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Dharmakīrti, *svataḥ prāmāṇyam*, and Awakening*

The question I would like to consider in this paper is: What was Dharmakīrti's position vis-à-vis the Mīmāṃsā theory of intrinsic validity or *svataḥ prāmāṇyam*, the idea that a cognition arises as a "knowing" of what it presents and persists as one unless and until it is overturned by another cognition? The situation is rather confusing, as I shall show. Some of his statements suggest that he rejected *svataḥ prāmāṇyam*, while at least one important passage seems to indicate that he accepted it as applicable to one crucial epistemic situation: the realization of selflessness. My main interest is whether this is another instance where Dharmakīrti could be seen as borrowing and adapting Mīmāṃsā ideas for his own purposes. We know that Dharmakīrti was deeply influenced by Mīmāṃsā, if mostly in a negative way. Much of his agenda, especially in the *Pramāṇavārttika*, seems to be dictated by the compulsion to refute Mīmāṃsā teachings at every turn: from the eternity and authorlessness of the Veda to the authorlessness of mantras and the principles of Mīmāṃsā exegesis, from the reality of universals to the impossibility of omniscience. But at the same time, scholars have noted passages where Dharmakīrti appears to be relying on Mīmāṃsā theories and arguments. Helmut Krasser drew our attention to two such instances. First, at the beginning of PV 2, v. 10, Dharmakīrti mentions several objections to the Nyāya proof of the existence of God that are developed by Kumāriḥ in his *Ślokavārttika*, two of which, however, he (Dharmakīrti) does not bother to explain himself; thus, it appears that Dharmakīrti is presupposing knowledge of Kumāriḥ's critique.¹ Second, just prior to that, at PV 2.5c, Dharmakīrti introduces an alternative definition of *pramāṇa* as "the revealing of an unknown [object]" that could have been inspired by an earlier statement by Kumāriḥ to the effect that a *pramāṇa* must know something not previously cognized.² In general, Dharmakīrti's intimate knowledge of not just Mīmāṃsā philosophical theories but also the Mīmāṃsā approach to the Veda inclines one to accept the Buddhist tradition that Dharmakīrti was born into a Brahmin family and in his youth studied the Vedas along with the auxiliary Vedic sciences, which of course would include Mīmāṃsā. It should not surprise us, then,

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¹ Krasser 1999.

² Krasser 2001. Franco (1997: 62) anticipates Krasser's argument here.

if Dharmakīrti was acquainted with the doctrine of *svataḥ prāmāṇyam* and even found a way to make use of it.

We can state the possibilities concerning Dharmakīrti's attitude toward *svataḥ prāmāṇyam* in the form of a tetralemma: He accepts it. He rejects it. He neither accepts it nor rejects it. He both accepts it and rejects it. The last alternative, implausible as it sounds, seems at first glance to come closest to the truth of the situation: he rejects it for the most part, with one crucial exception. Yet we shall see that the exception actually does not fall very neatly into the category of "intrinsic validity" after all.

I begin by examining PV 2.4d-5a:

svarūpasya svato gatih // prāmāṇyaṃ vyavahāreṇa

There is comprehension of the nature [of the cognition] from itself; its validity is due to everyday practice.

This statement follows upon the "first definition" of a means of reliable knowledge (*pramāṇa*) as a cognition that is reliable, and the clarification of reliability as the stability (*sthiti*) of the causal efficacy of the object (*arthakriyā*). Dharmakīrti then explains that a verbal cognition (*śabda*) can have validity, insofar as it indicates the intention of the speaker (but not insofar as words directly tell us how things are), while the conceptual awareness that arises immediately upon perceiving an object is not a *pramāṇa* (because it is essentially a memory). Then he states that it is the cognition that should be considered the means of knowledge – not, say, the sense faculty or the connection of sense faculty and object (because the image or form in the cognition is what determines that a cognition is a comprehension of a certain object). After introducing these crucial features of his epistemology Dharmakīrti makes the above statement: "There is comprehension of the nature [of the cognition] from itself; its validity is due to everyday practice." He would appear to be making a contrast here: the validity of a cognition is not known intrinsically, "from itself," but only the occurrence of the cognition itself is known intrinsically; for, as he will elaborate later in the *Pramāṇavārttika*, every cognition cognizes itself; every cognition is an act of self-awareness. The validity of the cognition, on the other hand, at least in the case of an unfamiliar type of cognition, can only be known by acting on it and seeing if it is confirmed. If one experiences the *arthakriyā* of the object, it is valid; if one does not, it is not.³

³ As Manorathanandin clarifies in his commentary ad loc., the type of cognition whose validity is to be established extrinsically by experiencing the *arthakriyā* of its object – or else by inference (based on its similarity to other valid cognitions) – is one whose validity, due to its being a novel kind of cognition, is uncertain. See PVV 4,5-6: *yat tv anabhyastadaśāyāṃ sandigdhaprāmāṇyam utpattau tasyārthakriyājñānād anumānād vā prāmāṇyaṃ niścīyate*. "That [cognition,] however, whose validity is doubtful when it is unfamiliar (literally: 'in a not frequently

This is one way in which Manorathanandin reads the passage: Dharmakīrti is setting aside the view that validity, *prāmāṇya*, is ascertained intrinsically and endorsing the view that it is comprehended through a cognition of *arthakriyā*. Prajñākaragupta also sees Dharmakīrti to be rejecting intrinsic validity, and takes 4d-5a as an opportunity to discuss the Mīmāṃsā theory of intrinsic validity at considerable length.⁴ Devendrabuddhi is more restrained and more nuanced. He accepts an opponent's assertion that, since the cognition itself is known to occur through self-awareness and "its validity is not distinct from being an existing cognition," its validity is in fact also apprehended when one apprehends that the cognition has occurred. However, one achieves a definite ascertainment (**niścaya*) of its validity only when one acts on it (presumably, successfully).⁵

repeated state') – when it arises, its validity is ascertained by a cognition of causal efficacy [of its object] or by inference." On the other hand, a familiar cognition, an inferential cognition, and the cognition of *arthakriyā* itself are all intrinsically valid. Thus, Manorathanandin, following Devendrabuddhi, interprets *arthakriyāsthitiḥ* in PV 2.1b to mean the ascertainment of *pramāṇa-yogyatā*, "the capacity of the *pramāṇa* [to cause one to obtain the object]," which can be achieved even without acting on a cognition and experiencing the causal efficacy of its object, not strictly the ascertainment of *arthakriyā* itself. See Dunne 2004: 285-287 & 296-298. Other Buddhist epistemologists taught a similar distinction of intrinsically valid and non-intrinsically valid cognitions. See, e.g., TS(P) 2958-2961 (*arthakriyājñāna*), 2968 (frequently repeated cognition), and 2944 (*anumāna*). See also Krasser 2003. This distinction, however, clearly goes beyond anything Dharmakīrti himself explicitly says.

⁴ Especially in the debate that introduces 4d-5a, PVA 23,15-24,32; Ono 2000: 58,8-63,10.

