

The Concept of *vyavaśthā* in Dharmottara's and Prajñākaragupta's Explanation of *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*

by
Mai Miyo

Introduction

My paper will examine the concept of *vyavaśthā* (“to differentiate, establish, fix”) in the context of the theory of the non-distinction between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*. This theory is characteristic of the Buddhist logico-epistemological school and criticized mainly by Brahmanical philosophers. Dharmakīrti expounds the relevant notions in the chapters on perception (*pratyakṣa*) of his *Pramāṇavārttika* (PV III), *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (PVin I) and *Nyāyabindu* (NB I), more specifically, at PV III 301–319, at PVin I 34–37 with prose,¹ and NB I 18–21. My focus, however, are the divergent interpretations of *vyavaśthā* given by Dharmottara and Prajñākaragupta. Firstly, by way of an introduction I shall briefly present Dharmakīrti's theory of the non-distinction between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*, how the concept of *vyavaśthā* is introduced in this context, and how it was interpreted by his followers. Secondly, I will investigate the interpretations of Dharmottara and Prajñākaragupta, which differ from each other in quite obvious ways; this confirms the conclusions of other scholars that these thinkers are adversaries on many topics.² The central point of their controversy in the present context is whether or not the function of *vyavaśthā* involves ascertainment (*niścaya*) or conceptual construction (*vikalpa*). Dharmottara affirms this, while Prajñākaragupta denies it.

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¹ For an edition of the Sanskrit text of PV III and a critically annotated Japanese translation, see Tosaki 1979: 394–413. For German and Japanese translations of PVin I based on the Tibetan translations, see Vetter 1966: 79–87 and Tosaki 1991, respectively. An edition of the Sanskrit text of the first two chapters of PVin was made by Ernst Steinkellner (see PVin I, II).

² See, above all, Ono 1995.

1. Dharmakīrti's theory of the non-distinction between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*

1.1 The meaning of the terms *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*

As is well known, the term *pramāṇa* has two main meanings in epistemological discourse.³ The first meaning is “means of valid cognition,” according to the *nirvacana*-analysis⁴ of the term as deriving from the verb *pra√mā* (“to cognize”), and formed with the suffix *-ana* in the meaning of an instrument (*karāṇa*). The second meaning is “valid cognition,” that is, not the means of valid cognition, but the cognition itself. In this respect *pramāṇa* is used synonymously with *samyagjñāna*.⁵ We can detect this second meaning in the so-called first definition of *pramāṇa* in the first verse of the *pramāṇasiddhi* chapter of PV (PV II), according to which *pramāṇa* is non-belying cognition (*avisamvādi jñānam*).⁶ The same meaning is also at work in the definitions of perception and the two kinds of inference (i.e., *svārthānumāna* and *parārthānumāna*), which are the subcategories of *pramāṇa*.⁷ Dignāga attempts to resolve the confusion arising from this dual meaning by arguing that the valid cognition is metaphorically designated, by way of *upacāra*, as the means of valid cognition.⁸ Dharmakīrti seems to use the term *pramāṇa* in a broader sense which encompasses both meanings. Regardless, we can ascertain that in the cases where the two terms *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala* are used as a pair *pramāṇa* means “means of valid cognition,” and *pramāṇaphala* means “valid cognition.”

The word *pramāṇaphala* is normally analyzed as a genitive *tatpuruṣa*, i.e. as *pramāṇasya phalam*. Given that *pramāṇa* here refers specifically to a means of valid cognition,

³ Yoshida 2011 also treats this subject.

⁴ I use the term *nirvacana*-analysis according to Kahrs 1998. *Nirvacana* is the analysis of a word in accordance with its meaning, and one of the fundamental features of it is that all nouns are regarded as related to an activity expressed in language by a verbal form. Although “*nirvacana*” is often rendered as “etymological analysis,” it is indeed not simply etymological in the sense that it does not reflect the findings of historical linguistics which probably is how we understand “etymology” today. See Kahrs 1998: 23, 27, and 35.

⁵ Cf. PVin I 1,8–10, including PVin I 1a (printed in bold): *tad dvididham samyagjñānam **pratyakṣam anumānam ceti***. It is worth noting that Dharmakīrti explicitly uses the word *samyagjñāna* in the NB, whereas in the PV and PVin he mainly uses *pramāṇa* to convey the same meaning. It is possible that he tried to avoid confusing the novice, intended reader of the NB with regard to the two meanings of the word.

⁶ “non-belying cognition” and “illumination of a [previously] unapprehended object” (*ajñātārthaprakāśa*) in PV II 5 are often assumed to be two definitions of *pramāṇa* especially according to Devendrabuddhi’s commentary, but Dharmakīrti himself does not declare them to be formal definitions. In addition, commentators have different opinions on how these two definitions relate to each other. For this topic, see Franco 1997: 45–66, Krasser 2001, and Ono 2012: 166–178.

⁷ See PVin I 7,3–4: *timirāsūbhramaṇanaūyānasāṅkṣobhādyānāhitavibhramam avikalpakam jñānam pratyakṣam*. PVin II 46,3: *trilakṣaṇāl līṅgād yad anumeye ’rthe jñānam, tat svārtham anumānam*. PVin III 1,2–4: *yathaiḥ svayaṃ trirūpāl līṅgāl līṅgini jñānam utpannam, tathā paratra līṅgijñānotpādayiṣayā trirūpalīṅgākhyānam parārtham anumānam, kāraṇe kāryopacārāt*.

