

## Self-Awareness and Mental Perception

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**Abstract** The purpose of this paper is to clarify Prajñākaragupta's view of mental perception (*mānasapratyakṣa*), with special emphasis on the relationship between mental perception and self-awareness. Dignāga, in his PS 1.6ab, says: "mental [perception] (*mānasa*) is [of two kinds:] a cognition of an [external] object and awareness of one's own mental states such as passion." According to his commentator Jinendrabuddhi, a cognition of an external object and awareness of an internal object such as passion are here equally called 'mental perception' in that neither depends on any of the five external sense organs. Dharmakīrti, on the other hand, considers mental perception to be a cognition which arises after sensory perception, and does not call self-awareness 'mental perception'. According to Prajñākaragupta, mental perception is the cognition which determines an object as 'this' (*idam iti jñānam*). Unlike Dharmakīrti, he holds that the mental perception follows not only after the sensory perception of an external object, but also after the awareness of an internal object. The self-awareness which Dignāga calls 'mental perception' is for Prajñākaragupta the cognition which determines as 'this' an internal object, or an object which consists in a cognition; it is to be differentiated from the cognition which cognizes cognition itself, that is, self-awareness in its original sense.

**Keywords** Dignāga · Dharmakīrti · Prajñākaragupta · *mānasapratyakṣa* · *svasaṃvedana*

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## Introduction

In *Nyāyabindu* 1.7–11, Dharmakīrti states that there are four types of perception: sensory perception (*indriyajñāna*), mental perception (*mānasapratyakṣa*, *manovijñāna*), self-awareness (*svasaṃvedana*), and yogic perception (*yogipratyakṣa*).<sup>1</sup> But did his predecessor Dignāga already accept the fourfold division of perception in the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (PS) and his own *Vṛtti* (PSV)? On this question different opinions exist. According to Prof. Eli Franco (1993, 2005), Dignāga accepted only three types of perception, i.e., sensory, mental, and yogic perception, while according to Prof. Yao Zhihua (2004, 2005), Dignāga accepted self-awareness as a separate type of perception, like Dharmakīrti:

It is evident that self-cognition is a separate type of perception and there are altogether four types of perception for Dignāga. His own works do not support the allegation that he accepts only three types of perception, which is only found in the commentatorial work of Prajñākaragupta.<sup>2</sup>

Yao's point is that the Sanskrit fragment of PSV from Prajñākaragupta's *Pramāṇavārttikālaṃkāra* (PVA) on which Franco bases his argument does not accord in its wording with the two Tibetan versions of PSV. We should accept the reading of these Tibetan translations, Yao argues, and not that of the fragment from PVA. I have to say, however, that both scholars miss an important point: What is Prajñākaragupta's own view? Examining his treatment of mental perception can, in my view, shed light on the intention behind Prajñākaragupta's quotation of the relevant passage from PSV, and further contribute to clarifying the status of mental perception in the Buddhist epistemological tradition.

In this paper I shall therefore re-examine Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's views about mental perception by focusing on the relationship between mental perception and self-awareness, and I shall further clarify Prajñākaragupta's understanding of mental perception.

## Dignāga's Definition of Mental Perception

Let us start with Dignāga's definition of mental perception in PS 1.6ab with the PSV:

*mānasam cārtharāgādisvasaṃvittir akalpikā* |<sup>3</sup>  
*yid kyang don dang chags la sogs* ||

<sup>1</sup> NB 1.7-11: *tat caturvidham* || *indriyajñānam* || *svaviṣayānantaraviṣayasahakāriṇendriyajñānena samanantarapratyayena janītaṃ tan manovijñānam* || *sarvacittacaittānām ātmasaṃvedanam* || *bhūtārthabhāvanāprakarṣaparyantaṃ yogijñānaṃ ceti* ||

<sup>2</sup> Yao (2005, 134).

<sup>3</sup> PVA 303,23; Vibhūti 191, n. 3. See Hattori (1968, n. 1.45).

*rang rig rtog pa med pa yin* ||<sup>4</sup>

In addition, mental [perception] (*mānasa*) is [of two kinds:] a cognition of an [external] object (*arthaśamvitti*) and awareness of one's own mental states such as passion (*rāgādisvasamvitti*).<sup>5</sup> [Both of them are] free from conceptual construction (*akalpikā*). [Thus, mental perception is also a type of perception].