⁵ PVP D 5a3-6 / P 5b5-6a1: *rang rig pa las tshad ma zhes bya ba'i shes pa de'i shes pa yod pa nyid grub pa yin gyi* (D gyi : P gyis) *tshad ma nyid ni ma yin no || gal te shes pa yod pa nyid las* (D las : P la) *tha dad pa med pa'i phyir tshad ma nyid kyang bzung ba nyid yin no zhe na | bden te |* (D zhe na bden te | : P zhe na |) *mngon sum de ni char skye ba ma yin pa'i phyir de yang bzung ba nyid ni yin mod kyi '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 gzhan du ni ma yin no || mthong ba las khyad par med na yang rnam pa gang don du gnyer ba dang goms pa dang skabs la sogs pa nges pa'i rgyu yod na de nges pa yin gyi* (D gyi : P gyis) | *gzhan chod pa ni ma yin no || des na shes pa yod pa nyid dmigs pa na tshad ma nyid bzung du zin kyang ma bzung ba dang 'dra ba yin te | nges pa med pa'i phyir ro ||* "Although [the fact of] being an existing cognition is established for the cognition called a *pramāṇa* from self-awareness, [the fact of] being a *pramāṇa* is not. [Objection:] Its being a *pramāṇa* is also certainly apprehended, since it is not different from being an existing cognition. [Reply:] True. While it is indeed the case that that (i.e., being a *pramāṇa*), too, is apprehended, since the perception does not arise piecemeal, nevertheless, it is accepted as a *pramāṇa* because it causes one to act toward whatever apprehended aspect it produces an ascertainment of; otherwise it is not [accepted as a *pramāṇa*]. Although there is no difference in terms of the perception [itself], there is an ascertainment of that aspect for which the causes of ascertainment such as desire for it, habituation, and context are present; another [aspect] that is concealed/obstructed is not [ascertained]. Therefore, when [the fact of] being an existing cognition is apprehended, even though [its] being a *pramāṇa* has been apprehended, it is as if it were not apprehended, because there is no ascertainment [of it]." Thanks to Vincent Eltschinger for help with this passage. Cf. Dunne 2004: 385-386.

Thus, although PV 2.4d-5a can be seen as rejecting intrinsic validity, it is curious that Dharmakīrti does not do so directly, but indirectly – by embracing a type of extrinsic validity. Indeed, he seems rather casual about it. He certainly does not go to the great lengths that Śāntarakṣita, for instance, will later go in refuting the doctrine. Of course, he cannot really do that here because he is just outlining the main principles of his epistemology; but he does not do it elsewhere, either – unless I’ve overlooked something big. Finally, we should note that Manorathanandin offers a second interpretation of the passage,⁶ to the effect (as I read his commentary) that a perceptual cognition apprehends only one moment of its object and does not also apprehend the future moment that will be obtained, so how is it a *pramāṇa*? The validity of inferential cognition, meanwhile, is dependent on the apprehension of the pervasion (*vyāpti*) of reason and consequent, which cannot be achieved by a perception, since it pertains to all times and places. Nor can it be apprehended by inference, since that would lead to a regress. Thus, an inferential cognition is not, strictly, a *pramāṇa*. Finally, the conceptual awareness which arises after a perception is not a *pramāṇa* either; rather, it is thought only to mimic the activity of the *pramāṇa* (that is, the perceptual cognition).⁷ Moreover, it superimposes something additional upon the object so that its *prameya* is without any basis. Thus, strictly speaking, while there is knowledge of the cognition itself, there is no validity at all!⁸ This is how he interprets 4d (*svarūpasya svato gatiḥ //*). 5a (*prāmāṇyaṃ vyavahāreṇa*) “Its validity is due to everyday practice,” he then takes to mean that there is validity only conventionally: the validity that is being discussed is the validity that pertains to everyday practice, which proceeds on the assumption of the sameness of past and future moments of visible form, etc.⁹ On this inter-

⁶ PVV 6,20-7,17.

⁷ PVV 7,3: *pramāṇavyāpārānukārī tv asāv iṣyate*.

⁸ PVV 7,9: *svarūpamātraṃ svato gamyate na prāpyarūpasāpekṣaṃ prāmāṇyaṃ nāma kiṃcid asti*. “Just the thing itself (i.e., the cognition) is comprehended intrinsically. There is nothing called validity, which depends on a form to be obtained.”

⁹ Unfortunately, Manorathanandin’s explanation of how everyday practice allows for validity is not easy to understand. Here is a tentative, literal translation of the relevant passage, PVV 7,11-14: *sāmvyahārikasyedaṃ pramāṇasya lakṣaṇaṃ, samvyavahāraś ca bhāvibhūtarūpādīkṣaṇānām ekatvena samvādaviśayo ’navagītaḥ sarvasya. sādhyasādhanayor ekavyaktidarśane samastataj-jātyatathātvavyavasthānaṃ samvādam avadhārayanti vyavahartāraḥ. tadanurodhāt prāmāṇyaṃ vyavasthāpyate*. “This is the definition of the *pramāṇa* that pertains to everyday practice. And everyday practice, inasmuch as it has, by virtue of their sameness, the agreement of future and past moments of visible form, etc., as its object, is uncontroversial for everyone. Upon observing a single instance of something to be proved and the means of proof, people engaged in everyday practice ascertain agreement to be the determination that all things of that type are that way. In accordance with that, validity is determined.” (Thanks to Cristina Pecchia and Karin Preisendanz for their suggestions.)

pretation, clearly, Dharmakīrti is not setting up a contrast between intrinsic and extrinsic validity at all, but rather a contrast between what is a *pramāṇa*, strictly speaking, and what is a *pramāṇa* for everyday purposes.

In general, then, the association of PV 2.4d-5a with a rejection of intrinsic validity seems not to have been clearcut among Dharmakīrti's commentators.

The next passage I would like to look at, PV(SV) 1.284-291, has until now received little attention. It comes just after Dharmakīrti's proof of momentariness (PV 1.269-283ab), which of course has been treated by several scholars,¹⁰ and before his discussion of the efficacy of mantras (PV[SV] 1.292-311), which has been treated by Eltschinger 2001.¹¹ Having, he believes, just demolished the theory that the Veda is authorless, Dharmakīrti now considers whether its imagined authorlessness would even be a point in favor of its validity. It is precisely at this juncture where one would expect intrinsic validity to come up, and Dharmakīrti does not disappoint us.

*nāpauruṣeyam ity eva yathārthajñānasādhanam /
dṛṣṭo 'nyathāpi vahnyādir aduṣṭaḥ puruṣāgasā // 284 //*

It is not the case that just because it is authorless [the Veda] produces a true cognition; for fire, etc., are also observed to be otherwise, [even though] uncorrupted by human faults.

In his autocommentary on this verse Dharmakīrti explains that even natural agents of illumination like a lamp – Karṇakagomin also mentions moonlight – do not always reveal things as they are, even though obviously they are not compromised by human defects. As Karṇakagomin explains, a lamp can make a blue lotus seem red; moonlight can make a yellow cloth seem white. So, Dharmakīrti continues, words that are authorless could naturally (*prakṛtyā*) be causes of illumination due to a specific nature (*svabhāvaviśeṣāt*), but they could invariably (*niyamenaiva*) reveal things falsely! If one objected that there is no reason for thinking there is such a restriction, hence (presumably) we can assume that words present things as they are, one could reply that there is also no reason to assume that they are restricted to revealing things as they are. One could just as easily postulate that they invariably reveal things as they are not!¹² Or else, Dharmakīrti more reasonably suggests, like a fire and so forth, authorless words could cause both types of cognitions, true ones and false ones, depending on the circumstances. In the case of authorless words, what type of cognition they cause would depend on the conventions according to which we

¹⁰ Most recently by Steinkellner 2013: I/97-118 and II/293-330.

¹¹ See, alternatively, Eltschinger 2008.

