

Ākāra and Direct Perception (*Pratyakṣa*)

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PRELIMINARY

THERE HAS BEEN considerable amount of discussion by various scholars on the notion of *ākāra* and *ākāra-vāda*. The following discussion therefore may not amount to much of an original contribution. Primarily, it aims to illustrate that the data commonly known by scholars from the logical texts can be corroborated and substantiated by those from the *abhidharma* texts. Accordingly, the importance of the latter cannot be neglected for the study in light of the relatively later articulation of the theory of perception in the Sautrāntika-Yogācāra tradition. It is also my intention here to clarify from the *abhidharma* material the exact connotation of the term *ākāra* as used by the Vaibhāṣika, thus determining whether the theory of perception of this school can be properly described as *sākāra-vāda* (as Xuan Zang's tradition seems clearly to suggest) or as *nirākāra-vāda* (as described by the latter-day Sanskrit texts).

SĀKĀRA-JÑĀNAVĀDA AS SEEN IN THE *NYĀYĀNUSĀRA

In the Vaibhāṣika *abhidharma* text, **Nyāyānusāra*, Saṃghabhadra argues that given the doctrine of momentariness and the denial of *sarvāstitva* and simultaneous causality, the Sautrāntika must acknowledge the resulting conclusion of the absolute impossibility of direct perception (*pratyakṣa*). The Sautrāntika leader, Śrīlāta, answers that direct perception is possible because of the *anudhātu* and because of the fact of consciousness being self-aware of the experience.¹ Accordingly, even though a knowledge has a non-existent as its perceptual object (*ālambana* = 0-p), the two requisite conditions for perception are

nonetheless still fulfilled² by virtue of the successive cause-effect relationship involved:

It is only after having grasped [perceived] a present [object] that one is able to rapidly infer the preceding and the succeeding. That is, one is able to infer that such an effect in the present is produced by such a type of cause in the past. This cause in turn was produced by such a cause—in this manner back to the distant past. In each corresponding case (*yathāyogam*), through inference it is directly realized (*pratyakṣī-kr*, *sākṣāt-kr*) just as in the present moment (如現證得). One may also infer that such a type of cause in the present will produce such a type of fruit in the future; this fruit in turn will induce the arising of such a fruit—in each corresponding case, through inference it is directly realized just as in the present moment. In this way, successively examining the past causes accordingly as the case may be back to the distant past, one directly realizes just as in the present moment, without any error (*aviparītam*). Although at the particular stage, the object (*viśaya*) does not exist, the knowledge is nonetheless not without the two requisite [conditions: O-p and the supporting basis (*āśraya*)].

[This is so because] at the time when a particular cause-knowledge (*hetu-jñāna*) arises, there exist the causes and conditions [the *anudhātu*] in one's serial continuity. That is: there was formerly produced such a knowledge; through a causal succession (*pāraṃparyeṇa*), it gives rise to a present knowledge of such a form. Since this present knowledge has as its cause the former knowledge, the result is that this present knowledge arises with an understanding like the former one, having as its O-p the former object. However, that O-p is now a non-existent; yet though now a non-existent, it constitutes the O-p. Hence one cannot say that the present knowledge is without the two requisite [conditions].³

Śrīlāta's explanations, like Dharmakīrti's (see *infra*), show that for the Sautrāntika, the *pratyakṣa* knowledge is achieved retrospectively in the second moment. This stance is consistent with what we know about the Sautrāntika theory of cognition in other *abhidharma* sources. The author of the *Abhidharmadīpa-vibhāṣā-prabhāvṛtti*, for instance, states that all perceptions are indirect.⁴ Later sources tell us that this Sautrāntika stance is known as the “inferability of the external object (*bāhyārthānumeyavāda*).” Śrīlāta's explanations above illustrate this stance. Put succinctly: no direct perception of the external object is possible. Nevertheless, there can be the exact knowledge of this object through inference, because the knowledge that arises in the second moment is completely and necessarily conditioned by that external

object grasped in the first moment. This knowledge, therefore, is none other than that of the external object. This constitutes the *pratyakṣa* knowledge.

In this theory, there is the assumption that (1) there is the grasping of the external object in the first moment, even though this grasping does not amount to its knowledge; (2) this grasping generates in the mental stream an effect that in turn serves as the cause—the knowledge-cause (智因, *jñāna-hetu)—generating the corresponding knowledge-effect (智果, *jñāna-phala) in the next moment. Śrīlāta states clearly that this knowledge-cause/knowledge-effect can be transmitted continuously for a long time in the mental series without its being distorted in any way in the process. With the presence of this causal conditionality, the mind always has the ability to exactly infer the object initially grasped, “just as in the present moment, without any error.”

The distinctive feature of Śrīlāta’s explanations here is in terms of his *anudhātu* doctrine. As Vibhajyavādins, all Sautrāntika explanations of the preservation of causal efficacy must be in terms of the present dharmas. Śrīlāta propounds the causal theory of the **pūrvānu-dhātu* (or more simply, *anudhātu*), which as Saṃghabhadra explains is a version of the better known *bīja* theory of the Sautrāntika.⁵ While its nature is said to be ultimately ineffable, it is explained as the serial continuity of the person—or more exactly, the six internal *āyatana*s—qua the presently existing causal matrix that subsumes the total causal efficacies and content of consciousness passed on from the preceding moment. This *anudhātu* is then “the nature of being the causal condition (*hetu-pratyayatā*)—the causal efficacy of the sentient serial continuity serving successively as the cause [of the arising of the subsequent moment of the series].”⁶ There are in fact numerous *anudhātus*, each of specific content perfumed into the individual’s mental stream of each moment.⁷ Yet they are not to be conceived of as being entities distinct from the mind itself—or for that matter from the whole psycho-physical complex constituting the individual.⁸ This way of explanation may make one think that the *anudhātu* is a singular causal matrix functioning as a whole within which, nevertheless, specific efficacies as potentialities can generate correspondingly specific effects. In these respects at least, it is rather similar to the Yogācāra concept of the *ālaya-vijñāna*.⁹

In terms of the karmic process, these *anudhātus* qua causal efficacy can remain operative even when the dharmas qua the original karmic forces have become extinct for over a *kalpa*.¹⁰ From the perspective of

this doctrine, the six *āyatana*s qua the *anudhātu* in the preceding moment are the karmic cause and those in the succeeding moment the retribution (*vipāka*). In this way, dharmas arising in every moment are all born of retribution (*vipākaja*).¹¹

This notion that the content of consciousness of the previous moment is kept in the *anudhātu* of the present moment—which serves as the equal-immediate condition of the succeeding moment¹²—plays an important role in the Sautrāntika explanation of the perceptual process.¹³ As the serially successive causal efficacy arising at each present moment of consciousness, it links the object in the preceding, or earlier, moment with the succeeding moment of mental consciousness. In it the content of the previous consciousness is stored, and via such a connecting principle the previous object can be experienced by the present mental consciousness that arises taking this previous consciousness in the *anudhātu* as its O-p.

