more usual meaning of “going,” and in consideration of the three meanings of *su-*, *sugata* is said to state that the Buddha’s knowledge is true, definitive and complete. That this was not Dignāga’s intention is quite clear (F 1997: 19-20).

Having established the causal connection among the properties, Dharmakīrti can now infer them in reversed order (PV II 281-282): Because the Buddha is a protector, which consists in his revealing the way to liberation or the four noble truths, he is *sugata*, i.e., has much more knowledge than is necessary for becoming an *arhat*, etc.; because he is *sugata* he is (or was) a “teacher,” i.e., must have exerted himself to obtain knowledge for the sake of other living beings; and because he is a “teacher,” he seeks the benefit of all living beings, i.e., is full of compassion. And because of compassion, knowledge and exertion, he is *pramāṇa* (PV II 282):

*dayayā śreya ācāste, jñānād bhūtam, sasādhanam /  
tac cābhiyogavān vaktum yatas tasmāt pramāṇatā //*

Because of compassion he proclaims salvation,  
because of knowledge [he proclaims] truth, and  
because he exerts himself to tell (i.e., teach) that  
[knowledge/truth] with [its] means, he is a  
means of knowledge.

### *On Circles*

To conclude the discussion of the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter, one may mention what Steinkellner would call “an episode” in the history of Dharmakīrti research, namely, the issue whether the proof of the reliability of the Buddha is circular. The opinion that Dharmakīrti’s reflections on the authority of the Buddha involve a logical loop, a vicious circle, or even a benign circle, has been asserted several times by renowned Dharmakīrti scholars such as Tilmann Vetter, Masatoshi Nagatomi, Ernst Steinkellner and Richard Hayes. According to Vetter and Nagatomi, the circle consists in the fact

that perception and inference legitimate the authority of the Buddha, and that the authority of the Buddha, in its turn, legitimates the validity of perception and inference. Thus Vetter says (in Steinkellner's translation, 2003: 324): "He, i.e. the Buddha, is considered as a means of valid cognition, because his authority legitimates the validity of perception and inference. For the Buddha gives goal and guidance of action, which perception and inference cannot give, and which would be disposed of only by a superficial rationality (*flache Aufklärung*, lit. shallow enlightenment). That he is an authority on this has yet to be proven. For nobody is a Buddhist simply on trust. This results in a historical-factual circle, which *Dharmakīrti* has rightly not avoided."

Similarly Nagatomi says: "We must note, however, that the final authority by which they [viz. *Dignāga* and *Dharmakīrti*] claim the validity of their *pramāṇa* system was none other than the Buddha's words which they accepted as authentic by faith. Thus, the Buddhist *pramāṇa* system and the authenticity of the Buddha's words stood, in reality, in a reciprocal relation: the structuring of the former was done within the limits of the latter, and the latter was meant to be supported by the former."<sup>69</sup>

The crucial passage that is supposed to substantiate this opinion occurs in verse 283a-c:

*upadeśatathābhāvastutis tadupadeśataḥ /*  
*pramāṇatattvasiddhyartham... //*

The praise [of the Buddha] by means of the teaching being so (i.e., being valid or non-deceptive) [is uttered by *Dignāga*] in order to establish the true characteristics of the means of knowledge from his teachings.

Admittedly this statement is open to several interpretations and those suggested by Vetter and Nagatomi are not impossible, but they certainly go against the immediate context of this verse as well as its understanding by all commentators.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Nagatomi 1980: 246. See also Dunne 2004: 233-239.

<sup>70</sup> This is explained in some detail in F 1999: 65-66.

As rightly pointed out by Tillemans,<sup>71</sup> both Vetter and Nagatomi fail to raise the obvious question: Does Dharmakīrti actually attempt to establish the validity of perception and inference by relying on the authority of the Buddha? And the obvious answer is: No! Rather, we have to understand this crucial verse within the context of the self-understanding of the *pramāṇa* tradition within the Buddhist tradition, that is, as clarifying the school's relation to the teachings of the Buddha. According to Dharmakīrti, Dignāga praises the Buddha as a means of knowledge, which amounts to praising him because his teachings are valid. If his teachings are valid, we can establish from them the true characteristics of the means of knowledge because perception and inference are used in the Buddha's teachings. The framework in which these statements are made is clearly apologetic, as Dharmakīrti aims at anchoring his own epistemology in the original message of the Buddha. Thus, according to Dharmakīrti, Dignāga praises the Buddha for being a teacher not only in religious matters, but also in matters of epistemology. These apologetics, however, are to be distinguished from the actual procedure by which Dharmakīrti reaches the conclusion that the Buddha is a means of knowledge. Even if the usage of perception and inference has been observed in the Buddha's teachings and serves as a model for establishing their true characteristics, one can test and independently use them to establish, among other things, the validity of the Buddha's teachings, and from it the authority of the Buddha himself. Perception and inference within this context are certainly not established from the outset just because of the Buddha's authority. Nevertheless, one is justified to claim later on, in an apologetic context, that the means which have proved so successful were already discovered by the Buddha and taught in his teachings. Dharmakīrti never attempts to establish the validity of perception and inference by appealing to the authority of the Buddha, neither in the *Pramāṇavārttika*, nor in any of his other works.

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<sup>71</sup> See Tillemans 1993: 18-24.

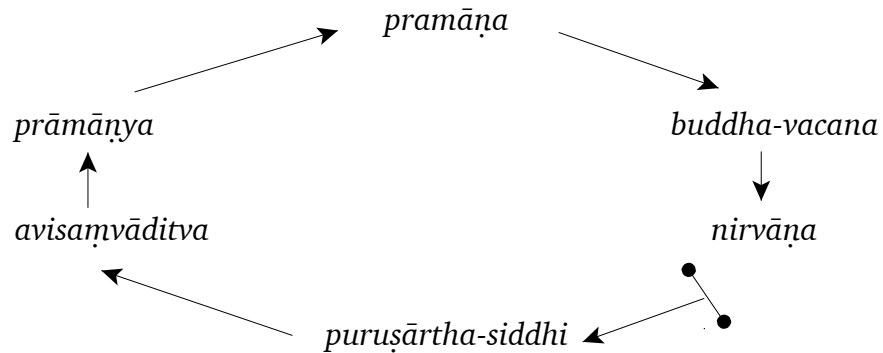
Richard Hayes suggested a different kind of circle in the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter. According to him (1984: 661), Dharmakīrti must address the following two questions in order to establish that the Buddha was a credible person: 1) How do we know that the Buddha was in possession of the truth? 2) How do we know that the Buddha did not lie to us? Hayes claims that “[i]n dealing with the first of these questions, Dharmakīrti falls into the familiar trap of circularity. We can be certain that the Buddha was in full possession of the truth, says Dharmakīrti, because it was the Buddha who taught us the four noble truths and the eightfold path to salvation. In other words, we know that the Buddha is trustworthy because it was he who taught us all the things that we Buddhists believe. The vicious circularity of Dharmakīrti's argument is disguised somewhat by the fact that it takes him some two hundred couplets to make the circle, but it is undeniable that he does eventually end up in a logical loop on this first question.” Thus, Hayes claims that, according to Dharmakīrti, the Buddha is considered to be trustworthy because he taught us the four noble truths, etc., which we consider to be true; and we consider the four noble truths, etc., to be true because the Buddha, who is trustworthy, taught them to us. However, the circularity observed by Hayes has no foundation in Dharmakīrti's text. In a way, it can be said that Dharmakīrti's reasoning moves from the teaching to the teacher and back to the teaching, but this does not involve a vicious circle. In fact, it does not involve a circle at all, because Dharmakīrti does not understand the Buddha's teaching to be a single whole. For him the teaching has a main or essential part (*pradhāna*) and a secondary or subordinate part. The main part, which consists of the four noble truths, is established independently of the authority of the Buddha by means of perception and inference. Only the secondary part (e.g., recollections of past lives, the reason for certain *vinaya* rules) cannot be established by means of perception and inference. The truthfulness of this part is inferred indirectly from the exceptional qualities of the Buddha. As Dharmakīrti says in PV I 217 quoted above:

