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Three Lectures on Dignāga (June 21-23, 2007, Taipei)

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Lecture 1: Dignāga on what exists and how to know it.

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## 1. A Brief Account of the Development of Indian Logic before Dignāga

As the late Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford University, Bimal K. Matilal once pointed out, there are two distinct traditions of Logic in Classical India. They are the tradition of debates (*vāda* 論議) and that of epistemology (*pramāṇa* 量, literally, the means of a valid cognition).

It is Dignāga (陳那) who integrated those two traditions into one coherent system of what we may call 'epistemological logic'. His *magnum corpus*, *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (集量論) with *Svavṛtti*, consists of the following six chapters: namely, I Perception (*pratyakṣa* 現量), II Inference (*svārthānumāna* 為自比量), III Proof (*parārthānumāna* 為他比量), IV Example (*dṛṣṭānta* 喩), V *Apoḥa*, and VI Fallacious Objections (*jāti* 過類). Chapters I, II and V belong to the *pramāṇa* tradition, while Chapters III, IV and VI belong to the *vāda* tradition. As a matter of fact, it is to be noted that Chapter IV Example should be included in Chapter III Proof, for Dignāga formulates a proof by means of three propositions: Thesis (*pakṣa* 宗), Reason (*hetu* 因) and Example (*dṛṣṭānta*), and Chapter III only deals with the first two propositions.

1.1. The tradition of debates in India goes back to the time of the *Brāhmaṇas* and *Upaniṣads* that record a kind of public debate called 'brahmodaya' among Brahmins. They debated on such topics as the effectiveness of sacrificial rituals, the foundation of the universe, etc. In those days there seems to have been one simple rule to determine the win and loss of a debate; namely, one who falls into silence loses the debate.

In the course of time Indian philosophers developed a set of rules called 'Points of Defeat' (*nigrahassthāna* 負處) that determine who loses a debate. For example, a medical treatise called *Carakasamhitā* lists the following 15 cases where one loses a debate:

- (1) If the opponent cannot understand what the proponent stated;
- (2) If the opponent criticize one who should not be criticized;
- (3) If the opponent fails to criticize one who should be criticized;
- (4) If the proponent abandons his original thesis;
- (5) If the proponent admits the criticism of the opponent;
- (6) If the proponent makes (a part of) his statement belatedly;
- (7) If the proponent gives the reason that is similar to the topic of his thesis, equal to the cause of a doubt, or equal to what is to be proved by himself;
- (8) If the proponent fails to present even one of the five propositions<sup>1</sup> that constitute his

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<sup>1</sup> The standard proof formulae in India consist of Thesis (*pratijñā/pakṣa*), Reason (*hetu*),

logical proof;

- (9) If the proponent presents more than five propositions in his proof formulation;
- (10) If the proponent makes an incoherent statement;
- (11) If the proponent makes a nonsensical statement;
- (12) If the proponent makes meaningless repetition;
- (13) If the proponent is self-contradictory;
- (14) If the proponent introduces another reason to prove his original thesis; or
- (15) If the proponent gives a pointless account.

It is to be noted that if the opponent presents his own proof formulae in order to counter the proponent, the above rules applied to the proponent should be applied to the opponent as well; the same is true of the proponent who criticizes the argument of the opponent. Furthermore, the oldest Indian manual of logic, *Nyāyasūtra*, adds more Points of Defeat and lists 22 kinds.

The *Carakasāṃhitā*'s Point of Defeat (7) mentioned above (underlined) indicates a new direction of Indian logicians; namely, they started looking for 'bad' reasons in lost debates, which led to the theory of Pseudo-reasons (*hetvābhāsa* 似因) in the *Nyāyasūtra* (正理經). The *Nyāyasūtra* adds two more important kinds of Pseudo-reasons, viz., Deviant/Inconclusive (*savyābhicāra/anaikāntika* 不定) and Opposite (*viruddha* 相違) Reasons. I shall explain the Pseudo-reasons in the next lecture.