Elsewhere, Śrīlāta further clarifies how the Sautrāntika arrives at the claim that a present consciousness/knowledge has as its *ālambana-pratyaya* (= O-p) a past object—how the external object that existed in the preceding moment can be grasped by the present consciousness:

Those mental consciousnesses that have the past, etc., as objects are not without the perceptual objects, [though] they do not exclusively have existents as objects. Why is that so? Because we say that the mental consciousnesses arisen with the five groups of consciousness as the equal-immediate [conditions] (*samanantara-pratyaya*) are [in each case] capable of experiencing (*anu-√bhū*) the [corresponding] object grasped by the preceding *manas* [i.e., the corresponding sensory consciousness that serves as the *samanantara-pratyaya* for the present mental consciousness]. Such a mental consciousness has as its cause (*hetu*) the *manas*, and its *ālambana-pratyaya* is none other than the object (*viṣaya*) of the [corresponding] sensory consciousness. [The preceding *manas* (= the sensory consciousness) is the cause] because it must have existed first in order that this [mental consciousness] can arise; and [the sensory object is the *ālambana-pratyaya* of this mental consciousness] because the existence or non-existence of this [consciousness] follows the existence or non-existence of that [object]. However, this mental consciousness does not exclusively have an existent as its object, since at this time [of its arising] that object has already perished. Neither is it without a perceptual object, since the existence or non-existence of this mental consciousness follows the existence or non-existence of that [object]. Furthermore, when one recollects (*anu-√smṛ*) an object that has long perished, the arising

of [the recollection] in the present moment has as its condition the former consciousness that perceived that object, for this consciousness of recollection belongs to the same series [of which this former consciousness is a member] and is arisen in a serial succession. Although there are other conditions that generate the consciousness of recollection, its arising must be preceded by the perception of that former object.¹⁴

This same Sautrāntika theory is also elucidated in the logical texts,¹⁵ even though the term *anudhātu* itself is not mentioned. In this connection, like Śrīlāta, Dharmakīrti too holds that the external object can be felt or experienced by the consciousness arising in the second moment, thus justifying the Sautrāntika position that despite the doctrine of successive causation, the perceptual object of consciousness is none other than the external object itself. Dharmakīrti explains as follows:

If it is asked how [an object] different in time can be grasped, we would say that the essence of being a graspable (*grāhyatā*) [i.e., an object] is none other than the fact of being the cause of [its] distinctive appearance, capable of transferring its knowledge-form (*jñāna-ākāra*).¹⁶

This explanation satisfies the twofold requirement for a dharma to be an *ālambana-pratyaya*: (1) it must contribute to the causal efficacy for the generation of the consciousness; (2) the consciousness must arise having a resemblance or representational form of it.¹⁷ Mokṣākaragupta, author of the *Tarkabhāṣā*, anticipating the question of why a knowledge of the nature of being a conceptual construction and therefore erroneous (*kalpanāvibhramātmaka*) is not an immediate perception (*pratyakṣa*),¹⁸ cites this very explanation by Dharmakīrti immediately before answering as follows:

Because it is the common understanding of all that immediate perception is a knowledge that directly realizes the object in its uniqueness (*artha-svarūpa*). And [the knowledges] that are conceptual constructions and erroneous are incapable of directly realizing the object. For the knowledge that grasps the object is the object's effect; the object, being that which is grasped, is the [generating] cause of the knowledge.¹⁹

Mokṣākaragupta further elaborates that, in contrast, a knowledge of the nature of a conceptual construction is born from nothing more than the residual force of a past experience without the object (*artham antareṇa vāsanāmātrāt*) and therefore cannot be the effect of the object:

That which can come into existence without another thing cannot be the effect of the latter.²⁰

One point emphasized in Mokṣākaragupta's explanation above, together with Dharmakīrti's comment, is this: the Sautrāntika would maintain that in spite of their theory of successive causation, which requires that the external object existing in the first moment comes to be known only in the second moment, in the case of immediate perception the object known is none other than the external object—or more correctly, the knowledge is that of the external object on account of the necessary causal relationship of the knowledge qua the “grasper” (*grāhaka*) and its object qua the “graspable” (*grāhya*). In the words of Śrīlāta, this necessary relationship is proved by the fact that “the existence or non-existence of the consciousness follows the existence or non-existence of the object” (see above). The other point is that whereas *pratyakṣa* is direct realization or seeing, a knowledge in the form of conceptual construction is imagining—a point similarly highlighted by Dharmottara (see below).

This doctrine that knowledge is acquired via a mental image of the object came to be described in relatively later time as *sākāra-(vi)jñāna-vāda*. The *Tarkabhāṣā* describes this as follows:

It is held by the Sautrāntika that all that appears in the form of blue, etc. is knowledge itself, not the external object, since an inanimate thing (*jaḍa*) is incapable of manifestation. As it has been said: the objects of the sense faculties are not perceptible, [though] they generate a knowledge possessing their corresponding form.²¹

The epistemological view that an inanimate or non-intelligent external object can never be known by the mind is one of the fundamental premises, along with successive causation and other related premises, that leads to the theory of *sākāra-vijñāna*: the object, for it to be a content of consciousness—for it to be known—must generate its own form or facsimile of a mental nature. And this is called the *ākāra*. In immediate perception, this *ākāra* corresponds exactly to the object, and there is absolutely no error. Accordingly, even though immediate perception is achieved only in the second moment at which time only the knowledge that the external object existed can be acquired retrospectively, the external object qua the *ālambana-pratyaya* has an existential and not merely inferential status.²² Its *ākāra* is the *pratyaya*, though not the *ālambana-pratyaya*, for the perception, and the necessary simultaneity of the perceptual condition with the perceiving consciousness, is in this

way satisfied. This, however, is not in the manner of the Sarvāstivāda notion of *sahabhū-hetu*, which requires the simultaneity of the external object and the consciousness. For this is a case not of mutual causation, but of necessary determination. This doctrine of *ākāra* also serves another important purpose: for the Sautrāntika, it is this specific *ākāra* that specifies the content of the particular consciousness; otherwise, as the opponents might argue, the nature of consciousness being the same in every case, the knowledge of a particular object in our consciousness would be an impossibility. *Tarkabhāṣā* argues succinctly:²³

Knowledge should be conceded as possessing a form (*sākāra*). Now if knowledge is not conceded as possessing a form, then on account of there being no [specifying] form, because of consciousness pertaining to every object being the same, the objects cannot be established as being distinct.²⁴

The particular *ākāra* is the coordination (*sārūpya*) or resemblance/conformity (*sādṛśya*) between the consciousness or knowledge and the actual external object and constitutes the source or means (*pramāṇa*, “measure”) of knowledge.²⁵ It being indistinguishable from the corresponding knowledge itself that arises, Dharmakīrti speaks of the *pramāṇa* and the *pramāṇa-phala* (= *pramiti*) as being the same. The latter is the fruit, that is, the knowledge acquired; but Dharmakīrti argues that since the relationship between *ākāra* and the consciousness is one of determination (*vyavasthāpya-vyavasthāpaka-bhāvena*) and not causation, there is no confounding of the cause with the effect in the statement.²⁶ It is in fact precisely because of this determinative function of the *ākāra* that one can prove the existence of the corresponding external object. *Tarkabhāṣā* explains how this proof works on the principle of *vyatireka*:

