

## Pre-Dharmakīrti Commentators on Dignāga's Definition of a Thesis (*pakṣalakṣaṇa*)

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A dominant theme in the writings of Erich Frauwallner and Ernst Steinkellner has been an attempt to trace the philosophical development of the Buddhist logician, Dharmakīrti (6th–7th c.). As their contributions show, in this research it is not only important to trace Dharmakīrti's positions as they evolved throughout his own works on epistemology and logic, but it is equally necessary to gain as much information as possible on the opponents against whom Dharmakīrti argued. And not just the non-Buddhists: we need to collect and analyse the fragmentary presentations of the views of the other Buddhist commentators on Dignāga, positions which Dharmakīrti sought to refute and which often motivated him to formulate his own particular interpretation of Dignāga. In what follows, we shall call these latter commentators “pre-Dharmakīrti” in the sense that their works and ideas were *anterior intellectual influences* on Dharmakīrti—it does, of course, have to be allowed that at least some of them might not have been pre-Dharmakīrti in a purely chronological sense and could have been his approximate contemporaries.<sup>1</sup>

Amongst these pre-Dharmakīrti commentators on Dignāga, none of whose actual works survives either in the original or in translation, one stands out fairly clearly: Īśvarasena, Dharmakīrti's probable teacher, who wrote a commentary on Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* against which Dharmakīrti repeatedly argued.<sup>2</sup> Let us summarise some of the basic elements of recent research on Īśvarasena's

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<sup>1</sup> A difference between chronological and intellectual orders is more than just a theoretical possibility: it may well have occurred in other contexts in Buddhist philosophy, notably the relationship between Jñānaśrīmitra, Ratnakīrti and Ratnākaraśānti, as is argued in an article by K. Mimaki, “The Intellectual Sequence of Ratnākaraśānti, Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti”, in *EA*, 1, 1992, 297–306.

<sup>2</sup> See E. Frauwallner, “Landmarks in the History of Indian Logic”, *WZKSO*, 5, 1961, 125–148 (= *Kleine Schriften*, 862–863).

philosophical stance. Although Īśvarasena's name is extremely rarely explicitly mentioned in Indian texts, Steinkellner<sup>3</sup> has shown that he was nonetheless spoken of by name by Arcaṭa and Durvekamiśra in connection with a position on non-perception (*anupalabdhi*), namely, that non-perception of *x* was just the lack of perception of *x* (*upalabdhyabhāvamātra*), the mere fact that one does not see *x* (*adarśanamātra*); this constituted a separate means of valid cognition (*pramāṇāntara*) for proving *x*'s inexistence or absence. This position, which was rejected by Dharmakīrti, was linked with an essentially inductive account of valid reasons, where absence of the reason in dissimilar instances (*vipakṣa*) was to be established by mere lack of perception. In other words, the general principle, or pervasion (*vyāpti*), would be established as not having any counterexamples *merely* because one did not see any; this was the position which Dharmakīrti went to great pains to reject in *Pramāṇavārttika* I, proposing instead a necessary absence of counterexamples based on a fact in reality, viz., the natural connection (*svabhāvavpratibandha*) existing between the terms in the inference. Subsequently, in his *Hetubindu*, Dharmakīrti would argue at length against a theory which held that a valid reason needed six characters (*ṣaḍlakṣaṇa*), instead of the usual three. While the attribution of the *ṣaḍlakṣaṇahetu* doctrine to Īśvarasena is still on the level of a reasonable hypothesis, unconfirmed by any specific Indian sources, it is at least corroborated in the indigenous Tibetan commentary on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* by rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen: there Īśvarasena is named in connection with the *ṣaḍlakṣaṇahetu* doctrine.<sup>4</sup> Īśvarasena, quite possibly in reply to Dharmakīrti's initial critique, seems to have realised that his inductive method of proving the absence of counterexamples was insufficient, and thus proposed three supplementary criteria for validity,<sup>5</sup> all of which were rejected by Dharmakīrti. In short, we can thus reasonably assume with Steinkellner that Īśvarasena was the major catalyst for Dharmakīrti's own interpretation and defense of the triply characterised reason (*trirūpahetu*), his notion of natural connections, and his views on non-perception.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> E. Steinkellner, "Bemerkungen zu Īśvarasenas Lehre vom Grund", *WZKSO*, 10, 1966, 78.