PSV: *mānasam api rūpādiviṣayālabanam avikalpakam anubhavākārapravṛttam*.<sup>6</sup> *rāgadvēṣamohasukhaduḥkhādiṣu ca*<sup>7</sup> *svasamvedanam indriyānapekṣatvān mānasam pratyakṣam*.<sup>8</sup>

*yid kyang yul gzugs la sogs pa la dmigs shing nyams su myong ba'i rnam pas 'jug pa ste, rtog pa med pa 'ba' zhig go. 'dod chags dang zhe sdang dang gti mug dang bde ba dang sdug bsngal la sogs pa ni dbang po la mi bltos* (V: ltos K) *pa'i phyir, rang rig pa'i mngon sum mo.*

A mental [cognition], whose objective basis (*ālambana*) is an object such as color [i.e. an external object], also occurs in the form of direct experience (*anubhavākārapravṛtta*) and is free from conceptual construction (*avikalpaka*). [Therefore, this mental cognition is also a type of perception.] In addition, awareness of one's own mental states such as passion, hatred, ignorance, pleasure and pain is [also] a [kind of] mental perception because it does not depend on the sense organs.

The problem here is that the Tibetan translation does not contain an equivalent to the underlined occurrence of the word *mānasam* in the final sentence of the PSV passage.<sup>9</sup> From the Tibetan, this sentence could be translated as follows:

Such things as passion, hatred, ignorance, pleasure and pain are [also regarded as a type of] perception, which is called self-awareness, because it does not depend on the sense organs.

<sup>4</sup> PVA<sub>T</sub> (D 281b3–4; P 348a6): *yid kyang don dang chags la sogs* || *rang rig rnam par mi rtog pa'o* ||

<sup>5</sup> PST<sup>1</sup> 51,8–10: *arthaśabdo 'yaṃ jñeyaparyāyah. rāgādīnām svam rāgādisvam. svaśabdo 'yam ātmavacanah. arthas' ca rāgādisvam ca, tasya samvittir artharāgādisvasamvittih*; PST<sub>T</sub> (D 24b4–5; P 28a3–4): *don gyi sgra 'di ni shes bya'i rnam grangs so* || 'dod chags la sogs pa mams kyi rang ni | chags la sogs | rang ngo || rang gi sgra 'di ni bdag nyid rjod par byed pa'o || don dang chags pa sogs rang ngo || de rig pa ni don dang chags la sogs rang rig pa ste |

<sup>6</sup> Steinkellner's edition has no period here. This is my punctuation. Cf. PVA 303,24: *mānasam apy artharāgādisvarūpasamvedanam akalpakatvāt pratyakṣam, anubhavākārapravṛtteh*; PVA<sub>T</sub> (D 281b4; P 348a6–7): *don dang 'dod chags la sogs pa'i* || *rang gi ngo bo rig pa'i yid kyang rnam par rtog pa med pa'i phyir mngon sum yin te* | *nyams su myong ba'i rnam par 'jug pa'i phyir ro* ||

<sup>7</sup> Vibhūti 229, n. 1: *rāgādiṣu ca...*; Vibhūti 194, n. 1: *rāgādisukhādiṣu...* See Hattori 1968: n. 1.47.

<sup>8</sup> PVA 305,17–18: *rāgadvēṣamohasukhaduḥkhādiṣu ca svasamvedanam indriyānapekṣatvān mānasam pratyakṣam iti.*

<sup>9</sup> As Yao (2004, 61–62) points out, Hattori (1968, 181,13–15) emends Vasudhararakṣita's translation by changing *rang rig pa'i* in the Tibetan text into *yid kyi* and replacing *ni* with *la yang rang rig pa* without any explanation. Cf. PVA<sub>T</sub> (D 283a4–5; P 350a6–7): *chags pa dang | sdang ba dang | gti mug dang | bde ba dang | sdug bsngal la sogs pa rang rig pa ni dbang po la mi ltos* (D; *bltos* P) *pa'i phyir |yid kyi mngon sum yin no zhes so* ||

Thus, we have at least two possibilities:

- (1) If we adopt the Sanskrit text which is a fragment from PVA, Dignāga holds that a mental cognition of an external thing is also a type of perception and that the awareness of an internal thing such as passion in oneself is a kind of mental perception.
- (2) If we adopt the Tibetan text, Dignāga holds that a mental perception cognizes an external thing and that self-awareness is a cognition separate from mental perception.