Or because [the truthfulness about] what is to be avoided and what is to be appropriated, as well as [of] the means [thereof], is well established, the main content [of the Buddha's teaching] does not belie [its promise]. Therefore, [it is justified] to infer [also] in respect to other [parts of the Buddha's teaching such as that on *karman* that they do not belie their promise.]

Yet another circle was suggested by Steinkellner. It contains the following links (2003: 328):

1. our ordinary valid cognitions (*pramāṇa*) establish the authority of the Buddha's teaching (*buddha-vacana*),
2. the validity of our cognitions (*prāmāṇya*) is understood as their reliability (*avisamvāditva*),
3. reliability depends on successful activity (*puruṣārtha-siddhi*),
4. all human goals are determined by the 'ultimate goal' (*nirvāṇa*),<sup>72</sup>
5. the 'ultimate goal' is indicated in the Buddha's teaching (*buddhavacana*).

This circle is illustrated as follows (Steinkellner 2003:329):



<sup>72</sup>This is further explained in Steinkellner's n.21: "I think that this 'last success' is necessary to determine all previous episodes of success, because these themselves are 'successful' only in having contributed to paving the way for the 'last success'. For, if one of these previous minor and subordinate, even trifle goals are improperly realised, e.g., if even the properties of fire are not judged correctly, the final results will not come about."



The weakest point in this circle is, of course, no. 4: all human goals are determined by the ‘ultimate goal’ (*nirvāṇa*). If the validity of every specific cognition is determined in relation to the ultimate goal, this does not only cause a practical problem that one would not know which of one’s cognitions are valid before one becomes enlightened, but is also contradicted by Dharmakīrti’s statements, e.g., that validity is determined by everyday practice. It would seem indeed far-fetched to claim that fire is correctly inferred from smoke just because this would somehow be conducive to reaching enlightenment. And if it does not help one to reach enlightenment, would it be false? Is every true cognition helpful for reaching enlightenment?

I also doubt that the ‘ultimate goal’ is indicated in the Buddha’s teaching, if this is meant in the sense that one would not know what this goal is without the Buddha’s teachings. The ultimate goal of stopping suffering is obvious to everyone (cf. PV II 238). As Dharmakīrti points out when objecting to the mediation on suffering, suffering is perceived prior to the meditation on it. The important thing about the Buddha’s teaching is not that it indicates the final goal, but that it indicates how to reach this goal.

### *Perception*

The chapter of the PV on perception is conceived as a loose commentary on verses 2-12, that is, the *svamata* part, of PS I.<sup>73</sup> Dharmakīrti’s discussion of perception centers on the following issues: 1) the number of means of knowledge (vv. 1-122); 2) the definition of perception as “free from conceptual construction” (vv. 123-190); 3) the etymology and justification of the use of the term “perception” (*pratyakṣa*) (vv. 191-193); 4) the compatibility between the Abhidharmic theory of perception and the definition “being free of conceptualization” (vv. 194-230); 5) the object of perception (vv. 231-238); 6) the classification of perception into four types (vv. 239-287); 7)

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<sup>73</sup> The Sanskrit text was recently reconstructed by Steinkellner, see PS I. For a translation see Hattori 1968.

pseudo-perception (vv. 288-300); 8) the result of the means of knowledge (301-422) and the proof of self-awareness (vv. 423-541). Only some of the above can be addressed here.

*The Duality of Means and Object of Knowledge*

Following the order of PS I, Dharmakīrti precedes the definition of perception with a discussion of the duality of means and objects of knowledge. Dignāga stated that there are only two means of knowledge or instruments of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*), namely perception and inference, because the objects of these means of knowledge have two characteristics: perception has the particular characteristic as its object, and inference the universal characteristic. However, in the same breath Dignāga also states that the universal is only a conceptual construction and that as such it does not exist in reality: “Conceptual construction is the association of a name, genus, and so forth [with the thing perceived which results in a verbal designation of the thing].”<sup>74</sup> Therefore, the question immediately arises: How could something nonexistent be the object of a means of knowledge? Dignāga neither raises nor answers this question. This is indeed one of the most intriguing points in the PS, that is, not only what Dignāga’s answer to this question would have been, but also why he saw no need even to raise it. If this is such an obvious problem, as it seems to us, how could it be that Dignāga did not address it?

Dharmakīrti proposes four criteria to distinguished particulars from universals (PV III 1-2): The particular is capable of efficient action, is dissimilar from all other things, is not the object of a word, and produces its own cognition. The universal is the opposite. But how can the universal, which does not exist, be the referent, the objective counterpart, of a valid cognition? And inversely, if the universal were a real object, how could it not be capable of efficient action? After all, the

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<sup>74</sup> PS I, p. 2.8: *nāmajātyādiyojanā*. The translation quotes Hattori 1968: 25. In what follows I repeat parts of my introduction to Franco/Notake 2014.

criterion of true existence (*paramārthasattva*) is the capacity to act efficiently (*arthakriyāśakti*).<sup>75</sup>

Dharmakīrti is very laconic, not to say obscure, on this point. Prajñākaragupta explains the negation in the statement about the non-capacity of the universal to produce an efficient action as an implicative negation, referring thereby to the well known division of negations as implicative and non-implicative (*paryudāsa* and *prasajyapratishedha*). Now, what does the implicative negation mean in the present case? It means that the universal does not produce an efficient action directly, but it does produce it indirectly. An illusory object like a floater produces no efficient action, neither directly nor indirectly, and is therefore not a real object, neither directly nor indirectly (PVA 169.25-26).

The universal is a property of something real (*bhāvadharma*) because it is indirectly related to real things. The object of a means of knowledge (*meya*), however, is only the particular (*svalakṣaṇa*). Only the particular can accomplish an efficient action and is thus to be investigated, inasmuch as the object of means of knowledge (*prameya*) is something existing. The particular appears in two forms, its own and that of something else. This is indeed one of the crucial points in Dharmakīrti's epistemology where he seems to have departed from Dignāga (PV III 53-54).

