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THOUGHT

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CAN THE FOOL LEAD THE BLIND? PERCEPTION AND THE
GIVEN IN DHARMAKĪRTI'S THOUGHT

The nature of perception is directly related to the question of the given in the Buddhist logico-epistemological tradition, especially in the writings of Dharmakīrti (600–660 A.D.)¹ and some of his major Indian and Tibetan commentators. Due to their philosophical importance, the questions of whether objects of knowledge are given to experience and whether knowledge is reducible to experience are central in Dharmakīrti's tradition. In this essay, I delineate two distinctive answers to these questions among Dharmakīrti's commentators. One is a revisionist trend associated with Dharmottara (750–810), and the other is a more literal interpretation associated with the Tibetan polymath Sa-skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251). Whereas the former seeks to coordinate perception and conception through modifying the understanding of perception, the latter struggles with the problem raised by Dharmakīrti's system without modifying its basic terms.

The general lines of Dharmakīrti's philosophy are well known and need not be belaboured here. Briefly, like his model Dignāga, Dharmakīrti is essentially preoccupied with questions regarding the nature of knowledge, or, rather, its Indian equivalent *pramāṇa* (*tshad ma*). Whereas his Hindu opponents tend to present a realist theory, which allows a liberal diversity of *pramāṇa*, Dharmakīrti offers a more restrictive view in accordance with his anti-realism. The interpretation of the word *pramāṇa* reflects itself the debate among Buddhist and Hindu thinkers. For Buddhists, *pramāṇa* means “valid cognition,”² whereas for most Hindus, this word refers to “means of valid cognition” in accordance with its grammatical (instrumental) form.³

Dharmakīrti's view about the nature and types of valid cognition is based on a principled ontological distinction between real individual objects, called *svalakṣaṇa* (*rang mtshan*), and conceptual constructs, called *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* (*spyi mtshan*). Conceptual constructs are fictional properties, agreed upon universals, that we project onto reality despite their not being part of the fabric of reality. The main function of the distinction between real things and constructs is to support an epistem-

ology that differentiates and limits knowledge (or, valid cognition) to two types, perception (*pratyakṣa*, *mngon sum*)⁴ and inference (*anumāna*, *rjes dpag*). These two types of cognition are distinguished not only on the basis of their modes of apprehension but mostly on the basis of their objects: whereas perception relates to real individuals through experience, inference apprehends unreal conceptual constructs on the basis of reasoning. Explaining knowledge in this way connects the ontological and epistemological levels of Dharmakīrti's system. Real individuals are apprehended only by perception, which thus provides an accurate cognitive link to reality. Inference, which is distorted, proceeds to conceptualize objects by superimposing fictional properties onto reality on the basis of the knowledge provided by perception. In this way inference provides accurate guidance, despite its being unreliable in and of itself.

This system seems at first sight to offer a straight-forward empiricist epistemology according to which knowledge is reducible to the apprehension and internalization of what is given to the senses. This essay argues that depicting Dharmakīrti as an empiricist, as suggested by several modern scholars,⁵ is incorrect. It is true that Dharmakīrti's epistemology is empirically inclined. Like his Nyāya opponents, Dharmakīrti gives primacy to perception among the forms of knowledge. Moreover, Dharmakīrti holds that the only other form of knowledge, inference, is valid only due to its reliance on perception. Hence, perception does form the foundation of Dharmakīrti's theory of knowledge. This does not mean, however, that Dharmakīrti is an empiricist, at least in the strict sense of the word. That is, Dharmakīrti does not subscribe to what Wilfrid Sellars calls the Myth of the Given, which I take to be the defining characteristic of empiricism strictly understood.

According to this myth, some elements of reality are given to us in their immediacy with absolute authority. Certain knowledge events possess an authority of their own by virtue of the sheer givenness of what they apprehend. Sellars puts it this way:

The idea that observation 'strictly and properly so-called' is constituted by certain self-authenticating episodes, the authority of which is transmitted to verbal and quasi-verbal performances when these performances are made 'in conformity with the semantic rules of the language' is, of course, the heart of the Myth of the Given. For the *given*, in epistemological tradition is what is *taken* by these self-authenticating episodes.⁶

We know certain things directly, with absolute authority. Verbal statements then are just ways to communicate what we know in isolation from conceptual schema, or to speak like some contemporary thinkers, in the privacy of our minds.

In this essay I argue that Dharmakīrti and his tradition do not subscribe to the Myth of the Given and, hence, are not empiricist. In order to show this, I analyze the role of memory (*smṛti*, *dran pa*)⁷ in the theory of perception defended by Dharmakīrti and his tradition. This may at first seem a rather surprising topic to introduce in this discussion, for it is well known that memory is almost universally excluded from being a *pramāṇa* among Indian epistemologists.⁸ Dharmakīrti is no exception,⁹ and repeatedly argues that memory is not valid in the technical sense of the term since it is not non-deceptive, the defining characteristic of *pramāṇa* for Dharmakīrti.¹⁰ Thus, it may seem that memory must be irrelevant to perception, which is universally accepted as a *pramāṇa*. This view, I argue, is mistaken, for perception crucially relies on memory in order to provide knowledge.

The exclusion of memory from being a *pramāṇa* is a consequence of the generally accepted understanding of the notion of *pramāṇa*. Contrary to the Western concept of knowledge which refers to an endurable quality possessed by the knowing person, the Indian term *pramāṇa* (as well as other related terms such as *jñāna* and *pramā*) depicts a mental event that cognizes the object as a momentary knowledge-event. Knowing is understood as a phenomenological process made of transitory mental states that last the duration of the particular mental mode, much like a mood comes and goes. Each mental state is a moment of awareness that takes stock of its object. Once this mental state has passed, the person is left with only the traces of the knowledge-event, memory. The consequence of this momentary conception of knowledge is that memory is not a *pramāṇa*. Since it merely recalls a knowledge-event, it is not an instrument of knowledge. It can only repeat the cognitive results achieved by previous cognitions. Moreover, *smṛti* understood in this epistemological sense is notoriously unreliable. We cannot rely on a mere recollection, for it brings no certainty concerning the object we remember. Thus, it does not satisfy the requirement that cognitions be non-deceptive and, hence, is not valid.

The exclusion of memory from being valid is not unique to Dharmakīrti's system. It is a basic assumption shared by almost all Indian epistemologists. In Dharmakīrti's system, however, the exclusion of memory from the sphere of validity creates great difficulties. My point here is to examine those areas of difficulty by investigating the articulation of memory and perception. I show that given Dharmakīrti's theory of perception, it is difficult and yet necessary to exclude memory from the sphere of validity. Perception in isolation cannot provide useful knowledge unless it is supplemented by perceptual judgments, which

are nothing but memories induced by previous experiences. Hence, memory, is necessary to perception. And yet, it is not valid!