Surely, if what is manifesting is nothing but knowledge alone, then how [does one know that] there exists the external object? [The Sautrāntika answers:] the proof of the external object is possible by the principle of absence (*vyatireka*): for the forms blue, etc., do not manifest at all times and in all places. Nor is [the manifestation] possible even when there exists the force of merely our own material cause (*upādāna*), since this does not conform to the fact that [a specific consciousness] operates with a specific object. Hence it can be ascertained that there surely exists something that is their cause, distinct from the *samantara-pratyaya* [of the consciousness], due to the power of which they occur in a certain place at a certain time. That very one is the external object.²⁷

One question here arises. We can know the existence of the external object through an immediate perception only when a judgment in the form of “this is blue” is made. It is only then that it becomes a real source of knowledge.²⁸ Does it then mean that *pratyakṣa* becomes a *pramāṇa* only when conjoined with a conceptual judgment (*adhyavasāya* = *kalpanā*)? If so, would it not contradict the definition of *pratyakṣa* as a means of knowledge? Dharmottara answers as follows:

This is not so. Because through a judgment produced by the power of *pratyakṣa*, the object is ascertained (*avasīyate*) as seen, not as imagined. And seeing, called the direct realization of the object, is the function of *pratyakṣa*. Imagining, on the other hand, is the function of conceptual thought (*vikalpa*).²⁹

Indeed, even to be distinctly conscious of seeing a color such as blue as an *āyatana dravya* in the case of a sensory perception, some simple judgment has to be exercised. This is called *svabhāva-vikalpa*—a simple, rudimentary discrimination—in the Sarvāstivāda. In the case of a mental operation, two other types of discriminative functions are also possible: investigative/judgmental (*abhinirūpaṇa*), powered by *prajñā*; and recollective (*anusmaraṇa*), powered by *smṛti*. Saṃghabhadra explains that although both *prajñā* and *smṛti*, being among the ten universal mental concomitants (*mahā-bhūmika-caitta*), are always present in every cognitive act, in the case of a sensory perception they do not contribute prominently—and it is only to this extent that a sensory perception is said to be non-discriminative.³⁰ The Sautrāntika does not agree that there is such an intrinsic or simple *vikalpa* of the nature of *vitarka*, since it considers the latter as no more than the gross state of the mind. Nevertheless, from the above explanation given by Dharmottara, we can see that the Sautrāntika too concedes some amount of mental ascertainment, operating in the background as it were,³¹ in the *pratyakṣa* experience—even though it does not amount to *vikalpa* (= *kalpnā*; see below) in the proper sense, which is pure imagination or mental construction.

It is well known that although tradition generally regards Dignāga and Dharmakīrti as Vijñānavādins, it is also quite aware of their occasionally Abhidharmika-Sautrāntika stance. Thus, the well-known Yogācārin master Dharmapāla, in his commentary on Dignāga’s **Ālambana-parīkṣā*, states explicitly that Dharmakīrti acknowledges the real existence of external objects.³² Historically, the Sautrāntika was

evolved from the early Dārṣṭāntika masters of the Sarvāstivāda. Accordingly, doctrinal influences coming from the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharmika are only to be expected. At any rate, there is clear indication of such an influence on the doctrines of perception: Dignāga, followed by Dharmakīrti and others in the logical tradition of the Sautrāntika-Yogācāra, states that there are only two valid means of perception (*pramāṇa*): immediate perception (*pratyakṣa*), which perceives the specific characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*), and inference (*anumāna*), which perceives the common-characteristic (*sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*)—an inheritance from the Sarvāstivāda that recognizes only two characteristics of existents, *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*.

In the **Ālambana-parīkṣā*, Dignāga, rejecting all views advocating the independent reality of external objects, concludes that “although the external object does not exist, there is the internal *rūpa* that manifests resembling the external object and serves as the *ālambana-pratyaya*.”³³ It seems therefore evident enough that he is a Yogācāra Vijñānavādin—though possibly with some Sautrāntika leaning. Nevertheless, in his *Pramāṇa-samuccaya-vṛtti*, we can see him at times attempting to align with some fundamental Abhidharmika doctrines. Thus, a question is raised there as to whether his doctrine of *pratyakṣa* is contradicted by the *abhidharma* tenets that a sensory consciousness (a) takes an agglomeration of atoms as object, and (b) perceives only an *āyatana-svalakṣaṇa* and not a *dravya-svalakṣaṇa*—since an agglomeration can only be perceived by a mental construction. Dignāga’s answer betrays clearly his eagerness to conform to the Abhidharmika tradition:

Since it [viz., *pratyakṣa*] is caused by many substances [viz., atoms in aggregation], it is said, in respect of its sphere of operation, that it takes the whole as its object; but it is not [that it operates] by conceptually constructing a unity within that which is many and separate. [Therefore, the definition that *pratyakṣa* is free from conceptual construction is not inconsistent with the Abhidharmika tenets.]³⁴

Kalpanā in Dignāga’s definition of *pratyakṣa* is also essentially similar to the Sarvāstivāda notion of *vikalpa*. It is the process in which the perceived object, which in its intrinsic nature is inexpressible, comes to be associated with *nāman*, *jāti*, and so on.³⁵ This is consistent with the Abhidharmika notions of *abhinirūpa*- and *anusmaraṇa-vikalpa* owing to the absence of which the sensory consciousnesses are said to be *avikalpaka* (see *supra*). Indeed, some Yogācāra and other masters do ex-

plicitly equate *kalpanāpoḍha* with *avikalpaka*, and explain *kalpanā* precisely in terms of *abhinirūpaṇā* and *anusmaraṇa*.³⁶

NIRĀKĀRA-(VI)JÑĀNAVĀDA AND THE SARVĀSTIVĀDA

In contrast to the Sautrāntika and Yogācāra, the Sarvāstivāda theory of knowledge is described in the Sanskrit texts³⁷ as *nir-ākāra-(vi)jñānavāda*: the theory that the external object is directly perceived, without the need of any representational form in the consciousness. However, according to the tradition passed down by Xuan Zang,³⁸ among all the northern Buddhist schools it is only the Sāṃmitīya that really holds such a theory, since this school asserts that only mental dharmas are momentary; external things can last longer than one moment. All other schools, including the Sarvāstivāda, would therefore have to be included in the camp of *sākāra-vijñānavāda*. We know of course that the Theravāda school too holds that a *rūpa* lasts sixteen moments (*citta-khaṇas*) longer than a *citta*, so that direct perception in the true sense becomes possible.³⁹ The confusion between these two traditional sources can only be cleared by examining the notion of *ākāra* as differently explained in these schools.