⁸ See PS(V) I 3,22–4,1: *savyāpārapratīṭvāt **pramāṇam phalam eva sat** // (PS I 8cd) na hy atra bāhyakānām iva pramāṇād arthāntaram phalam. tasyaiḥ tu **phalabhūta**sya jñānasya viṣayākāratayotpatyā **savyāpārapratīṭiḥ. tām upādāya **pramāṇatvam** upacaryate nirvyāpāram api sat***. For English translations, see Hattori 1968: 28, and (partially) Kellner 2010: 219.

pramāṇaphala literally translates as “the result of a means of valid cognition,”⁹ and by consequence refers to the valid cognition itself, as a resulting cognition. Dharmakīrti does not distinguish the action of cognizing (i.e. the action of knowing) from the resulting cognition (i.e., knowledge); rather, he denies the action of cognizing which has active sense and argues that only a resulting momentary cognition arises. This becomes most evident in PV III 307cd–308, the passage that is central for the concept of *vyavasthā*:

dadhānaṃ tac ca tām ātmany arthādhiḡamanātmanā ||
savyāpāram ivābhāti vyāpāreṇa svakarmani |
tadvaśāt tadvyavasthānād akāarakam api svayam ||

Moreover, the [cognition] which possesses the [property of having the form of the object] (*meyarūpatā*) in itself appears as if it performs an activity toward its object through the activity whose nature is the understanding of the object, because the [understanding of the object] is differentiated (*vyavasthāna*) by the [property of having the form of the object] even if [the cognition] does not act by itself.

In PV III 307–309, Dharmakīrti mainly expounds Dignāga’s point in PS I 8cd and the prose thereon, using the same metaphor, but he also adds the new idea of *vyavasthā* to characterize the relationship between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*.

1.2 Specific referents of *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*

What are the specific referents of *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*? The theory of the means and the result of valid cognition is not only applicable to perception, but also in the case of inferential cognition (*anumāna*),¹⁰ but we shall limit the discussion to perception here. Moreover, we may also confine ourselves to how Dharmakīrti explains means and result on the assumption of an external object (*bāhyārtha*). According to Dharmakīrti, we do not perceive external objects directly. Rather, the object projects its own form onto the cognition and we perceive the form or image of the cognition.¹¹ Dharmakīrti changes his position from this type of representationalism (Sautrāntika) to idealism (Yogācāra) in the latter part of the *pratyakṣa* chapters of the PV and PVin, according to a “sliding/ascending scale of analysis,”¹² where self-awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) plays a key role. The resulting complications are, however, outside the scope of this paper.¹³ In Dharmakīrti’s representa-

⁹ For example, Katsura 2007: 409 and Moriyama 2010: 263 use this translation.

¹⁰ See NB II 4: *pramāṇaphalavyavasthātrāpi pratyakṣavat ||* (“The distinction between a means of valid cognition and [its] result is here too [i.e., in the case of inference for oneself] the same as in the case of perception.”) PVin II 46,4: *pratyakṣavad asya phalavikalpo vijñeyah* (“The differentiation of the result of this [i.e., inference for oneself] should be known just like in the case of perception.”) The latter passage is also translated in Steinkellner 1979: 26.

¹¹ PV III 247: *bhinnakālam katham grāhyam iti ced grāhyatām viduḥ | hetuvam eva yuktijñā jñānā-kārpanakṣamam ||* (“[Objection:] How could [an object] which exists at a different time [from its cognition] be grasped [by that cognition]? [Answer:] People who know reasoning understand that to be grasped is to be a cause which is able to project [its own] form onto the cognition.”) Also translated in Tosaki 1979: 346.

¹² For this issue, see Dreyfus 1997: 83, Kellner 2011, and others.

¹³ We may leave the details to Murakami 2008, Kobayashi 2009, Kataoka 2011, Kellner 2011, and others.

tionalist theory, *pramāṇa* refers to the cognition's property of having the form of the object (*jñānasya meyarūpatā*),¹⁴ or its similarity to the object (*arthasārūpya*),¹⁵ and *pramāṇaphala* refers to the cognition's function of understanding the object (*prameyādhigati*¹⁶ or *arthapratīti*).¹⁷

1.3 The relationship between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*

Both *meyarūpatā* and *prameyādhigati* belong to one and the same perceptual cognition. Accordingly, they are distinguished only as properties (*dharma*) or aspects of the cognition, and not as real entities (*vastu*).¹⁸ This is the main point of Dharmakīrti's theory of the non-distinction between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*.

There are many ways in which the relationship between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala* is characterized in Dharmakīrti's works. Most prominently, they are referred to as *sādhana* and *sādhya*, what establishes and what is established, and as *karaṇa* and *kriyā*, instrument and function. Moreover, Dharmakīrti does not limit himself to the general understanding of *pramāṇa* given by Dignāga, which does not go beyond the commonly used grammatical derivation.¹⁹ Instead, Dharmakīrti maintains that *pramāṇa* is something which "differentiates" (*√bhid*, *vi√bhaj*, *vyavaśthā*) *pramāṇaphala*. This means that a cognition of an object like blue or yellow is differentiated by the cognition's own property of having the form of the object, e.g., blue or yellow.

The differentiating function of *pramāṇa* is stressed in various places in PV and PVin: "[only the factor] which is uninterrupted (*antyaṃ*) toward and differentiating (*bhedakam*) for the [function (*kriyā*)] is regarded as the most effective establishing factor (*sādhakatama*, i.e., *pramāṇa*),"²⁰ "[In a cognition,] there should be its own nature by which [the cognition]

¹⁴ See PV III 306ab (= PV I 35ab): *tasmāt prameyādhigateḥ sādhanam meyarūpatā* // ("Therefore, what establishes the understanding of the object of valid cognition is [the cognition's] property of having the form of the object.")

¹⁵ See NB I 20: *arthasārūpyam asya pramāṇam* // ("The means of valid cognition is the [cognition's] similarity to the object.") PVin I 31,10–11: *na ceyam arthaghaṭanārthasārūpyād anyato jñānasya sambhavati* ("And this connection of the cognition to the object cannot be performed by anything other than its similarity to the object.") Dharmakīrti demonstrates why *meyarūpatā* is *pramāṇa* more elaborately in this part of the PVin than in the PV. See Miyo 2008.

