Validity of Cognition and Authority of Scripture

Kei KATAOKA

Classification of cognition  Adopting the framework of the vīttikāra (Frauwallner’s ed., 26.7-21.34.19-36.5), Kumārila presupposes the following classification of cognition. First it is classified into two groups, *pramāṇa* (valid cognition) and *upramāṇa*. The latter is further classified into three: non-cognition (*ajñāna / ṇādikāśā / buddhyanuspati*), doubt (*samāyā*), and error (*mītyājñāna*). The last, i.e., error, is identified as such and is negated (*bādhyate*) when one finds faults in its cause (*hetuttīkāra / kāraṇadāsa*), or when one finds that its object does not exist in the manner that one has cognized it (*arthānāthāśā / utathābhāśā*).

1. *pramāṇa / sanyākpratyaya*
2. *upramāṇa*
   a. *ajñāna / ṇādikāśā / buddhyanuspati*
   b. *samāyā*
   c. *mītyājñāna*
   i. *hetuttīkāra / kāraṇadāsa*
   ii. *arthānāthāśā / utathābhāśā*

Mechanism of cognition  Kumārila regards validity of cognition (*pramāṇa*) as a kind of capacity (*sakti*). This identification implies that validity, for Kumārila, has various features attributed to capacity in general. Most importantly, in this context, it should innately exist in its locus. In other words, a cognition is valid from itself (*svottah), not from something else (*puruṣāt) such as good qualities (*guna*). Therefore when a cognition arises, its validity, i.e., the capacity for a cognition to operate, arises simultaneously. Considering that a characteristic feature of a capacity (*sakti*) is that it is an *adrṣṭa* to be postulated by *arthāpatti*, one must conclude that validity is not grasped by its locus, i.e., cognition itself, but only postulated from the result of cognition. Although it exists in a cognition innately and basically (*upavāda*), it is exceptionally (*opavāda*) cancelled when invalidity (*op-
Validity of Cognition and Authority of Scripture (K. Kataoka)

As we may suppose from Kumārila's work (vv. 22ab, 23, 102cd-110ab), good qualities of speech, derived from good qualities of the speaker, are of two kinds: the fact that it deals with an object that is known through another means of valid cognition (*pramāṇāntara-dṛthāhvāntara), and the fact that it has been uttered by an honest man (*yuktoktata). The former condition guarantees the correspondence between an object and a preceding means of valid cognition, while the latter guarantees that between an acquired information and speech.

Securing validity in the case of a Vedic injunction The Vedas, being authorless, lack the only possible source of a bad quality, and therefore never themselves have a bad quality, though they do not have a good quality either. But, because there is no possible source of a bad quality, they do not require a good quality from the beginning, which in the case of worldly statements (tandākam vocam) is required in order to guarantee the validity of verbal cognition. In consequence, the condition of not being a means of valid cognition (apramāṇata) never accrues to the Vedas, because they do not have the undesirable transference (samkrānta) of a bad quality (v. 68). Thus they keep their innate characteristic, i.e. being a means of valid cognition (pramāṇa). Therefore a cognition from a Vedic injunction never touches invalidity (apramāṇa) derived from a bad quality. Thus the innate characteristic of validity (pramāṇa) remains in the cognition, without being cancelled.

Impossibility of negating a cognition from a Vedic injunction It has become clear why a cognition from a Vedic injunction is ontologically faultless. A Vedic injunction is always a means of valid cognition (*cudam pramāṇa evo). This is why eternity (svayam), or not being made by sentient beings (apramāṇa), is required for protecting the authority of the Vedas (vv. 100cd-101a). However, as I mentioned above, one can deny an erroneous cognition by means of a later negating cognition (buddhabhāvatara), even though one could not point out a fault in its cause. For that one would need to show that a dharma, more concretely the relationship between cause and effect, e.g., śrīga and svarga, is otherwise (ato-...
Validity of Cognition and Authority of Scripture (K. Kataoka)

(8thc.) than a Vedic injunction teaches. But the domain of dharma is specifically allowed only to the Vedas, never to be approached by human perception. For perception and Vedic injunction, the two independent, primary and direct means of valid cognition, keep separate functional divisions. With regard to a dharma only a Vedic injunction is a means of valid cognition (sādhanāvatā promoting) (v. 4.13). This is why Kumārila (v. 11.26-155) is so eager to deny an omniscient being, who could even grasp a dharma. We human beings, according to the Mīmāṃsā system, can never obtain knowledge of a dharma without the teaching of the Vedas, just as a person blind from birth can never obtain knowledge of a particular color without the teaching of a non-blind person. Therefore it is impossible to deny a Vedic teaching by means of perception. As for the dependent, secondary and indirect means of valid cognition such as inference, because these are dependent on perception (Frawuller’s ed., 21:21: sādhākarā: 22:19: pravajñāvaiśākāra), they cannot overcome the limitations of perception.

*1 thank Dr. E. English, Dr. H. Isaacson and Mr. A. Watson for comments.

1) Ślokavārttika cokāta (ŚVc), v. 51ab. 2) As D’Sa (Francis X. D’Sa, 1980. Sādhanāpramāṇa in Sābara and Kumārila. Vienna. 181) correctly points out, each word of the pramāṇa-definition in verse 80 excludes a corresponding apramāṇa. But the text he gives (n. 1) of v. 80b nūpi samvādaḥ recchati, most probably there before Dvārakadāsa Sāṣṭri’s edition, should be corrected to na visvānād vāc ch. as he correctly translates on p. 180. probably there following the Madras edition (tasmād dyāya uvāc nānaḥ na visvānād vāc ch. jātāntaraṇa vyākāraḥ tattvānām pratyakṣaṇān) Suczrta Mīra (Kāśīkā 4.3.4) also enumerates two other kinds of invalid cognition, smaraṇa (recollection) and samvāda (later cognition which agrees with and therefore validates the preceding cognition). Kumārila, too, in the pramāṇa-definition in the Bṛhadārṇava (see below, note 9), in particular by the phrase apravakṣitāvyākāram, seems to exclude these two from being kinds of pramāṇa. But as far as the Ślokavārttika is concerned, we may see from the pramāṇa-definition in verse 80 in particular. Kumārila does not presuppose these two as kinds of apramāṇa 3) In Ratnakirti’s text hetikādosa (Thakur’s first edition, 105.10,106.1; Katsumi Mīmaki, 1976. Le rétention bouddhique de la persistance des choses (Śāraśāridhūlaṇa) et la preuve de la momentanéité des choses (Kṣaṇabhaṅga-