Dharmakīrti's Argument over the Universal in the Third Chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, vv. 11–50

NOTAKE Miyako

0. In *Pramāṇavārttika* III 1–63 Dharmakīrti addresses Dignāga's declaration that there are two means of knowledge because there are two kinds of object. In vv. 1–54 he defines these two kinds: the particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) and the universal¹⁾ (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*). He states four criteria that distinguish them (vv. 1b₂–c₁, 2), demonstrates the unreality of the universal (11–50), and states that the particular is its opposite (51ab) and the only true object of knowledge (53d–54).

We see here the first organised explanation in the Buddhist epistemological school of the differences between the two kinds of object. In this paper I shall first review the argument concerning the universal in PV III 11–50 and, in particular, its relation with the four criteria; then I shall consider the meaning of this argument in relation to that of the two kinds of object.

1. As Tosaki [1979] has pointed out, vv. 11–50 claim the non-existence of the universal.²⁾ The argument there can be understood to correspond to the four criteria that distinguish the two kinds of object, stated in vv. 1b₂–c₁, 2.³⁾ The four criteria are (i) whether or not an object has efficacy, (ii) whether it is similar or not, (iii) whether it is the object or not the object of a word, (iv) whether or not the cognition arises, when the causes other [than the object itself] are present. According to these criteria, the universal can be defined as (1) that which has no efficacy, (2) that which is similar, (3) that which is the object of a word, and (4) that whose cognition arises from causes other [than its own existence]. In the discussion in vv. 11–50, these four points appear in the order (3), (2), (4), and (1), as the evidences for the claim that the universal does not exist, which we can find in vv. 11–40, 41–44, 45–47, and 48–50, respectively. The whole argument can be summarised as follows. The numbers in round brackets show the corresponding criteria.

vv. 11–40: The universal is non-existent because it is the object of the word (iii).

vv. 41–44: The universal is non-existent because it is similar (ii).

(172) Dharmakīrti's Argument over the Universal in the Third Chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, vv. 11–50 (M. NOTAKE)

vv. 45–47: The universal is non-existent because its cognition arises from causes other [than its own existence] (iv).

vv. 48–50: The universal is non-existent because it has no efficacy (i).

I shall consider these points again, but first another analysis of the division of the argument must be examined.

2. Tosaki analyses the argument in vv. 11–50 into 7 sections with 7 reasons for the non-existence of the universal.⁴⁾ His analysis differs in two respects from that which I have proposed. Firstly, he analyses vv. 11–40 as comprising three separate arguments with three different reasons. The three reasons are: (a) that the universal is the object of the word (vv. 11–24), (b) that the universal cannot be expressed as identical with or different from the individual (vv. 25–38), and (c) that the universal is the object of a cognition of the same kind as that of an absence⁵⁾ (vv. 39–40). Secondly, in vv. 48–50 he finds two arguments with two different reasons, namely (d) that the form of the universal does not appear in its cognition (vv. 48–49), and (e) that the universal lacks efficacy (v. 50).

His division is the result of his effort to reflect the seven characteristics of the universal suggested by Devendrabuddhi and Manorathanandin.⁶⁾ In their comments on v. 51ab, the verse which says that the particular is that which is contrary to the [universal] as explained, they enumerate the seven characteristics of the particular as the opposites of those of the universal stated in the preceding discussion.⁷⁾ Manorathanandin further adds that the characteristics of the universal that are opposite to those of the particular serve [in Dharmakīrti's discussion] to establish the non-existence of the universal.⁸⁾ It is not wrong to count these characteristics in Dharmakīrti's argument as those of the universal and to understand them to be serving in some way as the reasons for asserting the non-existence of the universal; but to understand the context by dividing the argument according to these seven points is debatable;⁹⁾ for, as we shall see, of these some of these characteristics are not truly distinct. Furthermore, when we understand the argument thus, the meaning of the four criteria shown in the beginning of the argument blurs.

3. In brief the problems that arise in dividing vv. 11–50 according to the seven characteristics of the universal are as follows. First, Tosaki analysed vv. 48–50 as comprising (d) and (e), but since the claim of (e) is based on that of (d), these verses are better construed as a single continuous argument.¹⁰⁾ The subject there is that the universal is non-existent because it has no efficacy, which then corresponds to the first criterion of the four. (See

section 1 above.) The same holds for vv. 11–40: (a) vv. 11–24, (c) vv. 39–40, and also vv. 34–38, which are included in (b) in Tosaki's division, can be considered to have the same subject. The subject there is that the universal is non-existent because it is the object of the word,¹¹⁾ which corresponds to the third criterion.