<sup>4</sup> E. Steinkellner, "Remarks on niścitagrahaṇa", in G. Gnoli & L. Lanciotti, eds., *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, Rome, 1988, n. 47.

<sup>5</sup> viz., (4) *abādhītaviśayatva* ("[the reason's] not having as its object a [property] which is invalidated [by direct perception]"), (5) *vivakṣitaikasamkhyatva* ("that [the reason's] singularity is intended"), (6) *jñātatva* ("that [the reason] is known"). See *Hetubindu*, ch. VI, in E. Steinkellner, *Dharmakīrti's Hetubinduḥ*, Vienna, 1967, II, 70 ff. It is particularly the fourth character which would remedy the inadequacies of the inductive procedure by eliminating the exceptional cases where mere non-observation of counter-examples turned out to be misleading.

<sup>6</sup> See E. Steinkellner, "Bemerkungen zu Īśvarasenas Lehre vom Grund", *WZKSO*, 10, 1966, 73–85; *Dharmakīrti's Hetubinduḥ*, Chapters V and VI and notes, 1967; "Remarks on niścita-grahaṇa", *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, 1438–1441, n. 47 and 56.

Besides Īśvarasena, there were some other, much more obscure, Buddhist commentators on Dignāga against whom Dharmakīrti consecrated some of his argumentation: in Kārikās 27 and 122 of the fourth chapter of *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti was apparently refuting a commentator on Dignāga's *Nyāyamukha* (*nyāyamukhaṭīkā*) whom Śākyabuddhi named as “Mang po len pa'i bu”. Unfortunately, we have only the Tibetan translation of this portion of Śākyabuddhi's *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā*.<sup>7</sup> S. Watanabe, in his article on this subject,<sup>8</sup> has speculated that “Mang po len pa'i bu” might be restored as “Bāhuleya”, but this is conjectural and both names are, to our knowledge at least, unfindable in any other works. Compounding the mystery somewhat is that Śākyabuddhi seems to have alluded to other commentators on the *Nyāyamukha*, that is, he spoke of Mang po len pa'i bu la sogs pa (= *ādi*, “and others”), and Vibhūticandra's annotations to the *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* also mention “the commentator on the *Nyāyamukha* and others”. Now, there probably was at least one other major Indian commentator on the *Nyāyamukha*: Chinese sources tell us that Dharmapāla commented on the *Yin ming lun*, which is the *Nyāyamukha*.<sup>9</sup> However, this work of Dharmapāla has not survived in the original, in translation or in fragments, and it is thus impossible to know what its specific positions might have been.

Much more significant in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV is the position of a/the “commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*”—as we shall see below, this is the way he is repeatedly identified by Dharmakīrti's own commentators. This *pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā* is one of the opponents in the large section of *Pramāṇavārttika* IV which treats of Dignāga's definition of the thesis (*pakṣa*, *pratijñā*) in a logical argument. We can assume that we are dealing, once again, with Īśvarasena:

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<sup>7</sup> *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā*, TTP, 313b 2–3: *gang yang ltar snang bcas brjod sogs bkod pa'i zhes bya ba la sogs pa la mang po len pa'i bu la sogs pa rigs pa'i sgo'i ṭīkā byed pa dag gis ...*. Cf. *Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā*, TTP, 326b 8: *rigs pa'i sgo 'grel bshad byed pa*, and Vibhūticandra's notes to Manorathanandin's *Pramāṇavārttika-vṛtti* ad *Kārikā* 27, n. 4, *nyāyamukhaṭīkā*, ed., by R. Sāṅkrītyāyāna in *JBORS*, 24, 1938. On the actual arguments, see S. Watanabe, “Shōrimonron chūshakusha *Pramāṇavārttika*, 4, 27 shi ron”, in *Okuda Sensei kiju kinen Bukkyōshisō ronshū*, Osaka, 1976, and my own translation of *Kārikā* 27 and *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* in T. Tillemans, “*Pramāṇavārttika* IV (2)”, *WZKS*, 1987, as well as my article, “Dharmakīrti on Some Sophisms”, in E. Steinkellner, ed., *Studies in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition*, Vienna, 1991, 403–418.

