#### SPECIAL ISSUE

# On Self-Awareness in the Sautrāntika Epistemology

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**Abstract** This paper aims to examine the role of self-awareness (svasamvedana) for the Sautrantika epistemological tenet known as the doctrine that cognition has a form (sākārajñānavāda). According to this theory, we perceive external objects indirectly through the mental forms that these objects throw into our minds, and this cognitive act is interpreted as self-awareness. However, if one were to interpret the cognitive act such that the subjective mental form (grāhakākāra/svābhāsa) grasps the objective mental form, the position of the subjective mental form becomes problematic—it becomes superfluous, as can be demonstrated with reference to Dignāga's explanation of the Sautrāntika's pramāna-pramānaphala argument. As a result, self-awareness itself becomes precarious. In connection with this problem, an argument on the relationship between self-awareness and the yogic perception of other minds given by Dharmakīrti leads us to discover that self-awareness is important for establishing subjectivity, in order to avoid another person's access to one's own mental states. Through examining *Pramāṇavārttika* 3.448–459, this paper tries to find a way to interpret the svābhāsa-factor without relating to its object-factor (grāhyākāra), and to shed new light on the problem of subjectivity in the Sautrāntika epistemology.

**Keywords** *Sākārajñānavāda* · Self-awareness · Cognition of other minds · Subjectivity

#### A Fundamental Question Concerning the Sākārajñānavāda

In the Buddhist epistemology that was systematized by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, the theory of self-awareness (*svasamvedana*) plays a significant role for explaining

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our everyday cognitive experience as well as the path to liberation. If it is allowed to use the two terms "Sautrāntika" and "Yogācara," not in the sense of historical figures but only in the sense of philosophical systems, one presupposing the external world and the other presupposing no external world, respectively, the concept of self-awareness is related to both. From the Yogācāra viewpoint, this tenet functions for rejecting the external world and leading one to the ultimate reality of mind-only. However, it still remains open whether the theory of self-awareness is necessary in the Sautrāntika epistemology.

One could argue that the concept of self-awareness constitutes the essential part of the Sautrāntika epistemological tenet known as the doctrine of cognition with the mental form  $(s\bar{a}k\bar{a}raj\tilde{n}\bar{a}nav\bar{a}da)$ . According to this theory, we perceive external objects indirectly through the mental forms  $(\bar{a}k\bar{a}ra)$  that these objects throw into our minds, and this cognitive act is interpreted as self-awareness.

The connection between the *sākārajñānavāda* and the concept of self-awareness is found in Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (PS) 1.9, which appears in the context of the argument on the means of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) and its result (*phala*). The verse runs as follows:

svasamvittih phalam vātra tadrūpo hy arthaniścayah  $\mid$  viṣayākārataivāsya pramāṇam tena mīyate  $\mid\mid^3$ 

If one reads only this verse, it is not particularly problematic to identify the means of valid cognition and its result as "the cognition's having the mental form of object" (viṣayākāratā) and "self-awareness" (svasaṃvitti), respectively. The object of the cognition (prameya) is not clearly mentioned here, but the words "artha" and "viṣaya" very probably refer to it. Since these words refer to something other than the form of the object, denoted by "viṣayākāra," it is reasonable to identify the object as an external object. Thus, the verse can be translated as follows:<sup>4</sup>

Alternatively, here, the result is self-awareness, for the ascertainment of an [external] object has the nature of [self-awareness]. The means of valid cognition is exactly its (i.e., cognition's) having the mental form of the [external] object. By means of this, [the object] is cognized.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> As I have pointed out on another occasion, against Dignāga's own interpretation, Sucarita Miśra takes the entire verse as a presentation of the Sautāntika position. Cf. Kāś. 237,18–25, where Sucarita Miśra quotes PS 1.9 with a different word order and some variants: viṣayākāra evāṣya pramāṇam tena mīyate | svasamvittih phalam cātra tadrūpo hy arthaniścayah || In this case, pramāṇa and phala are clearly identical with viṣayākāra and svasamvitti, respectively. See Moriyama (2008, pp. 207–208).



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Dunne (2004, 58f.) calls these two positions "external realism" and "epistemic idealism," respectively, in his description of Dharmakīrti's sliding scale of analysis. Since his approach to this analysis is ontological, the role of self-awareness has not been examined, especially regarding its role as bridging the two positions. On this issue Katsura (1969, p. 28) has pointed out that the conception of self-awareness connects the Sautrāntika position to the Yogācāra position, in spite of their different presuppositions on the status of external objects. Cf. also Matilal (1986, p. 151).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> This theory is supported by another Sautrāntika theory which claims that external objects are to be inferred (*bāhyārthānumeyavāda*). For the Sautrāntika external objects are indirectly accessible to perception, but their existence can be proved through inference. Cf. Mimaki (1988, pp. 242–246).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For this verse, see Hattori (1968, 28f) and Taber (2005, pp. 194–196). Kellner's contribution to the present volume further makes clear problems of traditional and modern interpretations of the verse.

However, Dignāga's auto-commentary does not support this straight-forward reading. According to the commentary, the verse is divided into two parts: the first half of the verse explains that in all cognitions, self-awareness becomes the result of means of valid cognition and forms the nature of the ascertainment of an object. Next, Dignāga introduces the last half of the verse with the following sentence: "However, if nothing but an external object is the object, then ... (yadā tu bāhya evārthaḥ prameyaḥ, tadā)." From the contrastive particle tu one can assume that an internal object, namely, viṣayābhāsa, was meant to be the prameya in the previous sentence, and from this assumption, it is also assumed that not the viṣayākāratā of 9c, but svābhāsa was meant to be the pramāna.