Dharmakīrti himself does not seem to ever face squarely this tension. The task of clarifying the role of memory and its difficult articulation with perception has been left to his followers. After briefly summarizing Dharmakīrti's treatment of the question, I turn to two distinctive currents within his tradition. First, I examine Dharmottara's attempts to solve this problem. This analysis uncovers important and surprising conceptual revisions to the system. I suggest that this is the starting point for a long process of modifying Dharmakīrti's system which has continued in Tibet. After briefly examining this revisionist current, I examine a more orthodox attempt by Sa-skya Paṇḍita to find in the reflexive function of awareness a solution consistent with Dharmakīrti's original system.

DHARMAKĪRTI'S VIEW IN CONTEXT

Let us begin by briefly summarizing Dharmakīrti's theory of perception¹¹ in preparation for examining its relation to memory. Dharmakīrti's view is that perception is both free from conceptuality and undistorted.¹² To understand the implications of this view, let us place it within the context of the Nyāya philosophy, which serves as the dominant account of perception in classical India.¹³ This will allow us to understand the reasons for Dharmakīrti's necessary and yet unenforceable rejection of the validity of memory.

To greatly simplify, Nyāya thinkers distinguish two stages in the perceptual process: the first is a bare contact with the object in its sheer givenness. At this stage, we do not understand the nature of the object confronting us but just see, for example, a lump. The second stage is the subsequent articulation of reality through a perceptual judgment¹⁴ that understands the object as it is. We now see the lump *as*, for example, a jar by categorizing the bare object (the lump) under its proper universal (being a jar). In opposition to the first inarticulate moment, this second moment is propositional, for "it is a logical complex analyzable into constituent elements and relations."¹⁵ It is not, however, verbal, but merely provides the perceptual basis for linguistic formulations, which fall outside of the perceptual realm. The Nyāya call this form of perception determinate (*savikalpaka*, *rtog pa dang bcas pa*),¹⁶ as distinguished from the first stage, the mere sensing of the object, which is called indeterminate (*nirvikalpaka*, *rtog pa med pa*). The doctrine of determinate perception is an expression of the

realism¹⁷ of this school. It is the central element in the Nyāya theory of perception and one of the main points of contention with Buddhist¹⁸ epistemologists.

Dharmakīrti's theory of perception must be seen as a response to and a modification of this account of perception, which is rather convincing from a common sense point of view. Since he holds that there are no real universals,¹⁹ Dharmakīrti cannot accept the existence of determinate perception. And yet, he still thinks of perception within the Nyāya framework. This leads him to hold that perception can only be indeterminate, and hence lacks any categorization or articulation. This view is a direct consequence of Dharmakīrti's anti-realism. It raises, however, enormous difficulties for his fundamental task, the defense of an epistemology embodying Buddhist principles.

Initially Dharmakīrti's account of the validity of knowledge in a world of individuals describes the negative nature of conceptual knowledge (the famous *apoha* theory),²⁰ which is an explanation of how conceptual knowledge is possible in the absence of real universals. Dharmakīrti also attempts to demonstrate that conceptual knowledge has practical validity, despite being inherently distorted. Practical validity, however, must be grounded on an unproblematic form of knowledge, which is perception in Dharmakīrti's system. Hence, Dharmakīrti's epistemological program must elaborate a credible alternative to the generally accepted Nyāya account of perception, showing that perception can provide unproblematic knowledge of a world of particulars.

This task is made particularly difficult by Dharmakīrti's logical and yet problematic refusal of the Nyāya determinate form of perception and his view that perception does not articulate reality. For Dharmakīrti, perception is necessarily non-propositional. Articulation is exclusively conceptual and does not bear on perception. Therefore perception is limited to a bare sensing which does not directly produce any useable information. Hence, the epistemological status of perception, i.e., its status as a valid cognition, is problematic. Let me explain this.

Dharmakīrti understands the notion of valid cognition in relation to the world of practical concerns. He holds that a cognition is valid if, and only if, it is non-deceptive (*avisamvādi, mi slu ba*) with respect to the practical function performed by some real thing. For example, my perception of a fire is a non-deceptive if, and only if, it allows me to correctly identify the object in relation to the practical purposes such as burning, cooking, etc., that it can perform. In short, the validity of a cognition is based on its practical ability to lead us towards successful practical actions.

This practical understanding of epistemological validity, however, is difficult to apply to perception, for achieving a practical purpose depends on correctly categorizing the object we encounter. This requires that the correct description be applied to the object, and hence falls in the conceptual realm. For example, we see a lump and apply the concept of jar. It is only once the correct description has been applied to the lump that it can become an object of practical appropriation. Successful categorization of the object is not produced by perception itself, which only puts us in touch with the bare object (the lump) existing moment by moment. It is the conceptual thought subsuming the object under an appropriate universal (being a jar) that makes the perception part of the practical world.

Since the epistemological status of perception involves success in practical endeavours and since this success relies on conceptuality, it seems that perception can only be a form of knowledge in dependence on conception. This conclusion is not, however, acceptable to Dharmakīrti, for it completely undermines the foundational role of perception in his system. It furthermore threatens to make his account circular, for the epistemological support of conceptuality was supposed to lie in perception, the unproblematic foundation of knowledge. This foundation, however, can never be secured since the epistemological validity of perception seems to rely on the collaboration of concepts. It is here that we can see the important and yet unacknowledged role of memory in Dharmakīrti's theory of perception.

THE HIDDEN ROLE OF MEMORY

According to Dharmakīrti's system, the judgments that categorize perceptions and allow us to act successfully are forms of memory in two different but related ways: they apprehend an object which has been apprehended by perception previously but which is already gone (due to the momentary nature of reality). These judgments also subsume an individual under an already conceived (and unreal) universal category.²¹ Dharmakīrti describes such recollective consciousnesses as relative cognitions (*saṃvṛtijñāna*, *kun rdzob shes pa*),²² and excludes them from validity. He says:

[We] do not accept relative cognitions [as non-deceptive] because they apprehend that which has [already] been apprehended.²³

Dharmakīrti does not spell out what he means by "relative cognition." The term itself, which in Buddhist tradition often has the connotation

of obscuration, indicates that such cognitions are not the “real thing,” that is, they are not valid. His direct disciple Devendrabuddhi is more explicit.²⁴ He explains that “relative cognition” means memory, which is conventional (*samvṛti*, *kun rdzob*) because it obscures the clear vision of reality.²⁵

As stated earlier, the exclusion of memory from the sphere of validity is common among Indian epistemologists, although such exclusion takes on very different meanings for different traditions. For the Nyāya system, which holds that perceptual judgments are propositional, the exclusion of memory is unproblematic. Perceptual judgments are not forms of memory because they apprehend and categorize objects as we perceive them in the present. Memories are different, for they merely repeat the categorization already achieved by perceptual judgments described as determinate perceptions. Hence, they are not valid.