Devendrabuddhi explains that when in everyday practice one speaks and acts as if the universal were a property of some existing thing, this does not mean that the universal really exists, but only that a cognition arising from the impressions left by past experience of particulars is erroneously determined to be that of a universal.<sup>76</sup> Similarly Manorathanandin explains

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<sup>75</sup> Dharmakīrti means here true or absolute existence from the point of view of conventional reality; the discussion of *pramāṇas* and *prameyas* in Dharmakīrti's work is done within the framework of empirical reality (cf. *sāṃvyaavahārika-pramāṇa*). Absolute reality and absolute means of knowledge (*pāramārthika-pramāṇa*) is only occasionally hinted at; see PVin I 44.2-5.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. PVP P167b7-168a1/D144a3-5 translated in Franco/Notake 2014, n. 1 on v. 53.

that the cognition of a universal wrongly determines something to be common to many individuals and external to the cognition, while in fact it is only a form within cognition itself. Such cognition arises only after the apprehension of some existent thing. Thus, the reason why the universal is considered to be a property of an existent thing is not that its cognition has an existent thing as its object, but that it is produced by the awakening of latent impressions deposited in the mind by the experience of existent things.

The most intriguing question here is why or precisely how this error continuously happens. As far as I can see, neither Dharmakīrti nor his commentators have a persuasive answer to this question. Indeed, there is no obvious explanation for the arising of such an error within Dharmakīrti's systemic framework. How could particulars that are completely different from each other produce identical cognitions, which, in turn, produce impressions in the mind of the cognizing person? And even if they did, how could impressions or traces left by particulars produce conceptual constructions (in fact, recollections) of universals? Dharmakīrti gives two answers to this question, neither of which seems quite satisfactory. His first explanation (PV III 29) is that the cognition of a universal, which is an error, arises because of a previous error, and the previous error because of a still earlier error, and so on ad infinitum. That this does not amount to much of an explanation is clear from Prajñākaragupta's following comment: "How [does the cognition of the universal arise] from vivid (i.e., non-conceptual) cognitions, even though it has a non-vivid (i.e., conceptual) appearance? Here also, a [beginningless] sequence of errors is [our] refuge."<sup>77</sup>

The above process is presumably the usual case. However, in some cases the cognition of a universal may arise without dependence on a previous error, or at least without dependence on verbal convention (*saṃketa*). In PV III 47, Dharmakīrti admits that the cognition of a universal can arise from perceiving particulars due to a "close relation"

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<sup>77</sup>PVA 200.20: *asphuṭāvabhāse 'pi sphuṭadarśanāt katham iti bhrānti-paramparaivātrāpi śaraṇam.*

(*pratyāsatti*) between them, which is not further explained. This “close relation” causes them to produce the same, or at least similar, cognitions, which then produce the same, or at least similar, impressions. The same close relation is also observed when heterogeneous things, such as an object, sense, previous cognition and so on jointly produce an effect, namely, a cognition. To what extent the analogy holds is not clear. In the latter case, heterogeneous factors form a causal complex that produces an effect; this is not quite the same as different causal complexes producing the same effect. Further, the glosses of the commentators on Dharmakīrti’s “close relation” seem circular, for the close relation is supposed to explain why and how different particulars or individuals produce the same effect. The commentators, however, characterize it as producing the same effect, namely, the same cognition. For example, see PVA 210.8: *ekakāryajananalakṣaṇā pratyāsattiḥ...*<sup>78</sup> and PVV 129.11-12: *pratyāsattir ekabuddhyādikāryatvam*. This amounts to saying that different particulars jointly produce a cognition because they are in a close relation which consists in their producing a cognition.

Although inference is erroneous, it is a means of knowledge, not because inference apprehends a real object, but because the intention to obtain an object on the part of those who act upon it is not disappointed (*abhiprāyāvisamvāda*) (v. 56). For instance, two persons, one mistaking the light of a lamp falling through a keyhole<sup>79</sup> for a jewel, the other mistaking the glow of the jewel for the jewel itself, run to fetch the desired object, but only one of them will get the jewel (PV III 57-58).

The example is illuminating, but not unproblematic from a systemic point of view. Śākyabuddhi raises an objection that in the second case, where the glow of the jewel leads to the obtainment of the jewel, the cognition would amount to a third type of means of knowledge, since it is neither perception nor

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<sup>78</sup> Note that this is part of the opponent’s statement that such a relation is impossible without a universal.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. NBhū 197.22-23: *...kuñcīkāvivaraṇiḥśṛtāyāṃ prabhāyāṃ...*

inference. It is not perception because it is erroneous and conceptual. Nor is it an inference because it does not arise from an inferential sign (*liṅga*). Nor is it a cognition that is not valid, because it agrees with reality (*vastusaṃvāda*) inasmuch as it leads to efficient action. Śākyabuddhi solves this problem by suggesting that such a cognition is in fact an inference. The general characteristic of an inference, he says, is the following: Inference is the cognition of an object beyond the range of the senses (*parokṣa*) that arises from its connection to another object. In the present case, the erroneous cognition of a jewel arises because of the connection of the sense of vision to the light of a jewel, which is an effect of a jewel. Therefore, because the cognition of jewel arises from an inferential sign that is an effect of that jewel (*kāryaliṅgajātva*), it is nothing but inference. First, a non-erroneous visual cognition of the light of the jewel arises. Through this, the nature of an inferential sign that consists in an effect (*kāryaliṅgasvarūpa*) is apprehended because only the particular is an inferential sign.<sup>80</sup> This reasoning does not seem very convincing. Although one can establish a concomitance in the form wherever there is the light of a jewel there is a jewel, one is not aware of this putative inference. One would similarly have to assume that a person who mistakes smoke for fire and subsequently obtains fire is actually inferring fire from smoke.

*The Addition of “abhrānta” to the Definition of Perception*

When writing the PV, Dharmakīrti still retained Dignāga’s definition of perception as a cognition free from

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<sup>80</sup>Sanskrit fragment in Steinkellner 1981: 291: *tadā pratyakṣānumānavyatiriktam trtīyam idaṃ pramāṇam āpatitam. tathā hi maṇiprabhāyāṃ maṇibuddher (read -buddhir) na pratyakṣam, bhrāntatvāt savikalpakatvāc ca. pratyakṣam tv etadviparītam. nāpy anumānam, alṅgajtvāt. na cāpramāṇam vastusaṃvādāt. atrocyate. anumānam evaitat. tathā hy anumānasya sāmānyalakṣaṇam anantaram sthāpayiṣyate: parokṣārthasyānyasambandhāt pratipattir anumānam iti. iha ca maṇau maṇiprabhāsambandhāt tatkāryatvāt tasyāṃ <maṇi>prabhāyāṃ maṇi-bhrāntir utpadyate. tataḥ kāryaliṅgajtvād anumānam eva. tathā hi maṇiprabhāyāṃ ādāv abhrāntam eva cakṣurvijñānam upajāyate, tena ca kāryaliṅgasvarūpam adhigatam. yataḥ svalakṣaṇam eva liṅgam ...*

conceptual construction (*kalpanāpoḍha*), but added to it the word *abhrānta* when composing the PVin and NB. This addition, however, does not point at a real development in Dharmakīrti's thought; on the contrary, already in the PV he maintains (as far as we can tell, falsely) that Dignāga made an exception to his own definition and allowed that errors arising from defective sense organs are free from conceptual construction.