¹⁶ See n. 14.

¹⁷ See NB I 18–19: *tad eva ca pratyakṣam jñānam pramāṇaphalam* // *arthapratītirūpatvāt* // ("And this perceptual cognition itself is the result of the means of valid cognition because it has the property of understanding the object.")

¹⁸ See PV III 318: *kriyākaraṇayor aikyavirodha iti ced asat / dharmabhedābhyupagamād vastv abhinnaṃ itīṣyate* // ("[Objection:] It is contradictory that action and instrument are one. [Reply:] [That is] not true because a distinction of properties is admitted. We assent that the real entity is not distinguished.")

¹⁹ See PS(V) I 4,11–12: ... *arthābhāsataivāsya pramāṇam. yasmāt so 'rthaḥ tena miyate* (9d') ("... the means of valid cognition is exactly its [i.e., the cognition's] having the appearance of the object, for the object is cognized by means of it [i.e., cognition's having the appearance of the object].") The same kind of interpretation is found in Vātsyāyana's *Nyāyabhāṣya* 91,2–3 on NS 1.1.3: *upalabdhisāadhanāni pramāṇāni samākhyānirvacanasāmarthyād boddhavyam. pramīyate 'neneti karaṇārthābhīdhāno hi pramāṇaśabdaḥ* ("It should be known that, by a *nirvacana*-explanation of the term, *pramāṇas* are what establishes cognition, because the word *pramāṇa* expresses the meaning of instrument by means of which [the object] is cognized.")

²⁰ PV III 311cd: *yad antyaṃ bhedakam tasyās tat sādhakatamaṃ matam* //

is differentiated (*vibhajyate*) according to the object,²¹ or “the understanding of the object (*arthādhigama* as *pramāṇaphala*) is differentiated (*vyavasthāna*) by the property of having the form of the object (*meyarūpatā* as *pramāṇa*).”²²

1.4 *Vyavaśthā* in the relationship between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*

Commentators on Dharmakīrti’s works use words derived from *vyavaśthā* to interpret his definition of *pramāṇa*, referring to *pramāṇa* as differentiator (*vyavasthāpaka*) and *pramāṇaphala* as that which is differentiated (*vyavasthāpya*).²³ The relationship between differentiator and differentiated (*vyavasthāpyavyavasthāpakabhāva*) is contrasted with the causal relationship between producer and product (*janyajanakabhāva*) as which certain opponents analyze the relationship between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*. For example, the contact between the senses and the object (*indriyārthasannikarṣa*) and the cognition of the object (*arthavijñāna*) have such a causal relationship, and Naiyāyikas assume them to be related as *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*. Dharmakīrti’s successors attempt to justify the theory of non-distinction by keeping these two relationships clearly separate. If one supposes *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala* to be related as producer and product, then the two factors must be distinct from each other, because producer and product are two different entities occupying different moments in time; they are non-contemporaneous. But if it is accepted that *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala* are related as *vyavasthāpaka* and *vyavasthāpya*, so that the means differentiates the result and, at the same time, is the result’s own nature, then both belong to one and the same cognition, and they cannot be distinguished as real entities. Of course, they are then also simultaneous.

Dharmottara is thought to be the most authoritative commentator on these two relationships by modern scholars, but their distinction is also found in other commentaries, such as Manoranthanandin’s *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti*.²⁴ Moreover, Dharmottara’s remarks in the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* (NBT) are actually not as simple as one might expect. As Oki 1993 pointed out, his explanation includes not only the two aspects of perceptual cognition, but also, as a third factor, an ascertaining cognition (*niścayapratyaya*) that arises immediately after the perceptual cognition. Moreover, as we shall see, Prajñākaragupta criticizes Dharmottara’s view in his *Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra* (PVA). It is to this controversy that we now turn.

²¹ PV III 302cd: *bhāvyaṃ tenātmanā yena pratikarma vibhajyate* //

²² PV III 308c: *tadvaśāt tadvyavasthānād ...* //

²³ For example, Tosaki 1979: 397 abstracts this understanding from the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā*.

²⁴ See PVV 213,15–16 on PV III 315: *nāsty atra kāryakāraṇatātmakaḥ* (PVV_{MS}; *kāryakāraṇatmakah* PVV) *kriyākāraṇabhāvaḥ, kiṃ tu vyavasthāpyavyavasthāpakabhāvaḥ* (“In this case, the relationship between instrument and action does not have the nature of the relationship between producer and product, but is the relationship between differentiator and what is differentiated.”) Devendrabuddhi also refers to the relationship between *janaka* and *janya*, but does not use the words *vyavasthāpaka* and *vyavasthāpya*. See PVP D 216a3–4/P 253a8–253b2 on PV III 301: *’o na ci yin zhe na / gang las ’bras yin / gang yin pa’i las de bya ba de ni de’i sgrub byed / de sgrub par byed pa las chod pa med par tha snyad la bren pa’i sgo nas rab tu ’grub pa thob par ’gyur gyi / bskyed par bya ba skyed par byed pa’i dngos po* (D; *pos P*) *ni ma yin te / de’i bya ba ni de nyid yin no* //

2. Dharmottara's explanation of *vyavasthā* as involving an ascertaining cognition

2.1 Two kinds of relationships and *vyavasthāpaka* as *vyavasthāpanahetu*

After commenting on the individual words of NB I 21,²⁵ Dharmottara justifies the non-distinction between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala* in the way we have outlined above. The text reads as follows:

na cātra janyajanakabhāvanibandhanaḥ sādhyasādhanabhāvaḥ, yenaikasmin vastuni virodhaḥ syāt, api tu vyavasthāpyavyavasthāpakabhāvena,²⁶ tata ekasya vastunaḥ kiñcid rūpaṃ pramāṇaṃ kiñcit pramāṇaphalaṃ na virudhyate. vyavasthāpanahetur hi sārūpyaṃ tasya jñānasya, vyavasthāpyaṃ ca nīlasaṃvedanarūpaṃ.