This exclusion is harder to maintain for Dharmakīrti, who includes what the Nyāya describe as perceptual judgments in the category of memory. Thus, the exclusion of memory has much larger consequences for Dharmakīrti than for the Naiyāyika, for the category of memory is much more inclusive in the former's system. For Dharmakīrti, describing as memory what Nyāya describes as determinate perception is an essential point. It is a way to refute the Nyāya account, thus opening the door to his own view. Judgments that are held by the Nyāya to be perceptual are shown to be memories of past objects. As such they cannot be valid. In this way Nyāya realism is undermined. Including such judgments in memory and excluding them from epistemological validity ensures for Dharmakīrti the validity of his philosophy of perception, which in turn reflects and supports his anti-realist ontology.

Dharmakīrti's account of perception presupposes that the epistemological status of perception can be secured independently of memory. This, however, is difficult, since perception can be a form of knowledge if, and only if, it has the capacity to bring about successful activity. Since this requires adequate categorization and since perception cannot articulate its object, it appears that perception cannot be valid in isolation. Dharmakīrti might be obliged to grant some validity to memory after all! But this is not possible either, for memory is almost universally excluded from validity among Indian epistemologists. To admit the validity of memory would be, for Dharmakīrti, tantamount to acknowledging that his epistemological enterprise has failed. What can he do?

As he is essentially preoccupied by negative considerations such as defending Dignāga's system and refuting the Nyāya philosophy,

Dharmakīrti largely ignores these questions. He asserts the validity of perception, excludes judgments from validity by including them in memory, and neglects to explain how perception can be the foundation of knowledge despite its seeming reliance on conceptual elaboration. Faced with mounting criticism from their philosophical adversaries, his followers cannot avoid this issue. Much of the later development of the Buddhist philosophy of perception consists of their attempts to solve this problem. I will not describe these developments in detail,²⁶ but I will mention just two different roads taken by commentators.

One approach attempts to solve the difficulty by transforming the terms of the problem. This revisionist current, found in some of Dharmottara's texts, makes various attempts to formulate a richer epistemology. It is also found in other Indian commentators such as Śaṅkarāṇḍa and Mokṣākaragupta (eleventh-twelfth century). This trend is continued in Tibet by rNgog Lo-tṣā-ba bLo-ldan shes-rab (1059–1109),²⁷ Phywa-pa Chos-kyi-seng-ge (1182–1251)²⁸ and the dGe-lugs-pa tradition, all of which present perception as a form of propositional knowledge despite its being non-conceptual. The second, more orthodox, current attempts to find a solution without transforming the meaning of Dharmakīrti's basic terms. Here, I will examine a view elaborated by Sa-skya Paṇḍita (henceforth Sa-pan), one of Dharmakīrti's foremost commentators. But let us start with the more revisionist views of Dharmottara which seem to mark an important stage in the transformation of Buddhist epistemology.

DHARMOTTARA'S UNORTHODOX SOLUTIONS

Dharmottara²⁹ struggles with the problems raised by Dharmakīrti's theory of perception. In particular, he is troubled by the contradiction between perception's foundational role and its seeming dependence on conception. How can perception be valid if its reliability depends on perceptual judgments, which are conceptual and hence in principle not valid (since they are not inferential)? After describing the problem, he offers the following distinction as a solution:

A conceiving [consciousness induced] by the power of a perception conceives that [we] see a thing, not that we conceptualize [it]. Moreover, seeing is what is done by perception, it is the function of perception. Accordingly, the nature of conceptual cognition [of] a hidden thing is to conceptualize, not to see. Experience establishes that the function of conceptual cognition is to conceptualize. Therefore, [in the case of a judgement, such a conceiving consciousness] leaves aside its own function and exhibits that of perception. From [that it follows] that only a perception is a valid cognition with respect to the thing towards which the conceiving consciousness has become perceptual.³⁰

Dharmottara's solution is based on a distinction between the functions of perception and conception. Whereas the function of perception is to see an object, the function of conception is to conceive of a momentarily hidden object. Our perceptual experiences are cases of seeing objects, not of conceiving of them. Therefore, a perceptual judgment conceives that we see an object, not that we conceive of it. The perceptual function of seeing is thereby taken over by conception making the object directly available to us.

This account shows that perception is valid despite the fact that its object is made available to us only through the intervention of conceptions in the form of perceptual judgments. Dharmottara concludes further that in this case only perception is valid. This is so because conception assimilates the object seen by perception and carries it over to the conceptual domain by assuming the function of perception. Dharmottara argues that, since such a conception is not carrying out the function proper to the conceptual domain, the validity of the whole experience is entirely due to the perception.

Dharmottara must reach this conclusion to avoid accepting the Nyāya idea of a determinate perception. For, the Nyāya accepts bare perception as valid, but also holds the judgment that follows to be valid in its own right. Dharmottara's solution, however, is hardly satisfactory because it assumes rather than establishes a distinction in the functions of perception and conception. It presupposes that conceptual cognitions function to conceptualize, i.e., conceive, construct, imagine, etc., following the Buddhist repudiation of realism. Since the objects conceived of by thought are not part of reality, they must be constructed or imputed.

According to the Nyāya, objects conceived of by thought are real, for the function of thought is not limited to imagining, but is closely linked with reality. Thought is able to understand the general and abstract aspects of reality, which are not accessible to bare perception. Without this, human knowledge would be reduced to the bare sensing of particulars.

Due to their commitment to a sparse ontology, Buddhist epistemologists cannot agree with the rather convincing Nyāya account of human experience as a combination of perception and conception. Their philosophy privileges the particular over the general: reality is made up of a plurality of elements, and generality is, at best, the result of atomic aggregation (when it is not a figment of our imagination). This emphasis on the particular expresses itself on the epistemological level, where perception is valued over conception. These two levels (ontological and epistemological) of the system are inseparable. Nevertheless, they pull

in different directions. Whereas ontology favors a policy of sparsity, in which the general is given inferior status, epistemology requires that we consider general characteristics as well.

This situation can give rise to two attitudes: we might choose, as do the Naiyāyika, not to sacrifice the integrity of the epistemological level and to pay the price of a crowded ontology. Or, like the Buddhist, we might refuse to pay this price and try to patch things up when it comes to epistemology. There, thought is allowed a limited validity as inference but is denied any other role. Thought infers the real but does not apprehend it, because it is deprived of any direct access to it. Therefore, Dharmottara must deny that in the perceptual process thought has any validity of its own.