For Dignāga, the definition of perception as free from conceptual construction worked well because he maintained that no errors are due to the senses and that they are all due to the mind. Dharmakīrti rejected this position. While discussing Dignāga's verse on *pratyakṣābhāsa* (PS I 7cd-8ab), he claimed that next to the three conceptual types of pseudo-perception (erroneous cognition, cognition of empirical reality, inference and its result etc.), Dignāga allowed a fourth one that is free from conceptual construction. Dharmakīrti's interpretation, however, is not convincing (F 1986: 82, Chu 2004). It has a clear consequence of invalidating Dignāga's definition: If perception is defined as a cognition free from conceptual construction, and a cognition produced by *timira* sickness is free from conceptual construction, then such cognition is perception. It is for this reason that Dharmakīrti added later (in the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*) the word *abhrānta* to the definition and maintained it in all his subsequent writings. That, in its turn, rendered the word *kalpanāpoḍha* superfluous in the definition. Since inference is considered to be *bhrānta*, the word *abhrānta* alone would suffice to define perception. We do not know whether Dharmakīrti himself was aware of that consequence, but we can clearly see it in Prajñākaragupta's commentary:

[Objection]: Why is [the word] non-erroneous (*abhrānta*) not employed alone [in the definition of perception]? [Answer:] True. Perception is immediate experience, and it can be designated by employing [the word] non-erroneous [alone], for [a cognition] which does not have the form of immediate experience is not non-erroneous, because conceptual [cognition] is [always] erroneous. But others accept conceptual

[cognition] too as having the form of immediate experience [and] as non-erroneous. With reference to that [view], both these [words, i.e. *abhrānta* and *kalpanāpodha*] are taught [as the definition of perception].<sup>81</sup>

Thus, not much was left from Dignāga's original definition. First we started with perception defined as *kalpanāpodha*, then the word *abhrānta* was added, and finally the word *kalpanāpodha* was practically rejected: it was formally kept in the definition out of deference for Dignāga, but its role was not to define perception—the word *abhrānta* alone does that—but merely to reject the view of certain others, who recognized conceptual perception (presumably Naiyāyikas who accepted *savikalpaka-pratyakṣa*, a doctrine that was unknown to Dignāga and was probably developed in response to his theory of perception).

#### *Four Types of Perception*

Another area where Dharmakīrti contributed an important modification to the PS concerns the types of perception. Dignāga's stance on the different types of perception is not absolutely clear. First, it is important to emphasize that the various types of perception mentioned in the PS do not represent Dignāga's own view, but that of others. As Dignāga himself says, "the distinction [of various kinds of perception] here [in the PS] depends on what is thought/maintained by others."<sup>82</sup> Further, in Dignāga's

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<sup>81</sup> PVA, p. 335.12-14: *abhrāntagrahaṇam eva kasmān na kriyata iti cet. satyam etat. sāksātkari hi pratyakṣam tac cābhrāntagrahaṇena śakyam nīdarśayitum, na hy asāksātkaraṇākāram. abhrāntam savikalpakasya bhrāntatvāt, pare tu savikalpam api sāksātkaraṇākāram abhrāntam icchatī, tadanurodhena dvayam etad ucyate.* Translation from F 1986: 84.

<sup>82</sup> PS I on v. 5: *paramatāpekṣam cātra viśeṣaṇam*. See also Hattori 1968: 27, see also F 1993. The same types of perception appear also in the *Nyāyamukha* (Tucci's translation, p. 50). There Dignāga's distancing himself from this inner division of perception is less clear; it is expressed by saying: "These [i.e., mental perception etc.] are also called direct perception." In view of the clearer statement in the PS, one should probably understand that they are called so by others.



presentation, self-apprehension of feelings etc., is not an independent kind of perception, but is subsumed under mental perception. He also mentions separately the self-apprehension of conceptual construction, and it is possible, though perhaps not probable, that this self apprehension forms a different type of perception (and is not to be subsumed under mental perception). Whatever the case may be, Dharmakīrti systematized Dignāga's statements into four types of perception: sense-perception, mental perception, self-apprehension and yogic perception. And these are no longer presented as representing the opinion of others, but as Dignāga's (and of course Dharmakīrti's) own doctrine.

*Dharmakīrti's Ontology and the Sliding Scale of Analysis*

Several studies have dealt recently with the different ontological levels committed to by Dharmakīrti in various degrees. Dreyfus (1997), McClintock (2003), Dunne (2004) and Kellner (2011) have discussed the hypothesis that Dignāga, Dharmakīrti and their followers employ a sliding, or ascending, scale of analysis. Dreyfus and McClintock deal with later representatives of the tradition in South Asia and Tibet and no doubt present the Tibetan exegesis of Dharmakīrti accurately. Dunne, however, is concerned with Dharmakīrti's own work, and here I have some misgivings.

According to Dunne (2004: 56ff.), four ontological and epistemological levels can be distinguished in Dharmakīrti's writings:

1. "The belief of ordinary people". Characteristic or symptomatic for this level is the belief that wholes (*avayavin*) exist independently of their parts.
2. "The Abhidharma Typology". This level is characterized by the understanding that speaking of wholes is just applying names to bundles of physical and mental elements (*dharmas*). Three errors persist in this level, namely, that some elements have spatial extension, some temporal extension, and some are repeatable (e.g., all earth particles). According to Dunne (2004: 58), this level is best represented by the Sarvāstivāda topology in

the *Abhidharmakośa*. To move from the first to the second level, one refutes the whole and similar entities such as the *ātman* (2004: 62).

3. “External Realism—The Theory of External Things as Unique Momentary Particles.” This level eliminates the three errors of level 2, but persists in believing that extra-mental matter, infinitesimal particles, exists. Some commentators call this level Sautrāntika, but Dunne prefers to follow Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi and calls this level External Realism (*bāhyārthavāda*). To move from the second to the third level, the paradigmatic case is the refutation of the universal (2004: 62).
4. “Epistemic Idealism—All Entities are Mental.” The belief in extra-mental matter is eliminated through the understanding that subject/object duality is due to ignorance. Dharmakīrti refers to this level as *viññaptimātratā*, and the early commentators as *antarjñeyavāda* (the doctrine of the internal object of knowledge). Dunne refers to this level as “epistemic idealism”.