<sup>8</sup> S. Watanabe, “Shōrimonron chūshakusha”, 982, n. 28.

<sup>9</sup> See E. Frauwallner, “Landmarks in the History of Indian Logic”, 861 and n. 44 on *yin ming lun*; T. Tillemans, *Materials for the Study of Āryadeva, Dharmapāla and Candrakīrti*, Vienna, 1990, 11–13, on Dharmapāla's works.

- (a) Īśvarasena is, after all, the only pre-Dharmakīrti commentator on *Pramāṇasamuccaya* that we know of.
- (b) Especially if the *śaḍlakṣaṇahetu* ascription is correct, Īśvarasena was particularly influential in the development of key aspects in several of Dharmakīrti's works, so that it would be no exaggeration to say that many of the main elements of Dharmakīrti's thought on logical matters developed in a dialectical relationship with Īśvarasena.
- (c) Just as Īśvarasena played such an important role in *Pramāṇavārttika* I, so too it would be reasonable to assume that it is the same adversary, Īśvarasena, whose ideas play a significant role in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV.

Let me briefly give the background from Dignāga and some of the main elements in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV's section on the thesis. A translation and detailed explanation of the relevant verses from *Pramāṇavārttika* IV is appearing in an ongoing series of articles on this chapter of Dharmakīrti, and we shall try to avoid burdening the notes excessively here. As is well known by now, Dignāga gave two definitions of the thesis in his *Nyāyamukha* and *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, definitions whose wording differed but which were essentially the same in meaning (as Dharmakīrti in fact took pains to show in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV, 86–88). For our purposes, it is the definition given in *Pramāṇasamuccaya*'s chapter on inference-for-others (*parārthānumāna*) which concerns us, for there Dignāga gave a specification of a number of requirements which a valid thesis should satisfy, each one of which was commented upon *in extenso* by Dharmakīrti in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV. Here, then, is Dignāga's definition:

[A valid thesis] is one which is intended (*iṣṭa*) by [the proponent] himself (*svayam*) as something to be stated (*nirdeśya*) according to its essence alone (*svarūpeṇaiva*) [i.e., as a *sādhyā*]; [and] with regard to [the proponent's] own subject (*svadharmin*), it is not opposed (*anirākṛta*) by perceptible objects (*pratyakṣārtha*), by inference (*anumāna*), by authorities (*āpta*) or by what is commonly recognised (*prasiddha*).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Pramāṇasamuccaya* III, 2:

*svarūpeṇaiva nirdeśyaḥ svayam iṣṭo 'nirākṛtaḥ |*  
*pratyakṣārthānumānāptaprasiddhena svadharmini ||*

*Pramāṇasamuccaya*, Tib.:

*rang gi ngo bo kho nar bstan | bdag 'dod rang gi chos can la ||*  
*mngon sum don dang rjes dpag dang | yid ches grags pas ma bsal ba 'o ||*

Skt. of *svarūpeṇaiva* ... *'nirākṛtaḥ* is to be found in Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu*, III, 38. The restitution of *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, III, 2 follows E. Frauwallner, "Review of R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana's edition of the *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣya*", *JAOS*, 77, 1957, 58–60, *Kleine Schriften*, 885; see also V. van Bijlert, *Epistemology and Spiritual Authority*, Vienna, 1989, 72. Cf. *Nyāyamukha*, 1: *svayaṃ sādhyatvenepsitaḥ pakṣo virud-dhārthānirākṛtaḥ*. "The thesis is what is intended by [the proponent] himself as the *sādhyā* [and] is not opposed by contradicting states of affairs." See the edition and translation of *Nyāyamukha* in S. Katsura, "Inmyō shōrimonron kenkyū, I", *BFLHU*, 37, 1977, 109.