As we have seen, the Sautrāntika notion is that the *ākāra* corresponds exactly to the external object. It allows no possibility of a cognitive error in a genuine *pratyakṣa* experience. However, this *ākāra* is a resemblance (*sadrśā*) constructed by the mind. In the case of the Sarvāstivāda tradition, we note at the outset the information from *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāśā-śāstra* (T. 27, no. 1545; hereafter *Mahāvibhāśā*) that various Abhidharmika masters—most probably Sarvāstivādins—give various interpretations to “*ākāra*”:

Question: What is the intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) of the so-called “*ākāra*”?

Answer: Its intrinsic nature is *prajñā*. Herein it should be understood thus: [1] *Prajñā* is *ākāra*; it is also what cognizes with a form (*ākārayati*) and what is cognized with a form (*ākāryate*). [2] The *citta-caitta-dharmas* conjoined (*saṃprayukta*) with *prajñā*, while not being *ākāra*, are what cognize with a form as well as what are cognized with a form. [3] Those *viprayukta-saṃskāras* and other existent (*sat*) dharmas, while being neither *ākāras* nor what cognize with a form, are what are cognized with a form.

According to some: What is called *ākāra* has collectively all the *citta-caitta-dharmas* as its intrinsic nature. This theory would imply

that all *citta-caittas* are *ākāra*, and what cognize with a form (*ākārayati*) and what are cognized with an *ākāra*. All the other dharmas, while being neither *ākāra* nor what cognize with an *ākāra*, are what are cognized with an *ākāra*. According to some others: what is called *ākāra* has all dharmas as its intrinsic nature. This theory would imply that the conjoined dharmas are *ākāra*, as well as what cognize with a form and what are cognized with an *ākāra*. The disjoined dharmas, while being *ākāra* as well as what are cognized with an *ākāra*, are not what cognize with an *ākāra*.

Comment: It should be said that what is called *ākāra* has *prajñā* as its intrinsic nature, as given in the first explanation. . . .

Question: What is the meaning of *ākāra*?

Answer: *Ākāra* means the operation in the manner of examination/discernment (簡擇而轉; *pra-vi-vcī*) with regard to the nature of the object.⁴⁰

From this, it is clear that the orthodox Sarvāstivāda view is that *prajñā* is *ākāra*, explained as the function of “operating investigatively with regard to the object.” This is essentially the same as the definition given for *prajñā* as “the investigation of dharmas” (*dharma-pravicaya*).⁴¹ But this investigative operation may be correct or incorrect, skillful (*kuśala*) or unskillful (*akuśala*), sharp (*tīkṣṇa*) or blunt (*mṛdu*), withoutflow (*sāsrava*) or outflow-free (*anāsrava*). Thus, when one commits the cognitive error of mistaking a rope for a snake, or an aggregate of five *skandhas* for a *pudgala*, it is a case of “the *ākāra* being topsy turvy (*viparīta*)”; the *ālambana* is existent and not illusory—the rope or the *skandhas*.⁴² In brief, as stated by Saṃghabhadra: “Only a discriminative (*sa-vikalpaka*) consciousness is capable of grasping the specific characteristic of the object [in the form:] ‘it is blue, not green,’ etc.”⁴³ Accordingly, in the Sarvāstivāda epistemology, the operation of *ākāra* pertains to the domain of mental consciousness, not to that of a sensory consciousness where *prajñā* cannot properly function (see *supra*). Moreover, it may or may not correspond exactly to the actual form of the external object.

That with regard to one and the same perceptual object there can be various *ākāra* is clearly brought out in *Mahāvibhāṣā* in a consideration on the question: “If one gets out [of a *dhyāna*] from the *ākāra*, does one also get out from the perceptual object?” The answer to this is given as a fourfold alternative (*catuṣkoṭi*):

[1] There is a case where one gets out from the *ākāra* but not the perceptual object: viz., a person contemplates a given characteristic with

a given *ākāra*; without abandoning this characteristic, he further has another *ākāra*—e.g., he has as his object the *ākāra* of impermanence of the *rūpa-skandha*, and then immediately after that the *ākāra* of unsatisfactoriness of the *rūpa-skandha* arises before him. . . . [2] There is a case where one gets out from the perceptual object but not the *ākāra*: viz., a person contemplates a given characteristic with a given *ākāra*; with this same *ākāra*, he further has another characteristic—e.g., he has as his object the *ākāra* of impermanence of the *rūpa-skandha*, and then immediately after that the *ākāra* of impermanence of the *vedanā-skandha* arises before him. . . . [3] There is a case where one gets out from the *ākāra* as well as the perceptual object. . . . [4] There is a case where one gets out neither from the *ākāra* nor the perceptual object. . . .⁴⁴

The above passage also indicates the possibility of simultaneously having one and the same *ākāra* with regard to many and even all dharmas, excepting the knowledge itself at that given moment, its conjuncts, and co-existents, as when one contemplates that all dharmas are devoid of a self, etc.⁴⁵ In fact, the only case where the *ākāra* of an object corresponds exactly to the actual nature of the object is when the yogi acquires the *prajñā* qua true insight in the direct comprehension (*abhisamaya*) of the noble truths—he sees conditioned things truly as they are, in their aspects of being unsatisfactory, impermanent, etc. The contemplating yogi can see several aspects pertaining to a given object, each with a distinct and unconfounded *ākāra*—i.e., *prajñā*. Thus,

with regard to each with-outflow object (*sāsrava-vastu*), if the knowledge operates by way of the four *ākāras* [understanding it] as *duḥkha*, etc., it receives the name *duḥkha-jñāna*. If the knowledge operates by way of the four *ākāras* [understanding it] as *samudaya*, etc., it receives the name *samudaya-jñāna*. Hence the *ākāras* of the *duḥkha*- and *samudaya-jñānas* are not mixed (雜, *miśra*), while the *ālambanas* are mixed. . . .⁴⁶

This is clearly a case of mental exertion—mental application with regard to the common characteristics (*sāmānya-lakṣaṇa-manaskāra*).⁴⁷ It is for this reason that the sixteen *ākāras* of the four noble truths—*duḥkhatā*, etc.—as immediate perception of the yogi are said to be *prajñā*—the outflow-free or pure *prajñā*.⁴⁸ They clearly do not refer to images or “aspects” of the objects, but are in the active sense of the mental function of understanding. These common-characteristic (*sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*) are the universal principles of all dharmas intuited by spiritual

insight and pertaining to the absolute truth,⁴⁹ not universals abstractly constructed by the mind as in the case of mental inference. These are called dharma-knowledges (*dharma-jñāna*) where they pertain to the sense-sphere, and subsequent-knowledges (*anvaya-jñāna*) where they pertain to the two upper spheres. Both are *pratyakṣa-jñāna*.