The examination of 'bad' reasons led to the theory of the three characteristics (*trairūpya* 三相) of Valid Reasons<sup>2</sup>, which too I shall discuss in the next lecture. It seems very likely that Buddhist logicians contributed to the development of the theory of *trairūpya*. So by the time of Dignāga Indian tradition of debates seems to have been fully developed and Indian Buddhists composed several *Vāda* manuals such as \**Upāyahrdaya/Prayogasāra* (方便心論) attributed to Nāgārjuna (龍樹) and \**Tarkasāstra* (如實論) attributed to Vasubandhu (世親). Both texts are available only in Chinese translations. Vasubandhu is also known to have written three *Vāda* manuals, viz., *Vādavidhi* (論規), *Vādahrdaya* (論心), and *Vādavidhāna* (論式), which are available only in fragments. Dignāga himself has written a *Vāda* manual called *Nyāyamukha* (因明正理門論) and Śaṅkarasvāmin's *Nyāyapraveśa* (因明入正理論) is an introduction to Dignāga's system in the *Nyāyamukha*.

1.2. Now, I am not sure when Indian philosophers started discussing what are the

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Example (*udāharaṇa/dṛṣṭānta*), Application (*upanaya* 合) and Conclusion (*nigamana* 結). For example, "A sound/word is non-eternal because it is a product as for example, a pot, etc. A sound/word is a product; therefore, it is non-eternal."

<sup>2</sup> (1) A valid reason must be present in the topic of a thesis (*pakṣadharma* 宗法性), (2) it must be present in the similar cases (*anvaya*), and (3) it must be absent from the dissimilar cases (*vyatireka*).

means of a valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) or how we know the world. It may be interesting to note in passing that Jayatelekke reported in his *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* that the term *pramāṇa* is one of the rare words which was transmitted to the West in ancient days.

The *Carakasamhitā* records at least five *pramāṇas*, viz., Verbal Testimony, Perception, Inference, Oral Tradition, and Analogy. The *Nyāyasūtra* lists the four, viz., Perception, Inference, Identification/Analogy (*upamāna* 比喻量) and Verbal Testimony (*śābda/āgama* 聖言量). The other schools of Indian philosophy held the different lists of *pramāṇas*. For example, the Vaiśeṣikas admitted only two of them, viz., Perception and Inference, the Sāṃkhyas three, viz., Perception, Inference and Verbal Testimony, and the Mīmāṃsakas five or six, by adding Implication (*arthāpatti* 義準量) and Absence (*abhāva*). Among the six orthodox schools of Indian philosophy, the Sāṃkhyas and the Vaiśeṣikas seem to have contributed a lot to the development of Indian epistemology. It is perhaps not a mere coincidence that both schools developed the indirect type of proof called *avīta/āvīta* or *pariśeṣa* that is distinguished from the direct proof (*vīta/ anumāna*?) of the five propositions and that is essentially the *reductio ad absurdum* (*prasaṅga*) argument.

Indian Buddhists traditionally accepted three *pramāṇas* like the Sāṃkhyas. Vasubandhu, for example, mentions in his *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* (阿毘達磨俱舍論) Perception, Inference and Verbal Testimony as *pramāṇas*. In the *Nyāyamukha* Dignāga briefly mentions two *pramāṇas*, viz. Perception and Inference. In the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* Chapter V he tries to prove that Verbal Testimony and other *pramāṇas* are included in the category of Inference. Thus at the very beginning of Chapter I he insists that there are only two kinds of *pramāṇas*, viz., Perception and Inference, for there are only two kinds of the objects of *pramāṇas*, viz., the Particular (*svalakṣaṇa* 自相) and the Universal (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa* 共相).

1.3. In the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* Dignāga for the first time in the history of Indian logic tries to integrate the *Vāda* system into the *Pramāṇa* system, by introducing the new terms, viz., *svārthānumāna* (Inference for oneself, i.e., Inference proper) and *parārthānumāna* (Inference for others, i.e., Proof). In Chapters III and IV of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* Dignāga discusses *parārthānumāna* (Proof) that consist of the three propositions, viz., Thesis, Reason and Example. By means of the theory of *trairūpya* of a valid reason, he could demonstrate that Inference (*anumāna* 比量/比知) developed by the *pramāṇa* tradition and Proof (*sādhana* 能立) developed by the *vāda* tradition essentially come down to the same thing. Inference is a mental process that occurs to a certain cognizer, while proof is a linguistic expression or formulation (*prayoga* 方便) of such an inferential process.

In Chapter V of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, Dignāga mainly deals with the problem of meaning by means of Apoha, which I shall discuss in my third lecture. Nonetheless, as I mentioned, he tries to prove that Verbal Testimony and other *pramāṇas* are indeed included in the category of Inference. Thus, in the

*Pramāṇasamuccaya* Dignāga discusses only two kinds of *pramāṇas*; namely, in Chapter I he deals with Perception and from Chapters II to V he discusses Inference.