Dignāga himself, in his *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* on *Kārikā* 2, commented upon *svarūpeṇaiva nirdeśyaḥ* as serving to eliminate unestablished reasons and examples from being theses, and thus supposedly insuring that his definition would avoid the faults incurred by rival definitions, such as the *pratijñālakṣaṇa* put forth in Gautama's *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 1, 33.<sup>11</sup> The phrase *svayam iṣṭa*, however, eliminated theses which were just positions found in a treatise, and which were not those of the proponent himself. Dignāga states:

“This [phrase], *svayam iṣṭa*, shows an acceptance (*abhyupagama*) which does not rely upon treatises (*śāstrānapekṣa*).”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> On Dharmakīrti and Dignāga's arguments against *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 1, 33's definition, viz., *sādhyānirdeśaḥ pratijñā* (“a statement of something which is to be established is a thesis”), see T. Tillemans, “*Pramāṇavārttika* IV (2)”, *WZKS*, 31, 1987, 152ff.

<sup>12</sup> *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti*, TTP 125a 1, H. Kitagawa, *Indo koten ronrigaku no kenkyū. Jinna no taikei*, Tokyo, 1973, 471: *bdag nyid 'dod pa zhes bya ba ni 'dis ni bstan bcos la mi bltos pa'i khas blangs pa bstan pa yin no*.

Cf. the Skt. fragment of *Pramāṇasamuccaya* found in *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣya* 495, 2 [Kitagawa, *op. cit.*, 129, n. 166.]: *svayam iti śāstrānapekṣam abhyupagamam darśayati*. See also the article by M. Ono, “Dharmakīrti ni okeru shuchōmeidai no teigi ni tsuite”, *JIBS*, 34, 2, 1986, which discusses Dharmakīrti's development of Dignāga's definition of the thesis. As Ono points out, while *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* took *svayam iṣṭa* together, Dharmakīrti made a significant split between *svayam* and *iṣṭa*, using the latter to refute sophisms of the Sāṃkhyas and Cārvākas which turned on word-play and equivocation. Following *Pramāṇavārttika* IV, 28–29, then, the definition in *Pramāṇasamuccaya* III, gave specifications of four basic requirements which a valid thesis should satisfy, requirements embodied by *svarūpeṇa*, the particle *eva* (“only”, “alone”) in *svarūpeṇaiva, iṣṭa* (“intended”) and *svayam* (“himself”)—each one of these four was developed by Dharmakīrti in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV:

*gamyārthatve 'pi sādhyokter asaṃmohāya lakṣaṇam |  
tac caturlakṣaṇam rūpanipāteṣṭasvayaṃpadaiḥ || (28)*

*asiddhāsādhanārthoktavādyabhyupagatagrahaḥ |  
anukto 'pīchayā vyāptāḥ sādhyā ātmārthavan mataḥ || (29)*

“Although the statement of what is to be proven (*sādhyā* = *pakṣa*) is something which can be understood [by implication], the [defining] characteristic [of the thesis] was [stated] to dispel confusion. This [*sādhyā*] has four characteristics: By means of the words ‘essence’ (*rūpa*), ‘alone’ (*nipāta* ‘particle’ = *eva*), ‘intended’ (*iṣṭa*) and ‘himself’, one understands that [the thesis] is unestablished [for the opponent], is not a *sādhana* [i.e., reason or example], is stated according to the [real] sense and is what is accepted by the proponent (*vādin*). Even though not [explicitly] stated, what is pervaded by the [proponent's] intention is held to be the *sādhyā*, as in [the Sāṃkhya's argument that the eyes, etc., are] for the use of the Self (*ātman*).”

See the explanations on *Kārikās* 28–29 in my article, “*Pramāṇavārttika* IV (3)”, *EA*, 1, 1992, 437ff. Note that we have amended Miyasaka's reading of *Kārikā* 28 in keeping with E. Frauwallner, “Review of R. Sāṅkrītyāna's edition of the *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣya*”, 884.

