

Dialogue of Mīmāṃsā and Buddhism on the Buddha's compassion and authority

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The present author re-examines the positions of Dharmakīrti as expressed in his earlier works, *Pramāṇavārttika* I and II, in particular with regard to the authority of scripture and of the Buddha, thereby shedding light on the possible influence of his opponent, Kumāṛila. Attention is also paid to theoretical and historical developments beginning from the *Nyāyasūtra* with Pakṣilasvāmin's commentary and Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*.

In criticizing omniscience, Kumāṛila proves that the Buddha, being free from desire, cannot undertake the action of teaching (and therefore his teaching cannot be his own). Dharmakīrti, in his first book, *Pramāṇavārttika* I, after formulating Kumāṛila's syllogism stating that "the Buddha must have desire because he teaches", criticizes it as a wrong inference of the type known as *śeṣavat*. He does this with the intention of criticizing in general Kumāṛila's understanding of inference. He points out that Kumāṛila's reason is inconclusive (*anaikāntika*) because in some cases even compassion may lead one to teach, and so one cannot necessarily infer the existence of a bad desire from the action of teaching. Then in *Pramāṇavārttika* II, commenting on the four epithets of the Buddha given in the *Mangala* verse of Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, namely *jagaddhitaiṣin*, *sāstrī*, *sugata* and

tāyin, Dharmakīrti proves that because of his teaching the Buddha must have compassion. He does so by establishing in order (*anuloma*) and proving in reversed order (*pratiloma*) the causal chain of the four: compassion (*karuṇā*), repeated practice (*abhyāsa*), the cognition of the four truths (*catuḥsatyajñāna*), and their teaching (*upadeśa*). Thus he shows that Kumāriḷa's reason "because the Buddha teaches" proves rather the Buddha's compassion.

Kumāriḷa criticizes Dignāga's proof of scripture's authority (*āgamaḫprāmāṇya*), which presupposes the Naiyāyika theory of truth, i.e. *ḫarataḫprāmāṇya-vāda*. In *Pramāṇavārttika* I, Dharmakīrti abandons the *ḫarataḫprāmāṇya*-theory and reinterprets Dignāga's verse following the *svataḫprāmāṇya*-theory, which is Kumāriḷa's own, and thus defends the authority of the Buddha's teaching. But concerning the authority of the Buddha himself, who is criticized by Kumāriḷa as being not free from desire and not omniscient, Dharmakīrti in *Pramāṇavārttika* I does not explicitly prove the Buddha to be omniscient and compassionate. In *Pramāṇavārttika* II, however, he introduces two alternative definitions of *pramāṇa* from the perspectives respectively of the *ḫarataḫprāmāṇya*-theory and the *svataḫprāmāṇya*-theory. At the same time he identifies the teaching of the four truths (or *mārga*) as the characteristic feature of a *pramāṇa*. Thus he succeeds in proving the Buddha to be a *pramāṇa* on the grounds that he fulfils the condition of a *pramāṇa*. And he proves the Buddha to be omniscient (in the sense that he knows the most important things, i.e. the four truths) by applying the causal chain ending with the teaching of the four truths.