It is true, however, that within vv. 11–40, vv. 25–33 are discussing something different. In the beginning of this section, in vv. 25–27b, Dharmakīrti argues that a universal is non-existent because it can neither be identical with nor different from an individual. This reasoning for the non-existence of the universal differs from that which we have seen above in vv. 11–24 and 34–40. But we see almost the same reasoning appearing again in vv. 41–44 in the argument for the same claim. The difference between the two sets of arguments is that Dharmakīrti presents vv. 41–44 more clearly as corresponding to the second criterion for distinguishing the two kinds of object.¹²⁾ Moreover, after vv. 25–27b, from v. 34 on, the argument for the non-existence of the universal from the fact that it is the object of a word resumes. It would therefore be better to take vv. 25–33 as derivative arguments appearing in the series of arguments corresponding to the third criterion. Verses 28–33 explain what the universal is: the universal, which has been demonstrated in vv. 25–27b to have no nature, is stated in v. 28 to be just the result of conceptual construction; and v. 29 states that it is an error to think that the universal has its own nature or that a thing is [identical with] it. Thus, the arguments in vv. 25–33 are claiming that the universal does not exist and that to think that it does is mistaken. This argument must have been inspired by the preceding arguments, those in vv. 19–24, which criticise the doctrine of the Brahmanical realists that existent universals are the object of words.¹³⁾

4. In the previous sections I have proposed to divide the argument into vv. 11–40, 41–44, and 48–50, and shown that each corresponds to one of the criteria. Verses 45–47, which have not been mentioned above, explain that the cognition of the universal arises in dependence on verbal convention, or, when the cognition is not accompanied by a word, the proximity between the things. Thus vv. 45–47 claim that the cognition of the universal arises from causes other than the universal itself, and so correspond to the fourth criterion.

Thus we can see the argument in vv. 11–50 as proving the universal's being non-existent on the basis of its other four characteristics indicated in the four criteria. We can understand that Dharmakīrti's argument serves to attack the doctrine of those realists who hold that the universal exists,¹⁴⁾ as well as to promote his own theory. It would be useful, in or-

(174) Dharmakīrti's Argument over the Universal in the Third Chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, vv. 11–50 (M. NOTAKE)

der to understand the characteristics of this argument, to consider how it appears when we see that it is criticism of the realists' position.

5. As we have seen, the characteristics of the universal discussed in the first two arguments, in vv. 11–40 and vv. 41–44, are its being the object of the word and its being common. These are the characteristics of the universal accepted both by Dharmakīrti and by the realists. But the former found them incompatible with the additional characteristic ascribed to universals by the latter, namely their being existent: in vv. 11–40 he demonstrates the contradictions that arise if the object of verbal cognition is real, and, in vv. 41–44, that commonality, if it existed, could have no relation with individuals.

On the other hand, the characteristics that Dharmakīrti ascribes to the universal in vv. 45–50 are those that the realists would not accept. He states in vv. 45–47 that the cognition of the universal arises from other causes [than itself], and in vv. 48–50 that the universal is never seen and so has no efficacy. These arguments can be seen to share the same basic view against the realists' position that the universal produces its own cognition. Using Dharmakīrti's own terms, we may say that he is refuting the realists' view that the universal has efficacy.

6. In short, in vv. 11–50 Dharmakīrti is criticising the view that the universal, which is the object of the word, exists and has efficacy. For him the real is the efficacious, and by this criterion only the particular qualifies.¹⁵⁾ It was necessary for him, in order to distinguish the particular and the universal, to refute the view that something common, which is the most basic characteristic of the universal, can exist with efficacy. The argument in vv. 11–50 can therefore be said to support his theory of the distinction between the two kinds of object.

* This paper is part of the result of a DFG project carried out with Prof. Eli Franco (Leipzig), in which we are preparing a critical edition and English translation of PV III 1–63. I gratefully acknowledge the support of the DFG and the help derived from discussion with my collaborator. I wish also to express my deep gratitude to Prof. Alexis Sanderson (All Souls College, Oxford) for his valuable suggestions in understanding the text and for his kind help with the revising of my English.

1) In this paper I translate both *sāmānya* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* as 'universal.' Dharmakīrti uses *these two terms* without any difference of intention. It is true as Prof. Yōichi Fukuda pointed out in responding to my paper in the 61st conference for the JAIBS, that Dharmakīrti tends to use the

Dharmakīrti's Argument over the Universal in the Third Chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, vv. 11–50 (M. NOTAKE) (175)

word *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* when he has Dignāga's words in his mind, as in PV III 3d and NB I 16; but we also see the term used in explaining his own theory, as in PV III 5. The fact is, however, that he almost always uses the term *sāmānya*, and that there are only a small number of places in his entire work where he uses the word *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*. I am grateful to Prof. Fukuda for his helpful comment.