¹² PVSV 150,20-22: *avitathavyaktiniyame kiṃ kāraṇam? tasmād yathārthavyaktiniyamavat prakṛtyāyathārthavyaktiniyamah kiṃ na kalpyate?*

understand them as having certain meanings – so the possibility of being compromised by human defects would sneak back in.¹³

Moreover, Dharmakīrti continues with the next verse (PV 1.285), eternal things would not have the capacity to produce any cognition (or anything else, for that matter), be it true or false!¹⁴ Although we do have cognitions of eternal things like space, these are not produced by the things themselves; rather, they are errors that arise from the awakening of impressions left by concepts (PV 1.286). With v. 287-291 Dharmakīrti returns to the suggestion made by the opponent in his discussion of v. 284 that authorless words must be restricted to what is true. He takes up an *anumāna* based on a *kevalavyatirekīhetu*, stated as an objection, that allegedly proves this:

*mīthyātvaṃ kṛtakeṣv eva dṛṣṭam ity akṛtaṃ vacaḥ /
satyārthaṃ vyatirekasya virodhivyāpanād yadi // 287 //*

If [one were to say:] since falsehood is seen only in what is made [by humans], an unproduced statement is true, because the absence [of the *hetu*] pervades the opposite [of the *sādhya*] ...

The *anumāna* being considered here is, “A Vedic statement is true, because it is not produced [by any author].”¹⁵ Now, we are not able to observe that any unproduced statements besides Vedic statements are true, hence we cannot establish an *anvaya*, a positive concomitance, between the *hetu* (“not being produced”) of the inference and the *sādhya* (“being true”). However, we never observe that an unproduced statement is false, either, which the proponent of the argument believes establishes the *vyatireka*, the negative concomitance or discontinuity of the *hetu* and the *vipakṣa* (“not being true” / “being false”). Hence, Dharmakīrti is suggesting that the proponent of this *anumāna* understands it as being based on a *kevalavyatirekīhetu*, a reason for which there is only a *vyatireka*. In PV 1.287 he expresses the *vyatireka* on behalf of the opponent as a pervasion (*vyāpti*): “since falsehood is seen only in what is made [by humans], an unproduced statement is true, because the absence [of the *hetu*]

¹³ PVSV 150,28: ... *teṣāṃ api saṅketabalād anyathāvr̥tteḥ*. Kaṇvakagomin glosses (PVSVT 537,28-29): *teṣāṃ api vaidikānāṃ saṅketabalād anyathāvr̥tteḥ puruṣecchānuvidhāyisaṅketabalenānyathā pratījānanād ity arthaḥ*.

¹⁴ Dharmakīrti rejects the possibility that eternal, or even just non-momentary, entities can have causal powers in connection with his presentation of the so-called *sattvānumāna*, the inference of the momentariness of entities from the fact that they exist. What exists must have causal efficacy. However, non-momentary entities cannot have causal efficacy, either gradually or at once; therefore, they cannot exist. What is not momentary could not have causal efficacy gradually, because that would involve some change in its nature over time. And it could not have causal efficacy at once, because then, insofar as it is by nature causally efficacious in a single moment, it would be constantly producing its effect. See Steinkellner 1969: 371-374 and Rospatt 1995: 2-3.

¹⁵ PVSVT 542,11-12: *satyārthaṃ vaidikaṃ vākyaṃ akṛtakatvād iti prayoge kriyamāṇe ...*

pervades the opposite [of the *sādhya*].”¹⁶ That is to say, we only see falsehood for statements that are made/produced – *yan mithyārthaṃ vacanaṃ tad akhilaṃ kṛtakam* (PVSV 152,14) – so the absence (*vyatireka*) of the *hetu* (= *kṛtakatva*, “being produced,” while the *hetu* is *akṛtakatva*, “not being produced”)¹⁷ pervades the absence (*vyatireka*) of the *sādhya* (= *mithyātvam*, “being false,” i.e., not being true, while the *sādhya* is *satyārthatva*, “being true”): *hetuvyatirekeṇa sādhyavyatirekasya vyāpteḥ* (PVSV 152,14-15). This pervasion of the absence of the *sādhya* of the *anumāna* by the absence of its *hetu* is simply the *vyatireka* of its *hetu* in the technical logical sense, that is to say, the negative concomitance of *hetu* and *vipakṣa*. Expressed in modern logic, the Mīmāṃsaka wishes to assert, “For all x, if x is false then x is produced.” It is clear that this is equivalent to “For all x, if x is not produced then x is true,” on the basis of which one may infer, from the fact that a Vedic statement is not produced, that it is true.

The discussion that begins with PV(SV) 1.287 and extends through PV(SV) 1.291 is subtle and complicated, and appears to be an important passage for understanding Dharmakīrti’s reservations about the (*kevala*)*vyatirekīhetu*. I cannot do it justice here; PV 1.291 and the lengthy Svavṛtti thereon (PVSV 154,1-155,18) merit particular attention.¹⁸ An important question for Dharmakīrti is whether the first premise – only produced statements are false or, equivalently, all false statements are produced – can be established just by never observing a false statement that is not produced. In other words, it is the old problem of how do you establish a *vyatireka*, here the negative concomitance of *hetu* and *vipakṣa*?¹⁹ One could also attack this attempt to infer the truth of a

¹⁶ Here in PV 1.287cd Dharmakīrti is using the term *vyatireka* in a different sense from its technical logical meaning (the contrapositive of the *anvaya*), to mean just the contrary or opposite of something.

¹⁷ PVSVT 542,15-16: *akṛtakasya hetor yo vyatirekaḥ ...*

¹⁸ See the helpful analysis of Kano 2011.

¹⁹ Dharmakīrti says with PV 1.288, that “If the impossibility of the *hetu* [in the *vipakṣa*] is not stated” – that is, proven by a *pramāṇa* (PVSV 152,25-26) – “the presence of it also [there, in the *vipakṣa*] is suspected, since it is seen that there can be something that pervades even things that are opposed [in nature]”: *hetāv asaṃbhave ’nukte bhāvas tasyāpi śaṅkyate / viruddhānām padārthānām api vyāpakadarśanāt //*. The sense of 288cd appears to be: even two things opposed in nature can be pervaded by the same property. For example, things that are the result of effort and things that are not the result of effort (*prayatnanāntariyaketarayoḥ*, PVSV 152,29) can both be impermanent. Therefore, just because a produced statement is false does not mean that a statement that is not produced cannot also be false. Then, with PV 1.289ab, he says, “It has been stated that non-existence is not established from not being apprehended in any way” (*nāsattāsiddhir ity uktam sarvato ’nupalambhanāt /*). Only “one whose cognition does not diverge from the existence of the knowable” – presumably, an omniscient person – would appear appropriate if he were to say, “because it is not seen, it does not exist”; *yasya hi jñānaṃ jñeyasattām na vyabhicarati sa evaṃ bruvāṇaḥ śobhetādarśanān nāsti* (PVSV 153,4-5). He continues in the Svavṛtti:

statement from its not being produced (that is, its authorlessness) more directly, however, if one simply noted that, even if it is accepted as established that all false statements are produced, one could at best only infer that an unproduced statement is not false. That does not mean, however, that it is true. It could, rather, simply be meaningless – a point Dharmakīrti actually made earlier at PVSV 1.225.²⁰ Indeed, this passage, PV(SV) 1.284-291, resumes an earlier discussion, PV(SV) 1.224-230, triggered by the same Mīmāṃsaka suggestion that, since the falsehood of statements is seen to derive from the defects of their authors, authorless statements could only be true. Dharmakīrti's position is that authorlessness simply does not amount to validity. Although not a refutation of intrinsic validity per se, the notion that words somehow of themselves indicate what is the case seems to be at the heart of the view he is combatting.