Samghabhadra insists that the term *anvaya* does not imply that the subsequent-knowledges are *anumāna*, since in the sutra both knowledges are equally spoken of as capable of seeing truly *duḥkha*, etc. Moreover, the *ārya-jñānas* cannot be inferential in nature, and no object pertaining to the *ārya-satyas* can be realized by an inferential knowledge. He further argues that if the subsequent-knowledges are inferential, then there would not be even the dharma-knowledges having *nirodha* as object, since a *nirodha* is always non-empirical (*adrśya*). But it is from the point of view of *indriyāsrita-* and *anubhāva-pratyakṣa* that the objects of subsequent-knowledges are said to be non-empirical. And in that case there ought not even be the dharma-knowledges of *nirodha* since a *nirodha* cannot be an object for these two *pratyakṣas*. From the point of view of *buddhi-pratyakṣa*, however, it is not true that the objects of subsequent-knowledges are those of inferential knowledges. “Hence, all determination of things truly as they are (實義決擇, **tattvārtha-viniścaya*), properly accomplished (如理所引, **yoga-vihita*), are *pratyakṣa-jñānas*.”⁵⁰

Accordingly, from the Sarvāstivāda perspective, a sensory perception is definitely without an *ākāra*. It is for this same reason that *Mahāvibhāṣā* states that the *prajñā* conjoined with the five types of sensory consciousness is not *dr̥ṣṭi*, though it is also a knowledge (*jñāna*):

[1] It does not have a keen or sharp (*tikṣṇa, paṭu*) mode of activity (*ākāra*) and cannot penetrate deeply into the perceptual object; [2] it cannot discriminate; [3] it can have as the perceptual object only the *svalakṣaṇa*, but not the *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*; [4] it has only present objects, whereas a view can have as objects dharmas of all the three temporal periods as well as the unconditioned; [5] a view can grasp an object repeatedly, but this *prajñā* can only grasp an object in a single moment; [6] unlike a view, it cannot cogitate and examine a perceptual object.⁵¹

These explanations are essentially a good description of the Sarvāstivāda notion of sensory-immediate perception. We may note here once again the unambiguous notion that where *prajñā* operates, *ākāra* does not denote the “exact image/representation” of the *ālambana*.

The conclusion therefore is that, as far as sensory perception is concerned, the Xuan Zang tradition is not quite justified in grouping the Sarvāstivāda theory under *sa-ākāra-jñānavāda*. However, Pu Guang does speak of two aspects of the notion of “*ākāra*.” According to him, this notion connotes both a mode of understanding (行解) and a representational image (影像, *ābhāsā, pratibimba*):

A mode of understanding refers to the difference in the modes of understanding of the *citta-caittas* when they grasp [respectively] the generic and specific characteristics pertaining to an object. It refers to the difference in the activities of the *citta* and the *caittas*. This mode of understanding may generate a correct or wrong understanding with regard to the object . . . *ākāra* refers to the fact that the *citta-caittas* are clear by nature; as soon as they are confronted with an object, an image arises [in them] spontaneously without the need of any mental application—just as images appearing in a clear pond or mirror. . . . If one uses the term “mode of understanding,” only the difference in the activities of the *citta*, etc., is referred to. If one uses the term “*ākāra*,” it refers to two types [of *ākāra*]: (1) *ākāra* in the sense of an image, (2) *ākāra* in the sense of a mode of understanding. . . .

Question: With reference to which of the two—the mode of understanding or the *ākāra* [in the sense of an image]—is it said that [the *citta-caittas*] have the same *ākāra* (*sākāra*)?⁵²

Explanation: It is with reference to *ākāra* [qua image] that they are said to have the same *ākāra*. The *citta-caitta-dharmas* are clear by nature; as soon as they are confronted with a certain object, its form appears spontaneously. As they equally have this form, they are said to “have the same *ākāra*.” Thus, the *Abhidharmavatāra*, in its second fascicle, says: “Just as visual consciousness, etc., are produced with eyes, etc., as their support, manifesting with an image of the object (義影像 **arthasya pratinidhi*, **arthābhāsā*), the visible, etc., [thus] comprehend their respective objects.”⁵³ Accordingly, it is only from the point of view of *ākāra* [as the image of the object] that they are said to be having the same *ākāra*. . . .

Question: From the point of view of which of the two—the mode of understanding or the *ākāra* [in the sense of an image]—is the perceiver so called?

Explanation: From the point of view of the latter, not the former: When the *citta*, etc., is confronted with the object, an image appears; in this sense [the *citta*, etc.,] is called the perceiver, and the object is the perceived. This is because, when the *citta-caittas* perceive an object, they do not do like a lamp-flame radiating its ray to reach an object, or like a pair of pincers grasping an object.⁵⁴ It is from the

perspective of the manifestation of the image that the perceiver and the perceived are so called.⁵⁵

Pu Guang's explanation that *ākāra* connotes both a mode of understanding and an image is likely to have been influenced by the Sautrāntika-Yogācāra stance. It shows that Xuan Zang's tradition describes the Sarvāstivāda theory as *sākāra* because (1) the conjoined *citta-caittas* are said to have the same *ākāra*, which Pu Guang takes in the sense of the object's image; and (2) the school speaks of a sensory consciousness arising with an image of the object. But, as we have observed, unlike the Sautrāntika, the Sarvāstivāda consistently equates *ākāra* with *prajñā*, so that only Pu Guang's interpretation of *ākāra* as "a mode of understanding" may be acceptable, even though at the same time his exposition of the Sarvāstivāda theory here is otherwise basically correct. In particular, his interpretation that *ākāra* can refer to the image of an object that "arises spontaneously without the need of any mental application" contradicts the Sarvāstivāda explanation of it as a mental application. Moreover, it must be noted that the Chinese *Abhidharmāvatāra* passage cited by him uses the word 影像, which clearly means an image, and not 行相, which is Xuan Zang's usual rendering for *ākāra*. In the corresponding example given in the *Abhidharmadīpa* (109; see also note 43) too, the word used is "pratinidhi" instead of "*ākāra*." Since both texts are authored by orthodox Vaibhāṣika masters, it seems safe enough to surmise that in the Sarvāstivāda epistemological theory, the image arising in the sensory consciousness is not an *ākāra*—a mental construction by *prajñā*—but an image essentially belonging to the object, not the mind. And as Pu Guang says, it arises spontaneously like a reflection in a mirror: the reflection does not belong to the mirror, which is always clear by nature.