The two mental forms, *viṣayābhasa* and *svābhāsa*, constitute the essential nature of self- awareness, and from the Yogācāra standpoint in v. 10, the two mental forms are considered to be the object and the means of valid cognition for their result, self-awareness. The verse and Hattori's translation are as follows:

yadābhāsam prameyam tat pramāṇaphalate punaḥ | grāhakākārasamvittī trayam nātah prthakkrtam ||

Whatever the form in which it [viz. a cognition] appears, that [form] is [recognized as] the object of cognition (*prameya*). The means of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) and [the cognition which is] its result (*phala*) are respectively the form of subject [in the cognition] and the cognition cognizing itself. Therefore, these three [factors of cognition] are not separate from one another.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, the last half of v. 9 starting with the presupposition of the external object requires *viṣāyākāratā*, not *svābhāsa*, as the means of valid cognition; the result of the means of valid cognition could be interpreted to be self-awareness from the first half of the verse and the expression "*jñānaṃ svasaṃvedyam api*" in the commentary on v. 9c. However, this interpretation of the means of valid cognition and its result in the Sautrāntika epistemology contains the problem that a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Most recently, Prof. Kataoka has presented a new approach to the problem of the interpretation of PS 1.9. According to his interpretation, both PS 1.8cd and 9cd express the Sautrāntika's position, with viṣayābhāsatā as the means of valid cognition, arthasamvit as its result, and no room for self-awareness. On the other hand, PS 1.9ab and 10 articulate the Yogācāra position with grāhakākāra as the means of valid cognition and self-awareness as its result. Cf. Kataoka (2009). I do not yet have an opinion on this new interpretation, and thus I would still keep the traditional interpretation of accepting self-awareness in the Sautrāntika position of PS 1.9. A reaction to Kataoka's opinion is found in Kellner's contribution to the present volume.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> It is beyond the scope of my present research to examine the background of Dignāga's complicated exposition of this verse, which might lead us to examine the order in which he composed this work, in its mixture of verse-text and prose-commentary. Franco (1986, p. 85) has reported Prof. Schmithausen's suggestion on this issue as follows: "In several places in the Pramāṇasamuccaya, there are important differences between the  $k\bar{a}rik\bar{a}s$  and the Vrti. From this we can conclude that the Vrti was not written at the same time as the  $k\bar{a}rik\bar{a}s$ , and that Dignāga changed his mind in the meantime." In the introduction to his online edition of the PS(V) I, however, Steinkellner has expressed his opinion that the Vrti should not be considered as an independent work. Cf. Steinkellner in the introduction of PS(V) 1, p. III, n. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Hattori (1968, p. 29).

crucial part of self-awareness, the *svābhāsa*-factor, cannot be explained. Prof. Hattori has noted this point as follows:

If the Sautrāntikas, in concert with the Yogācāras, had recognized the self-cognizing faculty, i.e.,  $sv\bar{a}bh\bar{a}sa = gr\bar{a}hak\bar{a}k\bar{a}ra$ , as  $pram\bar{a}na$ , their doctrine would have been violated, because  $gr\bar{a}hak\bar{a}k\bar{a}ra$  does not take the external thing for prameya. Accordingly, within the doctrinal limitation of the Sautrāntikas, Dignāga considers that the cognition's having the form of an object  $(viṣay\bar{a}k\bar{a}rat\bar{a})$  should be regarded as  $pram\bar{a}na$ , the external object being cognized by means of it and it being self-cognized. However, Dignāga remarks that the essential nature of the self-cognizing cognition is disregarded in the justification of the Sautrāntika doctrine. (Hattori 1968, p. 105)

The problem is concerned with the position of the *svābhāsa*-factor. For explaining the cognition of an external object indirectly through its mental form, only "the cognition's having the form of an object (*viṣayākāratā*)" is necessary, but not the *svābhāsa*-factor. Of course, one may argue that the factor is implicitly involved in the above argument because one's cognition of an external object is impossible without the internal process of cognizing a mental form of the object. If so, however, one must accept the mental form as *prameya*, but not the external object itself. The resulting theory does not differ from the schema of v. 10, namely, the Yogācāra standpoint.

Bhāviveka's exposition of the means of valid cognition and its result shows us an alternative idea of the  $s\bar{a}k\bar{a}raj\bar{n}\bar{a}nav\bar{a}da$ , constituted only by the mental form of the object and without the  $sv\bar{a}bh\bar{a}sa$ -factor. In the fifth chapter of his  $Madhyama-kahrdayak\bar{a}rik\bar{a}$ , criticizing a certain Buddhist opponent's theory of self-awareness, Bhāviveka claims the following<sup>8</sup>:

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pramāṇaphalatābhāvād iṣṭā dvyābhāsateti cet | anyathāpi hi tatsiddhes tatklptir api neṣyate || 5.24 || bibhratā jāyamānena jñānena viṣayābhatām | pramīyate prameyam yat pramāṇam tena tan matam || 5.25 || tannirvṛttau ca dṛṣṭatvāt tannirvṛttiḥ phalam matam | anirdeśyasvarūpasya tathaivādhigamo yataḥ || 5.26 ||
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If [the opponent] claims that [a cognition's]<sup>10</sup> having two forms  $(dvy\bar{a}bh\bar{a}sat\bar{a})$  is accepted because [one same cognition] is the means of valid cognition and [its] result, [then,] this assumption is also not accepted because this (i.e., the

<sup>10</sup> Cf. MHK 5.20ab: viṣayābhāsatā cet syāc cittasyālambanam matā; 23ab: svaparābhāsatā neṣṭā cetasaḥ pratibimbavat.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> For these verses, see Hoornaert (2000, p. 110) and Saito (2008a). For a Japanese translation and study on these verses, see Saito 2008b. Eckel's recent study (2008, pp. 238–240) contains an English translation and detailed notes on these verses together with the commentary.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The reading: *anirdeśyasvarūpasya* (*bstan du med pa'i ngo bo*) in Eckel's edition (2008, p. 403) is more preferable than the reading *anidarśanarūpasya* in Ejima's edition. Ejima's footnote shows that this part contains unreadable *akṣaras* in the Ms: [a]ni[da]+++(14a4)+ .ya.