In the case of [*pramāṇā* and *pramāṇaphala*], the relationship between what establishes (i.e., *pramāṇa*) and what is established (i.e., *pramāṇaphala*) is not based on the relationship between producer and product. If it were, [then the relationship would result in a] contradiction in one and the same real entity (i.e., a momentary cognition). Rather, it is [given] in terms of the relationship between differentiator and differentiated. Therefore, it is not contradictory that a certain property of one real entity [i.e., cognition] is the means of valid cognition and a certain other [property of the same cognition] is the result of the means of valid cognition. For, the cause for differentiation (*vyavasthāpanahetu*) is the similarity (*sārūpya*) of cognition [to the blue object], and what is differentiated is the property of the awareness of blue (*nīlasaṃvedanarūpa*).

Dharmottara attempts to counter the objection that there would be a contradiction if *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala* belonged to the same cognition. In addition to introducing the contrast between the two kinds of relationships, he characterizes cognition's similarity to the object (*sārūpya*) as cause for the differentiation of the property of the awareness of the object (*nīlasaṃvedanarūpa*). The point I wish to emphasize is that the word *vyavasthāpaka* is here explained as *vyavasthāpanahetu*. This word *vyavasthāpaka* is problematic, and in fact, Malvania changes this reading, which appears in all the manuscripts, to *vyavasthāpana*, apparently following Durvekamiśra's suggestion in the *Dharmottarapradīpa* (DhPr) subcommentary. However, the reading *vyavasthāpaka* that all manuscripts used by Malvania contain should be kept, because Durvekamiśra himself confesses that the reading *vyavasthāpana* contradicts what will be stated, by which he probably refers to *vyavasthāpyavyavasthāpakabhāva* in NBT 83,2. Moreover, it seems more reasonable that Dharmottara would explain *vyavasthāpaka* as *vyavasthāpanahetu*, whereas it appears less plausible that he would apply the same explanation to *vyavasthāpana*. Durvekamiśra's commentary is nevertheless helpful for understanding the meaning of the word: *vyavasthāpaka*

²⁵ NB I 21: *tadvaśād arthapratīṣiddher iti* // ("For, the understanding of the object is established through the force of that [i.e., cognition's having the form of the object].")

²⁶ -*vyavasthāpaka*- MSS. (reported in NBT); -*vyavasthāpana*- NBT. See below.

is the cause for differentiating, with the *-aka* suffix having the sense of instrument (*karaṇa*), and *vyavasthāpanahetu* is the cause for the function of differentiation.²⁷

2.2 The ascertaining cognition as the third factor

Dharmottara next goes on to explain the relationship between *vyavasthāpaka*, *vyavasthāpanahetu*, and *vyavasthāpya* in more detail.

NBṬ 83,2–84,1: *vyavasthāpyavyavasthāpakabhāvo*²⁸ 'pi katham ekasya jñānasyeti cet. ucyate. *sadrśam*²⁹ *anubhūya tadvijñānaṃ yato nīlasya grāhakam avasthāpyate niścayapratyayena. tasmāt sārūpyam anubhūtaṃ vyavasthāpanahetuḥ. niścayapratyayena ca tajjñānaṃ nīlasaṃvedanam avasthāpyamānaṃ vyavasthāpyam. ... vyavasthāpakaś ca vikalpapratyayaḥ pratyakṣabalotpanno draṣṭavyaḥ.*

[Question:] How does the relationship between differentiator and differentiated, for its part, exist for one and the same cognition?

[Answer:] We say: having experienced (*anubhūya*) a likeness [to the external blue object] (*[nīla]sadrśa*, i.e., the blue form of the cognition), the [perceptual] cognition is ascertained (*avasthāpyate*)³⁰ to be grasping blue by the [subsequent] ascertaining cognition (*niścayapratyaya*) ["I perceive blue"].³¹

²⁷ DhPr 83,14–17: *vyavasthāpyate viśiṣṭenātmanā niyamyate 'neneti vyavasthānimittaṃ vyavasthāpanam abhipretam. vyavasthāpanabhāvenety ayaṃ pāṭho vakṣyamānavirodhī. yadā tu vyavasthāpakabhāveneti pāṭho drśyate, tadā karaṇe kartṛbhāvavivakṣayā tathā draṣṭavyam. sādḥvasiś chinattīti yathā* ("In NBṬ according to Durvekamiśra's reading: *vyavasthāpyavyavasthāpanabhāvena*,] *vyavasthāpana* is intended to be the factor for differentiating, by means of which [the property of the awareness of blue] is differentiated, that is, limited by [its] distinct nature. This reading *vyavasthāpanabhāvena* contradicts what will be stated [by Dharmottara in NBṬ 83,2]. When on the other hand the reading *vyavasthāpakabhāvena* is observed, [the word *vyavasthāpaka*] should be taken in the same way [as the word *vyavasthāpana*] with the intention to express agency (*-aka* suffix) in the sense of instrument (*-ana* suffix); for example, an excellent sword cuts"); DhPr 83,24–25: *vyavasthāpanam vyavasthākāraṇam, vyavasthāyāṃ prayojakavyāpāra itī yāvāt, tasya hetur nimittam* ("vayvasthāpana [in the phrase, *vyavasthāpanahetu*] is the function of differentiating, to be precise, the activity causing differentiation. Its [i.e., *vyavasthāpana*'s] cause [means] factor.")