Pu Guang's discussion on the meaning of *sākāra* above refers to the Sarvāstivāda tenet that the conjoined *citta-caittas* are all *sākāra*—having the same *ākāra*, as discussed *supra*. In another context, all mental dharmas are also described as *sākāra*, "with an *ākāra*." But what this term means in this context becomes controversial. Vasubandhu raises the question in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* that since the *caitta prajñā* itself is *ākāra*, *sākāra* in this context would imply that *prajñā*, as a mental dharma, is conjoined with another *prajñā*, which is against the *Abhidharmika* tenet.⁵⁶ He proposes to avoid this apparent contradiction by defining *ākāra* as the "object-grasping-mode (*ālambana-grahaṇa-prakāra*) of all the *citta-caittas*."⁵⁷ In this way, *prajñā* too, as a *caitta*, can

be said to be “with an *ākāra*.” Yaśomitra states that this is a Sautrāntika definition. However, if the sense of compound means a mode of understanding in the perceptual process, and not an image, then it is essentially Sarvāstivāda rather than Sautrāntika. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Vasubandhu here does not contest the *Mahāvibhāṣā* statement that *ākāra* is *prajñā*, and in fact proceeds to conclude with the same threefold classification of dharmas (*ākāra*, *ākārayati*, *ākāryate*) as we have seen in the *Mahāvibhāṣā* passage quoted above. This is, however, not to say that Vasubandhu’s definition of *ākāra* is identical with that of the Sarvāstivāda. It is for this reason that Saṃghabhadra objects to it, demanding from Vasubandhu more articulation on his definition:

Herein, the Sūtrakāra affiliates himself with another school, and asserts thus: “What is called *ākāra* is the object-grasping-mode by the *citta-caittas*.” This does not necessarily conform to logic. It must be considered what is meant by the “object-grasping-mode.” If it refers to the different modes/species of the form of the object, then the notion that all [*citta-caittas*] can assume the image-form (能像) [of the object] cannot be established at all, for an object has various forms, skillful, permanent, etc. Or rather, the *rūpa-dharmas* are to be subsumed under *ākāra*, since *rūpa-dharmas* can also assume the images of the forms of others. If it refers to the ability to grasp the specific characteristic of the object, then *ākāra* ought not be possible for the five [sensory] consciousnesses, since they are not capable of grasping the specific characteristic of the object—since only a discriminative (*sa-vikalpaka*) consciousness is capable of grasping the specific characteristic of the object [in the form:] “It is blue, not green,” etc. However, this is not what is conceded [by his definition]. Hence [his definition] is logically invalid.⁵⁸

Saṃghabhadra’s objections confirm our surmise above that for the Sarvāstivāda, *ākāra* does not mean the specific form or image of the object. It refers to the operation of *prajñā* at the stage of mental consciousness and is not applicable in the case of a sensory perception. After criticizing Vasubandhu’s definition, Saṃghabhadra then proceeds to claim that the Sarvāstivāda explanation is the correct one: (1) The *prajñā* that operates investigatively with regard to the object is said to be the *ākāra*. (2) All *citta-caitta-dharmas*, including *prajñā*, are said to be “those which cognize with a form,” which is synonymous with “those which grasp objects”—*prajñā* investigates the object, *vedanā* feels it, *saṃjñā* grasps its appearance, *viññāna* becomes conscious of it, etc.⁵⁹ (3) All dharmas, real or unreal, are equally said to be “those

that are cognized with a form.” In other words, this explanation leads to the same threefold classification as given in *Mahāvibhāṣā* that Saṃghabhadra in fact spells out explicitly in his conclusion.⁶⁰ But although the Vaibhāṣika doctrine of sensory perception can legitimately be labelled as a form of *nirākāra-jñānavāda*, we have seen above that the *pratyakṣa* of the yogi is said to perceive *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*. This perspective is also discernible from the three types of *pratyakṣa* enumerated by Saṃghabhadra: (1) that which is dependent on the sense faculty (依根現量, *indriyāstra-pratyakṣa*), (2) that which is experience (領納現量, *anubhāva-pratyakṣa*), and (3) that which is discernment (覺了現量, **buddhi-pratyakṣa*). The first refers to the direct grasping (*pratyakṣam-√grah?*), supported by the five sense faculties, of the five types of external objects, *rūpa*, etc. The second refers to the coming into the present of the *citta-caitta-dharmas*, *vedanā*, *saṃjñā*, etc. The third refers to the direct realization (*sākṣāt-√kr*) of the specific or common characteristic (*sva-sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*)—accordingly as the cases may be—of dharmas.⁶¹ From this, it is clear that it is the visual consciousness, not the mere seeing by the eye, that is *indriya-pratyakṣa*. The second type of *pratyakṣa* is intrinsically linked up with the first in as much as these *caittas* become present at the first moment of the perceptual process together with visual consciousness, sensing and categorizing (albeit weakly), etc., on the very same object that is being grasped generically by visual consciousness. The third type is mental consciousness that follows immediately from the first moment. It can still be considered a type of immediate perception since it is a clear, vivid perception directly induced by the immediately preceding sensory perception.⁶² Saṃghabhadra’s articulation, that the **buddhi-pratyakṣa* is the direct realization of either *svalakṣaṇa* or *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa* accordingly as the case may be, can be comprehended as follows: So long as the contribution from the co-nascent *caittas* are still weak, it too, like the preceding consciousness, can only apprehend the mere object, e.g., a blue color; it is therefore a grasping of *svalakṣaṇa*. But when the contribution is strong enough and it can apprehend, using name, “it is blue,” etc., it is apprehending universals—such as *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*.⁶³ This is then not a case of *pratyakṣa*. The mode of activity (*ākāra = prajñā*) that functions at this time can be erroneous. However, in the case of spiritual realization—“realization-knowledge” (證智, *pratyakṣa-buddhi*, **pratyakṣa-jñāna*, *adhigama-jñāna*)—the meditator apprehends directly, truly as they are, the universal characteristics of all dharmas. The modes of activity in

this case differ not the slightest from the true nature of the dharmas being examined. This is a case of direct seeing or immediate perception par excellence (真現量, *bhūta-pratyakṣa, *tattva-pratyakṣa)⁶⁴—without any conceptualization, even though *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa* is involved. For this reason the Sarvāstivāda identifies the sixteen *ākāras* pertaining to the four noble truths with *prajñā*—operating as spiritual insight. *Mahāvibhāṣā* states that “outside the sixteen *ākāras*, there is no other outflow-free *prajñā*,” and “The *prajñās* not subsumed under the sixteen *ākāras* mostly discern *svalakṣaṇas*; the *prajñās* subsumed under sixteen *ākāras* discern only *sāmānya-lakṣaṇas*.”⁶⁵

Samghabhadra argues that simultaneous causality obtains in a sensory perception; the sensory faculty and the object as the causes and the sensory consciousness as the effect all arise in the same first moment. Moreover, *vedanā*, the instrumental force for *anubhāva*,⁶⁶ must be “conjoined (*saṃprayukta*) with” consciousness—which entails not only simultaneity, but also that both take the same object, etc.⁶⁷ In fact, a sensory consciousness necessarily has a present perceptual object, or it will not be possible for one to have the *pratyakṣa* experience. For, with regard to what is personally sensed, one experiences it and discerns it at different times. That is, the *anubhāva-pratyakṣa* and *buddhi-pratyakṣa* are not simultaneous. Discernment occurs at the state of recollection, taking the experience—the *vedanā*—that has just ceased as its object. Accordingly, “a sensation—pleasurable, etc.—must first be experienced by the *anubhāva-pratyakṣa* before a *pratyakṣa* discernment can arise having it as its perceptual object. Likewise, an external object must first be experienced by *indriyāsrita-pratyakṣa* before a *pratyakṣa* discernment can arise having it as the perceptual object, by virtue of the thrust of presentness.”⁶⁸ This is consistent with the Sarvāstivāda view that the *citta-caitta-dharmas* cannot discern themselves or those conjoined or coexist with them.⁶⁹ Samghabhadra argues that since the Sautrāntika maintains that on account of causation being successive, an external object in the preceding moment has not been experienced directly (*pratyakṣam*), there can be no possibility of a subsequent discernment that is of the nature of *pratyakṣa*⁷⁰—having the thrust of vividness and immediacy.