cognition's being the means of valid cognition and its result) is established in another manner as well.  $(24)^{11}$ 

By this [fact] that the object to be cognized (prameya) is cognized by a cognition that is arising and bearing the form of the object ( $visay\bar{a}bhat\bar{a}$ ), the [cognition] is considered to be the means of valid cognition. (25)

And, since [the object is] seen when the [cognition] occurs, the accomplishment of the [cognition] is accepted to be the result.<sup>13</sup> [This is] because one apprehends the inexpressible own nature<sup>14</sup> [of the object] exactly in this manner. (26)

For a translation and interpretation, see Hoornaert (2000, p. 110), Saito (2008b) and Eckel (2008, 238f). Apart from the philological problems, however, there are difficulties to interpret the verse in accordance with the commentary because it seems strange to identify *viṣayābhāsa*, i.e., *grāhyākāra*, as the result of the means of valid cognition, especially in comparison with Dignāga's theory of self-awareness. In his most recent study of the MHK 5, David Eckel (2008, p. 238, n. 44) remarks that "[t]he source of the opponent's argument seems to be Dignāga, although the argument does not represent Dignāga's primary position, and Bhāviveka seems to develop it in ways that Dignāga does not anticipate." This comment is probably based on the assumption that the author of the MHK is same as the author of the TJ, yet, the authorship of the latter is still uncertain. On the other hand, it is true that even if one reads the verse independently of the TJ's interpretation, it is doubtful whether the opponent's claim is identical with Dignāga's idea of self-awareness, for the reason mentioned above. Thus, what Eckel says in the same note is convincing to me: "[t]he position presented by Bhāvivka is closer to Dignāga's alternative position in PS 1.9a, but it is not identical." At present, I would prefer to leave the question of the opponent in v. 24 open.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> The expression *anirdeśyasvarūpa* is in contrast with Dignāga's definition of a sense object (PS 1.5cd): *svasamvedyam hy anirdeśyam rūpam indriyagocarah*. I believe what Bhāviveka intends to say here is that one perceives the inexpressible own nature of an object in the manner as is explained in the above verses, and thus it is unnecessary that this nature is cognized by the cognition itself.



<sup>11</sup> According to the commentary,  $Tarkajv\bar{a}l\bar{a}$ , on v. 24ab, the means of valid cognition is identified with the cognition having its own appearance (\*svābhāsavijñāna, rang du snang ba'i rnam par shes pa), and its result with the appearance of the object (\*arthābhāsa/viṣayābhāsa, yul du snang ba). Cf. TJ D 206b5–6: rnam par shes pa ni gnyis su snang ba kho na yin te | tshad ma dang 'bras bu yin pa'i phyir ro || de la tshad ma ni 'dis rjes su dpog pa'i phyir tshad ma ste | rang du snang ba'i rnam par shes pa'o || 'bras bu ni de'i yul so sor rtog pa ste | yul du snang ba nyid do || yul du snang ba'i rnam par shes pa 'ba' zhig la ni tshad ma dang 'bras bu dag 'thad par dka'o zhe na ... With regard to the sentence above marked with a wavy line, one can assume "anenānumīyate" as its Sanskrit original. However, to mention inference does not fit in this context; "anena mīyate/pramīyate" would rather be expected here. Although it is difficult to determine whether this was an error of translation or of the Sanskrit manuscript of TJ, I believe an emendation is necessary. Saito (2008, n. 15) is of the same opinion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> True, it is more natural to read the relative pronoun *yat* with *tat* and to translate it: "... therefore (*tena*), the [*prameya*] that is cognized by the cognition ... is considered to be the means of valid cognition." However, as Eckel (2008, p. 239, n. 45) notes, it is unlikely that "Bhāviveka is arguing that the *prameya* constitutes the *pramāna*."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Eckel (2008, p. 239) translates the first half of the verse as follows: "[we] think that the conclusion (nirvrtti) of this [cognition] is the result (phala), because [the object] has been seen when this conclusion [occurs]." As he notes, its Tibetan translation interprets the term nirvrtti, which appears twice in the verse, in two different ways: de skyes pa ni mthong ba'i phyir || de grub pa ni 'bras bur 'dod ||. Eckel takes this second meaning for his translation, but I prefer to follow the Tibetan interpretation. Cf. Eckel (2008, p. 239, n. 46).

As Prof. Saito has pointed out, <sup>15</sup> Bhāviveka here claims that the means of valid cognition and its result can be explained without introducing the theory of self-awareness. His main claim is, as v. 20cd has already shown, that there is no other nature of mind other than cognition's having the mental form of an object (*viṣayābhāsatā*). <sup>16</sup> Unlike the opponent, who accepts the duality of mental forms, Bhāviveka proclaims that a cognition that has only the mental form of an object is sufficient for explaining the means of valid cognition as well as its result. In such cases, insofar as he accepts at least the mental form of an object, it is undeniable that this theory of perception can be considered a sort of *sākārajñānavāda*. <sup>17</sup>

Comparing this explanation to Dignāga's PS 1.9cd, we should note that both thinkers share the common schema of accepting an external object as the object of cognition, and the cognition's having the mental form of the object as the means of valid cognition; a difference is found only in their claims about the result (*pramāṇaphala*): whereas Dignāga seems to regard self-awareness as the result, Bhāviveka takes the accomplishment of the cognition, which bears only the object-appearance, as its result.