### The Meaning of the Word “*mānasa*”

In the context, however, it is more likely that the original text of the PSV contained the word *mānasam*, for otherwise, the expression *indriyānapekṣatvāt*, ‘because it does not depend on the sense organs,’ would become meaningless. Jinendrabuddhi comments as follows:

PST 56,4–5: ... *tat kasmād idam eva mānasam ucyata ity āha – indriyāna-pekṣatvād iti. rūpīndriyanirapekṣatvād iti bhāvaḥ.*

PST<sub>1</sub> (D 26b4-5; P 30a6-7): *de ci'i phyir 'di kho na yid las byung bar brjod par bya zhe na gsungs pa | dbang po la mi ltos (D; bltos P) pa'i phyir zhes pa ste (D; zhes te P) gzugs can gyi dbang po la ltos (D; bltos P) pa med pa nyid kyi phyir zhes pa dgongs pa'o ||*

[Objection:] Therefore, how could this very [cognition, i.e., self-awareness,] be called ‘mental perception’?

[Answer:] [To this objection, Dignāga] answers: “Because it does not depend on the sense organs.” What he means here is this: [self-awareness is a kind of mental perception] because it does not depend on any of the [five] material sense organs (*rūpīndriya*).

This comment of Jinendrabuddhi’s clearly shows that the text of PSV known to him contained the word *mānasam*. It is important to note, moreover, that according to Jinendrabuddhi, the word *mānasa* refers simply to a cognition which is not dependent on any of the five material and external sense organs, such as the eyes. If self-awareness does not depend on the external sense organs, it may well be referred to as a ‘mental perception.’ If we accept Jinendrabuddhi’s interpretation, therefore, with the final sentence of the PSV passage Dignāga intends to imply simply that self-awareness is a cognition which does not depend on any of the five external sense organs. Along similar lines, when he says that there is a mental cognition which cognizes an external object, he probably means that there is a cognition which cognizes an external object independently of the external sense organs.<sup>10</sup>

According to this interpretation, in short, the word *mānasa* at the beginning of the above passage from PSV refers to a cognition which is distinguished from self-awareness because of the difference in their objects, whereas the same word at

<sup>10</sup> In his *Sarvajñāsiddhi*, Ratnakīrti explains the word *manas* as follows: RNĀ 17,23: *manaḥśabdena tāvad asmākam anakṣajam vijñānam evābhipretam*. See also Funayama (1999, 76, n. 15).

the end of the passage refers to a cognition under which self-awareness is subsumed. Hereafter I will call the former cognition *mānasa*<sub>1</sub> and the latter *mānasa*<sub>2</sub>.

### Dharmakīrti's Definition of Mental Perception

In *Nyāyabindu* 1.9, Dharmakīrti defines mental perception as follows:

*svaviśayānantaraviśayasahakāriṇendriyajñānena samanantarapratyayena janitam tan manovijñānam* ||<sup>11</sup>

Mental perception (*manovijñāna*) is that which is produced by the immediately preceding condition (*samanantarapratyaya*), i.e., sensory perception, which is co-active with the object which immediately follows [the sensory perception's] own object.

Needless to say, Dharmakīrti is here concerned with *mānasa*<sub>1</sub>. He does not call self-awareness 'mental perception.'

### Mental Perception and Self-Awareness

In *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (PVin) 1 20,9, Dharmakīrti says that "the awareness of one's own mental states such as pleasure is also [regarded as a type of] perception" (*sukhādīnām svasaṃvedanam api pratyakṣam*).<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, however, Prajñākaragupta takes up this sentence and adds *mānasam* to it:

PVA 307,11: *sukhādīnām api svasaṃvedanam mānasam pratyakṣam*.