Finally in Chapter VI Dignāga examines Fallacious Objections. The late Professor Yuichi Kajiyama (梶山雄一 Buddhist Studies, Kyoto University) studied the *Upāyahṛdaya* and came to the conclusion that the text could have been written by Nāgārjuna himself.<sup>3</sup> He could successfully show many similarities between the *Upāyahṛdaya* and Nāgārjuna's works such as *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa* (廣破論), *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (廻諍論 and *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (根本中論頌). The most important is his discovery that 20 kinds of legitimate arguments called 相應 in the *Upāyahṛdaya* are precisely the *reductio ad absurdum* type of arguments practiced by Nāgārjuna.

For example, Nāgārjuna in the *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa* argues that *pramāṇa* does not make known its object (*prameya* 所量) either having reached it or without having reached it just as a lamp does not illuminate darkness either having reached it or without having reached it. Similarly the *Upāyahṛdaya* argues that Reason does not prove what is to be proved (*sādhya* 所立) either having reached or without having reached it just as a fire does not burn a thing either having reached it or without having reached it (到相應・不到相應).

Now the *Nyāyasūtra* called them *prāptisama* and *aprāptisama* and classified them under the category of Fallacious Objections (*jāti*). As a matter of fact the *Nyāyasūtra* lists 24 kinds of Fallacious Objections and many of them are found parallels in the *Upāyahṛdaya* and Nāgārjuna. In the *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa* Nāgārjuna criticizes the sixteen Principles (*padārtha* 句義) of the Naiyāyikas and he or his followers seem to have debated with them on the topic of *pramāṇa*, judging from the beginning portion of the *Nyāyasūtra* Chapter II. Therefore, it is not surprising that the *Nyāyasūtra* regarded Nāgārjuna as a dangerous opponent and rejected his *reductio ad absurdum* type arguments as Fallacious Objections.

Dignāga must have been very well acquainted with the debates between Buddhists and Naiyāyikas concerning *reductio ad absurdum*. He too rejects Fallacious Objections, giving theoretical reasons, based on the *trairūpya* theory, why they are fallacious. Regarding *reductio ad absurdum* he does not regard it as a proof, for his proof formulae presuppose the existence of the topic/subject of a thesis (*pakṣadhu* 宗) to be admitted by the both parties of the debate, while the topic/subject of a thesis in *reductio ad absurdum* is normally not accepted by the proponent. Nonetheless, Dignāga admits and practices *reductio ad absurdum* as the means to refute (*parihāra*) the opponents. In any case Chapter VI of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* may be regarded as an Appendix to Dignāga's discussion of two kinds of *pramāṇas*. Regarding another important topic of Indian debate tradition, i.e., Points of Defeat (*nigrahassthāna*), Dignāga does not give any special treatment. It is his successor, Dharmakīrti, who treats them in full in his *Vādanīyāya* where he criticizes the Naiyāyika treatments of the Points

<sup>3</sup> Hakuju Ui (宇井伯壽) once demonstrated that the text could not have been written by Nāgārjuna who was the founder of Mādhyamika tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

of Defeat and discusses them in the frame work of his own logical system.

I should stop talking of the historical background of Dignāga and go straight into the promised topic of my lecture: Dignāga on what exists and how to know it

## 2. Dignāga on what exists.

At the outset I must disappoint you because Dignāga never discusses the topic of what really exists. He seems to have been initiated by the Vātsīputriya tradition of Buddhism that was quite popular among Indian Buddhists, occupying the one fourths of the population of Buddhist monks when Xuan Tsang visited India. He seems to have studied the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (writing a short summary of the *Abhidharmakośa*), the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras* (般若經), the Yogācāra-vijñānavāda (瑜伽行唯識學派) philosophy, as well as Brahmanical traditions of Indian philosophy (writing several critical arguments against them). Among Indian philosophers he was much influenced by the Grammarian philosopher Bhartṛhari. One of Dignāga's works, *Traikālyaparīkṣā*, is nearly a copy of one section of the *Vākyapadīya*. Later Indian Buddhists usually classified him among Yogācāra-vijñānavādins but the modern scholarship considers that he behaves as a Sautrāntika (經量部) when he deals with Epistemology and Logic on the conventional level (*saṃvṛti* 世俗) and as a Yogācāravijñānavādin when he goes into the ultimate level (*paramārtha* 第一義・勝義). It is true that in some of his preserved small works such as the *Ālambanaparīkṣā* (觀所緣論), Dignāga argues from the stand point of the Yogācāravijñānavādins who do not admit the external reality. However, in the *Nyāyamukha* and the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* he discusses Epistemology and Logic, presupposing the external reality, which may be identified as the Sautrāntika position.