In summary, Dharmakīrti definitely seems to be taking aim at the intrinsic validity doctrine in PV(SV) 1.284, though what he presents there is a far cry from the fully developed theory we find in Kumāriḷa,²¹ and of course the expression *svataḥ prāmāṇyam* itself does not occur in the verse or Dharmakīrti's autocommentary. Kumāriḷa, for one thing, goes through all the options: intrinsic non-validity and extrinsic validity, extrinsic non-validity and extrinsic validity, intrinsic validity and intrinsic non-validity, and intrinsic validity and extrinsic non-validity. (His own view is the last.) He argues for intrinsic validity, moreover, primarily on the grounds that any extrinsic account of validity would either have to presuppose the intrinsic validity of a cognition at some point or else generate a regress; and he poses problems specifically for the view, reminiscent of Dharmakīrti's (ŚV Codanā 73-76),²² that validity is established by "agree-

Even though things are seen at one time to be a certain way, it is possible for them to become different. For example, in one place neem fruits are sweet (though they are normally bitter or bitter-sweet), due to a certain conditioning (*saṃskāra*), as well as tamarind fruits (which are normally sweet). Those sweet neem fruits are not to be denied by someone who does not see them now: *kvacit tathā dr̥ṣṭānām apy arthānām punaḥ kathaṃcid anyathābhāvo yathā kvacid deśe madhurāṇi nimbaphalāni saṃskāraviśeṣād āmalakīphalāni ca na cedānīm ataddarśinā tāni pratikṣeptavyāny eveti* (PVSV 153,9-12).

²⁰ PVSV 112,16-19: *yathā rāgādīparītaḥ puruṣo mṛṣāvādī dr̥ṣṭas tathā dayādharmaṭādiyuktah satyavāk. tadyathā vacanasya puruṣāśrayān mithyārthatā tathā satyārthatāpīti. sa nīvartamānas tām api nīvartayātīti ānarthakyaṃ syād viparyayo vā.* "Just as a person seized by desire, and so forth, is seen to speak falsely, so someone endowed with the property of compassion, and so forth, speaks truthfully. That is to say, just as a statement's falsehood is due to its dependence on a person, so is its truth. When former (i.e., the person) ceases to be, it causes the latter (i.e., the truth of the statement) to cease to be, so that [the statement] would be either without meaning (i.e., neither true nor false) or an error." Cf. Eltschinger 2007: 240-241. Cf. also TS 2354-2357.

²¹ I refrain in this essay from entering into the problem of what exactly Kumāriḷa means by *svataḥ prāmāṇyam*. I have tried to avoid saying anything that might conflict with the most careful analysis of Kumāriḷa's theory to date, Kataoka 2011: II/60-98.

²² See Kataoka 2011: II/281-285.

ment” (*saṃgati*) with other cognitions, that Dharmakīrti does not address. This of course does not mean that Dharmakīrti did not have Kumāriḥ in mind when he composed PV(SV) 1.284, but only that the verse by itself, and Dharmakīrti’s own explanation of it, do not warrant that conclusion. The *anumāna* of v. 287, meanwhile, which purports to establish the truth of authorless language specifically, rather than the intrinsic validity of cognitions in general, is not attested in any Mīmāṃsā source that I know of. It very well could represent Dharmakīrti’s own attempt to express the idea that authorlessness entails truth in the form of a syllogism; or else it derives from another Mīmāṃsaka who preceded Kumāriḥ. It does not seem worthy of Kumāriḥ.

We tend to think that every time a classical Indian author attacks a position, there must be some historical source for it. While I think this is usually the case, and it is always worthwhile trying to identify a source, it need not always be the case. Sometimes an author could be reformulating the view of his opponent. He could be doing so tentatively, so that it is easier to refute. But he could also be trying to give it a more coherent, rigorous formulation that is more difficult to refute, to show that his own theory prevails over the strongest possible arguments for the opposing view. We find Plato doing this in his dialogues all the time.

We move on now to a passage later in the second chapter of the PV that I think will cause us to refrain from drawing any conclusions about Dharmakīrti’s position vis-à-vis *svataḥ prāmāṇyam* or the sources of his awareness of the doctrine. PV 2.205-210 has already been treated expertly and in depth by other scholars. I shall in what follows rely on Eltschinger 2005b, Franco 1997, and Pecchia 2015.

The passage under consideration occurs in the context of Dharmakīrti’s exposition of the four epithets of the dedicatory verse of Dignāga’s *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. PV 2.205ab, according to Eltschinger (2005b: 175-179), relates to two of the epithets, *śāstrī* (teacher) and *sugata* (well-gone).²³ In brief, the perfection of the path, alluded to by the first *pāda* of the stanza, is understood by Dharmakīrti to be the Bodhisattva’s *śāstrīva*. The perfection of the fruit of the path, here characterized as a transformation of the “basis,” coincides with his *sugatatva*:²⁴ it is the complete destruction of the passions together with the *vāsanās* that give rise to them, and of “undefiled ignorance” (*akliṣṭam ajñānam*) or “the

²³ See also Eltschinger 2005a.

²⁴ See Eltschinger (2005b: 177): “PV II.205ab suggère que *l’āśrayaparivṛtti* résulte de la pratique du Chemin. Or dans l’économie générale de PV II, le premier résultat de cet exercice n’est autre que la Perfection de bien propre caractérisant le Sugata. *Āśrayaparivṛtti* et (accès au) *sugatatva* coïncideront donc en quelque façon.”

covering of the knowable” (*jñeyāvaraṇa*), which implies the dawning of omniscience.²⁵

ukto mārgas tadabhyāsād āśrayaḥ parivartate / 205ab

The path has been described (in explaining the epithet “teacher”); due to the practice of that the basis transforms itself.

Much of the discussion has focused on the significance of the phrase “the basis transforms itself.” Is “basis” an allusion to the *ālayavijñāna*, and does this half stanza indicate Dharmakīrti’s adherence to Yogācāra idealism? Merely the expression *āśrayaḥ parivartate* would incline one to think so,²⁶ were it not for the fact that Dharmakīrti has offered an account of the Path from a realist standpoint up to this point, and that in the continuation of the passage he still seems to be thinking about *āśrayaparivṛtti* within the framework of a realist epistemology. In 205cd he allows an opponent to question whether moral defects still could not arise for someone who has perfected the Path. The opponent is probably meant to be a Mīmāṃsaka; for in two previous passages Dharmakīrti has refuted Mīmāṃsā arguments against the possibility of eliminating moral defects and cultivating omniscience.²⁷

sātmye ’pi doṣabhāvaś cen mārgavat (205cd’)

Objection: Even if [the Path] has become habitual, defects arise, just like the Path (which arises in the condition of bondage).²⁸

That is, just as the Buddhist has to assume that the practice of the Path can counteract negative tendencies deeply ingrained in a life-stream, gradually transforming it, so it would seem, conversely, that even after the Path has become one’s very nature, as it were, due to constant practice,²⁹ it would still be possible for defects to re-emerge. In other words, why should we think that the practice of the Path culminating in *āśrayaparivṛtti* is irreversible?