The Sautrāntika, on the other hand, argues that not mere recollection but rather the simultaneity of the experiencing (*anubhāva*) and the discerning (*buddhi*) must be admitted to account for such an experience.⁷¹ That is, unless one is self-aware of what one is presently

cognizing or knowing—that is, unless what is termed *sva-saṃvedana*⁷² in later Buddhist logical texts is a fact—one cannot in the subsequent moment recollect as a *pratyakṣa* understanding in the manner: “I have experienced such a pleasure or pain.”⁷³

CONCLUSION

The *abhidharma* texts shed considerable light on the perceptual theories of the Sarvāstivāda and the Sautrāntika—and even to some extent the Yogācāra. Already in *Mahāvibhāṣā*, we come across an articulated conception of *pratyakṣa*, even though no formal definition as such is found.⁷⁴ From **Nyāyānusāra*, we learn that its theory of simultaneous causality notwithstanding, the Sarvāstivāda school, as much as the Sautrāntika, holds that sensory perception as a *pratyakṣa* experience is fully accomplished only in the second moment on recollection. The reasoning is that the external object must first be experienced by the *indriyāśrita-pratyakṣa* before a *buddhi*—the *buddhi-pratyakṣa*—having that *pratyakṣa* as its *ālambana* can arise.

Both the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika seek to account for the sense of vividness and immediacy necessarily entailed in a *pratyakṣa* understanding, albeit via somewhat different mechanism. The former relies on the principle of simultaneous causality in the perceptual act and on the co-nascence of the sensory consciousness with *vedanā* and the other *mahā-bhūmika-citta-caittas*. The latter, while rejecting simultaneous causality, maintains that in the *pratyakṣa* act, the experiencing (*anubhāva*) and the discerning (*buddhi*) are necessarily simultaneous—the perceptual act is intrinsically self-aware. The result, though, is the same: its doctrine of successive causation notwithstanding, it equally arrives at the second moment as the time of the full achievement of the *pratyakṣa* experience.

The Sarvāstivāda school, in its various texts, consistently equates *ākāra* with *prajñā*, both being defined as the investigative operation with regard to the perceptual object. This is in contrast to the Sautrāntika and Yogācāra for whom *ākāra* connotes both an image/representation and a mental understanding arising in the mind—with the difference that the Sautrāntika would regard it as a correspondent to an external existent. To this extent, therefore, it is inappropriate to describe the Sarvāstivāda theory of sensory perception—said to be non-discriminative on account of the weak functioning of *prajñā*

therein—as *sākāra-jñānavāda*. On the other hand, we must note that the *pratyakṣa* of the yogi is said to perceive *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*. This perspective is also discernible from the explanation on *buddhi-pratyakṣa*. This is the case of *satyābhisamaya*, in which the outflow-free *ākāras* perceived by the yogi are not conceptual understanding. They correspond truly and exactly to the *sāmānya-lakṣaṇas* as universal principles pertaining to the absolute truth (*paramārtha*). This perception is therefore also a *pratyakṣa* experience, in fact *pratyakṣa* par excellence—and in as much as it involves *ākāras*, is describable as a form of *sākāra-jñāna*. *Prajñā* at this stage is truly non-discriminative/non-superimposing, though not in the *Vijñānavādin* sense of transcending the “subject-object” dichotomy. This *Sarvāstivāda* notion that a practitioner endowed with true spiritual insight perceives reality through *ākāras* might well have influenced those members among the latter-day *Yogācārins* who opt for the view that even for those who have acquired the non-discriminative insight (*nirvikalpaka-jñāna*) too, knowledge is *sākāra*.

NOTES

1. See *Nyāyānusāra 374b et seq. and 447b et seq. It should be noted that the Sautrāntika conception of consciousness being self-aware, though clearly visible, is nowhere termed in *Nyāyānusāra specifically as *sva-saṃvedana* as in the later Sautrāntika-Yogācāra logical texts.

2. 智緣非有, 亦二決定.

3. *Nyāyānusāra 628c.

4. P. S. Jaini, ed., *Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāśāprabhāvṛtti* (Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1959), 47: “*dārṣṭāntikasya hi sarvam apratyakṣam.*”

5. Saṃghabhadra (*Nyāyānusāra 398b) regards this doctrine—and for that matter other doctrines, such as *vāsanā* or *aviprañāṣa-dharma* (of the Sāṃmitīya)—as just a version of the well known *bīja* theory of the Sautrāntika.

6. *Nyāyānusāra 440b.

7. Ibid. 442b.

8. This dualistic aspect of the *anudhātu* has provoked Saṃghabhadra’s objection:

Within one moment, there exist no subdivision within the single *citta* entity; how can there be the inducing of the fruits that are desirable, non-desirable, or neither? For the cause of determinate differentiation cannot be obtained [does not exist]. Moreover, at all times there ought to be the simultaneous arising of *cittas* which are skillful, unskillful, and neither. Yet, [such a situation] is not permissible, since these *cittas* are contradictory [in nature] among themselves. That is to say: at the stage when a skillful *citta* is manifesting, the unskillful and neutral (*avyākṛta*) *citta-dhātus* are always accompanying; and since they are not existing as entities distinct from the *citta*, on what logical basis can one assert that they do not manifest? The same objection applies to the cases when a *citta* of the other two natures [unskillful and neutral] is manifesting.

Moreover, he must explain why there arises subsequently only a *citta* of one [specific] species—given that within the one *citta*, *citta-dhātus* of diverse species are accompanying. . . . (*Nyāyānusāra 441c)

9. Mitomo Kenyō 三友健容 has already noted this similarity in his “舊隨界について” (“On **pūrvānudhātu*”), *Indogaku Bukkyogaku Kenkyū* 25, no. 1 (1976): 29. He, however, suggests there (on p. 28) that the term *anudhātu* signifies that within the one *citta*, many *dhātus* are perfumed. We would, however, rather believe that *dhātu* and *anudhātu* have essentially the same signification—both are synonyms of *bīja*. If there is any difference, it is only that *anudhātu* in some sense is more articulate in conveying the significance of *bīja*.

10. *Nyāyānusāra 442a.

11. Ibid., 359a.

12. In this perspective, both physical and mental dharmas can equally have *samanantara-pratyayas* (*Nyāyānusāra 445a)—in contrast to the Sarvāstivāda, which admits of this *pratyaya* only in the case of the *citta-caittas*.