2.1. In any case in the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* Dignāga does not discuss what really exists. He simply states that there are two kinds of the objects of *pramāṇa*, viz., the particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) and the universal (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*), without giving any explanations of those terms. The two terms appear in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* where a *dharma*, the most basic and real components of our world of experience, is defined to possess both *svalakṣaṇa* (literally, its own/unique characteristic) and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* (literally, its common characteristic shared by other *dharma*s). For example, the Earth Element (*prithivī-dhātu* 地大) has 'solidity' (*kharu* 堅) as its unique characteristic and 'non-eternity' (*anityatā* 無常性), etc., as its common characteristics. Vasubandhu's *svalakṣaṇa* corresponds to *svabhāva* (自性) in the Earlier Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma literature where a *dharma* is defined to possess its own nature (*svabhāva*).

Vasubandhu distinguishes two different levels of *svalakṣaṇa*, viz., *dravya-svalakṣaṇa* (*svalakṣaṇa* as a real entity) and *āyatana-svalakṣaṇa* (*svalakṣaṇa* as an objective support). In the *Abhidharmakośa* Chapter I an opponent raises an objection that the five sense cognitions do not take *svalakṣaṇa* but *sāmānya* as their respective

objects (*viṣaya* 境) because they are said to take a whole (*saṃasta* 總) as their objective supports. This objection seems to presuppose that the five sense cognitions are supposed to perceive *svalakṣaṇa* (the unique object itself), not *sāmānya* (something common among many objects, or even the universal). Vasubandhu answers that they indeed take as their objects *svalakṣaṇa*, not in the sense of real entities (*dravya*), i.e., atoms<sup>4</sup>, but in the sense of the objective supports (*āyatana*) such as ‘color-form’ (*rūpa* 色), ‘sound’ (*śabda* 声), ‘fragrance’ (*gandha* 香), ‘taste’ (*rasa* 味) and ‘the tangible’ (*spruṣṭavya/spurṣa* 触).<sup>5</sup> In other words, the sense cognitions perceive their respective objects, color-form, etc., but cannot perceive the atoms themselves that in the final analysis constitute those objects. Of course, atoms are beyond our sense-cognition.

Dignāga does not seem to be completely happy with Vasubandhu’s solution. He interprets that passage of Abhidharma in this way. The sense-cognitions can be said to take as their objective field of operation (*gocara*) something common (*sāmānya*) with reference to their own objective supports (*svāyatana*) such as color-form because the sense-cognitions are produced by many real entities, i.e., atoms, of color-form, etc.<sup>6</sup> Dignāga does not deny that sense-cognitions take *svalakṣaṇa* as their objects. He even would not deny that they take *āyatana-svalakṣaṇa* as their objects just as Vasubandhu proposed. Yet he insists that they take *dravya-svalakṣaṇa* as their objects, too, as long as the sense-cognitions are produced from the aggregates of atoms that may be called *saṃasta* (a whole), *sañcita* (accumulated) or *sāmānya* (common).

2.2. The above-mentioned materials suggest that Dignāga in the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* admits the existence of atoms, though he does not mention them by name and he does deny their existence in the *Ālambanaparīkṣā*. I suppose that he also accepts the two categories of *dharma*s, viz., Mind (*citta*) and Matter (*rūpa*), like the Sautrāntikas.

Furthermore, he must have accepted the Abhidharmic distinction between *dharma* (法) as the ultimate existence (*paramārthasat* 勝義有) and *prajñapti* (concept 施說・仮名) as the conventional existence (*saṃvṛtisat* 世俗有/*prajñaptisat* 仮有) expressed for example in the *Abhidharmakośa* Chapter VI.4.<sup>7</sup> When something is

<sup>4</sup> In the *Abhidharmakośa* the term *dravya* is often identified with *dharma*; in this context, however, it seems to refer to atoms (*paramāṇu* 極微). The Sarvāstivādins introduced the Atomic theory (probably from the Vaiśeṣikas) into their system of *dharma*s and by the time of Vasubandhu atoms were regarded as the finest unit of the material objects.