Another difficulty with Dharmottara's explanations is that they, even more than Dharmakīrti's, assume that conceptions and perceptions work together. For a conception to assume the function of a prior perception, it must be possible for conceptions and perceptions to operate in relation to exactly the same object. For example, I see an object which I categorize as a fire. In order for this categorization to have any relevance to the perceptual experience, it must relate to the seen object. This, however, is impossible since for Dharmakīrti conceptions cannot apprehend the objects of perception.

Contrary to their Brahmanical adversaries, for whom different types of valid cognition coalesce (*pramāṇa-samplava*, *tshad ma bslad pa*),³¹ Dharmakīrti and his followers are committed to a radical dichotomy between the two types of valid cognition (*pramāṇa-vyavasthā*, *tshad ma rnam par bzhang pa*). This is a direct consequence of the ontological dichotomy between real specifically characterized (*svalakṣaṇa*, *rang mtshan*) and conceptual generally characterized phenomena (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, *spyi mtshan*).³² Perception can only apprehend real individuals and conception only unreal constructs.

Since no epistemological link between perceptions and conceptions is in principle possible in Dharmakīrti's system, the only possible link between the two must be causal. Categorization of an object as a fire, for example, is epistemically relevant to the real fire because it is induced by the experience of the real object. Such an explanation, however, cannot account for the coordination between perceptions and conceptions. It cannot guarantee that our concepts are in touch with reality. The simple fact that I think "this is a fire" after seeing an object does not ensure that I have indeed seen a fire. I can have such an idea after seeing a red patch. Nor does my seeing a fire ensure that my idea factually applies to the fire I have seen. Such an experience could have

given rise to wrong ideas such as “this is a cold object” or “this fire is permanent.”

What is required is that my perception and conception of fire cognitively bear on the same real object. Such an epistemic coordination between perception and conception, however, is impossible in Dharmakīrti's system, predicated as it is on a strict dichotomy between these two types of valid cognition on the basis of their having different objects. Dharmottara sees the problem quite well and makes several attempts to solve it. I will mention briefly two attempts which I find puzzling, but the lengthy discussion of which would take us away from our main topic.

First, Dharmottara tries to bridge the gap between perception and conception by making a distinction between the object held (*grahya*, *gzung ba*) and the object conceived (*adhyavasaya*, *zhen pa*).³³ The held object is the object directly held by a cognition. It is understood in terms of appearance.³⁴ An individual momentary thing is the held object of perception, while an unreal concept is the held object of conception. Insofar as we are aware, however, we do not perceive things as being momentary and we do not believe our thinking to bear only on fictitious concept. Rather, we think that we relate to a stable reality and conceive of our ideas as applying to real things. These objects of practical concern are what Dharmottara terms the conceived objects of perception and conception, respectively.

Dharmottara attributes a conceived object to perception, an idea that even his Tibetan followers, who often take him as their main source,³⁵ will not adopt. It seems difficult to accept that perception, which is non-conceptual, has a conceived object. Why does Dharmottara have such a singular view? I think that he is attempting to bridge the gap between conceptions and perceptions by asserting that they have different held objects but similar conceived objects, thus establishing the unity of the cognitive process, in which both types of cognition relate to the same object, albeit in different ways.³⁶ In this way Dharmakīrti's radical dichotomy is saved, and reinterpreted as applying to the direct objects of cognitions. Moreover, the epistemological status of perception can be established on the basis of a minimal level of coordination between perceptions and conceptions. Both can be said to bear on the same object because they both, at least indirectly, cognize the same conceived object.³⁷

In what I take to be a second attempt at bridging the gap between conception and perception, Dharmottara proposes an even more puzzling view. In this case his solution is to reintroduce the distinction

between determinate and indeterminate perception, the same Nyāya view Dharmakīrti spent so much time criticizing!³⁸ In an answer to an opponent, Dharmottara explains how perceptions can lead to practical activities. The opponent assumes that perception is the mere holding of objects present in the perceptual ken without determination, devoid of understanding and practically ineffective. Dharmottara answers:³⁹

Ideas such as “this,” [i.e.,] “this leads to happiness, that leads to suffering,” are ascertained as perception. [For] when something is determined, the person who establishes a practical convention determines the proximate object as leading to happiness. That which is said to lead to happiness or suffering is the object of application . . . Such an application must have ascertainment. [The] opponent thinks that because perception does not [ascertain anything], it [cannot] engage [in practical activities]. Master [Dharmakīrti responds that] this is true for the things that are subsuming or subsumed. In order to show that both determinate and indeterminate perceptions are causes of application [in practical activities], the master said “this fault is not present.” There are two types [of case in which] there is no object of application: sometimes, a perception does not take [anything] as its object of application due to its not [being able] to ascertain the nature [of the object]. [At other times], indeterminate perception does not take [anything] as object of application due to the lack of proximity of a previously seen activity (i.e., due to the lack of habituation) . . . Accordingly, determinate perception separately ascertains the location, time, and aspect [of the object. Moreover, the cognition which is produced by the power of indeterminate [perception] ascertains that which is held by perception.⁴⁰

This passage is quite puzzling, for it seems to reintroduce the idea of determinate perception which Dharmakīrti so abundantly refuted. It is therefore difficult to interpret such a passage. One must wonder how seriously Dharmottara can propose a type of perception which so clearly contradicts Dharmakīrti’s theory of perception.⁴¹ Such a view might not even reflect his own opinion. In any case, it shows the difficulty that Dharmottara has in accounting for the relation between perception and conception.

Although his formulation is surprising and problematic, Dharmottara’s intention seems to be here again to establish greater unity between perceptions and conceptions. To do so, he differentiates two types of perception: determinate and indeterminate (*savikalpika*, *rtog pa can* – *nirvikalpika*, *rtog pa med pa can*). Although Dharmottara is not very explicit about how the distinction is drawn, we can assume that determinate perceptions identify their object as this or that (or at least immediately contribute to their identification), whereas indeterminate perceptions can only sense their objects and produce later judgements. For example, the perception present in the experience of perceptual reduction does not induce any certainty in us at the time of the experience. It is only afterwards that we are able to recollect the object (i.e., its touch as it was experienced at that time).

Determinate perception is able to determine indirectly the nature and function of the object it perceives. For example, I see a round object which I identify as a pot. This ascertainment is due to perception itself. It requires previous acquaintance with the nature and the function of the object. Nevertheless, one could argue that the identification of the object is not due to the conception following the perceptual experience but to the perception itself, which leads us to successful action.

SA-PAN'S SOLUTION

Later Indian and Tibetan thinkers have continued to reflect on this problem and come up with their own solutions, which are often continuations of Dharmottara's efforts. Tibetan epistemologists such as rNgog and Phywa-pa propose that perception is not restricted to the apprehension of bare particulars, but grasps an already articulated object.⁴² Again, this solves the problem by changing its terms. Perception is no longer a direct contact between mind and external reality that is distinguished from conceptual mediation by its non-propositional character. Rather, it is an articulated apprehension of reality which is psychologically unmediated by concepts. Since perception apprehends a categorically loaded reality, and since it is similar in function to conception, the validity of perception and its coordination with conception are no longer problematic.

