Non-Erroneous Cognition and Direct Awareness

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0. In his *pramāṇaviniścaya*, Dharmakīrti added the qualifier ‘non-erroneous’ (*abhrānta*, Q2) to Dignāga’s definition of perception, “being free from conception” (*kalpanāpoḍha*, Q1), in order to rule out sensory illusions from perception. As Funayama (1999) has already clarified, among Dharmakīrti’s followers, Vinitadeva and Kamalaśīla interpreted Q2 in the sense of ‘non-deceptive’ (*avisamvādaka*) because they held a common view that the definition of perception was made from the standpoint of both the Sautrāntika and Yogācāra schools. But Prajñākaragupta’s approach to the definition of perception is different from theirs.

Concerning Dignāga’s definition of perception, as Hattori (1968: 92) has already pointed out, Pra does not recognize the necessity of Q2, although he was aware of Dharmakīrti’s definition in the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*.¹⁾ In another part of the PVA²⁾, on the contrary, he introduces an objection that perception can be defined only by Q2,³⁾ and he gives his assent to this idea. These two explanations seem to contradict each other. However, by considering these explanations in the manner of Pra, we find that these two qualifiers have the same meaning, namely, direct awareness (*sākṣātkaraṇa*), which is the essential definition of perception. In this paper, I try to make clear the role of direct awareness in his explanation of the definition of perception.

1. Generally speaking, Q1 excludes all conceptual cognition, whereas Q2 excludes sensory illusion from perception. In the following explanation of Q2, however, Pra rejects this idea by regarding Q2 as a definition to exclude only the erroneous cognition caused by the mind, namely, mental illusion (*manobhrānti*): *sākṣātkāri hi pratyakṣan, tac cābhrāntagrahaṇena śakyaṇ nīdarśaytum / na hy asākṣātkaraṇākāram abhrāntam, savikalpakasya bhrāntatvāt* (PVA 335.12-14). This explanation derives from Dignāga’s statement in his *Pramāṇasamuccaya* where he attributes errors only to the mind.⁴⁾ But it is remarkable that Pra gives to Dignāga’s discussion a new perspective by introducing the notion of direct awareness. It becomes clear in the next passage where he explains the reason that erroneous cognitions can be excluded by Q1 regarding Dignāga’s definition of perception: *sarvasya sākṣātkā-*

raṇasya pratyakṣatvāt / dvicandrādijñānasyāpi pratibhāsamāne dvitve pratyakṣataiva / tena yatra yat sākṣātkāri tatra tat pratyakṣam (PVA 252.30-31), Here, too, **Pra** uses the notion of direct awareness for his explanation of perception. Important is the fact that a cognition of a double moon, one kind of sensory illusion, is regarded as perception free from conception, in the sense of direct awareness.

2. Then, what is this direct awareness? Although Dharmottara interprets the actual meaning of the term ‘*pratyakṣa*’ as direct awareness of objects (*arthasākṣātkāritva*), **Pra** has another view on the interpretation of the term ‘*pratyakṣa*’. He gives two kinds of interpretation : the first is the interpretation regarding the definition of perception in Dignāga’s *Nyāyamukha*, and the second is **Pra**’s own idea. Dignāga defines perception as follows : *akṣam akṣam prati vartata iti pratyakṣam*. **Pra** interprets this definition as the metaphorical meaning of direct awareness, because not only sense-perceptions but also the other three kinds of perception, i. e., mental perception, self-cognition and yogic perception, should be included in this definition.⁵⁾ In his second interpretation, on the other hand, he uses the term ‘direct awareness’, meaning (cognition’s) pervasion of the object itself (*viśayasvarūpavyāpti*) in accordance with the etymological interpretation of the term ‘*akṣa*’: *athavā ’śnute vyāpontiṭy akṣam / viśayasvarūpavyāptiś ca sākṣātkaraṇam eva. tataḥ sarve’kṣajā avikalpakā eva* (PVA 252.27-28). We can find the same etymological interpretation of the term ‘*akṣa*’ (<√*ās*) in some Jaina works.⁶⁾ Through this interpretation, Jaina authors explain ‘*akṣa*’ as referring not to the five sense organs, but to *jīva*. An important point of this interpretation is that ‘*akṣa*’ means something other than the five sense organs. Unlike Jaina authors, **Pra** does not interpret ‘*akṣa*’ as *jīva*, but as the cause of clear appearance (*spāṣṭapratibhāsanimitta*, i. e. *manas*).⁷⁾ In this way, the term ‘*pratyakṣa*’ can mean cognitions caused by the mind.