²⁸ Oki 1993: 136, n. 23 suggests to change *vyavasthāpaka* to *vyavasthāpana* in accordance with Malvania's earlier emendation. But now that Malvania's emendation has been rejected, this change is also unnecessary. It is true that Oki's modification solves the problem of two meanings in one word in this passage, which seems to be mentioned by Durvekamiśra, but it produces the same problem for the word *vyavasthāpana* in the earlier passage.

²⁹ *sadrśam* MSS. (reported in NBṬ); *nīlasadrśam* NBṬ. Malvania adds *nīla* according to DhPr, but this seems to be an addition by Durvekamiśra. I have not incorporated it into Dharmottara's text, in accordance with all the manuscripts reported in NBṬ and the Tibetan translation.

³⁰ *ava√sthā*, in causative, is a function of the ascertaining cognition and explained using the verbs *ni√yam* (DhPr 84,15) and *ni√ci* (DhPr 84,17), so I translate it as "to ascertain." Nevertheless, I am not sure about the difference between the meanings of *ava√sthā* and *vyava√sthā* – both in causative – here. They seem to be almost the same, so the meaning "differentiate" for *avasthāpayati* is also possible.

³¹ See DhPr 84,10: *niścayapratyayeneti. niścayātmakajñānenottarakālabhāvinā* ("[Answer:] By the ascertaining cognition. [This means] by the cognition whose nature it is to ascertain, and which arises at a subsequent time.")

Therefore, the similarity which has been experienced is the cause for differentiation, and the [perceptual cognition] is what is differentiated, being ascertained, by the ascertaining cognition, to be the awareness of blue. ... Moreover, it is to be observed that the conceptual cognition (*vikalpapratyaya*, i.e., the ascertaining cognition), which arises due to the [preceding] perception, is the differentiator (*vyavasthāpaka*, i.e., the agent of differentiation).³²

In this section Dharmottara uses the term *vyavasthāpaka* in two different senses. In the question, it is used in the same sense as before, i.e. as the cause for differentiating (*vyavasthāpanahetu*), and it indicates *pramāṇa* understood as similarity. On the other hand, in the answer, the term *vyavasthāpaka* is used in the sense of “agent of differentiation,”³³ referring to the ascertaining cognition which arises immediately after the perception.

The argument, now, runs as follows. First of all, Dharmottara presupposes that the cognitive process consists of two stages in different moments: In a first moment the perceptual cognition (*pratyakṣam jñānam, anubhava*) experiences a likeness to the external blue object (*nīlasadrśa*, i.e., the blue form of the cognition), and in a second moment there arises the ascertaining cognition, “I perceive this very blue” (*nīlam evānubhavāmi*).³⁴ The preceding perceptual cognition’s similarity to the blue object here is the cause for differentiating (*vyavasthāpanahetu, vyavasthāpaka 1*) because the succeeding ascertaining cognition carries out the function of ascertaining (*avasthāpayati*) due to the fact that the preceding cognition experiences (*anubhū*) the blue form in cognition. The preceding perceptual cognition – the awareness of blue (*nīlasamvedana*) – is what is ascertained (*vyavasthāpya*) because it is ascertained to be grasping blue by the succeeding cognition. The succeeding ascertaining cognition, for its part, is the agent of differentiation (*vyavasthāpaka 2*). This ascertaining cognition is also characterized as a conceptual cognition (*vikalpapratyaya*) because it accomplishes its function of ascertaining by the exclusion of others (*anyavyāvṛtti*).³⁵

3. Prajñākaragupta’s refutation of Dharmottara’s interpretation

Prajñākaragupta explicitly denies the intervention by the ascertaining cognition that Dharmottara assumes. A dialogue at the end of the PVA on PV III 311³⁶ clearly illustrates

³² This *vyavasthāpaka* does not mean the cause for differentiating, but the agent of differentiation. See below.

³³ See DhPr 84,25: *vyavasthāpayatīti vyavasthāpakaḥ* (“It differentiates [the perceptual cognition], so [it is] the differentiator.”)

³⁴ See DhPr 83,29–30: *na tu nīlasadrśam anubhavāmīti niścayo ’sti, api tu nīlam evānubhavāmīti nīlasya grāhakam avasthāpyate*.

³⁵ See NBT 83,5–6: *tasmād asārūpyavyāvṛtīyā sārūpyam jñānasya vyavasthāpanahetuḥ. anīlabodhavyāvṛtīyā ca nīlabodharūpatvaṃ vyavasthāpyam* (“Therefore, the [perceptual] cognition’s similarity [to the object] is the cause for differentiating by the exclusion of something which is not the similarity, and the [cognition’s] property of awareness of blue is what is ascertained by the exclusion of that which is not the awareness of blue.”)

³⁶ This numbering of the verse follows Tosaki 1979. Sāṅkṛtyāyana’s numbering in PVA is mistaken.

this point.³⁷ The opponent, whom the subcommentator Yamāri identifies as Dharmottara,³⁸ first says:

PVA 345,9f. on PV III 311: *tadākāratāyām api niścayaḥ paraḥ pratiniyata-vyavasthāyām apekṣyata iti cet.*

[Objection:] Even if [a cognition] has the form (*ākāra*) of that [object], ascertaining (*niścaya*),³⁹ which is different [from the cognition's property of having the form], is required for the differentiation [of the cognition/object] as being limited in each case (*pratiniyatavyavasthā*).⁴⁰

According to the opponent's view, ascertaining (*niścaya*) intervenes between the cognition's property of having the form of the object (i.e., *pramāṇa*) and cognition's differentiation according to the object (i.e., *pramāṇaphala*). We can see how this opponent's view corresponds to that of Dharmottara as discussed above.