It is in *Pramānavārttika* IV's section commenting upon *svayam* (42–90) that there is the most significant argumentation against what can plausibly be presumed to be Īśvarasena's positions. Dharmakīrti argued against the view that because the proponent accepted a treatise, all properties ascribed by the treatise to the subject (*dharmin*) had also to be part of the thesis for which the proponent was responsible. According to this view, when the proponent seeks to prove that sound is impermanent, the reason, "being produced" (*kṛtakatva*), will have to prove not just impermanence, but also should not contradict any of the properties which the proponent's treatise (in particular, the *Vaiśeṣikasūtras*) ascribe to sound, such as that it is a "quality of space" (*ākāśaguṇa*). Now, the argumentation up to *Kārikā* 69 is clearly directed at non-Buddhists. As the repeated advocacy of *ākāśaguṇatva* and other well-known Vaiśeṣika tenets suggest, we are dealing with an adversary who adhered to basic Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika positions. Equally, then, the adversary's view on the thesis, or equivalently on "what is being proven" (*sādhya*), must also be one which was, broadly speaking, ascribable to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika.<sup>13</sup> From *Kārikā* 69 onwards, however, we see that virtually the same position on the thesis is attributed to a Buddhist, whom Prajñākaragupta terms "a commentator (*vyākhyātr*) on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*".

<sup>13</sup> cf. Dharmakīrti's presentation of this view in *Pramānaviniścaya* 291a 5–6: *bstan bcos khas blangs pa'i phyir de la mthong ba thams cad bsgrub par bya ba yin no zhes dogs pa srid par 'gyur ro* || "The doubt could arise that because one accepts a treatise, all which is found there [in the treatise] is the *sādhya*."

Although neither Dharmakīrti nor his commentators explicitly identify which Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika(s) held this, it seems clear that Uddyotakara did hold it. This is brought out in his attack on the specification *śāstrānapekṣa* in the passage from *Pramāṇa-samuccayavṛtti* ad *Kārikā* 2 given above. Uddyotakara argued that if *svayam* showed that the position which the proponent sought to prove was really independent of *śāstra* (*śāstrānapekṣa*), then we should ask what is meant by *śāstra*. If the latter meant what is not contradicted by perception or scripture, then not relying on *śāstra* would be tantamount to holding and proving a false view. *Nyāyavārttika* ad *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 1, 33, 282, 4–8 (Kashi Sanskrit Series, 43): *yad api svayaṃśabdena śāstrānapekṣam abhyupagamaṃ darśayatīti atroktam | kim utkam | parāvajñānasyā-yuktatvād ity evamādi | kiṃ punaḥ śāstram yad anapekṣam abhyupagamaṃ darśayati | nanu śāstram pratyakṣāgamābhyām aviruddham | āgamas tadanapekṣam abhyupagamaṃ darśayatīti bruvatā 'pramāṇakam artham abhyupaitīty uktam | yaś cāpramāṇako 'bhyupagamo nāsāv abhyupagantum svasthātmanā yuktah | nāpi pratipādayitum yukta iti* ||

Note also that Prajñākaragupta (in his introduction to *Kārikā* 53) describes the adversary as holding the view that if one engaged in debate without accepting a treatise, one would simply be a caviller (*vaiṭaṇḍika*) and a nihilist (*nāstika*), raising objections without having a position of one's own. These are, of course, typically Naiyāyika terms, and the adversary's views would indeed be in keeping with the definition of debate (*vāda*) in *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 2, 1, which speaks of *vāda* not contradicting the school's philosophical tenets (*siddhāntāviruddha*). For the Naiyāyika, arguing without holding a system of tenets at all would be cavil (*viṭaṇḍā*) as defined in *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 2, 3.

Here, then, is *Pramānavārttika* IV, *Kārikā* 69 with the introductory passage from Prajñākaragupta's *Pramānavārttikabhāṣya*:

“A commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* says [the following]: “Because one accepts a treatise, all which is found in the treatise is to be proved (*sādhya*). Otherwise, accepting a treatise would be meaningless. Indeed, if its propositions were not the *sādhya*, then accepting the treatise would not be of use for anything, nor would one be entitled to accept [it]. Nothing is [effectuated] autonomously by a *pramāṇa*. Therefore, once one has accepted a treatise, the property [mentioned] in it becomes the *sādhya*. Thus, when there is a contradiction with the [treatise], a fault does indeed occur.”<sup>14</sup>

[Dharmakīrti replies:] (69) “Suppose that because one accepted a treatise, all [*dharmas*] found in [that] treatise would be the *sādhya*. Then it would follow absurdly that a statement of an unestablished example or reason would have to be a thesis.”<sup>15</sup>

The first half of the *kārikā* represents the adversary's view, while the last half is Dharmakīrti drawing the consequence that this adversary would fall into exactly the same trap as one who accepts the definition in *Nyāyasūtra* 1, 1, 33. What stands out clearly is the fact that the “commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*” did hold the same view on the thesis, or *sādhya*, as the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas against whom Dharmakīrti argued in the *kārikās* preceding *Kārikā* 69. Let us from here on, in keeping with the arguments sketched out earlier, speak of this commentator on *Pramāṇasamuccaya* as being Īśvarasena.