Of these two ideas, it is obvious that the latter explanation is less problematic because, in this case, the means of valid cognition and its result are both related to the same external object. For Dignāga, however, the two are related to different objects: whereas the means of valid cognition is concerned with an external object, the result is connected to an internal object. As I have already pointed out on another occasion, it is exactly this stance that is criticized by Kumārila as committing the fallacy of *visayabheda*. <sup>18</sup>

Then, does self-awareness play no essential role in Dignāga's version of the Sautrāntika's sākārajñānavāda? Should we assume this self-awareness to be reducible to the Yogācāra's self-awareness in the sense of a cognition's cognizing a mental form? These questions are difficult to answer without detailed examinations of the whole argument concerning self-awareness in the writings by Dignāga, Dharmakīrti and their followers. What I would like to present here is just one possibility to preserve a certain value for the Sautrāntika's self-awareness by considering how it accounts for subjectivity in the case of private experiences like feeling pain. On the presupposition that there is an external world, including other persons or other mental streams, it is necessary to distinguish our access to our own mental status from the access to the mental states of others. In this context, the concept of self-awareness is required for establishing the privacy of each cognition, and the function seems important for revealing an aspect of the self-awareness and svābhāsa-factor in the Sautrāntika epistemology. In order to clarify this point,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Cf. Moriyama (2008).



<sup>15</sup> Saito (2008b).

MHK 5.20cd: visayābhāsatām projjhya cittātmānyo 'sti kīdrśaḥ.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> In the ninth chapter of the AKBh (473,24–474,1), Vasubandhu describes how cognition cognizes the object through its similarity with it, namely, by having its mental form (tadākāratā): evaṃ vijānānam api vijānātīty ucyate. sādṛṣyenātmalābhād akurvad api kimcid. kim punar asya sādṛṣyam. tadākāratā. In this exposition, which is usually said to be formulated from the Sautrāntika point of view, we find no mention of self-awareness or any similar elements.

I would focus on Dharmakīrti's argument on the relationship between self-awareness and the yogic perception of other minds. 19

# Self-Awareness as the Basis of the Self-Identification of Experience

In *Pramāṇavārttika* (PV) 3.448–459, Dharmakīrti attempts to make the factor of self-awareness a necessity in the case of feelings (*vedanā*) such as pleasure (*sukha*) and pain (*duḥkha*) in order to generalize its necessity for all cognitions, based on the assumption that such feelings have a structural similarity to sense perception:

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āśrayālambanābhyāsabhedād bhinnapravṛttayaḥ | sukhaduḥkhābhilāṣādibhedā buddhaya eva tāḥ || 3.448 || pratyakṣās tadviviktaṃ ca nānyat kiṃcid vibhāvyate | yat tajjñānaṃ paro 'py enān<sup>20</sup> bhuñjitānyena vid yadi || 3.449 ||
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Various [feelings] such as pleasure (sukha), pain (duhkha), desire ( $abhil\bar{a}sa$ ), etc. are nothing but cognitions, inasmuch as [they] arise differently in accordance with the differences of [their] basis ( $\bar{a}saya$ , i.e., sense faculty), object-support ( $\bar{a}lambana$ , i.e., external object) and repeated practice ( $abhy\bar{a}sa$ ). They are perceived [by themselves]. And apart from them, no other [factor] that cognizes them becomes manifest. If one knows [these feelings] by other [cognitions], another [person] would also experience these [feelings such as pleasure and pain]. (448-449)<sup>21</sup>

According to the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, consciousness (*citta*) and mental states (*caitta*),  $^{22}$  including feelings like pleasure and pain, possess the common features of having a basis ( $\bar{a}$ śraya), object-supports ( $\bar{a}$ lambana), cognitive modes ( $\bar{a}$ kāra), and being associated (samprayukta).  $^{23}$  The above verse refers to the first two features together with repeated practice (abhyāsa), and shows the structural similarity of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Cf. AK 2.34b2-d1: cittacaitasāḥ sāśrayālambanākārāḥ saṃprayuktāś ca. In his auto-commentary on this section, Vasubandhu explains (AKBh 62,5f.): ta eva hi cittacaittāḥ sāśrayā ucyante indriyāśritatvāt, sālambanā viṣayagrahaṇāt, sākārās tasyaivālambanasya prakāraśa ākaraṇāt, saṃprayuktā samaṃ prayuktatvāt. "For exactly these consciousness and mental states are called 'having a basis' because [they] depend on sense faculties; 'having an object-support' because [they] grasp [their] objects; 'having cognitive modes' because [they] form [themselves] in [their] cognitive modes relating to precisely this [respective] object-support; 'being associated' because [they] are connected as equals [to each other]."



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> For the following reflections, I am indebted to various pioneering studies on self-awareness, especially Dreyfus (1997, pp. 400–402) and Tanizawa (2002).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> The reading  $en\bar{a}n$  in  $Pr_B$  220a3 is preferable to  $en\bar{a}m$  in  $Pr_A$ ' 82,28. Manorathanandin's paraphrase of this half of the verse ( $M_A$  49b1) suggests that he knew the text with  $et\bar{a}n$ . The folio of  $PV_H$  that contains this verse is missing.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Cf. Tosaki (1985, 130f).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Note the difference between *citta* and *caitta*, as described by Dharmottara: whereas *citta* grasps a mere object (*arthamātra*), *caitta*s grasp specific states (*viśeṣāvasthā*) of the object. Cf. NBT 64,3: *cittam arthamātragrāhi. caittā viśeṣāvasthāgrāhiṇaḥ sukhādayaḥ*. As for the two different approaches to a single external object, namely through cognition and feeling, cf. AKVy 142,4f.: *tasyaivālambanasya vijīnānam sāmānyarūpenopalabhyatā rūpam grhnāti. viśeṣarūpena tu vedanānubhavanīyatā rūpam grhnāti.* 

feelings and cognition (sense perception).<sup>24</sup> This similarity is an important presupposition in Dharmakīrti's argument for the self-awareness of feelings. One might argue that in our everyday experience of feelings like pleasure and pain, there is no feeling that is not sensed. A feeling can be sensed in two possible ways: it can be sensed by itself or by a cognition other than itself. In order to establish the first possibility, the self-awareness of feelings, Dharmakīrti rejects the second due to its undesirable consequence that other persons would then also experience one's own feelings.