Prajñākaragupta refutes this position as follows:

PVA 345,10–12: *na, pratyakṣaprāmāṇyaprastāvāt. abhyāsasambhave hi pratyakṣam pramāṇam. tadākāramātrād eva ca tadā pravartanam⁴¹ niścayam antareṇāpi. yadā tu niścayāpekṣā, tadānumānam pramāṇam. tasyāpy ākāramātrād eva pravrtteḥ nāparāpekṣā. tasmād ākārān nāparam karaṇam.*

No. For, the relevant subject is perception's being a valid cognition. To explain: perception is the *pramāṇa* when there is habituation (*abhyāsa*). And then, [perception] prompts [the cognizing person] to act (*pravartana*), only due to its form (*ākāra*), even without ascertaining (*niścaya*). On the other hand, inference (*anumāna*) is the *pramāṇa* when [the person] depends on ascertaining [in order to act]. [However, he/she] also acts only due to the form of that [inference], so the [inference] does not depend on anything other [than its form for prompting him/her to act]. Accordingly, there is no other instrument (*karaṇa*, i.e., *pramāṇa*) apart from the [object's] form [in direct perception or inference].

Prajñākaragupta introduces a new topic here regarding *pramāṇa* in the broader sense, i.e., valid cognition and human action, thus broadening the scope of the discussion. As Dharmakīrti claims in PV II 3cd, valid cognition is the main cause (*pradhāna*) for human

³⁷ See Miyo 2013 for a critical edition of the whole Sanskrit text of PVA on PV III 311, a Japanese translation, and additional information.

³⁸ Y (D 251a3, P 337b1–2): *da ni slob dpon chos mchog gi lugs sun phyung ba'i don du nye bar 'god pa ni / de'i rnam pa yang zhes bya ba'o //* (“In order to criticize the teacher Dharmottara's theory, [Prajñākaragupta] states here that even if [the cognition] has the form of the [object,] and so on.”)

³⁹ It is also possible to interpret *niścaya* here as “ascertaining cognition,” as in the NBT.

⁴⁰ The interpretation of this compound involves some difficulties. We have a synonym for it, *pratiniyatārthavyavasthā*, cited in n. 46. I tentatively interpret it according to PVA 346,23–24: *yadi sa tathābhūta ākāro na syāt, na kaścit pratiniyatam artham vyavasthāpayet* (“If such a form did not exist, nothing would differentiate the object as being limited in each case.”)

⁴¹ *pravartanam* PVA_{MS} [‘jug pa yin no T (D 15a4, P 18a7)]; *pravartana*- PVA.

action (*pravṛtti*) toward an object that is to be obtained or avoided.⁴² If one interprets this statement strictly speaking, perception as valid cognition, or more precisely, its object-form, should directly prompt the cognizing person to act without ascertaining. But if perception could cause the action only through ascertaining, then the ascertaining cognition would be the *pramāṇa*.⁴³ It is important to note that Prajñākaragupta here adopts the concept of “habituation” (*abhyāsa*) as a powerful device that guarantees perception’s ability to cause action.⁴⁴ He clearly separates perception and inference in accordance with the presence or absence of habituation, so the range of perception as a *pramāṇa* is limited to those particular cases that directly cause human action based on habituation.⁴⁵ Consequently, perception causes human action only through its object-form without ascertaining. On the other hand, inference is the *pramāṇa* if the person acts depending on ascertainment, but inference does not depend on subsequent ascertaining; rather, inference itself is the ascertaining cognition. Therefore, the object-form is the means of valid cognition in both cases, perception and inference, and the ascertaining cognition which is different from them does not have any influence on them.

A detailed discussion of Prajñākaragupta’s views on the relationship between *pramāṇa* and *pramāṇaphala*, as well as an examination of his unique terminology for explaining the aspects of cognition that are involved,⁴⁶ must be left to another occasion. But for the present context we may note that according to Prajñākaragupta, a cognition’s aspect of understanding (i.e., *pramāṇaphala*) is completely identical with its aspect of having the object’s form (i.e., *pramāṇa*), so there is no room for a third factor that might intervene to differentiate the understanding;⁴⁷ rather, it must be differentiated by another aspect of the very same perception.

⁴² See PV II 3b’-d: *dhīpramāṇatā / pravṛttes tatpradhānavād dheyopādeyavastuni //* (“Cognition is the *pramāṇa* because it is the main cause for [human] action toward an object that is to be obtained or avoided.”) The verse is also translated in Dunne 2004: 262. As Katsura 1989: 541 points out, it is a distinctive feature of Dharmakīrti’s thought, in contrast to Dignāga’s, to formulate *pramāṇa* theory as concerning the whole of the cognitive process including the action toward the object.

⁴³ However, Dharmakīrti accepts that some other factors intervene between perception and the action that it prompts. Dharmottara justifies this intervention by paraphrasing “what prompts to act” (*pravartaka*) as “what indicates the object of the action” (*pravṛtṭiṣayapradarśaka*) and Durvekamiśra interprets it introducing the concept of “capable of action” (*pravṛtṭiyogya*). Therefore, we can say Prajñākaragupta makes a radical interpretation here. On this subject, see Miyo 2014.

⁴⁴ The concept of *atyantābhyāsa* is already used by Śākyabuddhi in the same context, as seen, among others, in Inami 1993: 96 and Krasser 2003. This issue may relate to the topic of yogic perception (*yogipratyakṣa*).

⁴⁵ For other instances demonstrating the same idea, see PVA_O 55,15–56,1 on PV II 3b’cd: *na ca cakṣurā-dikāt pravartate jñānam antareṇa, vikalpam antareṇāpi tv abhyāsāt pravartate. tato heyopādeyaviśaye dhīr eva pūrvikā pravartanāt pramāṇam, na vikalpādayaḥ. yatra tu nābhyāsaḥ, tatrānumānam eva pratyabhijñānādayaḥ*, dealt with in Ono 1993: 110–111; PVA 218,6–8 on PV III 56: *yatra bhāvīgatis tatrānumānam mānam iṣyate / vartamāne ’timātrena vṛttāv adhyakṣamānatā //240// yatrātyantābhyāsād avikalpayato ’pi pravartanam, tatra pratyakṣam pramāṇam. anyathā vikalpasya pramāṇāntaratā prāptā. yadi yatra vikalpas tatraiva pratyakṣam pravartakam pramāṇam ceti.*

⁴⁶ Some examples for his unique terminology are: *pratiniyatākāratā* (PVA 344,31), *tadākāraviśeṣa* (PVA 345,3), and *ākāraniyama* (PVA 345,7) for *pramāṇa*; and *arthaparicchedavyavasthā* (PVA 345,1), *niyatārthavyavasthā* (PVA 345,2), *arthavyavasthiti* (PVA 345,6), and *pratiniyatārthavyavasthā* (PVA 345,4–5) for *pramāṇaphala*.