The awareness of one's own mental states such as pleasure is also [regarded as] mental perception.<sup>13</sup>

This passage occurs in the commentary on *Pramāṇavārttika* 3.249 where Dharmakīrti begins to explain self-awareness after having discussed mental perception (*mānasa*<sub>1</sub>). Prajñākaragupta clearly uses the word *mānasa* here in the sense of *mānasa*<sub>2</sub>.

Ravigupta, who is considered to be a disciple of Prajñākaragupta, finds it difficult to make sense of the use of the word *mānasa* here. He gives the following interpretation:

<sup>11</sup> NBT 58,1–4 ad NB 1.9: *sva ātmīyo viśaya indriyajñānasya, tasyānantarah, na vidyate 'ntaram asyeti. antaram ca vyavadhānam viśeṣaś cocyate. tataś cāntare pratiśiddhe samānajātīyo divi-tyakṣaṇabhāvya upādeyakṣaṇa indriyavijñānaviśayasya gṛhyate. tathā ca satīndriyājñānaviśayakṣaṇād uttarakṣaṇa ekasantānāntarbhūto gṛhītaḥ. sa sahakārī yasyendriyajñānasya tat tathoktam*. See also PVin 1 19,3–6: *mānasam cākṣavijñānanantarapratyayodbhavam | tadarthānantaragrāhi* (v.19a-c) *pratyakṣam iti vartate. mānasam apīndriyajñānena samanantarapratyayena svaviśayānantarākṣaṇasahakārīṇa janitam pratyakṣam*. Cf. PVA 305,1: *mānasam apīndriyavijñānena svaviśayānantaraviśaya-sahakārīṇa jātitam pratyakṣam*, and Vādirāja's *Nyāyaviniścayavivarāṇa* (NVV) I 525,3–4.

<sup>12</sup> PVin, 62,8: *bde ba la sogs pa rang rig pa rnam kyang mngon sum mo* ||

<sup>13</sup> PVA<sub>1</sub> (D 284b6; P 352b1-2): *bde ba la sogs pa rang rig pa'i yid kyang mngon sum mo* ||

R (D 101a7; P 122b5): *bde ba la sogs pa rang rig* (D; *rigs* P) *pa yang yid kyi mngon sum bzhin mngon sum yin no* ||

As mental [perception] is [a type of perception], so the awareness of one's own mental states such as pleasure is also [regarded as a type of] perception.

It is interesting to note that Prajñākaragupta calls self-awareness 'mental perception' as Dignāga does in PSV. Obviously Ravigupta could not quite grasp the point made by Prajñākaragupta.

### Is Pleasure Sensory or Mental?

Let us now look into PVA in order to understand the context where the Sanskrit fragment of PSV that we discussed above is found. After showing that the awareness of one's own mental states such as pleasure has to be regarded as mental, Prajñākaragupta says the following:

PVA 305,16–21: “*aīndriyasyaiva sukhāsukhasyotpatter*” (PVin 1 37,3)<sup>14</sup> *iti virudhyata iti cet. atrāpi mūlācāryavacanam virudhyate. “rāgadveṣamohasukhaduḥkhādiṣu svasaṃvedanam indriyānapekṣatvān mānaṣaṃ pratyakṣam”* (PSV ad PS 1.6ab) *iti. iyaṃ tarhi dharmakīrter akīrtir āyātā, aīndriyasyaiva sukhāsukhasyeti. sukhādiśabdena*<sup>15</sup> *sukhahetū rasādikam evocyate. kaṭumiṣṭam pratibhāty avikalpayato 'pīndriyajñāna iti yāvat. mānaṣam eva vāvikalpakatvasādharṃyāt tathocyate ity avirodhaḥ.*

[Objection:] There is contradiction with [what Dharmakīrti says in PVin 1 37,3:] “Because pleasure and non-pleasure [i.e., pain] (*sukhāsukha*) arise in fact as relating to the senses (*aīndriya*).”