<sup>5</sup> AKBh: *nanu caivaṃ samastāmbanatvāt sāmānyaviṣayāḥ pañca vijñānakāyāḥ prāpnuvanti na svalakṣaṇaviṣayāḥ / āyatanasvalakṣaṇam praty ete svalakṣaṇaviṣayā iṣyante na dravyasvalakṣaṇam ity adoṣaḥ /*

<sup>6</sup> PSI.4cd: *tatrānekārthajanyatvāt svārthe sāmānyagocaram // PSV:*

*anekadravyotpādyatvāt tat svāyatane sāmānyaviṣayam uktam, na tu bhinneṣv abhedakalpanāt.*

<sup>7</sup> *Yatra bhinne na tadbuundhir anyāpohe dhiyā ca tat / ghaṭāmbuvat saṃvṛtisat, paramārthasad anyathā //*

physically destroyed or mentally analyzed, if its notion does not disappear, it is the ultimate existence or *dharma*, if its notion disappears, it is the conventional existence or *prajñapti*. The notion of 'pot' will disappear when it is destroyed but the notion of 'color-form' will not disappear even when the pot itself is destroyed. Thus, a pot is the conventional existence, while color-form is the ultimate existence.

Regarding the conventional existence Dignāga seems to adopt the Vaiśeṣika-like hierarchy of the categories such as Substance (*dravya* 實), Quality (*guṇa* 德), Action (*karman* 業), and Universal (*sāmānya* 同). The Vaiśeṣikas add two more categories, viz., Particular (*viśeṣa* 異) and Inherence (*samavāya* 和合). The former category is relative to and hence included in the category of Universals except on the level of atomic existence. Inherence is a unique concept of the Vaiśeṣika school that is never accepted by Buddhists as a separate and real entity. As I shall show in my third lecture, Dignāga's theory of Apoha presupposes such a hierarchy of categorical concepts or universals commonly accepted by people (*lokaprasiddhi* 世間極成).

In any case Dignāga does not present any Ontology in the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, which led me to conjecture that he was trying to present a new system of logic that could be accepted by philosophers of any Ontological background, Buddhist or Non-Buddhist. As we shall see in my next lecture, the basic theories of Dignāga's logic were indeed adopted by most schools of Indian philosophy. Let me now proceed to Dignāga's Epistemology.

### 3. How does Dignāga know what there is.

Indian Epistemological discussion centers upon the *pramāṇas* (the means of a valid cognition). As I mentioned before, each school of Indian philosophy has developed a different theory of *pramāṇas* but the most standard version seems to be the one given by the Naiyāyikas. They acknowledge four kinds of *pramāṇas*, viz., Perception, Inference, Identification/Analogy and Verbal Testimony. "Perception is a cognition arisen from a contact between sense and object, is inexpressible, non-deviating, and of determining nature." (*Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.4, Translation by Ernst Steinkellner) In short, it is a sense-cognition.

Inference is not formerly defined in the *Nyāyasūtra*, which gives only an ostensive definition by mentioning three of its kinds: *pūrvavat*, *śeṣavat* and *sāmānyato dṛṣṭam*. If we use the cases given by the medical treatise *Carakasamhitā*, which seem to represent the oldest phase of the three kinds of inference, we can give the following interpretations of each case. (1) *pūrvavat*: One can infer from the present event to the past event as e.g. the birth of a child makes one infer the past sexual intercourse. (2) *śeṣavat*: One can infer from the present to the future as e.g. the sexual intercourse makes one infer the possibility of the future conception. (3) *sāmānyato dṛṣṭam*: One can infer the present to the present as e.g. a piece of smoke on the hill makes one infer the existence of a fire there on the basis of the known similarity between the two.

Identification/Analogy is the case when someone is taught that *gavaya* is an animal similar to a cow, he later can identify some unacquainted animal as *gavaya* from

its similarity with a cow. Verbal Testimony is an instruction given by a trustworthy person (*āpta*).

3.1. As I mentioned above, Dignāga just like the Vaiśeṣikas admit only two kinds of *pramāṇas*, viz. Perception and Inference. He defines Perception as “a cognition free of conception” (*kalpanāpoḍha* 除分別). He defines ‘conception’ as “association (*yojanā*) with proper name (*nāman*), genus (*jāti*, i.e., universal), quality, action and substance. The five items such as name can be predicated in the sentence “X is so and so,” and the last four precisely correspond to the four categories of the Vaiśeṣikas mentioned above.