⁴⁷ PVA 345,6: *ākāraniyamaḥ siddho yadi sārthavyavasthitiḥ (em.; -vyasthitiḥ PVA) / akāraṇam paraḥ (PVA_{MS}; śaraḥ PVA) siddhe prāptaḥ kim iti poṣyate // (618)* (“If the limitation of the form has been

4. Conclusion

As we have shown, for Dharmottara the ascertaining cognition (*niścayapratyaya*), which arises immediately after a perceptual cognition, plays an important role even in his discussion of perception. This ascertaining cognition works as the agent of differentiation (*vyavasthāpaka*), and the perception's similarity to the object is merely the cause for differentiating (*vyavasthāpanahetu*). Prajñākaragupta, on the other hand, denies this kind of intervention by an ascertaining cognition. He excludes it from the discourse on perception by taking recourse to the idea of habituation (*ābhyāsa*). According to Prajñākaragupta, a cognition's aspect of understanding the object (i.e., *pramāṇaphala*) is completely identical with its aspect of having the object's form (i.e., *pramāṇa*), so one aspect of cognition is simply differentiated by another aspect of the very same cognition. This difference in the two commentator's interpretations also results in a difference in their usage of derivatives of *vyavasthā*. Dharmottara uses these only in cases where the function of ascertaining, or conceptual construction, is involved. On the other hand, Prajñākaragupta uses them even in cases where conceptual construction is not concerned.

Why do Dharmottara and Prajñākaragupta present us with such divergent opinions on the influence of the conceptual construction on perception? While this topic calls for further in-depth studies, I would like to highlight three points that seem to be of special interest. The first is the position of the form or image in a cognition. Prajñākaragupta emphasizes the unity of the form and cognition, which easily leads to a negation of the intervention by conceptual construction,⁴⁸ while Dharmottara does not.⁴⁹ A second point worthy of note is the kind of cognition they are thinking about when discussing perception as a *pramāṇa*. Dharmottara thinks mainly about mundane cognition, such as perception by the sense faculties, but Prajñākaragupta seems to think more about supramundane cognition, such as yogic perception up to a Buddha's cognition.⁵⁰ This soteriologically relevant cognition should be free from the influence of conceptual construction. As a last and final point, I would like to highlight that already the earlier commentaries on the *Pramāṇavārttika* by Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi show a faint indication of the same controversy.⁵¹

established, that is [exactly] the differentiation of the object. Something other [than the limitation, such as the soundness of the sense faculty,] is not a cause [for differentiation]. Why would a thing which has [already] become established be increased [by something else]?" Prajñākaragupta's identification of cognition's form of the object and understanding of the object affects his interpretation of the *sahopalambhaniyama* inference as well. On this subject, see Iwata 1991.

⁴⁸ See also the passage discussed in n. 47.

⁴⁹ These two different views on cognition's form are the basis of the two sub-schools of Yogācāra, i.e., *sākāravāda* and *nirākāravādālikākāravāda*. See, among others, Iwata 1991: 211–231, Funayama 2007.

⁵⁰ As Ono 2012: 166; 170–173 points out, Dharmottara takes mundane cognition into account in his discussion of the definition of *pramāṇa*, but on the other hand Prajñākaragupta regards the Buddha as the supreme *pramāṇa* (*paraṃ pramāṇam*) whose nature is perception. PVA_O 84,1–2 on PV II 7a: *tathāgato hi bhagavān tadvān kṛtvā pratyakṣarūpa eva bhagavān pramāṇam*, translated in Ono 1993: 84.

⁵¹ Devendrabuddhi probably assumes that perception prompts the cognizing person to act after it brings forth the ascertaining cognition. However, Śākyabuddhi divides human action based on perception into two types, the first instance and habituated instances, and he states that the fully habituated perception with a vivid form ascertains its validity by itself. This could mean that habituated perception prompts

Thus, a satisfactory understanding of the dissimilarity of views held by Dharmottara and Prajñākaragupta will emerge only after comprehensive investigation into its epistemological and historical roots.