In the description of this consequence, it is interesting to note Dharmakīrti's usage of the term <code>bhuñjīta</code>, which derives from the root <code>bhuj-</code>, "to enjoy" or better, "to experience." In the Brahmanical ontology this and similar terms presuppose the existence of <code>ātman</code>, as typically presented in the Vaiśeṣika system. One's feelings such as pleasure or pain are considered to be qualities (<code>guṇa</code>) inherent in <code>ātman</code> as a substance, and in this case, <code>ātman</code> itself takes the role of the subject (<code>bhoktr</code>) that experiences these qualities arising in itself. For the Buddhists who deny the existence of <code>ātman</code>, however, such a subject of experience is not acceptable. Instead, the above counter-factual statement implies that self-awareness serves to account for the subjectivity of experience and thus helps to avoid the absurd consequence that one person can experience another person's mental states.

As is well known, Dignāga argued for the necessity of self-awareness on the basis of memory (*smṛti*): The fact that one can remember an object that one has previously cognized shows that one has cognized the object and also that one has cognized the cognition itself. If the cognition is cognized by another cognition, one needs still another cognition to cognize the second cognition, and so on. In this manner, an infinite regress (*aniṣṭhā*) would occur. To avoid this fallacy, the self-awareness of a cognition is accepted.<sup>27</sup>

The argument we are now examining, namely, PV 3.448–459, is just one part of Dharmakīrti's broad argument for the necessity of self-awareness (vv. 425–539). But when we compare it to Dignāga's argument, we notice an interesting change of focus from the temporal sequence of cognitions in a single mind-stream to the co-occurrence of cognitions in the same moment in multiple mind-streams—what Dharmakīrti tries to avoid with self-awareness is not the fallacy of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> PS 1.12ab: *jñānāntareṇānubhave 'niṣṭhā tatrāpi hi smṛṭih* ||. On this argument, see Hattori (1968, p. 30, 111f, nn. 1.77–79) and Williams (1998, 9f). Most recently, at the 14th World Sanskrit Conference in 2009, Kellner has presented a detailed analysis of the issue under the title, "Infinite regress arguments (*anavasthā*) in connection with self-awareness (*svasamvedana*): a closer look at Dignāga and Dharmakīrti." Her contribution to the present volume also deals with this problem.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> A similar statement appears in PV 3.251-254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> In his commentary on AK 1.14c (vedanā 'nubhavaḥ), Yaśomitira gives upabhoga as a synonym of anubhava, and its subject as a person. (AKVy 36,33–37,2): anubhūtir anubhava upabhogaḥ. kasya. cittasya pudgalasya vā. sa ca trividhaḥ. sukho duḥkho 'duḥkhāsukhaś ca. vastuno hlādaparitāpatadubhayavinirmuktasvarūpasākṣātkaraṇasvabhāvaḥ. anubhūyate vānena viṣaya ity anubhavaḥ. anubhavatīti vānubhavah.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> For Praśastapāda's definitions of *sukha* and *duḥkha*, cf. PDhS 58,11–59,6, and for his definition of *ātman*, cf. PDhS 16,3–14. For Kumārila's idea that the *ātman* understands pleasure and so forth when it is connected with the mind (*manas*), see ŚV *pratyakṣa* 83. Cf. Taber (2005, p. 83).

an infinite regress, but the absurdity that one person can experience another's mental states.

Dharmakīrti's argument continues by substantiating this absurdity, expressed in 449cd: if one's own feeling is cognized by another cognition, another person would also have to experience it. This implies that a subsequent cognition of one's own feeling in the same mind-stream and another person's cognition of the same instance of feeling cannot be differentiated. If the opponent<sup>28</sup> manages to distinguish between the two cognitions in some other way, Dharmakīrti cannot use this argument to establish the necessity of the self-awareness of one's feeling.

On this point, Dharmakīrti considers three possible criteria for distinguishing between the two cognitions, and he rejects them one by one. The first is the presence or absence of two conditions of cognition, namely, that it arises from the object (tajjatva) and has the object's appearance  $(tatpratibh\bar{a}sitva)$ . This possibility is based on the general account of how cognitions arise that has gained acceptance in Buddhist epistemology especially after Dignāga's  $\bar{A}lambanapar\bar{t}k\bar{s}\bar{a}$ : all cognitions arise from their object and have the object's appearance.

The opponent claims that a subsequent cognition in the same mind-stream arises from a previous instance of feeling that cast its impression onto the later cognition, as a mental form, but the other person's cognition does not fulfil these conditions. Dharmakīrti replies to this that the other person's cognition also has a previous instance of feeling as its object-support and thus likewise fulfils both conditions. More precisely, the other person can access the same pleasure by inference and as a result, a cognition that bears the appearance of pleasure arises indirectly from observing the logical mark (*lingadarśana*) of that pleasure.<sup>29</sup>