In my opinion Dignāga’s definition of Perception is not really the definition; he is simply distinguishing two kinds of knowledge, viz., Perception and Conception or, in other words, Immediate Sensation and Conceptual Judgement. Instead of giving the formal definition of Perception, Dignāga gives ostensive definition by enumerating the cases of Perception. Just like the Naiyāyikas and others, Perception of Dignāga is a sense-cognition (*indriya-jñāna*). Buddhists traditionally lists the five of them: (1) visual cognition (眼識), auditory cognition (耳識), olfactory cognition (鼻識), gustatory cognition (舌識) and tactile cognition (身識). Dignāga notes that an object possesses many natures that cannot be grasped by a single sense-organ. Furthermore, he characterizes the objective field of the sense-organ (*indriyagocara*) as *rūpa* (a matter) to be self-awared (*svasaṃvedya* 自内證) and beyond the verbal designation (*anirdeśya*).

3.2. Dignāga adds a few other kinds of Perception, viz., (1) mental perception (*mānasa*) that is further classified into object-awareness and self-awareness, (2) yogic perception, and (3) self-awareness of concepts. Mental Perception is one of the most difficult concepts in Buddhist Epistemology. It must somehow correspond to Mental cognition (*mano-vijñāna* 意識) of the Early Buddhist philosophy (as a matter of fact, Dharmakīrti calls it *manovijñāna* in his *Nyāyabindu*). Buddhists traditionally hold that there are six kinds of cognitions, viz., the five sense-cognitions and mental cognition, and that a mental cognition (such as “This is blue”) arises immediately after a sense-cognition (of blue color), taking as its object what is cognized by that sense-cognition. The object of mental cognition is called *dharmu* that is in fact our concept/notion/idea of an object cognized by the sense-cognition. Thus mental cognition is a conceptual cognition in Dignāga’s terminology and it should be strictly distinguished from his Perception.

In this context I would like to follow Toru Funayama’s assessment that Buddhist classification of Perceptions are made from three different standpoints.<sup>8</sup> (1) Whether it is derived from one of the five sense-organs or not (in the latter case, some internal sense-organ called *manas* (意) is hypothesized), (2) whether it is a cognition/awareness of an external object or not (the latter case is called by Dignāga ‘self-awareness’), and (3) whether it is an ordinary cognition or not (the latter case is

<sup>8</sup> カマラシーラの直接知覚論における「意による認識」(*mānasa*), 『哲学研究』 Vol. 569, 2000.



called ‘Yogic Perception’).

- (1) The five sense perceptions are contrasted with mental perception. Though Dignāga does not say so, yogic perception and self-awareness of concepts mentioned above may be included in mental perception as long as they are not derived from any external sense organ (in fact Kamalaśīla distributes yogic perception to the class of mental perception).
- (2) The five sense perceptions, mental perception<sup>1</sup> (in the form of object-awareness) and yogic perception are contrasted with self-awareness of mental events such as desire (mental perception<sup>2</sup>) and self-awareness of concepts.
- (3) Yogic perception is contrasted with the rest of perceptions.

It is difficult to imagine precisely what Dignāga considered to be “mental perception<sup>1</sup> in the form of object-awareness”. He simply says:

“Mental cognition (*mānasa*), too, that takes as its object support (*ālamabana*) the objective field such as color-form (*rūpādiviṣaya*), that is free from conceptual construction (*avikalpaka*) and that is produced by that [sense-cognition] which has the form of direct perception (*anubhavākāra*) is mental perception (*mānasaṃ pratyakṣam*).” (Steinkellner [2005: 3])

Between an initial sense perception (*indriya-pratyakṣa*) of a certain external object and the succeeding conceptual determination (*vikalpa*) of that object Dignāga seems to place the mental perception (*mānasa-pratyakṣa*) of that external object. It is similar to the sense perception because they take the external object and because they are free from conceptual construction (*nirvikalpa*), and they are different because the former is not mediated by the external sense organ. It is similar to the succeeding conceptual cognition because they are not mediated by the external sense organ and they are different because the former is free from conceptual construction. Thus the mental perception is something between the two cognitive states. According to Dignāga the sense perception of a pot produces the mental perception of the pot, which, though he does not say, seems to produce the conceptual determination of the pot.<sup>9</sup> Thus the mental perception plays a role of connecting the sense perception with the conceptual cognition.