To accept this view, however, entails a radical transformation of the tenets of Dharmakīrti's system. Under the influence of the Indian Paṇḍita Śākya Śrībhadrā (1182–1251), Sa-pan notices the discrepancy between the Tibetan epistemologies of his day and Dharmakīrti's system. His famous *Tshad ma rigs gter* is an attempt to expose these distortions and recover the original system.⁴³ In this text Sa-pan returns to Dharmakīrti's original idea that perception provides an unarticulated view of bare momentary objects. Sa-pan attempts to find solutions to the problems we have noticed in Dharmakīrti's account of how perception and memory relate.

According to Sa-pan, the problem with perceptual knowledge stems from our necessary reliance on conceptual thinking, which is a result of our inability to relate to things as they are. Unlike noble beings,⁴⁴ ordinary beings cannot operate by the power of meditative concentration. Instead, they relate to reality through concepts they construct on the basis of their experiences. This necessarily entails distortions. Sa-pan describes this situation:

The valid cognitions of ordinary beings engage in [desirable activities] and withdraw [from undesirable ones] solely by ascertainment. Noble beings [absorbed in] non-conceptual states are said to act by [the power of] concentration.⁴⁵

Buddhist philosophers do not see our reliance on distorted concepts as an insurmountable limitation to the human condition, but as the result of the ignorance (*avidyā*, *ma rig pa*) that dominates our minds. Noble beings, who have eliminated this ignorance or are in the process of doing so, can enter non-conceptual states in which their actions arise spontaneously attuned to reality. This type of activity, which prefigures the unfathomable way in which a Buddha relates to reality, is a direct and undistorted relation to reality.

In the absence of an unmediated link to reality, ordinary beings act by relying on conceptual constructs. Inasmuch as these creations relate successfully to reality (and are not totally imaginary), they proceed through judgments of the type “this blue pot is beautiful,” etc. The nature of such judgments are the subject of contention between the different epistemologies. The Nyāya school takes them to be another form (determinate) of perception. Tibetan realists take these judgments to conceptualize the cognitive content already present in the perceptual act. Sa-pan understands these judgments, which are induced by perceptions, to introduce new epistemic content by ascertaining (i.e., conceptually categorizing) their objects.

For Sa-pan, ordinary knowledge is achieved by applying the proper concept to the reality given to us by perception. It is not achieved by mere perception but requires active categorization on our part. Accordingly, perception does not determine the situation cognitively understood, but brings about certain forms of conceptual activity in which we apply or withdraw concepts we have previously learned. These forms of memory are necessarily conceptual. For example, the judgement “this blue pot is beautiful” does not come about just by mere acquaintance with the object but requires a conceptual elaboration in which concepts are formed by excluding contrary assumptions such as “this is not blue,” “this is not a pot” and “this is not beautiful.”⁴⁶ This conceptual activity is not arbitrary, for it arises within the limitations imposed by experience, but it does not reflect directly reality. Our assertions and negations, which constitute our knowledge, are based indirectly on the reality we perceive. In other words, the truth of our conceptions is based on their being connected with perception.

This epistemology of perception leads to a major difficulty. Perception gives the object as it is, but is not able to determine what it is. Conception determines and understands the object by subsuming it under a universal,

but does not see it. Knowledge of the external world necessitates both seeing and conceiving and, therefore, requires the cooperation of these two cognitive elements, which are powerless in isolation. This cooperation is, however, problematic in Dharmakīrti's system in which perception and conception relate to entirely different objects. How can the two work together cognitively? Sa-pan answers through a pithy metaphor:

Sense consciousness is like the fool who sees. Conceptions is like a blind skillful speaker. Self-cognition is like [a person] with complete senses, who introduces one to the other.⁴⁷

Perception is like the fool; it sees objects but is unable to characterize them. This job is performed by conception, the blind and clever person skilled in describing what she does not see. The cooperation between the two requires an intermediary because perception and conception do not apprehend the same objects. Sa-pan finds this intermediary in the reflexivity of apperception, or to put it in Dharmakīrtian terms, self-cognition (*rang rig*, *svasamvitti*).

Apperception⁴⁸ is the factor of mind that ensures the transparency and immediacy of our mental states. When we are aware of something, we are at the same time cognizant of our awareness. This self-presenting is not objectified, for we are not aware of ourselves in quite the same way as we are aware of external objects. Nevertheless, our own experiences do not go unnoticed, and are integrated into the continuity of our conscious life, without any necessary mediation. We do not have to think that we experience, for we are unthematically aware of this fact. Although we might not know the full implications of our experiences, we can be aware of them. It is also undeniable that we perceive a continuity in these experiences that goes well beyond the perceived stability of various objects. According to Buddhist epistemologists, this subjective continuity is not due to a supposed transcendental unity of a self,⁴⁹ but to the reflexive and self-presenting character of our mind.⁵⁰

This reflexive factor, self-cognition or apperception, functions in Sa-pan's interpretation as the pivot and warrant that ensures that conceptions operate on the objects given to perceptions, thereby indirectly keeping thinking in touch with reality. Since apperception inheres in perception as well as in conception, it can act as an intermediary without breaking the restriction imposed on the number of allowable types of knowledge (two, i.e., perception and inference). Apperception realizes the aspects of both types of cognition and keeps track of the epistemic continuity between them. We know that a conception applies to the

seen object because apperception ensures that the concept is induced by the appropriate perception.

Thus according to Sa-pan, the final word in Dharmakīrti's system is apperception, which links perception and cognition. Apperception ensures the union of the two components of knowledge, dumb perception and blind conception, by keeping track of the continuity of our psychic life.⁵¹ Perception is unable in and of itself to bring about ordinary knowledge, which cannot be reduced to experience, contrary to what empiricists argue. To produce knowledge, perception requires the cooperation of perceptual judgements, which are memories. Under the guidance of apperception, perceptual judgements can help perception by remembering previously learned concepts in appropriate ways. In this way, apperception is the warrant of our ordinary knowledge about the world; it is indubitable. Although we can be mistaken about the nature of the objects of our perceptions, we cannot be mistaken in our immediate awareness of our experiences.

For Sa-pan, the final answer to the question about the feasibility of knowledge in the absence of real universals is apperception. For Sa-pan, it is the self-presenting nature of conceptual mental events that guarantees their objectivity. For, although there is no correspondence between concepts and reality, thought is not arbitrary but causally grounded in reality through perception. A mere causal link or association of ideas, however, is not sufficient to ensure objectivity. Something stronger is needed to warrant the link between perception and conception. If Sa-pan is right, Dharmakīrtians find this link in apperception, which ensures the unity of our psychic life.