- 2) See PVP P167a1/D143a6; Hiromasa Tosaki, *Bukkyōninshikiron no Kenkyū* (仏教認識論の研究). Vol. 1. Tokyo: Daitōshuppansha, 1979, p.120, fn. 144. Dharmakīrti's own remarks which appear in each argument assure this. See PV III 11a, 27b, 43ab, 50.
- 3) PV III 1b²–c¹, 2: *chaktyaśaktiṭaḥ | arthakriyāyām ... || sadṛśāsadrśatvāc ca viṣayāviṣayatvataḥ | śabdasyānyanimittānām bhāve dhīśadasattvataḥ*.
- 4) Tosaki [1979: 71–120].
- 5) A literal translation of Tosaki's words, which I find do not make good sense, would be 'that the universal is the object of the manifestation which is the same as the cognition whose object is an absence' (「無」を対象とする知と同じ顕現の対象). His interpretation is on the basis of his emendation of PVV 130.23 on the particular. See n. 7.
- 6) In considering the division of the argument, Tosaki also consulted Devendrabuddhi's syllogisms that summarise the arguments, and comments on the change of subject. See for instance, Tosaki [1979: 87, fn. 62; 103, fn. 100].
- 7) PVP P167a2–4/D143a7–b1, PVV 130.20–25: *yathoktāt sāmānyād viparītaṃ yat tat svalakṣaṇam ucyate. idaṃ ca vaiparītyam: anabhidheyatvam, tattvānyattvābhyām vācyatvam, asadart-hapratibhāsa viśiṣṭapratyaya viṣayatvam* (em., cf. PVP P167a2-3/D143a7* : *asadart-hapratyaya viśiṣṭapratibhāsa- PVV_m^{ac} : asadarthapratyaya viśiṣṭapratibhāsa- PVV_m^{pc}*) **, *asādhāraṇatvam, samketasmarāṇānapekṣapratipattikatvam, anyarūpaviviktasvarūpapratibhāsa-vattvam, arthakriyākṣamatvaṃ ca. *med pa'i don snang ba'i* (em. : *snang ba* PD) *khyad par med pa'i* (em. : *med pa* P, *med par* D) *shes pa'i yul ma yin pa*. **Tosaki [1979: 104 fn. 101]: *anasadarthapratyaya viśiṣṭapratibhāsa viṣayatva*.
- 8) PVV 130.25–26.
- 9) Tosaki confesses awkwardness in dividing the sections according to the explanations in PVP and PVV (See Tosaki [1979: 105, fn. 102; 108, fn. 107]). However, the point that he found problematic is different from that to which I am drawing attention in this paper. See Tosaki [1979: 120, fn. 144].
- 10) See PVA 211.19, PVV 130.16.
- 11) Verses 34–38 claim that the universal, the referent of the word, cannot be real, since words can refer to things that no longer exist or that do not yet exist, things, that is, of which existent universals could not be properties. Verses 39–40 assert the same by pointing out that verbal cognition is observed in respect both to things that exist and to things that have ceased to exist. In vv. 11c–18 Dharmakīrti is criticizing the concept of names (*nāman*) held by the Vaibhāṣikas. They think that names exist apart from sounds, and that the speaker's intention can be conveyed only through names. Dharmakīrti criticises this view by taking it to mean that the referent of a

(176) Dharmakīrti's Argument over the Universal in the Third Chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, vv. 11–50 (M. NOTAKE)

word is an existent name. What is refuted in this criticism is the existence of the object of the word. Whether or not the referent is a common property is not the point of the discussion. As for vv. 19–24, see n. 14.

- 12) The structure of the argument in vv. 25–27b and vv. 41–44, and the reasons used there, are basically the same. Both passages proceed in the following way: the universal cannot be identical with an individual, because the universal is common whereas the individual cannot be so; nor can they be different, because in that case there would be no relation between them. Therefore, the universal has no own nature. In the case of the argument in vv. 41–44, however, Dharmakīrti adds a line in v. 43ab that indicates the second criterion: ‘therefore, nothing but the universal’s nature of being common is the mark of its being unreal.’
- 13) See n. 14.
- 14) Dharmakīrti explicitly attacks the doctrine of the existence of common properties in the following places. In 19–23 he counters the theory, maintained by such realists as the Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas, that universals exist independently of individuals and are the objects of words. Verse 24 is directed against opponents such as the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsakas who hold that universals, the referents of words, are real and one with individuals.
- 15) See PV III 3; also Shōryū Katsura (2002), “Sonzai towa nanika.” *Bukkyō bunkakenkyūjo kiyō* (仏教文化研究所紀要) 41: 264–265.

Abbreviations of text-titles: NB *Nyāyabindu*, PV *Pramāṇavārttika*, PVA *Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra*, PVP *Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā*, PVV *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti*.

〈Key words〉 Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇavārttika*, *sāmānya*, *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, universal, 普遍, 一般相
(Researcher of the DFG, University of Leipzig, M. A.)