Birgit Kellner (2011) has already voiced some doubts about the transition from level 3 to level 4 by pointing out that Dharmakīrti uses several arguments to move from realism to idealism, and that there is no particular reason to favour the argument on subject/object duality over other arguments such as the *samanantarapratyaya* argument. My qualms about this scheme are more radical and I would claim that it has one level too few, and one too many. First, I see no reason to distinguish between the so-called Sarvāstivāda and Sautrāntika levels. The error about substances and wholes is not more fundamental than the error about universals. Furthermore, there is no need at all to move from the presumed level 2 to level 3 when eliminating the error about the universal. The best example is probably the PVSV. It contains an extensive refutation of universals, but the *avayavin* is not even mentioned in it. Similarly in the context of the discussion of two *prameyas* in PV III 1-63, the universal is repeatedly refuted, but not on the basis of the so-called level 2. Actually, Dharmakīrti’s starting point is

not even level 1 of “the belief of ordinary people”, but the theories of other philosophical schools such as Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Sāṃkhya, or Jainism. Moreover, Dunne’s scheme is contradicted by the commentarial tradition (which appears already in Vinītadeva’s work if not before) that Dharmakīrti’s work, or at least parts of it, represents both the Sautrāntika and the Yogācāra points of views; I have never seen any commentarial or other evidence for the so-called Sarvāstivāda level. Further, the belief in a form (*ākāra*) of an object such as blue is common to the Sarvāstivāda and the Sautrāntika and cannot be used as a criterion to distinguish the two, or, even without adhering to these names, to distinguish between two ontological levels or two levels of analysis. What Dunne presents as two different levels seems rather as an incompatibility in the same level. It is this incompatibility that Vasubandhu in the *Viṃśikā* and Dignāga in the *Ālambanaparīkṣā* use in order to refute “External Realism”. Had the beliefs in infinitesimal, imperceptible atoms and spatially extensive objects of cognition such as a visible form not belonged to the same level of the same philosophical tradition, they would not be used as the two conditions or two characteristics for being an object of cognition and further could not be said to contradict each other. Thus, I fail to see that one can insert another level of analysis between the beliefs of the common people and the Sautrāntika point of view.<sup>83</sup> In addition one may add that as a rule Dharmakīrti is busy refuting other philosophical theories, not the beliefs of the common people. The belief in the *avayavin* as entirely different from its parts is particular to the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika traditions; it is not accepted by other philosophical traditions such as the Sāṃkhya and the Mīmāṃsā, and it is far from certain that is accepted by ordinary people.

Dunne also has one level too few. As is well known, the level of *viññaptimātratā* is not the final ontological level in Yogācāra (in terms of the three *svabhāvas*, *viññaptimātratā* corresponds to *svatantra*); and even though Dharmakīrti is quite laconic about it, there is enough evidence to indicate that

<sup>83</sup>Of course, one can distinguish levels within the Sautrāntika tradition; but this is not what Dunne has in mind, and such a level is also not discernable in Dharmakīrti’s work.

he accepted another superior level that may be considered to represent absolute reality. When describing the final stages of the path (*mārga*), Dharmakīrti uses two pregnant terms, *prabhāsvaracitta* and *āśrayaparivṛtti*, whose association actually point at the Tathāgatagarbha tradition.<sup>84</sup> I do not wish to argue that Dharmakīrti associated himself with the Tathāgatagarbha tradition in contradistinction or opposition to the Yogācāra tradition. It is probable that by the seventh century the Tathāgatagarbha was already absorbed into the Yogācāra, and that Dharmakīrti considered it as an integral part of the Yogācāra tradition, as did the Tibetan tradition later on (F 1997: 89-90). Therefore, I would suggest the following four levels:

- 1) Everyday practice (*vyavahāra*)
- 2) Atomic realism (*sautrāntika*)
- 3) Idealism (*viññaptimātratā*)
- 4) Absolute reality (*buddhatā? tathatā?*)

The final level is referred to by Dharmakīrti as the cognition which is permanent (*anapāyin*), free from errors and without defilements (*vibhramavivekanirmala*) and is absolute *pramāṇa* (*pāramāthikapramāṇa*);<sup>85</sup> elsewhere he speaks of a cognition which is free of parts such as subject, object and self-apprehension.<sup>86</sup> This state which is clearly distinct from the cognition as *viññaptimātra* certainly represents the state of Buddhahood or at least the state of enlightenment. However, if Dharmakīrti is a traditional Yogācāra, one would expect this state to be combined, or exist side by side, or coalesce with *tathatā/śūnyatā/dhārmadhātu*. Perhaps because he attempts to write from both the Sautrāntika and the Yogācāra point of view, or perhaps because he is reluctant to bring this topic to the

<sup>84</sup>Cf. F 1997: 81ff. Tathāgatagarbha influence on Dharmakīrti's verses becomes even more plausible because of the use of the word *garbha* in PV II 209: The defilements cannot increase indefinitely in a thing (*vastu*) whose embryo is (i.e., which contains/is filled with) the capacity for the arising of that which sublates these defilements (*bādhakotpattisāmarthyagarbha*), like fire on oozing earth (F 1997: 88, see also PVSV 220-221).

<sup>85</sup>See PVin I 44.4-5.

<sup>86</sup>PV III 354cd: *grāhyagrāhakaśamvittibhedavān iva lakṣyate*. This tenet is repeated several times in the Pratyakṣa chapter.

argumentative context of the *sāṃvyavahārikapramāṇas*, or for whatever other reason, Dharmakīrti is not explicit about this level of the absolute. But in some rare cases he seems to hint at it or at least formulate his statements vaguely enough that they could be so interpreted. For instance PV II 253 (and it may be reminded that the Yogācāra identified *pratītyasamutpāda* with *tathatā*):

*sā ca naḥ pratyayotpattiḥ sā nairātmyadrgāśrayaḥ /  
yuktis tu śūnyatādr̥ṣṭes tadarthāḥ śeṣabhāvanāḥ //*  
And this [painfulness of the produced (*saṃskāraduḥkhatā*)] is, according to us, the dependent origination (*pratyayotpatti*=*pratītyasamutpāda*); it is the basis for seeing *Nairātmya*. As for liberation, [it arises] from seeing emptiness. All the other meditations have that [seeing of emptiness] as their purpose.

To be sure, concepts like *nairātmya* and *śūnyatā* admit of many readings, and Dharmakīrti was probably deliberately vague in his formulation; but a Yogācāra reading of the verse is certainly not impossible.

### *Soteriology*

According to Dharmakīrti, the main part of the Buddha's teaching are the four noble truths or more specifically the truth of the path (PV II 145-146). The main part of the path is *samyagdṛṣṭi*, which in the final analysis consists in the intuitive understanding that there is no self (*anātman*).