The second criterion is concerned with the mode of cognition, namely, whether the cognition grasps a feeling directly or indirectly. Dharmakīrti's response is that since both the subsequent cognition and the other person's cognition have the same object (i.e. a feeling), the two cognitions are indistinguishable.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, the third restriction is provided on the basis of the Brahmanical doctrine of unseen power (*adrsta*), the inherence (*samavāya*) to *ātman* and so forth.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> PV 3.453b–d: *gṛhṇāti tān punaḥ* | *nādhyakṣam iti ced eṣa kuto bhedaḥ samārthayoḥ*\* || "If [one argues:] '[Another person] grasps them (i.e., pleasure, pain, etc.), but not directly,' why is there such difference between those [two cognitions] that have the same object]?" \*Read *samārthayoḥ* instead of *samarthayoḥ*. M clearly assumes this reading with its paraphrase *ekaviṣayayoḥ* in M<sub>1</sub> 253,15, Pr<sub>A</sub>' 84,4 also has it, and the Tibetan materials also assume it. Only Pr<sub>B</sub> 220b5 has *samarthayoḥ*. The folio of PV<sub>H</sub> that contains this verse is missing.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Dharmakīrti's argument seems to be directed not only at Brahmanical thinkers, but also at fellow Buddhists who do not accept self-awareness. In his commentary on AKBh 461,7 (manasaś ca), Yaśomitra presents two interpretations concerning the manner of cognizing a mental cognition as associated with feelings like pleasure and pain, namely, by its subsequent cognition or by self-awareness: AKVy 698,2–5: manasaś ca. kim. pratyakṣam upalabdhih. samanantaraniruddham hi mano 'nantarotpannena mano-vijñānena vijñāyate raktam vā dviṣṭam vā sukhasamprayuktam vā duḥkhasamprayuktam vety evamādi. svasamvedyatayety apare.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> PV 3.450: tajjā tatpratibhāsā vā yadi dhīr vetti nāparā | ālambamānasyānyasyāpy asty avaśyam idam dvayam || "If the cognition that arises from this [pleasure] or that has the appearance of this [pleasure] cognizes [the pleasure], [but] no other [cognition], there are necessarily these two [conditions] for the other [cognition] (i.e., someone else's cognition) cognizing [the same pleasure], too."

However, if this restriction applied, it would be altogether impossible for a person to know someone else's feelings, but this is not the case.<sup>31</sup>

# The Two Modes of Cognition: Having Object-Support (ālambana) and Being Aware (vedana/ā)

So far, Dharmakīrti has presented a general argument concerning the necessity of self-awareness of feelings by contrasting it with another sort of access to a feeling, namely, a subsequent cognition of it, which he argues is essentially the same as someone else's cognition of that feeling. Now, Dharmakīrti introduces a more specific cognition that accesses another person's cognition, namely, yogic perception. This leads him to differentiate between two modes of cognition: its having object-support (*ālambana*) and its being aware (*vedana/ā*).

In Western philosophy, the question of how one knows other minds has been discussed mainly in connection with the argument from analogy: one observes a causal connection between one's own mental states and one's bodily behaviour, and by finding a similar behaviour in other bodies, one concludes that others have mental states similar to oneself. This argument, however, has been criticized because it neglects the asymmetry between first-person experience and third-person experience.<sup>32</sup> This Western approach to other minds excludes from the outset the possibility that other minds can be cognized directly, through a special kind of perception such as yogic perception. If, however, one accepts such a special perception, the problem arises of just how one can distinguish one's own experience of one's feelings from a yogi's direct access to the same feeling.

Dharmakīrti's argument consists of two parts: criticism of a non-Buddhist opponent's view which accepts yogic perception (vv. 455–457), and a defence of yogic perception within the Buddhist doctrine (vv. 458–459). The most important arguments for our purpose occur in the first part. Dharmakīrti says:

yeṣāṃ ca yogino 'nyasya pratyakṣeṇa sukhādikam | vidanti tulyānubhavās tadvat te 'pi syur āturāḥ || 455 ||

And for those who [accept that] yogis cognize [feelings such as] pleasure, [pain] etc., of another [person] by perception, [they would have to admit that]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> According to Devendrabuddhi, the Buddhist defence of yogic perception starts with v. 457cd (cf. De<sub>t</sub> 250a5f.); Tosaki (1985, p. 140) follows his interpretation. On the other hand, Prajñākaragupta, Ravigupta and Manorathanandin construe v. 457cd as the reason for v. 457ab. I follow the latter interpretation.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> PV 3.454: adṛṣṭaikāṛthayogādeḥ saṃvido niyamo yadi | sarvathānyo na gṛḥṇ̄yāt saṃvidbhedo 'py apoditaḥ || "If there is a restriction of cognition owing to unseen [power], the connection with a single [substratum] (i.e., ātman), etc., the other [person] would not grasp [someone else's feelings] in any manner, and the difference between [these two] cognitions (i.e., one's cognition of an object and someone else's cognition of the same object) is also denied."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Cf. Bilgrami (1992–1993). A similar discussion about the argument based on analogy is also found in Dharmakīrti's SAS. Cf. SAS v. 1: *rang lus blo sngon du 'gro ba yi* | *bya ba mthong nas gzhan la de* | 'dzin phyir gal te shes 'gyur | sems tsam la yang tshul 'di mtshungs || Cf. Katsura (2007).

they (i.e., yogis), too, having the same experience [as the suffering person], would experience pain like that [person]. (455)<sup>34</sup>

In reaction to this argument, the opponent may try to distinguish the yogic perception of someone else's pleasure or pain from one's own experience of it by pointing out differences in their causation. For instance, according to Praśastapāda, the arising of pleasure and pain involves the following components: (1) the presence of a desirable or undesirable object, (2) its cognition and the contact (sannikarsa) between sense faculty and object, (3) other elements like merit (dharma), and (4) the connection (samyoga) between ātman and the mind.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, yogic perception is explained to be a cognition of the own nature (svarūpadarśana) of all categories belonging to oneself and others by the mind supported by merit that arises from concentration (yoga). 36 Since the yogic perception of another person's pleasure does not arise from the contact between a desirable object and a sense faculty, the yogin also does not feel the other person's pleasure. In short, for the opponent, feelings like pleasure or pain occur in ātman, the subject of experience, through a causal process that involves contact with an object that is desirable or undesirable. This account can separate a person who experiences pleasure or pain from someone else like a yogi who perceives that person's mind.