Frankly speaking we are not necessarily conscious of such a mental perception that seems to be a hypothetical assumption of Dignāga’s. (The initial non-conceptual perception of Dignāga, I think, is also a hypothetical assumption, for by definition we ordinary people are not able to aware of such cognition). Although Dharmakīrti admits the existence of a mental perception, one of his successors Dharmottara considered it to be known merely by the Scriptural tradition, not by a logical proof, which seems to indicate the ambivalent status of a mental perception (*mānasa-pratyakṣa* 意現量).

3.2. We have had enough of the mysterious mental perception. Now I would like to discuss Dignāga’s most important contribution to Buddhist epistemology, i. e., ‘self-

<sup>9</sup> This view is later attributed to certain Jñānagarbha/Śāntabhadra.

awareness' or 'self-cognition' (*svasaṃvedana* 自證). As we have seen, Dignāga lists two kinds of self-awareness in his list of perceptions, viz., (1) a mental perception in the form of self-awareness of mental events such as desire and (2) self-awareness of concepts. Most of our perceptions, including Yogic perception, may be called 'awareness of objects' (*artha-saṃvedana*). However, mental perception of mental events such as desire cannot be classified under the category of 'object-awareness' and should be regarded as a sort of 'self-awareness' that occurs in our mind.

As we have seen, Dignāga clearly distinguishes between non-conceptual perception (*nirvikalpa-pratyakṣa* 無分別現量) and conception/conceptual cognition (*kalpanā/vikalpa* 分別). Therefore, conception is not to be regarded as perception. However, Dignāga lists 'self-awareness' of concepts as a kind of perception. He explains that conception is not perception as long as it is taken to be 'object-awareness' but it is perception if it is analyzed as 'self-awareness'. Now, if conception in the form of 'self-awareness' can be considered perception, it will result that all kinds of cognition are perception as long as it is regarded as 'self-awareness'. Furthermore, all kinds of cognition can be regarded as 'self-awareness'. In fact, Dharmakīrti in his *Nyāyabindu* identifies *svasaṃvedana* with self-awareness of all kinds of mind and mental events (*sarvacittacaittānāṃ svasaṃvedanam*). Thus 'self-awareness' can no longer be regarded as a class of Perception. It is a general principle of Dignāga's epistemology that can be applied to any cognition.

The terms *svasaṃvedana* and *svasaṃvedya* occur in Buddhist literature before Dignāga, referring to mystical awareness of Buddhists in their meditation practice. Dignāga refers to 'self-awareness' again towards the end of his *svamata* section of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* Chapter I where he discusses the structure of the cognitive event in terms of the means of cognition (*pramāṇa* 量), the object of cognition (*prameya* 所量) and the result of cognition (*pramāṇa-phala* 量果).

For Dignāga when a particular external object (*svalakṣaṇa* 自相) is the object of cognition (*prameya*), it is grasped by means of cognition (*pramāṇa*) called perception (*pratyakṣa* 現量) and if he admits the external reality, the object of cognition and the means of cognition are two distinct entities. Regarding the means of cognition (*pramāṇa*) and its result (*pramāṇaphala*), however, Dignāga does not separate them. According to him cognition has two aspects, viz. (1) possession of the shape/form/representation (*ākāra* 相) of an object and (2) awareness of that object. Since people say that cognition takes the shape/form of an object, although no action of taking is involved, the first aspect of cognition is metaphorically called 'the means of cognition', while the second aspect is called 'the result of cognition'. Therefore, the means of cognition is not a separate entity different from the cognition itself.

Alternatively, Dignāga proposes that the result of cognition is not 'awareness of an object' but 'self-awareness' (*svasaṃvedana* 自證). As stated above, cognition has two aspects: it possesses the shape/form of an object (*viśayākāra*) and it is awareness/cognition of that object. In other words, cognition arises with two

forms/appearances (*dvirūpa*), that of an object (*arthābhāsa*) and that of cognition itself (*svābhāsa*). The theory of twofold appearance of cognition reminds us of the traditional Yogācāra scheme of the two aspects of cognition, viz., the objective aspect (literally, the aspect to be grasped, *grāhyākāra* 所取) and the subjective aspect (literally, the grasping aspect, *grāhakākāra* 能取). As a matter of fact, this portion of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* is supposed to be written from the standpoint of the Yogācāra that admits the existence of mind only (*cittamātra*). Dharmakīrti endorses such a view when he discusses the same topic in the first chapter of the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*.