Suffering is defined by Dharmakīrti as the five *skandhas* which are characterized by transmigration. This definition refers only to *saṃskāraduḥkhatā*; the other two types of suffering (*duḥkhaduḥkhatā* and *pariṇāmaduḥkhatā*) seem not to be relevant to Dharmakīrti's discussion. *Samskāraduḥkhatā*, in its turn, is identified with dependent origination (PV II 253). Similarly, while discussing the second noble truth Dharmakīrti reduces the three types of thirst mentioned in the canonical formulations (*kāmatṛṣṇā*, *bhavatṛṣṇā*, *vibhavatṛṣṇā*) into one: The cause of suffering is the desire for existence. The desire for pleasure and for non-existence are included in it (vv. 183b-

184). Karma and ignorance are not mentioned in the second noble truth because karma alone (without desire and ignorance) cannot lead to rebirth, and ignorance is not the direct cause of rebirth (PV II 189).<sup>87</sup>

Dharmakīrti conceives liberation above all negatively as the stopping of suffering, that is, cessation of the transmigration of the five *skandhas*. Rebirth cannot be stopped directly; the only way to stop it is to eliminate its cause. However, rebirth does not have a single cause; consequently, one has to identify the necessary causes of rebirth and find out which one among them can be eliminated. If none of the causes can be eliminated, liberation is impossible. On the other hand, even if more than one necessary cause could be eliminated, it would be useless to engage in the elimination of two causes because the elimination of one cause is sufficient to prevent the result. To the suggestion of an opponent that both desire and karma should be eliminated, Dharmakīrti replies (PV II 274) that the elimination of karma would be pointless (*vyartha*).

One has to eliminate the cause of rebirth by eliminating the cause of the cause of rebirth. The direct and necessary causes of rebirth are three: desire (*rāga*, *tṛṣṇā*, etc.), karma and the body (primarily the senses). If any one of the three is missing, the other two cannot cause a new birth, just as when the seed is missing, the earth and the sun cannot grow a sprout by themselves. Which of the three causes should be eliminated? Dharmakīrti says—in conformity with the third noble truth—that desire should be abandoned because neither the body nor karma can be abandoned. They have no antidotes (*vipakṣa*), and as long as desire is present, they will arise again (PV II 272-273).

The question that arises next is how to eliminate desire. Dharmakīrti considers and rejects several alternatives. For instance, desire cannot be fought by aversion (or hatred) because desire and aversion do not contradict or suppress each other; on the contrary, they arise from the same source, namely, the apprehension of a Self, and give rise to each other

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<sup>87</sup>In the following I repeat parts of F 2001.

(PV II 211). Similarly, compassion, friendliness, etc., (i.e., the four *brahmavihāras*) cannot bring about a definitive suppression of the defilements because the source of all defilements is the delusion that there is a Self (*satkāyadarśana*) (PV II 212). The meditation on suffering (*duḥkhabhāvanā*) is also useless. By meditating on suffering one only becomes aware of suffering. But suffering was perceived already before this meditation and yet one did not lose one's desires (PV II 238). In this connection Dharmakīrti also considers and rejects the possibility that Tantric rituals would lead to salvation (PV II 258ff.). Rather, the way to liberation is practicing repeatedly the right vision of the four noble truths in their sixteen aspects, which destroys desire together with its associated factors (PV II 271).

The practicing of the way culminates in the right vision, which is the vision of Selflessness. Dharmakīrti repeats again and again that as long as the apprehension of a Self (*satkāyadr̥ṣṭi* and similar expressions) subsists, desires cannot be eliminated, and that apprehension of a Self alone is responsible for all faults. The following is a representative sample: The false apprehension of Self and Mine causes desire; the apprehension of Selflessness (*nairātmya*) removes/obstructs it (PV II 135). Birth and faults (*janma-doṣa*) do not return when their cause is abandoned; their cause is the apprehension of a Self (*ātmadarśana*) (v. 140). In all cases (*sarvatra*), the love of the Self (*ātmasneha*) is the cause of desires (v. 185). As long as the love for the Self is not abandoned, the *skandhas* continue to suffer because of the superimposition of a suffering Self (v. 191). Delusion (*moha*) is the root of all faults; it consists in the apprehension of a living being (*sattvagraha*) (v. 196). Someone who does not see a Self does not desire the Self, and without love for the Self the living being is not reborn (v. 201). As long as one is attached/devoted to the Self (*ātmābhīniveśa*) one remains in *saṃsāra* (v. 218). When there is a conception of a Self, there is a conception of an Other; from these two, seizing (*parigraha*) and aversion arise, and from these two all other faults (v. 219, cf. also PVSV 111.11f.). Things are not desirable in themselves. Only the appropriation of a Self makes them attractive and desirable. Everybody can observe that one's own

hair and nails that have fallen off the body are considered with repulsion, but the same hair and nails, when attached to one's body, are considered lovingly (PV II 228). The apprehension of a Self strengthens the love of the Self, and the latter is the seed for the love of things that belong to the Self (v. 235). Liberation (*mukti*) is due to the apprehension of emptiness, and all other meditations (*śeṣabhāvanā*) have that as their purpose (*tadārtha*) (v. 253). Further passages in this vein could be easily adduced.

In the final analysis, the main part of the Buddha's teaching, according to Dharmakīrti, can be reduced to the *anātman*-doctrine. However, although Dharmakīrti uses the term *nairātmya* and *śūnyatā* primarily to indicate that the *skandhas* are empty of a Self, it is obvious that one can easily interpret some of these passages to imply that all *dharmas* are empty of own-being, i.e., unreal, in the Yogācāra sense.

### *Scope and Dating*

In several publications Vincent Eltschinger argued strongly that Dharmakīrti's philosophy can be regarded neither as the systematized outcome of the Buddhist dialectical tradition, nor as a sophisticated answer to challenges of a purely philosophical order (2010: 432, 2013: passim). He considers the period between 475 and 550 A.D., which coincides with the gradual collapse of the Gupta dynasty, as the turning point, in which Brahmanical orthodoxy, notably the Mīmāṃsā, resorts to apocalyptic rhetoric and interpretations in order to account for the rise and spread of heretical movements such as Buddhism. Kumāri's *Tantravārttika* clearly shows how philosophical interaction mirrors non-philosophical and social as well as religious interests. Similarly, the most prominent Buddhist intellectuals of the time (Dignāga, Dharmapāla, Dharmakīrti, Bhāviveka) suddenly start addressing non-Buddhist philosophies and religious doctrines in a systematic way. "This heresiological turn develops against the background of the political, economic and social insecurity brought by the decline and fall of the Gupta empire" (2010: 443).



While the attempt to anchor the philosophical developments in political and social circumstances seems reasonable and commendable, relating Dharmakīrti's work to the disintegration and collapse of the Gupta dynasty seems doubtful. Eltschinger relies in his thesis on a new dating of Dharmakīrti by Helmut Krasser to ca. 550 (Krasser 2012).