Dharmakīrti responds:

²⁵ See Eltschinger (2005b: 179): “L’*āśrayaparivṛtti* résulte de la pratique d’un Chemin initié par la réflexion rationnelle, et où le processus culmine, au terme du *bhāvanāmārga* (à l’entrée dans la *buddhabhūmi*), dans l’abandon de la *sahajā satkāyadr̥ṣṭiḥ* et des *āvaraṇa*. En sanctionnant l’éradication définitive des obstructions, elle marque la Perfection d’abandon; en signant l’acquisition de l’omniscience, elle marque la Perfection de savoir.”

²⁶ Though, to be sure, reference to *ālayavijñāna* should not be taken as either a necessary or a sufficient condition for a work to be affiliated with Yogācāra.

²⁷ PV 2.142b-144 (mentioned by Eltschinger [2005b: 179]); PV 2.122-133. In the latter passage the Mīmāṃsaka maintains that compassion, which Dharmakīrti understands to be the foundation of the characteristics praised by Dignāga, cannot be increased without limit. Cf. Franco 1997: 6-8.

²⁸ Cf. Eltschinger 2005b: 183 and Pecchia 2015: 171 & 173. In translating PV 2.205-208 I have mostly followed Eltschinger, but I have also found Pecchia’s translations very helpful.

²⁹ PVV 81,20: *mārgasyābhyāsaprakarsāt sātmye ’pi prakṛtīve ca prāpte ...*

nāvibhutvataḥ // 205d' //

No, because they are incapable.

Once insight into selflessness has been attained, moral defects such as desire, which are ultimately grounded on belief in a self and the substantiality of entities, can no longer arise.³⁰ The following stanzas explain why this is the case.

*viṣayagrahaṇaṃ dharmo vijñānasya, yathāsti saḥ /
grhyate, so 'sya janako vidyamānātmaneti ca // 206 //*
*eṣā prakṛtir, asyās tan nimittāntarataḥ skhalat /
vyāvṛtttau pratayāpekṣam adṛḍhaṃ sarpabuddhivat // 207 //*
*prabhāsvaram idaṃ cittaṃ prakṛtyāgantavo malāḥ /
tat prāg apy asamarthānāṃ pascāc chaktiḥ kva tanmaye // 208 //*

It is the property of cognition to apprehend an object; it (i.e., the object) is apprehended as it is. And that [object] produces [the cognition] according to its present nature. This is the nature [of the cognition and the object]. Deviating from this [nature] due to other causes,³¹ not firm (*adṛḍha*), it (i.e., the cognition) requires a[n other] condition for its cessation, like the cognition of a snake [when one looks at a rope]. This mind (*citta*) is luminous by nature; its impurities are adventitious. Thus, what capacity, in regard to [a mind] consisting of that [Path], will [impurities] have that even previously were incapable [of affecting it]?

On a first reading, this passage seems to be saying the following:

(a) It is the inherent nature of cognition to apprehend things as they really are. The reason why cognition presents an object in a certain way is because the object causes it. (This is the “realism” Eltschinger emphasizes.)

³⁰ Cf. PV 1.222: *sarvāsāṃ doṣajātīnāṃ jātiḥ satkāyadarśanāt / sāvidyā tatra tatsnehas tasmād dveṣādīsambhavaḥ //* “All types of defects arise from the notion that there is a person. That is ignorance. In regard to that [object which one adheres to as one’s self and one’s own] there is attachment to the [self and one’s own] (cf. Eltschinger 2007: 236); from that [in turn] arise aversion, etc.” See the entire discussion of Dharmakīrti’s in which this statement is embedded, PV(SV) 1.220-223 (Eltchinger 2007: 230-239).

³¹ Chiefly ignorance, *avidyā*, as emphasized by Eltschinger (2005b: 188-189), but Devendrabuddhi mentions internal and external (lit., “the other”) factors (PVP D 87b7 / P 101a5-6): *de ltar na rtogs pa ma yin pa gang yin pa de ni phyi rol lam cig śos glo bur ba'i 'khrul pa'i rgyu mtshan gyis yin te | dper na sbrul du 'driś pa'i phyogs mi gsal bar thag pa la sbrul gyi śes pa lta bu'o //* “... [toute] non-connaissance [, c’est-à-dire toute connaissance erronée,] tient alors à une cause d’erreur [purement] adventice, interne ou externe [à la connaissance elle-même], à l’exemple de la connaissance d’un serpent pour une corde en [tel] lieu sombre [et] propice aux serpents.” (Eltchinger 2005b: 185). Cf. PVV 82,16: *niṃittāntarata āntarād avidyārūpād āgantukāc ca viṣayadoṣādeḥ* “... ‘due to other causes,’ [that is,] due to an internal one having the form of ignorance and an adventitious one such as defects of the object.” Defects of the object would include being too small, too far away, etc. Note that Pecchia (2015: 230) translates 207ab as “That [cognition] which is due to causes different from this [mode] is erroneous,” taking *asyāḥ* as an ablative dependent on *niṃittāntarataḥ*. She is uncertain whether the verb *skhal-* can govern nouns in the ablative (Pecchia 2015: 230, n. 202).

(b) Cognition sometimes deviates from its nature of presenting things as they are only due to the influence of extrinsic factors (such as nescience, *avidyā*, or “defects of the object, etc.”³²).

(c) An erroneous cognition, that is, a cognition that deviates from the inherently veracious nature of cognition, depends on another condition, such as another cognition or *pramāṇa* which apprehends the object as it really is,³³ for its cancellation.

Compare now Kumāriḷa’s statement, ŚV Codanā 80:

*tasmād dṛḍhaṃ yad utpannaṃ na viṣaṃvādam rchati /
jñānāntareṇa vijñānaṃ tat pramāṇaṃ pratīyatām // 80 //*³⁴

Therefore, that cognition which is firm, which has [actually] arisen, [and] which does not disagree with another [later] cognition – that is to be regarded as a *pramāṇa*.³⁵

I will leave it to the reader to match up the phrases of Kumāriḷa’s statement with the parts of Dharmakīrti’s passage as I have analyzed it. The idea of a cognition being inherently valid, however, as well as that of a cognition being erroneous due to some adventitious factor, are perhaps more evident in ŚV Codanā 53:

*tasmād bodhātmakatvena prāptā buddheḥ pramāṇatā /
arthānyathātvahetūtthadoṣajñānād apodyate // 53 //*³⁶

Therefore, the validity of a cognition, which is due [just] to its being a knowing, is [exceptionally] cancelled [only] when one cognizes that the object is otherwise or that there are defects in its causes.³⁷

Kumāriḷa seems to be saying, it is when one realizes that one’s cognition has been influenced by some defect in its causes, or when one simply realizes that the object is otherwise than how it is represented by the cognition, that the validity that would otherwise have naturally belonged to it is cancelled – presumably, for the one who has it. The “condition” that according to Dharmakīrti is required for the “cessation” of a false cognition (PV 2.207c), which he does not specify further, is for Kumāriḷa specifically another cognition – of either the

³² See previous note.

³³ In fact, Manorathanandin evidently understands *pratīyaya* in 207c to mean “cognition” (PVV 82,19-20): *yathā sarpabuddhī rajjivā<ṃ> bhrāntinimittāḷ jātā rajjusvarūpagrāhiṇaḷ pratīyayān nivṛttā na punar udbhavati* (emended according to Pecchia 2015: 148). Cf. PVP D 89a2-3 / P 102b5-6 (cited by Eltschinger [2005b: 189, n. 119]): *rang bzhin rnam pa gzhan du 'gyur ba'i ldog pa'i rgyu mtshan gyi rkyen la ltos pa yin te | de ltar skyes bu'i 'khrul pa gnod pa can gyi tshad ma la ltos pa dang bcas pa yin no ||*.