It might be, *prima facie* at least, unclear how Īśvarasena's view on the *sādhya*, as found in *Kārikā* 69 and *Pramānavārttikabhāṣya*, could have been reconciled with Dignāga's idea in *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* that the proponent's position should not rely on a treatise (*śāstrānapekṣa*)—after all, Īśvarasena *does* accept that the thesis, or *sādhya*, includes properties mentioned in treatises, and is thus not independent of treatise-based positions. We might, however, reasonably hy-

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<sup>14</sup> *Pramānavārttikabhāṣya*, ed., R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, 1, Patna, 1953, 510, 8–11: *pramāṇasamuccayasya vyākhyātā prāha | śāstrābhyupa-gamāt sādhyatā sakalasya śāstradr̥ṣṭasyānyathā śāstrābhyupagamasya vyarthatā | na hi tadarthāsādhyatāyām śāstropagamah kva cid upayogī | abhyupagamam vārhati | svātantreṇa pramāṇena na kiṃ cit | tasmād upagamya śāstram tadarthaḥ sādhanīyaḥ | tatas tadvirodhe doṣa eva ||*

Manorathanandin simply speaks of “followers of the Ācārya” (*ācāryīyāḥ*). Cf. *Pramānavārttikavṛtti*, 438, 10–11: *yad apy āhur ācāryīyāḥ śāstram abhyupagamya yadā vādaḥ kriyate tadā śāstradr̥ṣṭasya sakalasya dharmasya sādhyatety atrāha ||* “But the followers of the Ācārya [Dignāga] argue: ‘When a debate is engaged in after one has accepted a treatise, then at that time all the dharmas found in the treatise are the *sādhya*’. Here [Dharmakīrti] replies:”

<sup>15</sup> *śāstrābhyupagamāt sādhyah śāstradr̥ṣṭo 'khilo yadi | pratijñā 'siddhadṛṣṭāntahetuvādaḥ prasajyate ||* (69).

pothesise that Īśvarasena took Dignāga’s *śāstrānapekṣa* as meaning “no reliance on treatises which are unaccepted by the proponent at the time of the debate”. This interpretation is borne out fairly well when we look at the adversary’s view discussed in *Kārikā 72*: once again, Śākyabuddhi’s *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā* (322a3) identifies him as being a/the “commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*” (*tshad ma kun las btus pa’i ṭīkā byed pa, pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkākāra*), and as before, Īśvarasena seems by far the most reasonable candidate. He proposed the following explanation for *svayam*: The word is needed to show that the treatise in question, whose properties are the *sādhyā*, is the very one which the proponent *himself* accepts now, rather than some treatise which he might have accepted earlier, but now rejects. Here is Devendrabuddhi’s explanation of the views which Dharmakīrti is refuting in *Kārikā 72 et seq.*:

“Having given up some previously accepted treatise, then it is not contradictory that at the time of the debate, the proponent relies on another treatise as he himself wishes.”<sup>16</sup>

In short, for Īśvarasena *svayam* would have served to eliminate doubt about which treatise was to be the basis for the *sādhyā*.

Let us now try to summarise Īśvarasena’s position and contrast it with that of Dharmakīrti:

- (a) Īśvarasena seems to have interpreted Dignāga as still allowing that the positions in a treatise would also have to be the proponent’s *sādhyā* or thesis, *providing the proponent accepted that treatise himself*.
- (b) He interpreted *svayam* in a manner which would be consistent with the idea that properties mentioned in an accepted treatise were also the *sādhyā*. In particular, *svayam* did not eliminate *all* treatises, but only those which the proponent might have once accepted, but now rejected.
- (c) Īśvarasena thus may well have interpreted *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti*’s phrase *śāstrānapekṣam abhyupagamaṃ darśayati* as meaning that *svayam iṣṭa* shows that the proponent’s position does not rely upon (i.e., is not based upon) any treatises which are not accepted by the proponent himself at the time of the debate.
- (d) Dharmakīrti took Dignāga’s statements in *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* about no reliance upon treatises (*śāstrānapekṣa*) much more radically: at the time the proponent makes an inference, he does not rely upon, or even ac-