Dharmakīrti's date in the seventh century has been established even before the Buddhist *pramāṇa* tradition became an object of modern scholarly study. Already Wassili Wassiljew in *Der Buddhismus, seine Dogmen, Geschichte und Literatur*, St. Petersburg 1860 (Russian original 1857) dated Dharmakīrti in the seventh century.<sup>88</sup> The current and widely accepted dating (ca. 635-650), however, has been established by Satish Chandra Vidyabhushana in the posthumous publication *A History of Indian Logic* (1920: 303). The commonly found dating of 600-660 goes back to Erich Frauwallner's "Landmarks in the History of Indian Logic,"<sup>89</sup> and is only due to Frauwallner's convention of assigning a life-time of sixty years to the philosophers whose life-span is unknown.<sup>90</sup> In fact, Frauwallner simply repeats Vidyabhushana's dating without acknowledging it.<sup>91</sup> Both Vidyabhushana and Frauwallner base their dating on the fact that Xuanzang, who left Nālandā in

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<sup>88</sup>Wassiljew 1860: 58 (= page 54 of the original Russian): "Da Dharmakīrti für einen Zeitgenossen des tibetischen Königs Strongtsan Gambo gilt, so lässt sich daraus schliessen, dass dieses [i.e., das Verfinstern der Sonne des Buddhismus, E.F.] im siebenten Jahrhundert nach Chr. vorging." Note, however, that the time of Strongtsan Gambo is now a subject of dispute among historians of Tibet. Some allocate him to the seventh century, others to the sixth.

<sup>89</sup>Frauwallner 1961, repr. K. Schr.: 847-870.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 129; Kl. Schr.: 851.

<sup>91</sup>In his "methodological observations" (1961: 125, K. Schr.: 847) he says, somewhat unkindly: "The opinion of experienced scholars may be of value even when they are not based on firm evidence. But to quote mere unfounded suppositions as authority only leads us astray. Data from works such as Satis Chandra Vidyabhusana's *History of Indian Logic*, Calcutta 1921, which abound in errors and inaccuracies, must not be utilized without a through examination."

642, does not mention Dharmakīrti, though I Ching who traveled in India during 671-695 does.

This dating of Dharmakīrti has been challenged several times, notably by Lindtner (1980), Kimura (1999) and most recently by Krasser (2012). All three have argued, though on different grounds, that Dharmakīrti was known to Bhāviveka and therefore his date must be advanced to the sixth century. However, while Lindtner's and Kimura's datings encountered wide-spread skepticism, and were refuted by Steinkellner (1991a) and Funayama (2000) respectively, the new dating by Krasser (ca. 550) has been accepted by leading scholars such as Steinkellner (2013) and Eltschinger (2013), the former in a somewhat qualified and cautious manner, the latter without any reservations. However, Krasser's dating raises considerable problems that have not yet been seriously addressed. On the whole, it creates more problems than it solves.<sup>92</sup>

Krasser points out some similar statements in Bhāviveka's *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā*, together with the commentary *Tarkajvālā* (which, unlike most scholars, he considers to be a genuine work by Bhāviveka), and Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* and *Pramāṇavinīścaya*, notably on the subjects of *apoha* (as pointed out earlier by Tillemans 2011b), the unreliability of the Veda, the Buddhist *āgama*, omniscience and the *sattvānumāna*. Krasser himself seems aware that the similarities that he adduces are far too vague and general to allow one to conclude whether there is a dependence relationship between Bhāviveka and Dharmakīrti (and if so, in which direction), whether they both rely on a common source, or whether these similar ideas were simply "in the air" (see pp. 537 and 558).

However, his trump card, so to speak, is the so-called *sattvānumāna*. This he considers the single most decisive case that makes clear that Bhavya refers to Dharmakīrti. He refers to MHK 9.45ab: *sattvād anityaḥ śabdo 'yaṃ kriyāvat*. On the basis of this statement alone, he concludes (pp. 556-557):

Now, to the best of my knowledge, this type of inference, the so-called *sattvānumāna*, did not exist before

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<sup>92</sup>For a more extensive discussion of Krasser's essay see F forthcoming a. I confine myself here to a few of the main points.

Dharmakīrti but was developed by Dharmakīrti himself in several stages, although components of the argument are already present in PV 1.269–283ab (PVSV 141,17–150,5). One of its formulations runs like this:

*yat sat tat sarvaṃ kṣaṇikam, yathā ghaṭādayaḥ,  
saṃś śabda iti ...* HB 39.18ff.

Whatever exists is momentary, like a pot, etc.,  
and sound exists [...]

An inference like this cannot be formulated in a serious way just out of thin air; it must have been explained somewhere. Since it is not explained by Bhāviveka himself, and since modern experts agree that this theory is Dharmakīrti's, a fact that is also supported by Arcāṭa, a commentator on Dharmakīrti's *Hetubindu*, I can see no other possibility than to assume that this formulation of the *sattvānumāna* in the MHK presupposes knowledge of Dharmakīrti, unless we postulate some unknown factors or assume that Bhāviveka applies a logical reason that was already shown by Uddyotakara to be faulty.

However, in his eagerness to prove Bhavya's knowledge of Dharmakīrti, Krasser overlooks a couple of things. First, Bhavya presents the inference in its traditional form, not in the Dharmakīrtian form of *vyāpti* and *pakṣadharmatā*. But more importantly, Krasser ignores the fact that the two inferences have different *sādhya*s: while Bhavya proves impermanence (*anityatā*), Dharmakīrti proves momentariness (*kṣaṇikatva*). One may also mention that the subjects and contexts are only superficially the same. Bhavya argues against the Mīmāṃsā that the Veda is impermanent; in his inference, *śabda* stands for the Veda. Dharmakīrti, on the other hand, attempts to prove the Buddhist tenet that everything is momentary; in his inference, *śabda* is a *pars pro toto* for any object or for everything. Thus, when considered closely, Krasser's entire evidence for the alleged relationship between Bhavya and Dharmakīrti dissolves into the thin air. As for the Buddhist inference that everything

is impermanent because it exists (*sattvāt*), it is well known that this inference precedes Uddyotakara.<sup>93</sup>

However, lack of evidence does not mean that Krasser's hypothesis is impossible. So what would be the consequences, if Krasser were right? It is clear that if we move Dharmakīrti's date to the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, a whole lot of other dates would have to be moved as well, for we must assume at least two generations between Dharmakīrti and Dignāga.<sup>94</sup> Dignāga is now commonly considered to have lived ca. 480-540, and thus would have died only 10 years before Dharmakīrti's assumed floruit. Now, it would be impossible to assume an earlier date for Dignāga, if Vasubandhu the Kośakāra lived ca. 400-480 (as Frauwallner and others assumed). However, the theory of two Vasubandhus has practically collapsed, and even the die-hard supporters of this theory (like Schmithausen 1992) assign the "later" Vasubandhu to the 4<sup>th</sup> century, or at the very latest to the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup>. Therefore, we may, at least in theory, move "everybody" by some sixty to eighty years. As far as I can see, there is not a single date of a philosopher from that period, not even among the Jainas, whose dates are so firmly established that they cannot be advanced by, say, sixty to eighty years. As for Sthiramati's date, there is nothing to indicate that the Sthiramati mentioned in the famous inscription of the kings of Valabhī (and dated by Schopen 575 CE) is the same person as the Yogācāra commentator.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup>Cf. NV 445, 5-6 on NS 4.1.28: *sattvād anityam iti sādhyet, tasyāpy uttarapadasiddhyā nityatvasiddhir iti pratijñādoṣād vākyam nivartate iti*.