³⁴ Kataoka 2011: I/20,7-21,1.

³⁵ Based on Kataoka 2011: II/288-289. See op. cit., p. 289-291, n. 284 for a justification of this way of reading the verse.

³⁶ Kataoka 2011: I/12,6-13,1.

³⁷ Based on Kataoka 2011: II/257-259.

correct state of affairs or the defect that causes the original cognition to deviate. This, however, is consistent with the example of an erroneous cognition Dharmakīrti gives: “like the cognition of a snake.” When one sees that it is really just a rope and not a snake, or notices that it is rather dark and one may not be seeing clearly, then the cognition of a snake is nullified.

Other scholars have come close to recognizing the similarity of the view expressed by Dharmakīrti in PV 2.206-208 to the Mīmāṃsā doctrine of intrinsic validity. Eli Franco, while discussing 205ab, mentions Schmithausen’s suggestion that Dharmakīrti in this passage is giving “an epistemological twist (Wendung)” to the teaching of a “luminous cognition” that goes back to Aṅguttara-nikāya 1.6, mediated perhaps by the Vibhajyavādins – a teaching moreover that Sautrāntikas are reported to have rejected (Franco 1997: 85-87):³⁸

Für ihn [Dharmakīrti] ist – wie aus dem Kontext hervorgeht – die Formel, der Geist sei seinem Wesen nach “strahlend” (PV II, 20[8]), dahingehend zu verstehen, daß die Wahrnehmungen und Erkenntnisse von Natur aus dazu neigen, ihren Gegenstand so zu erfassen, wie er wirklich ist, und daß sie lediglich von äußeren Ursachen davon abgebracht werden.

Franco asks – but perhaps only mischievously – in parentheses: “Is this a *svataḥ prāmāṇyam* theory in disguise?” (p. 87). What is especially intriguing is a linguistic coincidence between PV 2.207 and ŚV Codanā 80. Dharmakīrti refers to the cognition that “deviates” (*skhalat*) from its nature due to another cause as “not firm,” *adrḍha*. Kumārila refers, on the other hand, to a *pramāṇa* as “firm,” *drḍha*. One of the obstacles for me to accepting the widely held view that Dharmakīrti is attacking specifically Kumārila when he criticizes a Mīmāṃsā position has always been that, although Dharmakīrti frequently does attack ideas and arguments that find expression in Kumārila’s writings, he rarely seems to be aware of how they are worded there, or for that matter other, crucial points of Kumārila’s arguments (crucial especially for Dharmakīrti, because often they imply serious, even fatal, objections to his theories). But here we have a case where Dharmakīrti is using the same word (with of course the *alpha privativum*) that Kumārila uses in the same context.

In fact, there is another apparent linguistic coincidence in this passage. The expression *vidyamānātmanā* in 206d resonates with Mīmāṃsāsūtra 1.1.4, which defines perception while denying that it is a means of knowing Dharma “because it is the apprehension of something present”:

*satsamprayoge puruṣasyendriyāṇām buddhijanma tat pratyakṣam animittam vidyamānopalambhanatvāt.*³⁹

³⁸ Schmithausen 1973: 139.

³⁹ Frauwallner 1968: 22.

The arising of a cognition when there is a connection of the sense faculties of a person with an existing object, that is perception. It is not a cause (of knowledge of Dharma) because it is the apprehension of something present.

Although *vidyamānātmanā* in 206d probably refers to how the object appears in the cognition it produces, namely, that it is apprehended “according to its present nature,” rather than how it produces it, that is, “by means of its present nature,”⁴⁰ I think the use of this expression in the context of discussing how cognitions arise would almost certainly remind a Mīmāṃsaka of MS 1.1.4. In short, it seems possible that Dharmakīrti composed PV 2.206-208 under the influence of his knowledge of Mīmāṃsā.

At the same time, however, it seems possible that the view Dharmakīrti is expressing evolved within Buddhist circles or perhaps originated with Dharmakīrti himself. First of all, there is an alternative explanation for his use of *adṛḍha*. At the end of the first chapter of his *Pramāṇaviniścaya* Dharmakīrti clarifies how he thinks the *Vijñānavādin* can make a distinction between a *pramāṇa* and an *apramāṇa* even when all cognition is in fact ultimately without an external object. The *Vijñānavādin*, he suggests, can call that cognition a *pramāṇa* “whose continuity is not severed as long as *saṃsāra* lasts (*ā saṃsāram aviśliṣṭānubandham*) due to having a firm (*drḍha*) *vāsanā*, insofar as it is confirmed by everyday practice in this [world].”⁴¹ Another kind of cognition would be an *apramāṇa*. Dharmottara explains in his *Ṭīkā* that a *vāsanā* is “firm” (*drḍha*) which both produces a cognition of a certain object-content and “nourishes” the *vāsanā* that will later produce a cognition of the *arthakriyā* of the object.⁴²

Second, and much more important, is the fact that the view Dharmakīrti is presenting in PV 2.206-208 is taken up again by Kamalaśīla in his *Tattvasaṅgrahapañjikā*, in his lengthy comment on TS 3337 (summarized and partially translated in McClintock [2010: 213-217]) and defended on the basis of essentially *a priori* reasoning that seems independent of typical Mīmāṃsā considerations in favor of intrinsic validity. (Kumārila’s two main points in favor of *svataḥ prāmāṇyam* are [1] that, if cognitions were not intrinsically valid there would be a regress of epistemic justification, and [2] that, if a cognition did not

⁴⁰ Cf. PVV 82,10-11: *sa ca viṣayo 'sya vijñānasya janako vidyamānenātmanā yathāvasthitena rūpeṇa*. “And the object is productive of a cognition according to its present nature, i.e., according to its form as it really is.” Cf. Pecchia 2015: 146-147. The idea of MS 1.1.4, on the other hand, is that perception is not a cause of knowledge of Dharma because it has an object that is present here and now (whereas Dharma pertains to all three times, past, present, and future); it arises only when there is a connection of the senses with an existing (*sat*) object.

⁴¹ PVin I 44,1-2: *aparam ā saṃsāram aviśliṣṭānubandham drḍhavāsanatvād iha vyavahārā-visaṃvādāpekṣayā pramāṇam*.

⁴² See Eltschinger 2005b: 156, n. 8.

give rise to validity of itself, nothing else could.)⁴³ Kamalāśīla's main idea is, roughly, that mind (*citta*) by nature involves a relation between subject and object (*viṣayaviṣayibhāva*). If mind did not apprehend the object as it truly is, there would not really be a relation between subject and object. This idea is presented in answer to the challenge that defects can never be completely and finally uprooted because they are properties of a living being (*prāṇidharmatva*), due to having mind as their nature (*cittasvabhāvatvena*). Here is the crucial passage:⁴⁴

By one who accepts a relation of subject and object, mind is to be assumed as having the nature of apprehending the object; otherwise, there would not be a relation of subject and object between object and cognition. [Mind] being assumed to have the nature of apprehending a thing, one must say that whatever is its (i.e., the thing's) nature, the thing is apprehended by it (i.e., mind) with that nature (*tenaivātmanā*); otherwise, how could this [thing] be an apprehended one? And if it were apprehended with a non-existent form, then there would not be a relation of subject and object. That is to say, if the way a cognition takes the thing as its object is not the way the object is, and the way the thing is is not the way [the cognition] takes it as its object, then cognitions would indeed be objectless, and from that it would result that no things would be established. Therefore, it is established that the inborn nature of this [mind] is to apprehend the real form of the object. And it has been shown that the real nature of the object has an appearance that is momentary, without self and so on. Therefore, mind has the nature of apprehending selflessness, not the nature of apprehending a self.