[Answer:] This statement of [Dharmakīrti's] is also in contradiction to the following statement by the *mūlācārya*, 'the original teacher' [i.e., Dignāga]: “awareness of one's own mental states such as passion, hatred, ignorance, pleasure and pain is [also regarded as] a kind of mental perception because it does not depend on the sense organs.” (PSV ad PS 1.6ab)

[Objection:] Then, Dharmakīrti, who says: “pleasure and non-pleasure (*sukhāsukha*) [arise] in fact as relating to the senses (*aīndriya*),” would suffer

<sup>14</sup> -*otpatter* M, *skye ba'i phyir T*; -*otpattir* S.

PVin 1 37,1–4: *iṣṭāniṣṭāvabhāsiṃyaḥ kalpanā nendriyabuddhaya iti cet, na, tatrāpy ariṣṭādāv apratisandhānadarśanāt, anyatrāpi śabdagandharasaviṣeṣair abhinnaṃ prāṇiviṣeṣānām aīndriyakasvaiva\* sukhāsukhasyotpattē. tasmāt svasaṃvedanarūpavārthapratītiḥ.* (\*Note that Prajñākaragupta has *aīndriyasya* for PVin ms. A *aīndriyakasya*; PVin mss. B and C also read *aīndriyasya*.) PVin, 88,23–30: 'dod pa dang mi 'dod par snang ba ni rtog pa yin gyi dbang po'i blo ni ma yin no zhe na | ma yin te | de la yang 'chi ltas la sogs pa'i tshē mtshams sbyor ba med par mthong ba'i phyir dang | gzhan la yang tha dad pa med pa'i sgra dang dri dang ro la sogs pa'i khyad par gyis srog chags kyi bye brag rnam kyi dbang po nyid kyi dbe ba dang mi bde ba bskyed pa'i phyir ro || de'i phyir don rtogs pa ni rang rig pa kho na'i rang bzhin no || See also PV 3.345.

<sup>15</sup> *sukhādiśabdena* M, *bde ba la sogs pa'i sgras ni T*; *sukhādiśabdena na S*.

dishonor (*akīrti*).

[Answer:] With the word *sukha*, ‘pleasure,’ and so on, [in this statement, Dharmakīrti] means just a thing such as taste which is the cause of pleasure (*sukhahetu*). In short, for a person who is not engaged in conceptual construction, bitterness, [which is the cause of pain,] and sweetness, [which is the cause of pleasure,]<sup>16</sup> appear in sensory perception.

[Second interpretation:] Or, [the cognition of pleasure and pain], being precisely what is mental (*mānasa*), is spoken of as [‘sensory’ (*aindriya*)] in that manner, on the basis of the similarity: both [self-awareness and sensory perception] are free from conceptual construction.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, there is no contradiction.

In PVin 1 37,1–4, Dharmakīrti states that pleasure and pain are sensory (*aindriyaṃ sukhāsukham*). If we take this statement literally, we have to resolve a contradiction to Dignāga’s statement in the PSV that the awareness of one’s own mental states such as pleasure is mental (*svasaṃvedanam mānasam*). Trying to explain away the contradiction, Prajñākaragupta argues that Dharmakīrti’s statement can be interpreted in two ways:

- (1) The word *sukha* indicates, or indirectly refers to, the cause of pleasure, i.e., taste, so that by the statement in question Dharmakīrti means that the cause of pleasure is sensorily grasped.
- (2) Awareness of pleasure in oneself is a kind of mental perception and hence free from mental construction, so that it can be metonymically called sensory perception because of a similarity. Both self-awareness and sensory perception are free from conceptual construction.

We have to note that Prajñākaragupta uses the word *mānasa* here, which I think suggests once more that the word *mānasam* was contained in Dignāga’s original text, for it is beyond doubt that Prajñākaragupta speaks of self-awareness as *mānasa* because of Dignāga’s usage of this word.