# To this, Dharmakīrti replies:

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viṣayendriyasampātābhāvāt teṣāṃ tadudbhavam | nodeti duḥkham iti cen na vai duḥkhasamudbhavaḥ || 3.456 || duḥkhasya vedanaṃ kintu duḥkhajñānasamudbhavaḥ | na hi duḥkhādy asamvedyaṃ pīḍānugrahakāraṇam || 3.457 ||
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If [the opponent argues that] because of the absence of the connection between objects and sense faculties, the pain that arises from this [connection] does not arise for them (i.e., yogis), [then this is not correct]. Indeed, not the arising of pain, but the arising of the cognition of pain is [accepted to be] the sensation of pain. For unsensed [feelings like] pain, etc., cause neither damage nor benefit.<sup>37</sup>

It is true that the process of how a feeling arises is not applicable when a yogi perceives someone else's feelings. However, according to Dharmakīrti, the point of the discussion is not how feelings arise, but how they are sensed because there are no unsensed feelings. From this viewpoint, again, yogic cognitions of another person's feelings do not differ from their own cognition of that feeling that arises after the feeling. Both cognitions take the feeling as their object-support, and there arises the undesirable consequence that first-person experience and third-person experience are not different.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> I basically follow Franco's translation of this verse. Cf. Franco (forthcoming). In the second part of his article, Franco examines several problems concerning the yogic perception of the desire of other persons in Prajñākaragupta's discussion in the latter's commentary on PV 3.281–286.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. PDhS 58,11-14; 59,2-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Cf. PDhS 45.5-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> PV 3.456-457; cf. Tosaki (1985, pp. 137–140).

Does the same fallacy also apply to the Buddhist who accepts the yogic perception of other minds? Dharmakīrti's response to this hypothetical objection runs as follows:

bhāsamānam svarūpeņa pīḍā duḥkham svayam yadā | na tadālambanam jñānam na tadaivam prasajyate<sup>38</sup> || 3.458 ||

When [one's] damage is the pain that appears by itself in its own nature  $(svar\bar{u}pa)$ , but not a[n other] cognition having this [pain] as [its] object-support, then such [a fallacy that a yogi who cognizes another person's pain also experiences the same suffering] does not result.<sup>39</sup>

The opponent knows only one mode of cognition, namely, that cognition cognizes the object-support. Dharmakīrti now presents an additional mode of cognition, namely, self-awareness. While the former mode relates a cognition to an object that is commonly accessible to everyone, the latter mode is private to the agent him- or herself. The private character of one's experiencing a feeling is here expressed as "appearing by itself, in its own form" (*svayaṃ bhāsamānaṃ svarūpeṇa*). Manorathanandin paraphrases this phrase as "the pain that illuminates itself without depending on something else, as it appears by its own luminous nature." <sup>40</sup>

In this manner, the mode of self-awareness that applies to feelings like pleasure and pain is in contrast to the other mode of cognition that is designated as "having pain as its object-support," which applies to the yogic perception of another person's pain. As Dharmakīrti defines it in the another treatise, the *Santānāntarasiddhi*, the yogic cognition of other minds is a kind of perception, inasmuch as a mental form corresponding to another person's mind appears vividly in the yogic cognition. It is also accepted as a means of valid cognition inasmuch as it is not belying with respect to its object. However, even though yogic perception is a means of valid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Cf. SAS 71,5–7: mngon sum de ni de'i rnam pa'i rjes su byed pa gsal bar snang ba'i phyir dang | mi slu ba'i phyir (em. by Katsura) tshad ma zhes bya bar 'dod do || This clearly corresponds to Dharmakīrti's definition of yogic perception in PVin 1.28: bhāvanābalataḥ spaṣṭaṃ bhayādāv iva bhāsate | yaj jñānam avisamvādi tat pratyaksam akalpakam || For Dharmakīrti's discussion in the SAS, see Katsura 2007.



 $<sup>^{38}</sup>$  Sānkṛtyāyana's *editio princeps* of the PV (PV<sub>1</sub>) shows *prayujyate* as a variant reading. Among the available witnesses only Manorathanandin's commentary could have been a source for this reading, where the phrase in question is paraphrased as *na yujyate*. It seems therefore that Sāṇkṛtyāyana interpreted this paraphrase as indicating a different reading in the PV text.

<sup>39</sup> PV 3.458; cf. Tosaki (1985, p. 141).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> M<sub>1</sub> 254,21: duhkham svayam paranirapekṣaprakāśam svarūpeṇa prakāśasvabhāvena bhāsamānam pīḍā ... For "shining forth" as the essential nature of cognition, see PV 3.329: prakāśamānas tādātmyāt svarūpasya prakāśakaḥ | yathā prakāśo 'bhimatas tathā dhīr ātmavedinī || In a different context dealing with the later Madhyamaka argument of self-awareness, Paul Williams has distinguished two natures of self-awareness, namely, the reflexive nature of self-awareness and that of having a subject-object relationship. Of the two, he describes the reflexive nature of self-awareness as follows: "... the mere luminosity is said to be without any dependence on an external object, and completely uninvolved in any dualistic appearances of subject/object"; "... consciousness is self-referring in a non-objectifying way, just as a lamp illuminates itself not as one object among others to be illuminated, but through the very act of being a lamp, an illuminator of others." Cf. Williams (1998, p. 20). In spite of the difference of context, in my view, this nature is also applicable to Dharmakīrti's above argument for the self-awareness of one's own feelings.

cognition for accessing other minds, it can be distinguished from one's private access to one's own feelings.

The discussion contains another significant point. As we have seen previously, feelings have a structural similarity to cognition because they both arise from the same kind of causes, including external objects (as their object-support). Therefore, in addition to the above nature of self-awareness, feelings also possess a nature that relates them to their external objects, just like the yogic perception of other minds, which arises from other minds existing outside the yogi's mind. Feelings such as pleasure or pain are therefore actually a combination of two modes of cognition:<sup>42</sup>

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b\bar{a}hy\bar{a}rtha \rightarrow sukhavedan\bar{a} = (1) b\bar{a}hy\bar{a}rth\bar{a}lambanavedan\bar{a} (2) svasamvedana (sukhaj\tilde{n}ana)
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When one feels pleasure or pain with regard to an external object, the mental form of the object appears in the feeling by causally depending on that object. This mode of cognition presupposes an external object that makes itself known to everyone without difference. For instance, if two persons whose sense faculties are not damaged stand before an apple, the same mental form of the apple appears. However, the feelings that one holds with regard to the object may be different: one may feel pleasure, the other may feel pain. Such feelings are private experiences that are accessible only to the person who feels them. Dharmakīrti's second mode of cognition, self-awareness, serves to defend such privileged access to one's own feelings.