That, however, [there is] an appearance of [its] nature in a different way for deluded people happens/occurs due to [some] capacity (*sāmarthyāt*), that is,

⁴³ See ŚV Codanā 47-48 and 49-51. Of course, there are widely differing interpretations of Kumāriila's theory by classical and modern interpreters alike. See Taber 1992 and Kataoka 2011: II/246ff.

⁴⁴ TSP 1056,21-1057,11: *viṣayaviṣayibhāvam icchatā cittam viṣayagrahaṇasvabhāvam abhyupeyam, anyathā viṣayajñānāyor na viṣayaviṣayibhāvaḥ. arthagrahaṇasvabhāvatvenāṅgīkriyamāṇe yas tasya svabhāvas tenaivātmanā so 'rthas tena grhyata iti vaktavyam. anyathā katham asau grhītaḥ syāt. yady asatākāreṇa grhyeta tataś ca viṣayaviṣayibhāvo na syāt. tathā hi yathā jñānaṃ viṣayīkaroty arthaṃ na tathā so 'rthaḥ, yathā so 'rtho na tathā taṃ viṣayīkarotīti nirviṣayāny eva jñānāni syuḥ. tataś ca sarvapaḍārthāsiddhiprasaṅgaḥ. tasmād bhūtaṃ viṣayāyākāragrāhitāsyā svabhāvo nija iti sthitaḥ. bhūtaś ca svabhāvo viṣayasya kṣaṇikānātmādirūpa iti pratipāditam etat. tena nairātmayagrahaṇasvabhāvam eva cittam nāmagrahaṇasvabhāvam. yat punar anyathā svabhāvasya khyātir mūḍhānām sāmarthyād āgantukapratyayabalād evety avatiṣṭhate na svabhāvatvena, yathā rajjvām sarpapratyayasya. ata eva kleśagaṇo 'tyantasamudhato 'pi nairātmadarśanasāmarthyam asyonmūlayitum asamarthaḥ, āgantukapratyayakṛtvenādṛḍhatvāt. nairātmayajñānaṃ tu svabhāvatvāt pramāṇasahāyatvāc ca balavad iti tulye 'pi virodhitva ātmadarśane pratipakṣo vyavasthāpyate. na cātmadarśanaṃ tasya tadviparītatvāt. I have read the text as emended by McClintock 2010: 214, n. 518 and 216, n. 521, with one additional correction which the editors of WZKS have pointed me toward: for *anyathāsvabhāvo* 'sya khyātir read *anyathā svabhāvasya khyātir*.*

merely due to the force of an adventitious condition, not through [its real] nature, such as [the appearance] of the cognition of a snake in regard to a rope. For this very reason the multitude of defilements, even though they may be very strong, is incapable of uprooting its capacity to see selflessness, since [the appearance of the nature of cognition differently] is not firm because it is caused by an adventitious condition. The cognition of selflessness, on the other hand, is strong, because that is its nature, and because it is assisted by *pramāṇas*. Thus, even though their being in opposition [to each other] is the same, [it] (i.e., the cognition of selflessness) is established as the antidote of the seeing of a self, and not the seeing of a self [as the antidote of the cognition of selflessness], since that [seeing of a self] is the opposite of that (i.e., it is not the cognition's nature and it is not assisted by *pramāṇas*).⁴⁵

Almost all of the key expressions of PV 2.206-208 recur in this passage: “with that nature” (*tenaivātmanā*) and the negative locution, “with a non-existent form” (*asatākāreṇa*) correspond to PV 2.206d, *vidyamānātmanā*; “since it is not firm” (*adr̥ḥatvāt*) corresponds to 207d, *adr̥ḥa*; “due to the force of an adventitious condition” (*āgantukapratyayabalāt*) to 208b, *āgantavo malāḥ*; *svabhāva* to 207a, *prakṛti*; “incapable” (*asamartha*) to 208c, *asamarthhānām*; and so on. There is little doubt that Kamalaśīla had PV 2.206-208 in mind when he composed this passage. And in fact, Eltschinger (2010: 50-55) has shown that Kamalaśīla's explanation follows the commentaries of Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi on PV 2.206-208, in part word-for-word.

We may understand the theory being elaborated by Kamalaśīla in this passage, then, as what Dharmakīrti's interpreters thought Dharmakīrti's theory to be. It is my impression that it is not a Mīmāṃsā theory – which, however, is not to say that it could not have been influenced by Mīmāṃsā. There are of course several versions of *svataḥ prāmāṇyam* offered by Kumāriḷa's expositors.⁴⁶ The one that comes closest to what Dharmakīrti appears to be saying is Umbeka's.⁴⁷ According to Umbeka the validity of a cognition consists in its truth, that is, its non-deviation or agreement with its object (*arthāviśamvāda*),⁴⁸ as opposed to the mere appearance or impression of its truth, as suggested for instance by Pārthasārathimīśra. Validity in this sense is “intrinsic” or “of itself” insofar as it is produced by the same causes that produce the cognition. That is to say, the normal causes of a cognition – in the case of perception, the sense faculty, the object, the connection of sense faculty and object, and so forth – naturally pro-

⁴⁵ Cf. the translation of McClintock (2010: 214-216), which I have followed in part.

⁴⁶ Schmithausen (1965: 259-260) gives a helpful survey of the various versions considered by Umbeka.

⁴⁷ See ŚVVT 53,25-54,22; cf. Schmithausen 1965: 257. For Pārthasārathimīśra's characterization of Umbeka's view and his dismissal of it, see NRM 30,10-31,13.

⁴⁸ Pārthasārathimīśra explains Umbeka's notion of validity as *arthāvyabhicāra*, NRM 30,10.

duce a valid cognition. In particular, the normal causes of a cognition do not have to be endowed with “excellences” (*guṇas*) in order for a valid cognition to arise. An invalid cognition, on the other hand, arises only if its causes are somehow defective.

Despite having features in common with Umbeka’s understanding of intrinsic validity, I take the core idea of Dharmakīrti’s proposal, relying on his interpreters’ understanding of it, to be different. Namely, mind (by definition, for most people?) involves a distinction of subject and object; it consists in a cognition apprehending some object-form. Hence, its nature is to apprehend an object, and to apprehend an object is to apprehend it as it really is. If a cognition does not apprehend an object as it is, it is not mind at all. This argument has a distinct *a priori* feel to it. It proceeds from the concept of what mind is to the conclusion that all cognition, by nature, is the apprehending of an object as it really is. Umbeka’s argument, on the other hand, is based on empirical considerations about causation.

What, then, are we finally to make of this situation? Could PV 2.206-208 be another instance where Dharmakīrti is making use of Mīmāṃsā ideas for his own purposes? Or could he have been at least unconsciously influenced by Mīmāṃsā teachings in devising his own theory? And if either of these alternatives were the case, would he be guilty of inconsistency, since in fact as we have seen he does seem to be rejecting a version of the theory of *svataḥ prāmāṇyam* elsewhere? (Do we have another “sliding scale of analysis” here, where – God forbid – Dharmakīrti is now part of the time a Mīmāṃsaka, the rest of the time a Buddhist?) Or else, does the theory of PV 2.206-208 not derive from Mīmāṃsā at all but originate from Dharmakīrti himself, without any Mīmāṃsā influence, or if not from Dharmakīrti specifically, then at least from within Buddhist circles? Do we, that is to say, have here a case of the same theory discovered independently by philosophers reflecting on the nature of consciousness in different traditions?