### Prajñākaragupta’s Definition of a Mental Perception

Next, let us consider Prajñākaragupta’s definition of *mānasa*<sub>1</sub>, which is different from those of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Prajñākaragupta says:

<sup>16</sup> J (D 94a2-3; P 106b6–7): *rtsa ba dang ’gal ba’ i bshad pa gzhan du ’gyur ro zhes bya ba’ i rigs pa bstan pa ni | bde ba la sogs pa’ i sgras ni zhes bya ba ste | bde ba dang bde ba ma yin pa’ i rgyu yin pa’ i phyir bde ba (D; phyir zhes P) dang bde ba ma yin pa ni (D; pa’ i P) tsha ba dang zhim pa la sogs pa’ i ngo bo’ o ||*

<sup>17</sup> J (D 94a3; P 106b8): *de skad brjod pa ni dbang po las byung ba zhes bya bar nye bar btags pa yin no ||*

PVA 305,4:

*idam ityādi yaj jñānam abhyāsāt purataḥ sthite |*  
*sākṣātkaraṇatas tat tu pratyakṣam mānasam matam ||443||<sup>18</sup>*

With reference to a thing before one's eyes, a cognition occurs in a form such as 'this' (*idam iti*) on account of repeated practice (*abhyāsa*). This cognition is considered to be mental perception since it directly apprehends its object (*sākṣātkaraṇataḥ*).<sup>19</sup> (443)

According to Prajñākaragupta, mental perception is a cognition which grasps its object as 'this' (*idam iti jñānam*).<sup>20</sup> Jayanta explains that what is meant by the expressions *idam ityādi* and *abhyāsāt* are respectively that the objective basis (*dmigs pa*, \**ālabhana*) and the cause (*rgyu mtshan*, \**nimitta*) of mental perception are different from those that give rise to sensory perception.<sup>21</sup>

Prajñākaragupta explains the difference in function between the visual organ and repeated practice as follows:

PVA 305,5–7: *atha cakṣurvyāpārād upajāyamānaṃ cākṣuṣam eva. na, rūpapatibhāsamātre cakṣuṣa upayogo 'bhīniveśe tu pūrvābhyāsasya. tena, cakṣuṣo 'tra vyāpārābhāvāt, manasaḥ pūrvābhyāsalakṣaṇād utpatteḥ, mānasam pratyakṣam etat.*

[Objection:] A cognition which arises through the function of the visual organ is none other than visual perception (*cākṣuṣa*).

[Answer:] No. The visual organ serves only for color to appear [to a cognition] (*pratibhāsamātra*), while former repeated practice serves to determine [the color] (*abhīniveśa*). Therefore, this cognition is mental perception because the visual organ has no function towards the [determination] and because [this cognition] arises from the mind (*manas*) which is characterized as former repeated practice (*pūrvābhyāsalakṣaṇa*).

<sup>18</sup> This verse is quoted in NVV I 119,6–7. The same verse is found in the *Tarkarahasya* (TR) with a modification, cf. TR 29\*,5–6: *idam ityādi yad jñānam abhyāsāt purataḥ sthite | sākṣātkaraṇatas bhāsyē\* pratyakṣam mānasam matam || (\*bhāsyē TR<sub>M</sub>; bhāvye TR<sub>Sh</sub>, emended to *tat tu* by Yaita.)*

<sup>19</sup> See also PVA 305,5: *idam iti purovartini sākṣātkaraṇākāreṇa pravartamānaṃ mānasam pratyakṣam.*

<sup>20</sup> The author of the TR explains the connection between NB 1.9 and PVA k. 443. TR 29\*,7–11: *sva ātmīyo\* viśayo manasaḥ\*\* tasyānantaro nirantaro viśayo manasa eva. anena punaḥpunarāvartanaṃ viśayasyābhyāsa uktaḥ. tatsahakāriṇendriyajñānena samanantarapratyayeneti purataḥ sthītatvam uktaṃ viśayasya. niyatārthasamanantarapratyayajanītatvena sākṣātkaraṇam abhilakṣitam. (\*sva ātmīyo TR<sub>M</sub>, Yaita; sukhātmīyo TR<sub>Sh</sub>. \*\*manasaḥ TR<sub>M</sub>, TR<sub>Sh</sub>; indriyajñānasya Yaita.)* For further details, see Kobayashi 2008. On the understanding of Prajñākaragupta's view of mental perception in the Tibetan tradition, see Tillemans (1989, 72–73).