References and abbreviations

- DhPr** Dharmottarapradīpa (Durvekamiśra): *Pañḍita Durveka Miśra's Dharmottarapradīpa: Being a sub-commentary of Dharmottara's Nyāyabinduṭīkā, a commentary of Dharmakīrti's Nyāyabindu*, ed. Pañḍita D. Malvania. Patna 1955.
- Dreyfus 1997** G. B. J. Dreyfus, *Recognizing Reality: Dharmakīrti's Philosophy and Its Tibetan Interpretations*. Albany 1997.
- Dunne 2004** J. D. Dunne, *Foundation of Dharmakīrti's Philosophy*. Somerville 2004.
- Franco 1997** E. Franco, *Dharmakīrti on Compassion and Rebirth*. Wien 1997.
- Funayama 2007** T. Funayama, Kamalaśīla's distinction between the two sub-schools of Yogācāra. A provisional survey. In: *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ: Papers Dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. B. Kellner et al. Wien 2007, 187–202.
- Hattori 1968** M. Hattori, *Dignāga, On Perception, being the Pratyakṣapariccheda of Dignāga's Pramāṇasamuccaya from the Sanskrit fragments and the Tibetan versions*. Cambridge, MA 1968.
- Inami 1993** M. Inami, Bukkyō ronri gakuha no shinron: Devendrabuddhi to Śākyabuddhi (Theory of Truth in the Buddhist Epistemological School: Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi). In: *Genshi bukkyō to daijō bukkyō: Watanabe Fumimaro hakushi tsuitō kinen ronshū*. Vol. 2. Kyoto 1993, (85)–(118).
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human action directly because of its vivid form of the object. PVP D 5a5/P 5b7: 'on kyang bzung ba'i rnam pa gang yin pa dag la yang nges pa skyed par byed pa de la / 'jug par byed pa'i phyir tshad ma nyid du 'dod kyi / gghan du ni ma yin no //; PVṬ(Ś) D 72a5–7/P 87a5–87b2: mngon sum ni rnam par rtog pa med pa nyid kyi phyir nges pa ma yin mod kyi 'on kyang der snang bar skyes pa tsam yin no // ... mngon sum gyi rten can gyi 'jug pa ni rnam pa gnyis te dang po nyid dang goms pa can no // de la goms pa dang ldan pa gang yin pa de la shin tu goms pa gsal (D; bsal P) ba can gyi mngon sum skyes pa na ji lta ba bzhin du goms pa'i rnam par 'khrul pa'i rgyu mtshan spangs pa can nyid kyis yongs su bcad nas skye ba dang / de lta bur gyur pa'i phyis 'byung ba'i nges pa skyed par byed pa'i phyir de la skyes bu 'jug par byed do // This passage is translated in Inami 1993: 95–96.

- Kellner 2010** B. Kellner, Self-Awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) in Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and *-vṛtti*: A Close Reading. *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 38 (2010) 203–231.
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- Murakami 2008** A. Murakami, Rang rig pa ni kansuru mKhas grub rje no kaishaku (The Interpretation of *rang rig pa* by mKhas grub rje). *Report of the Japanese Association for Tibetan Studies* 54 (2008) 17–31.
- NB** Nyāyabindu (Dharmakīrti): see DhPr.
- NBṬ** Nyāyabinduṭīkā (Dharmottara): see DhPr.
- NS** Nyāyasūtra (Akṣapāda Gautama): see NBh.
- Nyāyabhāṣya** Nyāyabhāṣya (Vātsyāyana): *Nyāyadarśanam with Vātsyāyana's Bhāṣya, Uddyotakara's Vārttika, Vācaspati Miśra's Tātparyaṭīkā & Viśvanātha's Vṛtti*, ed. Taranatha Nyāya-Tarkatirtha, Amarendramohan Tarkatirtha and Hemata Kumar Tarkatirtha. 2 vols. Calcutta 1936–44.
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- Ono 2012** M. Ono, Shinri ron: puramāna toha nanika (Chapter five: What is *pramāna*). In: *Ninshiki ron to ronri gaku (Epistemology and Logic)*, ed. S. Katsura et al. Tokyo 2012, 155–188.
- PS I** Pramāṇasamuccaya, chapter I (Dignāga): see PS(V) I.
- PS(V) I** Pramāṇasamuccaya and -vṛtti, chapter I (Dignāga), ed. E. Steinkellner. Wien 2005. https://www.oeaw.ac.at/fileadmin/Institute/IKGA/PDF/forschung/buddhismuskund/e/dignaga_PS_1.pdf, last visited 20-07-2019.
- PV** Pramāṇavārttika (Dharmakīrti).
- PV II** Pramāṇavārttika, chapter II (Dharmakīrti): see PVV.
- PV III** Pramāṇavārttika, chapter III (Dharmakīrti): edited in Tosaki 1979.
- PVA** Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra (Prajñākaragupta): *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣyam or Vārttikālaṅkārah of Prajñākaragupta: Being a commentary on Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇavārttikam*, ed. R. Sāṅkrtyāyana. Patna 1953.
- PVA_{MS}** Sanskrit Manuscript (Manuscript B) of Prajñākaragupta's Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra: *The Sanskrit Commentaries on the Pramāṇavārttikam from the Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana's Collection of Negatives*. 3 vols. Vol. I: Sanskrit Manuscripts of Prajñākaragupta's *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣyam*. Patna/Narita 1998.
- PVA_O** Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra (Prajñākaragupta): *Prajñākaraguptas Erklärung der Definition gültiger Erkenntnis (Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra zu Pramāṇavārttika II 1–7)*, Teil I, ed. M. Ono. Wien 2000.
- PVin** Pramāṇaviniścaya (Dharmakīrti).
- PVin I, II** Pramāṇaviniścaya, chapter I, II (Dharmakīrti): *Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇaviniścaya, Chapters 1 and 2*, ed. E. Steinkellner. Beijing/Vienna 2007.
- PVin III** Pramāṇaviniścaya, chapter III (Dharmakīrti): *Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇaviniścaya, chapter 3*, ed. P. Hugon and T. Tomabechi. Beijing/Vienna 2011.
- PVP** Tibetan translation of Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā (Devendrabuddhi): D 4217 (che), P 5717(b) (che).
- PVṬ(Ś)** Tibetan translation of Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā (Śākyabuddhi): D 4220 (nye), P 5718 (nye).
- PVV** Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti (Manorathanandin): *Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇavārttika with a Commentary by Manorathanandin*, ed. R. Sāṅkrtyāyana. Appendix to *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* 24-3. Patna 1938.
- PVV_{MS}** Sanskrit Manuscript of Manorathanandin's Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti: *The Sanskrit Commentaries on the Pramāṇavārttikam from the Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana's Collection of Negatives*. 3 vols. Vol. III: Sanskrit Manuscripts of Manorathanandin's *Pramāṇavārttikavṛttiḥ*. Patna/Narita 1998.
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