<sup>16</sup> *Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā*, 338a7–8: *bstan bcos cung zad sngar khas blangs pa de gang yin pa de bor nas | rtsod pa’i dus su bdag nyid kyi ’dod pas bstan bcos gzhan la brten pa’i rgol ba yang ’gal ba yod pa ma yin no zhes* || Cf. Vibhūticandra’s notes on *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* ad *Kārikā 72*, n. 2: *svīkṛtaśāstraṃ muktavā vādakāle śāstrāntaram icchayā labhyate ’ṅīkartum* || “Having abandoned a treatise which he had accepted, then at the time of the debate another treatise could be accepted as wished.”



cept, any treatises at all; the positions in the treatise do not count as being the *sādhya*; inference which functions by the force of [real] entities (*vastubalapravṛttānumāna*) is completely independent of all scriptures and treatises.<sup>17</sup>

- (e) *Svayam*, for Dharmakīrti, does not serve to indicate which treatise is to be taken into account to determine the *sādhya*. It shows that only those properties which the proponent intends to prove himself are the *sādhya* (see *Kārikā* 42). Unrelated properties, which happen to be mentioned in a treatise but are unintended by the proponent in the specific debate, are irrelevant (see *Kārikās* 56 and 57).

This, then, is what we can glean about the views of the “commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*” on the thesis-definition, a commentator whom we have taken to be Īśvarasena.<sup>18</sup> If we are right in our identifications and attributions,

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., *Pramāṇavārttika* IV, 48. Additions follow *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti*:

*uktaṃ ca nāgamāpekṣam anumānam svagocare |  
siddham tena susiddham tan na tadā śāstram iṅśyate ||*

“Now, it has [already] been said that an inference [which functions by the force of entities (*vastubalapravṛttānumāna*)] does not depend upon scripture with regard to its object, [i.e., what is to be proved (*sādhya*)]. What is established by such an [inference], is well established; at the time [of making such an inference], a treatise is not taken into account.”

The point applies specifically to *vastubalapravṛttānumāna*, which concerns rationally decidable propositions (like sound being impermanent) whose truth or falsity can be known objectively by logical reasoning alone. Note, however, that Dharmakīrti certainly does allow reliance upon treatises when one is deliberating about rationally inaccessible matters (like the details of karmic retribution), which are completely imperceptible (*atyantaparokṣa*) and cannot be known in any way other than by relying upon scripture. See *Pramāṇavārttika*, IV, *Kārikā* 50ff and 94ff. See also the introduction to T. Tillemans, *Persons of Authority*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993, 9ff., as well as my own translations and explanations of *Kārikās* 48 and 50 in my article “*Pramāṇavārttika* IV (4)”, *WZKS*, (in press).

<sup>18</sup> The “commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*” does reappear in Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi’s elaboration of the discussion of the four types of “opposition” mentioned in the latter half of the thesis-definition. This discussion begins at *Kārikās* 91–92 in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV, where Dharmakīrti gives a general explanation of the need to include the provision *anirākṛta* (“not opposed”) and presents the four types of possible opposition, viz., by perceptible objects (*pratyakṣārtha*), inference (*anumāna*), authorities (*āpta*, i.e., scriptures or the proponent’s own words) and what is commonly recognised (*prasiddha*). Devendrabuddhi (*Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā*, 342b8), commenting on *Kārikā* 92, spoke of “some people” (*‘ga’ zhiḡ*) who seem to have interpreted the compound *pratyakṣārthānumānāptaprasiddhena* differently—Śākyabuddhi then identifies them as commentators on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā*, 325a1: *‘dir yang ‘ga’ zhiḡ ces bya ba ni tshad ma kun las btus pa ‘i ṭīkā byed pa dag ste | de dag ni tshig gsum zlas dbye ba byas nas rab tu grags pa ‘i sgra dang | gsum pa ‘i de ‘i skyes bur khas len cing grags pa ‘i sgra yang re re la mngon par sbyor bar byed do ||*