<sup>21</sup> J (D 93b3; P 106a6): *dbang po'i mtshan nyid dang mi mthun pa'i dmigs pa bstan pa ni 'di'i zhes sogs zhes bya ba'o || shes pa de'i rgyu mtshan nyid mi mthun par bstan pa ni goms pa las zhes (em.; zhes om. D, P) bya ba'o ||*



Yamāri explains that what the term *abhiniveśa* refers to is the determination of something in the form ‘this’ (\**idam ity adhyavasāyaḥ*).<sup>22</sup> According to Prajñākaragupta, the term *mānasa* denotes what arises from the mind (*manasa utpattiḥ*); and what is called ‘mind’ is simply former repeated practice (*pūrvābhyāsa*), which brings about the determination (*abhiniveśa*) of a given object in the form ‘this.’ Clearly, thus, what he calls mental perception is a cognition which determines its object as ‘this’ and which does not depend on the function of a sense organ.

Then, why is such a cognition required separately from sensory perception? Prajñākaragupta answers this question as follows:

PVA 305,8–9: *athāpi syāt, tadākārasya cakṣurādivijñānenaiva grahaṇāt mānasam vyartham. na vyartham. adhimukter adhiḥkāyāḥ sambhavāt. idam ity eva kṛtvā pravartate. tena pravartakatvāt pramāṇam.*

[Objection:] Mental perception is useless because the form of the [given object] is directly grasped by a cognition such as a visual cognition itself.

[Answer:] It is not useless, for determination (*adhimukti*)<sup>23</sup> occurs as something additional [to sensory cognition]. One takes action [towards a given object] only after thinking ‘this.’ Therefore, mental perception is a valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) because it incites one to take action [towards a given object] (*pravartaka*).

It is highly important that what Prajñākaragupta calls mental perception is a cognition which, determining its object as ‘this,’ causes the cognizer in question to take action towards the object.

### Self-Cognition as a Mental Perception

As said above, Prajñākaragupta like Dignāga regards self-awareness as a kind of mental perception. But this does not mean that self-awareness is for Prajñākaragupta a determining cognition, as becomes clear in the following passage:

PVA 308,20–23: *athāpi pratibhāsamāna eva prabandhena sukhādāv idaṃ sukhādīti yadā vijñānam adhimuktirūpam upajāyate, tadā kasmān na savikalpakatā. atra mānasam pratyakṣam artha iveti varṇitam. tathā hi,*

*artharūpe sukhādau ca yadedam iti vartate |  
svarūpagrahasākṣāttve sarvaṃ tan mānasam matam ||474||*

<sup>22</sup> Y (D 213b6; P 288b3-4): ‘*dzin pa la zhes bya ba ni | ’di zhes bya bar (zhes bya bar D; zhes par P) lhaḡ par zhen pa ste | de la ni sngar gyi goms pa’i byed pa ’jug pa yin no || des na ’di mig las byung ba ji ltar yin zhes dgongs pa’o ||*

<sup>23</sup> It can be surmised that Prajñākaragupta uses the word *adhimukti* in the same sense as Abhidharma scholars. In Abhidharma texts, *adhimukti* or *adhimokṣa* is enumerated as one of the mental states (*caitta*). AKBh 54,23: *adhimokṣo ’dhimuktiḥ*; AKV 128,2–3: *adhimuktis tadālabanasya guṇato ’vadhāraṇam*. See also TrBh 25,27–29: . . . *yenāvākāreṇa tan niścitam anityaduḥkhādyaḥkāreṇa tenāvākāreṇa tasya vastuś cetasya abhiniveśanam evam etan nānyathety avadhāraṇam adhimokṣaḥ*.

[Objection:] If, after a thing such as pleasure continually appears [to cognition], there occurs a cognition in the form ‘this is pleasure’, [or in the form ‘this is pain’], etc., (*idaṃ sukhādīti vijñānam*) which consists in determination (*adhimukti*), then why is [this cognition] not conceptual?

[Answer:] It has already been explained that just as mental perception occurs with reference to an external object, so [it also occurs] with reference to this [i.e., a thing like pleasure].<sup>24</sup> To explain:

When a cognition in the form ‘this’ occurs with reference to an external object and to a thing such as pleasure [after they appear in cognitions], any cognition of this sort is considered to be a mental [perception] on the basis of its grasping directly the essence of its object (*svarūpagrahasākṣātvā*).<sup>25</sup> (474)

What Prajñākaragupta here calls mental perception is the cognition in the form ‘this’, which occurs with reference to both an external object and an internal object such as pleasure. It is to be noted that the cognition in the form ‘this’ which occurs with reference to an internal object is differentiated from the cognition which cognizes itself, that is, self-awareness in its original sense. It can be said, consequently, that, unlike Dharmakīrti, Prajñākaragupta holds that the mental perception follows not only after a sensory perception of an external object but also after an awareness of an internal object.