Now if we apply the scheme of *pramāṇa* and *prameya* to the twofold aspect of cognition, the object of cognition (*prameya*) is the appearance of an object (*arthābhāsa/grāhyākāra*) in cognition and the means of cognition (*pramāṇa*) is the appearance of its cognition (*svābhāsa/grāhakākāra*). Then what is the result of cognition? Dignāga's answer is 'self-awareness' (*svasaṃvedana*). If there is no external object to be cognized by perception, then the result of perception cannot be called 'cognition of an object/object-awareness'; since the object of perception is its appearance as an object, i. e., perception itself, the result of perception can only be called 'cognition of itself/self-awareness'.

In this way Dignāga could maintain the threefold structure of cognitive event even in the system of Yogācāra. The crucial verse of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* Chapter I.10 (*yadābhāsaṃ prameyaṃ tat pramāṇaphalate punaḥ / grāhakākārasaṃvittiyos trayam nātaḥ prthak kṛtam // PS I.10 //*) is quoted by Xuang tsang (玄奘) in his 成唯識論 (如集量論伽他中說 似境相所量能取相自證 即能量及果此三體無別). It seems to indicate the importance of this theory in Yogācāra Buddhist tradition. The verse emphasizes that the threefold division should not be taken literally; for no actual action (*vyāpāra*) is involved in the process of cognition and the names like *pramāṇa* are given only metaphorically.

Furthermore, Dignāga seems to suggest that even if we presuppose the existence of external reality, perception itself is 'self-awareness'. As stated before, perception arises with form/appearance of an object, which implies that perception is 'cognition of its appearance of an object' in other words 'self-awareness'. Thus not only some mental perception (self-awareness of desire, etc.) but also sense perception of an object should essentially be regarded as 'self-awareness'. In short, whatever perception it may be, it is self-awareness.

In this connection it is to be noted that there seems to be two different usages of the term 'self-awareness' in Dignāga's epistemology. It refers to the result of cognition (*pramāṇaphala*) that is distinguished from 'object awareness'. It also refers to the essence or essential operation of cognition; namely, cognition cognizes its own appearance of an object, whether it is given by an external object or not; in short, cognition cognizes itself. Of course, the two cases refer to one and the same cognitive event. Yet, they should be carefully distinguished in each different context. In Dignāga's epistemology, 'self-awareness' in the sense of essential operation of cognition is not restricted to perceptions but extended to conceptions. Thus Dignāga

includes 'self-awareness of concepts' in his list of perceptions. Therefore, every cognition, not only perception but also conception, is characterized by 'self-awareness'.

Dignāga's basic position of epistemology is called *Sākāravijñānavāda* according to which cognition (*vijñāna*) arises with a form/shape (*sākāra*) of an object. It is shared by other schools of Indian philosophy, such as Sāṃkhya and Vedānta. Dignāga formally expresses his theory of *sākāravijñānavāda* in the *Ālamabanapurīkṣā*. There he establishes two conditions of an objective support (*ālambana* 所緣). According to him an objective support must be a cause of its cognition (*tadutpatti*) and it must have a form/shape similar to its cognition (*tatsārūpya*). The second condition of an objective support implies that cognition must have a form/shape similar to its object, i.e., *sākāravijñānavāda*.

Finally, I would like to give a list of cognitions in Dignāga's epistemology. It is to be noted that the list of conception is incomplete.

Cognition = 'self-awareness'

(1) Perception (Non-conceptual)

(1a) Sense Perception ('object-awareness')

(1b) Mental Perception

(1b1) Mental Perception of 'object-awareness'

(1b2) Mental Perception of 'self-awareness of desire, etc.'

(1b3) Yogic Perception ('object-awareness')

(1b4) Self-awareness of concepts

(2) Conception (Conceptual)

(2a) Pseudo-perception (*pratyakṣābhāsa* 似現量)

(2a1) Erroneous cognition (*bhrāntijñāna* 惑亂智)

(2a1) Mundane cognition (*saṃvṛtijñāna* 世俗智)

(2a3) Inference (*anumāna* 比度)

(2a4) Result of Inference (*ānumānika*)

(2a5) Recollection (*smṛta* 憶念)

(2a6) Expectation (*ābhilāṣika*, and other mental events such as doubt)

(2b) Verbal cognition and others (?)

In this lecture I failed to discuss the other means of a valid cognition, i.e., Inference. I shall begin my second lecture with a brief description of inference, and then will go into Dignāga's system of logic.

(2007/06/16)