NOTES

¹ E. Frauwallner "Landmarks in the History of Indian Logic," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Süd und Ostasiens* (1961) 5: 137–141. As usual in ancient India, Dharmakīrti's exact dates are difficult to establish.

² Throughout this work I use the word "valid" to mean correct or right in accordance with *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*: "Valid implies being supported by objective truth ..." This colloquial use should not be confused with the more technical distinction made by modern logicians who distinguish validity from soundness. Similarly, I use "cognition" less to refer to a process through which knowledge is acquired than to imply a momentary mental state which apprehends an object. In doing so I am following the current scholarly usage in Buddhist Studies. I reserve "correct cognition" to translate *samyagjñāna* (*yang dag pa'i shes pa*).

³ For a discussion of this question, see: Nandita Bandyopadhyay, "The Buddhist Theory of Relation between Pramā and Pramāṇa," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, VII, 1 (1979).

⁴ Although there are four types of perception, in this essay I focus on sense-perception,

which I take to be paradigmatic of Dharmakīrti's conception of perception. For more on the four types of perception, see: M. Hattori, *Dignāga, On Perception* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 25–8 & Y. Kajiyama, *An Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy* (Kyoto: Kyoto University, 1966), 44–56.

⁵ For example, B. K. Matilal, *Perception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 389.

⁶ W. Sellars, *Science, Perception, and Reality* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1963), 169.

⁷ This essay understands memory as a form of recollection, in accordance with the usage among Indian epistemologists. Although such an understanding of memory may not be adequate to the Buddhist tradition as a whole, it captures quite adequately what Indian epistemologists mean by *smṛti*.

⁸ Jain, Vedānta and Prāsangika seem to be the only schools that assert the validity of memory. The former hold that memory is valid because it realizes something new, namely, the pastness of its object. Udayana convincingly shows, however, that this is a confusion since the pastness of the object is not remembered but experienced in the present. See: B. K. Matilal, *Logic, Language and Reality* (Delhi: Motilal Barnar-sidass, 1985), 208. The latter two have a different view of validity than most other schools and one could question whether they are really committed to epistemological inquiry. They do not understand the validity of a consciousness as the determination or obtention of an ontologically privileged object but in terms of non-contradiction. Accordingly, memory is valid because it is not contradicted by any other items of knowledge. Sinha, *Indian Psychology* (Delhi: Motilal, 1969, 1986), III. 13. See also Dzong-ka-ba, *Byang chub lam rim chen mo* (Dharmasala: Shes rig par khang, no date), 397 and 405.

⁹ This exclusion of memory under its different forms (identification, recognition, recalling) is found in Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇa-vārttikam*, II. 3, 5. cd, III. 174, 185–9, 236, 498 & 503.

¹⁰ In PV II: 1 Dharmakīrti says: “Valid cognition is that cognition [which is] non-deceptive (*avisamvādi*, *mi bslu ba*). Non-deceptiveness [consists] in the readiness [for the object] to perform a function.” (*tshad ma bslu med can shes pa/ don byed nus par gnas pa ni/mi slu sgra las byung ba yang/ mngon par 'dod pa ston phyir ro// pramāṇam avisamvādi jñānam arthakriyāsthitiḥ/ avisamvādanam śābde 'py abhiprāyanivedanād//*).

¹¹ Dharmakīrti's definition of perception is a refinement of Dignāga's description of perception as being free from conception (*kalpanāpoḍha*, *rtog pa dang bral ba*). See: Hattori, *Dignāga*, 25. There is disagreement among both traditional and modern scholars on how much Dharmakīrti's restriction of perception to cognitions which are unmistakable (*abhrānta*, *ma 'khrul ba*) represents a modification of Dignāga's view. See: Th. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic* (New York: Dover, 1930, 1962), S. Mookerjee, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux* (Delhi: Motilal, 1935), & R. Hayes, *Dignāga on the Interpretation of Signs* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988).

¹² See: Y. Miyasaka ed., *Pramāṇa-vārttika*, *Acta Indologica* 2 (1971–2), III. 300. cd. I have not followed Miyasaka's order of chapter (which is Prajñākara-gupta's) and have preferred the traditional order to Devendrabuddhi, adopted by Frauwallner and Steinkellner as well.

¹³ Here I present a mere sketch of the Nyāya view, leaving out the complexities of without its historical developments. For a more detailed account, see: C. D. Bijalwan, *Indian Theory of Knowledge* (New Delhi: Heritage, 1977), 72–8.

¹⁴ What Buddhists describe as ascertaining consciousnesses induced by perception (*mngon sum gyis 'dren pa'i nges shes*).

¹⁵ J. Mohanty, *Gaṅgeśa's Theory of Truth* (Delhi: Motilal, 1966, 1989), 29. A

perceptual judgment is not a proposition for it is not a sentence or an abstract self-sufficient entity (as a proposition). It cannot even be explained by linguistic analysis and requires the recollection of the experience. Nevertheless, it possesses a certain logical complexity which is lacking in the first stage of perception.

¹⁶ I translate *savikalpaka* as determinate when this word is used to designate a perceptual judgment in the Nyāya system. Taken in a strictly Buddhist context, this word would be translated as conceptual. Since this translation would lose track of the Nyāya important distinction between perceptual and verbal judgments, I have preferred to use “determinate” when *savikalpaka* is discussed according to the Nyāya sense of the word.

¹⁷ This word can be used in various ways. Here, I use it in relation to the problem of universals. A realist such as a Naiyāyika is the proponent of the reality of universals and is opposed by anti-realists such as Dharmakīrti or Ockham who deny it. Also refer to a realist view of perception according to which perception has unmediated access to the external world (this is also the Nyāya view). This view is opposed by the representationalist (Dharmakīrti as a Sautrāntika) and the phenomenalist (Dharmakīrti as a Yogācāra), who both deny that perception can apprehend directly external objects.

¹⁸ I will use the word “Buddhist” as referring to the school of logic and epistemology of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. This is not to say that this school was the only Buddhist school debating the problem of knowledge in India. For example, Candrakīrti refuses Dignāga’s description of perception as non-conceptual and propounds a view similar to Nyāya ideas (described below). See: Hattori, *Dignāga*, 87. It remains true, however, that Dharmakīrti’s tradition gained wide acceptance among Buddhist philosophers and was often taken by the critiques of Buddhism as representing Buddhist views in logic and epistemology.

¹⁹ Dharmakīrti can be described as a conceptualist according to whom universals are conceptual and, therefore, not real. In his system, only individuals are real. For a description of Dharmakīrti’s anti-realism and its reception in Indo-Tibetan traditions, see: Georges Dreyfus, “Universals in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism; a Conceptual Evolution,” in *Tibetan Studies* (Tokyo: Naritasan Institute, 1992). I. 29–46.