The explanation in *Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā* and *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā* is relatively brief and obscure, but it seems clear at least that the “commentators on *Pramāṇa-samuccaya*” held that *prasiddha* qualified the *dvandva* compound *pratyakṣārtha-anumāna-āpta*—“what is commonly recognised through *pratyakṣārtha*, *anumāna*, *āpta*.” The whole compound becomes an instrumental *tatpuruṣa*. However, while the position may have been that of Īśvarasena, it did not provoke any argumentation in *Pramāṇavārttika* itself, but only a short reply by two of Dharmakīrti’s commentators. Oddly enough, Śākyabuddhi speaks of “commentators on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*”, thus using the plural *ṭīkā byed pa dag*—it is not clear to us what we should make of this plural.

then a picture of what must have been a complex dialectic emerges: Īśvarasena seems to have attempted to reconcile Dignāga's views in *Pramāṇasamuccaya* III, *Kārikā* 2 and *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* with an essentially Naiyāyika position on the *sādhya*—viz., that the *sādhya* is not independent of treatises. This uneasy combination then led him to a very strained interpretation of Dignāga's proviso, *svayam*. Dharmakīrti, by contrast, simplified things and vociferously rejected both those aspects of Īśvarasena's interpretation of Dignāga. In so doing, he reinforced his general position in *Pramāṇavārttika* that logical argument on rationally accessible matters stands or falls only on its own merits and not because of any appeals to authority or tradition.

Finally, it is worthwhile remarking that there was probably at least one other commentator whose views on *svayam* seem to have served, in some measure, to stimulate Dharmakīrti's own thought. In *Pramāṇavārttika* IV, *Kārikā* 76 *et seq.* Dharmakīrti argued against an adversary (*anya*) who maintained that *svayam* was destined to eliminate all treatise-based qualities of the subject (*dharmin*). In other words, when we prove sound is impermanent, we are speaking only of sound as it is commonly recognised (*prasiddha*) by ordinary people, and not of the theoretical entity, "sound", which is described in the *Vaiśeṣikasūtras* as being a quality of space (*ākāśagaṇa*): according to this adversary, *svayam* insures that the *dharmin* is indeed *prasiddha*. Dharmakīrti's reply in *Kārikā* 77 is that elimination of "theoretical", and hence not commonly recognised *dharmins*, is at any rate already presupposed in any debate on whether a *dharmin* has the property to be proved (*sādhya**dharma*). As soon as it is understood that the *dharmin* is not the commonly recognised real entity, the debate will simply cease. Hence, *svayam*, if explained as assuring commonly recognised *dharmins*, would perform no needed function at all.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *samayāhitabhedasya parihāreṇa dharmināḥ |*  
*prasiddhasya grhītyarthāṃ jagādānyaḥ svayaṃśrutim || (76)*

“Another [commentator] has said that by [its] elimination [of any *dharmin*] which has a particularity superimposed by a [philosophical] tradition, the word *svayam* has the purpose of making one hold a commonly recognised subject (*dharmin*).”

*vicāraprastuter eva prasiddhaḥ siddha āśrayaḥ |*  
*svecchākālpitabhedeṣu padārtheṣy avivādataḥ || (77)*

“Since there is actually an undertaking of an investigation [as to whether the *sādhya**dharma* is present or not in the *dharmin*], then the locus will be established as commonly recognised, for there is no debate about things whose particularities are imagined according to one's own wishes.”

It is far from clear who this adversary was: the commentators say nothing. Vibhūticandra (*Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* ad *Kārikā* 76, n. 3) does, however, classify him as a *ṭīkākāra* (“commentator”), suggesting that he was not just a hypothetical opponent. However, we have no way of knowing whether he was perhaps the *nyāyamukhaṭīkākāra* spoken of in *Kārikā* 27 and *Kārikā* 122 or whether he was someone else. One thing seems likely: he was not the same person as “the commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*”, for his views on *svayam* serving to eliminate all treatise-based qualities of the *dharmin* would run counter to those of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*-commentator whom we have hypothesised to be Īśvarasena.