3. Therefore, we can assume that **Pra** considers Dignāga’s definition of perception as the definition of self-cognition, not of perception in general. Let us look again at his discussion of the definition “being free from conception” In order to exclude sensory illusion from perception, he proposes that the same cognition can be considered from two different points of view: sensory illusion and self-cognition. Compared with external objects like one moon, the cognition of a double moon and the like becomes erroneous, but even such cognitions can be regarded as direct awareness of its appearing image. In the same way, our usual cognitions are also to be considered from a different point of view. As far as the external objects are conceptually constructed, our cognition of them becomes erroneous because

their appearing images in our mind are different from the external objects as such.⁸⁾ Thus, ultimately, there remains only self-cognition as cognition free from conception.⁹⁾ In other words, as the sub-commentator of the PVA, Yamāri, points out,¹⁰⁾ this definition is to be interpreted from the Yogācāra point of view. We can find similar arguments regarding the distinction between self-cognition and the other cognitions in several parts of this PVA. For instance, **Pra** argues that every cognition except for the self-cognition becomes erroneous with regard to the object itself to be attained.¹¹⁾ Concerning objects of human action (*pravṛtti-viṣaya*), cognition is considered to be an element of a process toward its effect, namely, attainment or abandonment of its object. Thus, even sense-perceptions become erroneous with regard to their objects themselves to be attained because there is a distance between objects to be attained and objects to be perceived, as in the case of inference. Apart from such a process of human action, **Pra** considers self-cognition on a different level in his epistemological system, which has already shown in the PVA ad PV II4d-5a.

Abbreviations JTBh : *Jaina Tarkabhāṣā*. S. Sanghavi et al. eds., Ahmedabad 1993. NKC : *Nyāyakumudacandra*. M. Kumar ed., vol. 1, Delhi 1991. PM : *Pramāṇamīmāṃsā*. S. Sanghavi et al. eds., Ahmedabad 1998. PVA : *Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāra*. R. Sāṅkrtyāyana ed., Patna 1953. VABh : *Viśeṣāvaśyakabhāṣya*. D. Malvania ed., Ahmedabad 1993. Y : *Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkāraṭīkā Supariśuddhī* [tib.]. P. No. 5723, D. No. 4226. Funayama (1999): "Kamalaśīla's Interpretation of 'Non-Erroneous' in the Determination of Direct Perception and Related Problems." *Dharmakīrti's Thought and Its Impact on Indian and Tibetan Philosophy*, Wien, 73-99. Hattori (1968): *Dignāga, On Perception*, Cambridge. Ono (1996): "A Tradition of the Buddhist Logico-epistemological School" (in Japanese), *Tetsugaku Shisō Ronshū*, No. 21, 162-142. **Notes** 1) Cf. PVA 252.20-253.5. 2) Cf. PVA 335.12-14. 3) Against the same objection, **Pra** replies elsewhere that **Q1** is necessary in response to the views of others. Cf. PVA 252.23-25. This idea is traced to Dharmottara's view. Cf. Ono (1996: 158). 4) Cf. Hattori (1968: 96 n.1.53). 5) Cf. PVA 252.26-27. 6) Cf. VABh 23.11-16; NKC 26.6-7; PM 7.17-18; JTBh 2.8-9. I would like to thank prof. Masahiro Inami for valuable information about the VABh. 7) Cf. PVA 277.19-21. 8) A similar distinction is shown elsewhere as a distinction between *svarūpa* and *artha*. Cf. PVA 331.13-16. 9) Cf. PVA 252.29-253.5. 10) Y (P) Me 219b6. 11) Cf. PVA 221.1-8.

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