<sup>94</sup>It seems highly improbable that Uddyotakara, Praśastapāda, Prabhākara, Kumāṛila, Saṅkarasvāmin, Īśvarasena, the Yuktidīpikākāra Bhāviveka, Candrakīrti, several Cārvākas (such as the author of the *sadvitīyaprayoga*), several Jainas and so on could be squeezed into a single generation between Dignāga and Dharmakīrti.

<sup>95</sup>See Schopen 1997: 262. Yasuhiro Ueno reports on a highly interesting passage in Sthiramati's commentary on *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra* 18.82a, where the three kinds of reason, namely *kārya*-, *svabhāva*-, and *anupalabdhi*-*hetu* are mentioned (Derge 4034, Mi 95a7-b2, quoted by Krasser in n. 99): *tshigs sgrub pa'i rigs pa ni gsum ste/'bras bu'i rgyu dan/rañ bññ gyi rgyu dan/mi dmigs pa'i rgyu'o//de la 'bras bu'i rgyu ni gañ na du ba yod pa de na me yod do žes bya ba lta bu'o//rañ bññ gyi rgyu ni śin žes bya bas śin śa pa dan than śin la sogs pa kun la khyab pas na 'di ni śin yin te/ci'i phyir že*

The trouble in moving “everyone” to an earlier date is that if we do so, we would have an empty century on our hands. In other words, assuming Dharmakīrti flourished at 550 (and Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi 550-600), there would be no single philosopher we know of between 600 and 700. That would be a rather strange state of affairs considering the intense philosophical activity in the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Further, Krasser tries to explain away Xuanzang’s silence about Dharmakīrti (p. 583ff.).<sup>96</sup> However, Xuanzang’s is not the only one being silent about Dharmakīrti. Perhaps even more significant is Candrakīrti’s silence. If Bhavya knew Dharmakīrti, why is Candrakīrti, who lived a generation or so later, silent about him? In view of Candrakīrti’s intense critique of Dignāga’s notion of *svalakṣaṇa*, it is hard to imagine that if Candrakīrti knew Dharmakīrti, he would not have taken his interpretation of *svalakṣaṇa* into consideration.<sup>97</sup> Further, in a recent study, Yoshimizu (2012) has shown that Candrakīrti studied closely Dignāga’s and Bhavya’s theories of *parārthānumāna*. It is practically inconceivable that Chandrakīrti would have known Dharmakīrti’s doctrine of the same and would not have even alluded to it.

One also has to consider the general silence about Dharmakīrti outside the Buddhist tradition. Here the Jaina tradition is especially valuable, for it is the only one that can provide more or less accurate dates that are independent of Dignāga or Dharmakīrti. For instance, Jinabhadra(gaṇi), the author of *Viśeṣāvaśyakabhāṣya*, knows Dignāga, but displays no

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*na/śiñ śa pa yin pa’i phyir ro źes bya ba lta bu’o//mi dmigs pa’i rgyu ni sa phyogs ‘di na dmigs su ruñ ba’i mtshan ñid kyi bum pa mi snañ ba ni bum pa med do źes bya ba lta bu’o//*. This is in my opinion a clear reference to Dharmakīrti’s work and if it were not a unique case, which can be explained as a later interpolation, I would have certainly assumed that Sthiramati knew Dharmakīrti.

<sup>96</sup>In this connection he says that Katsura 1985 considers that Xuanzang knew Dharmakīrti, but this is not quite what Katsura says. Besides, why would Xuanzang follow Dharmakīrti on a rather obscure point concerning the particle *eva*, but remain entirely silent about Dharmakīrti’s major teachings?

<sup>97</sup>See Arnold 2003. A similar opinion was voiced by Klaus-Dieter Mathes in a personal communication.

knowledge of Dharmakīrti.<sup>98</sup> Jinabhadra is generally believed to have lived at the turn of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries; the *Viśeṣāvaśyakabhāṣya* was composed in 609 according to Muni Jinavijayaji, followed by Mahendra Kumar Jain.<sup>99</sup> Jambuvijaya's dating is grounded on the *praśasti* of the *Viśeṣāvaśyakabhāṣya* as well as on lists of Śvetāmbara pontiffs. Whatever the case may be, the first Jaina philosopher who refers to Dharmakīrti is Akalaṅka (ca. 720-780).<sup>100</sup> Here too, one would wonder why no Jaina philosopher from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, or even from the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, refers to Dharmakīrti, had Dharmakīrti lived ca. 550. Therefore, we can conclude that Xuanzang was not an exception and that Dharmakīrti was generally unknown before the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

Yet if Krasser's explanation of Xuanzang's silence were valid, it could easily account for such a general silence as well. Krasser actually assumes that Dharmakīrti's work was somehow suppressed by the "religious authorities" or "the leaders of a big religious institution like Nālandā". Needless to say, we know nothing about such leaders or authorities, or about any institutional suppressing or censoring of Dharmakīrti's works. Moreover, Krasser further concludes that Dharmakīrti seems to have been a "*persona non grata*" (p. 586) and that Xuanzang did not mention him for this reason, even though he may have known him. But what does it mean to have been a *persona non grata* for the leaders of religious institutions like Nālandā? Does it mean that one's work had to be suppressed or ignored? Do we know of a single case where someone's work was suppressed in Classical India? And if this were the case, why did Bhavya take Dharmakīrti's work into consideration? Or does

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<sup>98</sup>The fact that he divides *pratyakṣa* into *mukhya* and *sāṃvyaavahārika* would hardly be enough for the assumption that he knew Dharmakīrti; see Mahendrakumar's note p. 36, n. 3.

<sup>99</sup>Cf. his introduction to the *Siddhiviniścayaṭīkā*, pp. 35-36. I thank Anne Cleavel for this reference.

<sup>100</sup>An attempt by Piotr Balcerowicz (2011, as well as in a lecture in the Fifth International Dharmakīrti Conference) to prove that Samantabhadra knew Dharmakīrti is in my eyes not convincing.

it mean that the work of a *persona non grata* had to be criticized, as Bhavya does? But if so, why is Dharmakīrti not better known as an object of criticism? And most importantly what happened in the few decades that separate I Ching from Xuanzang? Why did the putative leaders of Nālandā change their minds about Dharmakīrti? How did Dharmakīrti turn from a *persona non grata* into a greatly honored master? And why did such a revolution leave no trace anywhere?

It is clear that Krasser's essay creates more problems than it solves, but it is also a useful reminder that our current dating of Dharmakīrti as well as practically all Indian philosophers from the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century does not rest on solid foundations and is only a working hypothesis.

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