I shall not attempt to answer any of these questions. I offer here only a few observations. First of all, we should keep in mind that in this passage Dharmakīrti is debating with a Mīmāṃsaka over whether it is possible for the Buddhist practitioner to destroy completely and irrevocably the defilements, that is, to bring about a “transformation of the basis,” which for the Buddha was the foundation of his extraordinary knowledge and activity as a teacher. It would be quite appropriate in such circumstances, both rhetorically and philosophically, for Dharmakīrti to be responding to the Mīmāṃsaka in familiar terms, employing similar if not identical assumptions. Moreover, this is the sort of situation where the theory of intrinsic validity does have some plausibility. (I fear

that those who just dismiss the theory out of hand as philosophically hopeless have not studied it very carefully.) If we see how things “really are,” we cannot fall back into ignorance. You cannot un-know what you “know” – unless of course your “knowing” is, unexpectedly and improbably, superseded by some other more powerful and convincing knowing. As the saying goes, once you have drawn aside the curtain and seen who the Wizard of Oz really is (just an ordinary old man), you cannot cover him up again and pretend you do not know the truth.⁴⁹ This seems to be more or less what Manorathanandin says in his comment on PV 2.207:⁵⁰

Just as the cognition of a snake in regard to a rope, caused to arise by an error, ceases due to a cognition apprehending the nature of the rope and does not occur again, so once one has seen, due to the removal of the cause of error, selflessness, there is no possibility of seeing / the view of a [personal] being when a thing is present, because a cognition is inclined to apprehend the [true] nature of its object, and because the object is occupied with placing its form [in the cognition].

In short, I am suggesting that what Dharmakīrti is saying here is something like the following: Look, you Mīmāṃsakas, this is essentially what you believe, too, that consciousness is naturally luminous, that its inherent nature is to reveal things as they are. And so, if a practitioner were to achieve real insight into the selflessness of persons and *dharmas*, it would be unshakable; there would be no lapsing or falling away from it.⁵¹

My second observation, implied by what I have just said, is that it is not clear that the type of knowledge Dharmakīrti and Kamalaśīla are talking about falls under any of the *pramāṇas*. They are talking about mind or consciousness (*citta*), not perception, inference, and scripture, which are “cognitions” (*jñāna*); they are talking about what could be called insight or enlightenment. Therefore, the theory they present in this connection is not a theory of *prāmāṇya*, validity, at all – at least not in the usual sense. The theory of the *pramāṇas* and *prāmāṇya*, as Dharmakīrti explains in a crucial, often quoted passage at the end of the first chapter of his *Pramāṇaviniścaya* – and which Manorathanandin echoes in his

⁴⁹ This, of course, is not exactly Kumāriḷa’s idea, for he wants to say that all cognitions, even the most routine empirical cognitions such as seeing a bottle of water, arise as knowings. See ŚV Codanā 53 and Kataoka 2011: II/257-259.

⁵⁰ PVV 82,19-22: *yathā sarpabuddhī rajjivā<ṃ> bhrāntinimittā jātā rajjusvarūpagrāhiṇaḥ pratyayān nivr̥ttā na punar udbhavati, tathā bhrāntinimittanirāsād dṛṣṭe nairātmye vastuni sati nāsti sattvadr̥ṣṭisambhavaḥ, jñānasya viṣayasvarūpagrahaṇapravaṇatvād viṣayasya ca svākār- paṇapravṛttatvāt* (emended according to Pecchia 2015: 148). Cf. Eltschinger 2005b: 189, n. 119 and Pecchia 2015: 149.

⁵¹ We should remember that this was an ancient controversy. See Kathāvatthu I 2, where the issue is slightly different: Whether one can fall from arhatship. See Bureau 1957.

second interpretation of PV 2.4d-5a, discussed above – pertains only to everyday usage and practice, *vyavahāra*:⁵²

It is the nature of the *pramāṇa* of everyday practice that has been explained [by us in this treatise]. With regard to this, too, other deluded ones deceive the world. [Therefore, we have made an attempt to refute them here.] But those who cultivate the insight consisting in reflection directly realize that invariable ultimate *pramāṇa*, which due to being devoid of error is without stain (*vibhramavivekanirmalam*). That, too, has indeed been indicated to a small extent.

It is altogether conceivable that Dharmakīrti could have thought that a theory of validity he rejects for empirical cognition gets things essentially right when it comes to “the ultimate *pramāṇa*” that apprehends the selflessness of persons and *dharmas*.

In conclusion, I believe that we must appreciate that Dharmakīrti was a protean thinker. His system is vast; it is complex. There are many sides to it, and many ways of approaching it. (Others have referred to his “sliding scale of analysis,” but I think we find the pieces of Dharmakīrti’s system moving in many different directions.) We should not expect him to be saying the exact same thing over and over. Statements made in one context had to be adjusted in other contexts, in order to do justice to the complexity of the phenomena he is describing. He can indeed be compared in this respect to Kumārila, who for instance offered three different views of the means of attaining liberation across three different works. For neither thinker can one be confident that just because he states, with apparent finality, P in one passage, that P is his position. One is almost certain to find P stated differently in some other passage, or find it revised or significantly qualified. When reading Dharmakīrti, and Kumārila, we should keep in mind the famous, if perhaps over-quoted, manifesto of Ralph Waldo Emerson:⁵³

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. ... If you would be a man, speak what you think today in words as hard as cannon balls, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day. Ah, then ... so you shall be sure to be misunderstood! Misunderstood! It is a right fool’s word. Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

⁵² PVin I 44,2-5: *sāṃvyavahārikasya caitat pramāṇasya rūpam uktam. atrāpi pare mūḍhā viśaṃvādayanti lokam iti. cintāmayīm eva tu prajñām anuśīlayanto vibhramavivekanirmalam anapāyī pāramārthikapramāṇam abhimukhikurvanti. tad api leśataḥ sūcitam eveti.* Cf. Eltschinger 2005b: 156 and Krasser 2004: 143.

⁵³ Emerson 1926: 41 (“Self-Reliance”).

Abbreviations and References

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- PVP Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā of Devendrabuddhi: D no. 4217, *che* 1-380 / P no. 5717b, *che* 1-390a8.
- PVSV Pramāṇavārttikasvavṛtti of Dharmakīrti: *The Pramāṇavārttikam of Dharmakīrti. The First Chapter with the Autocommentary*. Text and Critical Notes, ed. by R. Gnoli. [Serie Orientale Roma 23]. Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1960.
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- ŚV Codanā Ślokavārttika of Kumāriḷa, Codanāsūtra. See Kataoka 2011: I.
- ŚVVT Ślokavārttikavyākhyātātparyāṭīkā of Umbeka: *Ślokavārttikavyākhyā Tātparyāṭīkā of Uṃveka Bhaṭṭa*, ed. by S. K. Ramanatha Sastri. Revised by K. Kunjunni Raja and R. Thangaswamy. [Madras University Sanskrit Series 13]. Madras: University of Madras, 1971.
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- TSP Tattvasaṅgrahapañjikā of Kamalāśīla. See TS.