²⁰ For a study of this difficult topic, see: M. Hattori, “Apoha and Pratibha,” M. Nagatomi, B. K. Matilal, J. M. Masson, E. Dimock, *Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Festschrift in Honor of Danie H. H. Ingalls* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1980), 61–73, & S. Katsura, “Jñānaśrīmitra on Apoha,” Matilal, *Buddhist Logic*, 171–181. Also “Dignāga and Dharmakīrti on Apoha,” a forthcoming response to Herzberger, *Bharthari and the Buddhists* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1986). See also: Mookerjee, *Doctrine*, Kajiyama, *Introduction*, & Hayes, *Dignāga*. For a view of some Tibetan interpretations, see: A. Klein, *Knowledge and Liberation* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1986). For a study of its evolution, see: Georges Dreyfus, *Recognizing Reality: Dharmakīrti’s Philosophy and its Tibetan Interpretations* (Albany: Suny, forthcoming).

²¹ This double aspect of the recollective function parallels the double meaning of universals and exposes the close link between the issue of the status of memory and anti-realism in Buddhist epistemology. Several (but not all) Buddhist thinkers such as Mokṣakaragupta and Sa-pan consider that there are two types of universals: the horizontal universal (*tiṛyaglakṣaṇam sāmānyam, thad ka’i spyi*), which is a property such as cowness horizontally shared by individuals, and the vertical universal (*ūrdhvatālakṣaṇam, gong ma’i spyi*), which unifies the moments existing within the same continuum. See: Kajiyama, *Introduction*, 58.

²² The word *saṃvṛti* usually means conceptual in Dharmakīrti’s system. Here, however, its meaning is more restricted and refers to a conceptual cognition that is not involved in an inferential process. The source for this usage is in Dignāga’s discussion of pseudo-perceptions (*pratyakṣābhāsa, mngon sum ltar snang*), *PSS*, P: 14.b.2–3. See also: Hattori, *Dignāga*, 28, 180–1.

²³ *gr̥hītagrahaṇān neṣṭam saṁvṛtam dhīpramāṇatā/gzung ba 'dzin phyir kun rdzob ni/ mi 'dod blo ni tshad ma nyid/ Miyasaka de., PV, II: 3.ab.*

²⁴ Devendrabuddhi, *Tshad ma rnam 'grel gyi 'ka' 'grel,* "Pramāṇa-vārttika-pañjikā, P: 5717, *Che*, 3.b.8–4.a.3.

²⁵ According to Candrakīrti, the word *saṁvṛti* can have one of the following three connotations: a) it can mean term (*vyvahāra*, *tha snyad*) and is then equivalent to worldly convention; b) it can also mean inter-dependence; c) however, the most usual connotation (or etymology) of *saṁvṛti* is: "that which entirely obstructs reality." Candrakīrti, *Mūlamadhyamakavṛttiprasannapadā*, *Dbu ma rtsa ba'i 'grel pa tshig gsal ba*, P: 5260, 'a, 492.10. Although a remembering cognition appears to be a true means of gaining access to reality, in fact, it is not. It is a distorted (being conceptual) form of cognition which, unlike inference, does not provide any new information. Such a conceptual cognition has no validity of its own, but merely duplicates the information provided by valid cognition.

²⁶ For a description of this, see: Dreyfus, *Recognizing Reality*.

²⁷ rNgog is the main instigator of scholastic studies in Tibet. Nephew of Atiśa's disciple, rNgog Legs-pa'i-shes-rab who had founded in 1073 the monastery of gSang phu ne'u thog, rNgog was one of the foremost translators of the second spread (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism in Tibet. He also established a new tradition of logic and epistemology in Tibet. See: L. van der Kuip, *Contributions to the Development of Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1983), 31–2. S. Onoda, "The Chronology of the Abbatial Successions of the Gsang Phu Sne'u Thog Monastery," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 33 (1989) 203–213.

²⁸ L. van der Kuip describes Cha-ba as a non-sectarian thinker mostly associated with the Ka-dam-pa. "Phya-pa Chos-kyi-seng-ge's Impact on Tibetan Epistemological Theory," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 5 (1978), 355–369, 357.

²⁹ Dharmakīrti's first commentators Devendrabuddhi and his disciple Śākyamati (seventh century Ad.) did not add much to the original system. They offered literal commentaries and have been described by Stcherbatsky as constituting the school of literal exegesis. Śāntarakṣita, Dharmottara and Prajñākaragupta (eighth century Ad.) developed more independent interpretations of Dharmakīrti's system to respond to the Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā criticisms. See: Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, 39–47.

³⁰ gang gi phyir mngon sum gyi stobs kyis byung ba'i zhen pas ni don mthong ba'i nyid du zhen par byed kyil/ rtog par byed pa nyid du ma yin no/ mthong ba yang don mngon sum du byed pa zhes bya ba mngon sum gyi byed pa yin no/ mam par rtog pa yin te 'di ltar don lkog tu gyur pa mam par rtog pa ni bdag nyid rtog par byed kyil/ mthong ba ma yin no zhes rtog pa'i bdag yid yin par ni myong ba las nges pa yin no/ de bas na rang gyi byed pa btang ste mngon sum gyi byed pa ston par byed pa las don gang la mngon sum du song ba'i zhen pa yod pa der mngon sum 'ba' zhig tshad ma yin no/ Dharmottara, *Rigs pa'i thigs pa'i rgya cher 'grel ba* (*Nyāya-bindu-ṭīkā*), D: 5730, *We*, 46.b.4–6.

³¹ Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, II. 301–8. The realist idea can be summarized in the following way: since there are not two different types of existants, the different types of cognition do not relate to different kinds of object. Instead, they relate in different ways to the same real things that make the world.

³² This epistemological dualism in turn reinforces the basic ontological typology, which acts to support the traditional Buddhist doctrines of impermanence, dependent arising, and selflessness.

³³ See: Dharmottara, *Tshad ma rnam par gnes pa'i 'grel bshad*, *Pramāṇa-Viniścaya-ṭīkā*, (DVT) D: 4229, *Dze*, 79.a.4–6.

³⁴ Dharmottara, *PVT*, D: *Dze*, 38.b.4–6.

³⁵ This is particularly true of rGyal-tshap, who takes Dharmottara as the main authority on logic and epistemology. The importance of Dharmottara is also clear in

the earlier stages of the Tibetan tradition. rNgog and Phywa pa give to Dharmottara and his revisionist positions a role that partly explains their differences with Dharmakīrti's original system.

³⁶ The question of whether Dharmottara succeeds in his enterprise will require further studies. It seems, however, highly problematic, for, Dharmottara does not seem to succeed in explaining the cooperation between perception and conception, which his account presupposes.