# Conclusion: Towards a Better Explanation of the Sautrāntika Epistemology

Dharmakīrti's arguments on feelings that were examined so far illustrate the necessity of self-awareness by considering the yogic perception of other person's feelings in comparison to one's own private access to them. Now, Dharmakīrti generalizes the two modes of cognition that he has introduced to apply to all cognitions:

bhinne jñānasya sarvasya tenālambanavedane | arthasārūpyam ālamba ātmā vittiḥ svayaṃ sphuṭaḥ<sup>43</sup> || 3.459 ||

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> We follow the reading of Pr<sub>B</sub> 221b4: ātmā vittih svayam sphutah, in which the notion of vitti is explained as "the nature [of cognition] (ātman), which is clear by itself (svayam sphutah)." Pr<sub>A</sub>' 85,14 contains the reading ātmavittih svayam sphutah, where it is difficult to explain the masculine-ending of sphutah. Another reading, ātmā vittih svayam sphutā, can be extracted from M<sub>1</sub> 255,4, since Manorathanandin comments on this part as follows: ātmā svayam paranirapeksah sphutā vittir vedanārthah; "The meaning of 'vedanā' [in v. 459b is explained here by the term] 'vitti,' i.e. awareness, which is the nature [of cognition] by itself, i.e., without depending on others, [and] clear." Here, we find two predicates to the subject, vittilvedanā, namely, svayam ātmā with masculine ending and sphutā with feminine ending. Theoretically, we can also assume the other reading ātmavittih svayam sphutā and translate: "The self-awareness (ātmavitti) is clear by itself." However, no witness supports this possibility.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Cf. PV 3.266–267; Nagatomi (1980, pp. 255–258).

Therefore, for all cognitions, there are the [two] different [modes of] having object-support ( $\bar{a}lambana$ ) and [self-]awareness ( $vedan\bar{a}$ ). Having object-support is [a cognition's nature of] having a similar form to an object ( $arthas\bar{a}r\bar{u}pya$ ); [self-]awareness (vitti) is the [essential] nature [of cognition], [which is] clear by itself (i.e., without depending on other objects than cognition itself). <sup>44</sup>

When one perceives an external object, the object causes a mental form that is similar to it in the sense cognition. This mode of cognition called "cognition having object-support" functions as our usual experience in the case of sense perception. As we have seen in Bhāviveka's claim, this is enough for explaining the passively arising process of sense perception. However, Dharmakīrti adds an extra mode of cognition to the same cognition, that is, self-awareness in terms of the cognition's nature being clear by itself. One reason for why we need this mode of cognition is, as we have seen in the case of feelings, the defence of the self-identification of cognitive experiences. Even though it seems that one perceives an external object as it is, the cognition is subjectively coloured, and this subjective colouring is only accessible to oneself, and not to others.

Returning to Dignāga's PS 1.9, we find there a combination of the two modes of cognition, namely, cognition having object-support as the means of valid cognition and self-awareness as its result. As we have seen in the introduction of this paper, if one interprets self-awareness in the sense of a cognition's cognizing cognition itself, one faces the problem that the means and the result apply to different objects because external objects, as *prameya*, differ from the internal objects of self-awareness. However, if one interprets self-awareness in the sense of the mere appearance of a cognition itself for justifying the subjectivity of one's private access to one's own experience, the above problem is avoided.

My emphasis here is to distinguish between two kinds of self-awareness as well as their  $sv\bar{a}bh\bar{a}sa$ -factor. In the Yogācāra context, this  $sv\bar{a}bh\bar{a}sa$ -factor is often equated with  $gr\bar{a}hak\bar{a}k\bar{a}ra$ , namely, the factor of grasping cognition's internal object. This line of interpretation of the  $sv\bar{a}bh\bar{a}sa$ -factor causes the problem mentioned above. Therefore, it is necessary to search for another type of  $sv\bar{a}bh\bar{a}sa$ -factor that is not related to internal objects. One possible solution is to consider the  $sv\bar{a}bh\bar{a}sa$ -factor not as  $gr\bar{a}hak\bar{a}k\bar{a}ra$  relating to  $gr\bar{a}hy\bar{a}k\bar{a}ra$ , but as the mere appearance of a cognition itself without relating to any objects. This kind of  $sv\bar{a}bh\bar{a}sa$ -factor seems absolutely identical to self-awareness as the result of a means of valid cognition, and thus it can be omitted in the schema of PS 1.9. This conclusion is only tentative, but, in my opinion, it helps to explain the relationship between  $s\bar{a}k\bar{a}raj\bar{n}\bar{a}nav\bar{a}da$  and the self-awareness of the Sautrāntika, while stopping one step before Yogācāra idealism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> The two modes of cognition, called here "ālambana" and "vedanā," are also reflected in PV 3.427 in terms of their respective content: bahirmukham ca tajjñānam bhāty arthapratibhāsavat | buddheś ca grāhikā buddhir nityam antarmukhātmani || "And this cognition, having the appearance of an [external] object, directed outward, and cognition that grasps the cognition always [appears] directed inward, [namely,] toward [the cognition] itself." Cf. Tosaki (1985, p. 108). Concerning ālambana, see also PV 3.267d: ālambas tu tadābhatā.



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- PV<sub>H</sub>: Palm-leaf manuscript of Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇavārttika. Photographs edited in: Kellner, B., & Sferra, F.: A palm-leaf manuscript of Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇavārttika from the collection kept by Nepalese rājaguru Hemarāja Śarman. In F. Sferra (Ed.), Sanskrit texts from Guiseppe Tucci's collection (pp. 229–248). Part I. Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente 2008.
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