If we accept Prajñākaragupta’s view of mental perception, we can take the expression *artharāgādisvasaṃvitti* in PS 1.6ab as meaning the following:

- (a) [Mental perception is] the cognition which cognizes the essence of an external object [as ‘this’] (*arthasvarūpasamvitti*).
- (b) [In addition, it is] the cognition which cognizes the essence of an internal object like passion [as ‘this’] (*rāgādisvarūpasamvitti*).

Dignāga has stated that awareness of one’s own mental state such as pleasure is a kind of mental perception. According to Jinendrabuddhi, this amounts to saying that the occurrence of the self-awareness does not depend on any of the five material organs. According to Prajñākaragupta, however, both sensory perception and self-awareness are followed by a cognition in the form ‘this’; and it is this cognition that is to be called mental perception.

Prajñākaragupta’s account raises an important question: How can a determining cognition in the form ‘this’ be regarded as ‘perception’? Prajñākaragupta answers as follows:

PVA 308,14–15:

*darśanābhimatir yatra tajjñānam avikalpakam |*  
*sākṣātkṛtyadhimokṣāc ca pratyakṣam iti gīyate ||468||*

<sup>24</sup> Y (D 217a6; P 293b1): ‘*dī la zhes bya ba ni bde ba la sogs pa’o* ||

<sup>25</sup> Y (D 217a6-7; P 293b1): *rang bzhin zhes bya ba ni don gyi rang bzhin ‘dzin pa dang bde ba la sogs pa’i rang bzhin ‘dzin pa’o* ||

*paramārthas tu vijñānaṃ sarvaṃ evāvikalpakam |  
svagrāhyaviṣaye sarvasyāvikalpena vṛttitaḥ ||469||*<sup>26</sup>

The cognition of that object which is believed to be perceived is non-conceptual. If a cognition is determined to be what directly experiences its object, the cognition is called ‘perception.’ The ultimate truth, however, [is that] all cognitions are non-conceptual because [from the viewpoint of the ultimate truth] all [cognitions] occur as free from conceptual construction with reference to their own object to be grasped (*svagrāhyaviṣaya*).

## Conclusion

What Dignāga calls ‘mental perception’ (*mānasa*) is a cognition that is not dependent on the five material sense organs (*rūpīndriya*), no matter whether its object is external or internal. Dharmakīrti, on the other hand, considers mental perception to be a cognition which arises immediately after sensory perception and does not call the awareness of an internal object ‘mental perception.’

Unlike Dharmakīrti, Prajñākaragupta holds that mental perception follows not only after sensory perception of an external object but also after an awareness of an internal object. Even though, following Dignāga, Prajñākaragupta speaks of self-awareness as mental perception, he has a clear concept of mental perception, namely that it is the cognition which determines its object as ‘this’ (*idam iti*).

In view of these observations, we may finally note that the threefold division of perception is not, as some scholars maintain, the original idea of Prajñākaragupta’s. Rather, Prajñākaragupta attributes it to Dignāga; Prajñākaragupta accepts the fourfold division of perception, but his understanding of mental perception is different from that of Dharmakīrti.

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<sup>26</sup> These verses are quoted in NVV I 103,22–25: *darśanābhimatir yatra tajññānam avikalpakam | sākṣātkṛtyaviḍi(mokṣāc ca pratyakṣam iti gīyate || paramārthatas tu vijñānam sarvaṃ evāvikalpakam | svagrāhyaviṣaye sarvasyāvikalpena vṛttitaḥ || NVV I 135,5–6: paramārthatas tu sakalam vijñānam avikalpakam | tadgrāhyaviṣaye sarvasyāvikalpena vartanāt || NVV I 177,3: paramārthatas tu vijñānam sarvaṃ evāvikalpakam.*

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