³⁷ Mokṣakaragupta seems to offer a similar view when he distinguishes between directly held objects (*grāhya*, *gzung ba*) and indirectly determined objects (*adhyavaseya*, *nges pa*) of valid cognitions. Perception holds a momentary object directly, and determines a universal indirectly. In this way, perception and conception are coordinated by way of their objects. Kajiyama, *Introduction*, 58.

³⁸ Dharmottara, *PVT*, D: *Dze*, 83.a.1–b.1.

³⁹ Dharmottara, *PVT*, D: *Dze*, 82.b.4–83.a.1. I am grateful to Helmut Krasser from the University of Vienna for kindly drawing my attention to this passage.

⁴⁰ 'di ni bde ba sgrub pa'o/ 'di ni sdug bsngal sgrub pa'o zhes 'di'o zhes mngon sum nyid du nges te/ yongs su bcad na tha snayad du byed pa'i skyes bu bde ba sgrub par byed pa nyid du nye ba'i don yongs su gcod pa yin no/ bde ba dang sdug bsngal sgrub par byed pa dag ces bya ba ni 'jug pa'i yul ston pa'o/ ldots 'jug par byed pa de la yang nges par byed pa nyid kyis khyab pa yin no/ mngon sum la ni yod pa ma yn pa'i phyir 'jug par byed pa ni ma yin no zhes bya ba nipha rol po'i bsam pa'o/slob dpon gyis kyang khyab par bya ba dang khayb par byed pa byed pa'i dngos po de bden yang/ rtog pa med pa dang rtog pa dang bcas pa'i mngon sum dag 'jug pa'i yan lag nyid du khyad par med par bstan pa'i phyir skyon 'di med de zhes bya ba gsungs so/ 'di la 'jug pa'i yul mi gnas pa ni mam pa gnyis te/ de'i dus na nye ba'i rang bzhin ma nges pa'i phyir mngon sum gyis 'jug pa'i yul du byed pa ni mi nus pa'am/ gal te bya ba byed pa nyid sngar mthong ba nye ba ma yin pa'i phyir mam par rtog pa med pa'i mngon sum gyis ma nges pas 'jug pa'i yul du mi byed/ ldots 'di ltar mam par rtog pa dang bcas pa'i mngon sum gyis yul dang dus dang mam pa so sor nges pa gtan la phebs pa hin la/ mam par rtog pa med par yang de'i rjes su byed pa de'i stobs kyis skyes pa'i gtan la phebs pa'i shes pas mngon sum gyis gzung ba nges par byed pa yin no/ Dharmottara, *Explanation*, D: *Dze*, 83.a.1–b.1.

⁴¹ A possible interpretation would be that Dharmottara is referring to the fact that certain perceptions induce judgments that take over their perceptual functions, while others require further investigation. The problem of the coordination between perception and judgment then remains.

⁴² This view presupposes a modification of several key points of Dharmakīrti's system, the first and foremost being a transformation of his stance on universals. Dharmakīrti's conceptualism is replaced by a moderate realism that admits the reality of properties which exist in dependence on their instances. See: Dreyfus, "Universals in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism." This view has been adopted by the dGe-lugs-pa tradition despite the opposition of Sa-skyā scholars such as gSer-mdog Pañ-chen Śākya mChog ldan (1428–1509 Ad.) and Go-ram-pa bsod-nams seng-ge (1429–1489 Ad.). For a study of this debate, see: Dreyfus, *Recognizing Reality*.

⁴³ *Tshad ma rigs gter*, in the Complete Works of the Great Masters of the Sa sKya Sect (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 1968), V. 155.1.1–167.1.6., (*Tha*, 1.a–99.a).

⁴⁴ *Ārya (phags pa)*, i.e., the persons who have obtained direct realization into the four noble truths.

⁴⁵ so so skye bo'i tshad ma ni/ nges pa nyid las 'jug ldog byed/ 'phags pa rtog pa bral ba mams/ ting nge 'dzin las byed par gsungs/ Sa-pan, *Rigs gter*, 17.a.4–5.

⁴⁶ As I argue elsewhere, the negative nature of conceptions should not be understood psychologically. That is, it is not a subjective process of elimination revealed by

an introspective analysis in which we examine whether we actually eliminate a super-imposition when we conceive of an object. Rather, the negative nature of conceptions is epistemological. It is revealed to an analysis concerned with the justification of the cognitive status of conceptions. What is relevant in this respect is not the subjective process, but the way in which we learn concepts. The introspective analysis is flawed because it does not realize that we use mostly concepts we are already acquainted with. These concepts have already been determined negatively and are used through habituation. See: Dreyfus, *Recognizing Reality* (forthcoming).

⁴⁷ dbang shes lkugs pa mig can 'dra/ rtog pa long ba smra mkhas 'dra/ rang rig dbang po tshang ba yis/ gnyis po de'i brda sprod byed/ Sa-pan, *Treasure*, 6.a.5.

⁴⁸ The term was coined by Leibniz to distinguish the reflective knowledge that we have of our mental states from perception, which is the representation of outer things. See: S. Kömer, *Kant* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 61. It is important to keep in mind, however, that here apperception does not necessarily imply a separate cognition. For Dharmakīrti, apperception is not introspective or reflective, for it does not take inner mental states as its objects. It is the self-cognizing or self-presenting factor of every mental episode which brings us a non-thematic awareness of our mental states.

⁴⁹ There is a striking similarity here with Sartre's description of reflexivity as a unifying element to argue for a non-egological (i.e., selfless) model of consciousness. Sartre attempts to correct what he perceives as one of the greatest limitations in Husserl, his insistence on a transcendental ego. For Sartre, the unity of mental life is the result of consciousness's awareness of itself. Mind is aware of other objects, and in the process reveals its presence. This self-awareness is not, however, thematic. That is, we are not aware, except in cases in which we reflect on ourselves, of being aware of things. Nevertheless, we are cognizant of our mental states. This is what Sartre describes as non-positional self-consciousness, i.e., a mental state that does not set itself up as object, but rather becomes aware of itself through being aware of an object. J. P. Sartre, *La Transcendance de l'Ego* (Paris: Vrin, 1927, 1985).

⁵⁰ rGyal-tshab describes self-cognition as the basis of denomination of the person as subject. It is due to this reflexive factor of the mind that we apprehend things thinking "I cognize this and that." *bsTan bcos tshad ma rnam ngs kyi 'ika chen dgongs pa rab gsal*, Collected Works (Delhi: Guru Deva), VIII.172.1-2.

⁵¹ Although Dharmakīrti does not explicitly express this view, he suggests it, particularly in PV III: 489–503 when he discusses of the role of self-cognition in bringing about the impression of length in phonemes by keeping track of the individual moments of hearing.

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