13. The Yogācāra most likely had inherited the *bīja* doctrine of the Sautrāntika and differs importantly from the latter in upholding and emphasizing the *sahabhū* causality. Nevertheless, one cannot help noting here the similarity in the Yogācāra reference of *dhātu* to the *ālaya-vijñāna*. Consider the following stanza from the apparently rather ancient text, *Mahāyānābhidharma-sūtra, cited in Asaṅga's *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha (T. no. 1594, 133b, etc.), which refers to the *ālaya-vijñāna* as the *anādikālika-dhātu* (Tib. *thog ma med pa'i dus kyi dbyigs*):

anādikālika dhātuḥ sarva-dharma-samāśrayaḥ |
tasmīn sati gatiḥ sarvā nirvāṇādhiḡamo 'pi vā ||

This is quoted as a proof of the existence of the *ālaya-vijñāna*. It is to be noted in this context that the *dhātu*, which is the *āśraya* of all dharmas, is given in the singular. (It is also cited in Sthiramati's *Triṃśikā vijñapti bhāṣya* [hereafter *Triṃśikā*] as reproduced in *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi: Deux Traités de Vasubandhu*, ed. S. Lévi [Paris: Honore Champion, 1925], 37).

14. *Nyāyānusāra 447c.

15. Cf. Vācaspatimiśra's description of the Buddhist position in his *Nyāyakanikā*, quoted in Th. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, 2 vols., Indian ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993), 2:353ff.

16. R. C. Pandeya, ed., *Pramāṇavārttikam of Ācārya Dharmakīrti, with the Commentaries Svopajñāvṛtti of the Author and Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti of Manorathanandin* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989), 115, stanza 247:

bhinnakālaṃ kathaṃ grāhyam iti ced grāhyatāṃ viduḥ |
hetutvam eva ca vyakter jñānākārpaṇa-kṣamam ||

This is cited in various logical texts—*Nyāya-vārtikā-tātparya-ṭikā* 101.14; *Sarva-darśana-saṃgraha*, ed. T. G. Mainkar (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1978), 36; Mokṣākaragupta's *Tarkabhāṣā*, ed. Embar Krishnamacharya (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1942), 8. Cf. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, 2:360; Satkari Mookerjee, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux*, reprint ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993), 338.

17. Cf. T. 31, 888b; *Triṃśikā* 16: *bāhyo hy arthaḥ svābhāsa-vijñāna-janakatvena vijñānasya ālambana-pratyaya iṣyate na kāraṇatva-mātreṇa. . .*

18. Krishnamacharya, *Tarkabhāṣā*, 7. Our text has *pramāṇami*, but Iyengar's version gives *pratyakṣam*; see Kajiyama Yuichi, *An Introduction to Buddhist Phi-*

osophy: An Annotated Translation of the *Tarkabhāṣā* of Mokṣākaragupta (Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetologie und Buddhistische Studien, 1998), 41 n. 71.

19. Krishnamacharya, *Tarkabhāṣā*, 7ff.: “*artha-svarūpa-sākṣātkāri hi jñānaṃ pratyakṣaṃ sarveṣāṃ sammatam | na ca kalpanāvibhramāv arthaṃ sākṣātkarttuṃ samarthau | tathā hi artha-grāhakaṃ jñānam arthasya kāryam | artho hi grāhyatvāt jñānasya kāraṇam.*”

20. *Ibid.*, 8.

21. *Ibid.*, 34: “*sautrāntikānāṃ matam | jñānam evedaṃ sarvaṃ nīlādy-ākāreṇa pratibhāt | na bāhyo ’rthaḥ | jaḍasya prakāśāyogāt | yathoktam | svākāra-buddhi-janakā dṛṣyā nendriyagocarāḥ.*”

22. The difference between the way *pratyakṣa* makes known the external object that is spatio-temporally determined (*niyata*) through its *ākāra* and that in which *anumāna* makes known the object through the marks (*liṅga*) connected with it is explained by Dharmottara in *Nyāyabinduṭīkā*, *Bibliotheca Buddhica* 7, Indian repr. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), 3: “*yasmād yasminn arthe pratyakṣasya sākṣātkāritva-vyāpāro vikalpenānugamyate tasya pradarśakaṃ pratyakṣaṃ tasmād dṛṣṭatayā jñātaḥ pratyakṣa-darśitaḥ | anumānaṃ tu liṅga-darśanān niścinvatpravṛtti-viśayaṃ darśayati | tathā ca pratyakṣaṃ pratibhāsamānaṃ niyatam arthaṃ darśayati | anumānaṃ ca liṅgasambaddham niyatam arthaṃ darśayati.*”

23. See Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, 2:358ff.

24. Krishnamacharya, *Tarkabhāṣā*, 11ff.: “*yadi punaḥ sākāraṃ jñānaṃ neṣyate tadā ’nākāratvena sarvatra viśaye tulyatvāt vibhāgena viśaya-vyavasthā na syād iti.*” Cf. Stcherbatsky, *Buddhist Logic*, 2:351ff.

25. Cf. *Nyāyabinduṭīkā*: “*arthasārūpyam asya pramāṇam ||20|| arthena saha yat sārūpyam asya jñānasya tat pramāṇam | iha yasmād viśayāj jñānam udeti tad viśaya-sadrśaṃ tad bhavati | yathā nīlād ṭpadyamānaṃ nīla-sadrśam | tac ca sādṛśyam ākāra ity ābhāsa ity api vyapadiśyate.*”

26. “*nīla-sadrśaṃ tv anubhūyamānaṃ nīlasya samvedanam avasthāpyate | na cātra janya-janaka-bhāva-nibandhanaḥ sādhyā-sādhanabhāvo yenaikasmin vastuni virodhaḥ syāt | api tu vyavasthāpya-vyavasthāpaka-bhāvena | tata ekasya vastunaḥ kiṃcid rūpaṃ pramāṇaṃ kiṃcit pramāṇa-phalaṃ na virudhyate.*” Cf. Krishnamacharya, *Tarkabhāṣā*, 11: “*iha nīlāder arthāt jñānaṃ dvirūpam utpadyate | nīlākāraṃ nīlābodha-svarūpaṃ ca | tatrānīlākāra-vyāvṛtṭyā nīlākāraṃ jñānaṃ pramāṇam | anīla-bodha-vyāvṛtṭyā nīla-bodha-svarūpaṃ pramitiḥ | saiva phalam | yathoktam [quoting Dharmakīrti:] artha-sārūpyam asya pramāṇam arthādhiḡatiḥ pramāṇa-phalam iti | etac ca vikalpa-pratyayena bhinnam vyavasthāpyate | paramārthavastuno nāsty eva bhedaḥ | yathoktam [Dharmakīrti:] tad eva pratyakṣaṃ jñānaṃ pramāṇa-phalam iti.*”

27. Krishnamacharya, *Tarkabhāṣā*, 35: “*nanu yadi prakāśamānaṃ jñānam evedaṃ*

tadā 'sti bāhyo 'rtha iti kutaḥ | bāhyārtha-siddhiḥ syād vyatirekataḥ | na hi sarvatra sarvadā nilādaya ākārāḥ prakāśante | na caitad svopādānamātra-bala-bhāvitve sati yujyate | niyata-viṣaye pravṛtṭiyogāt | tasmād asti kiñcid eṣāṃ samanantara-pratyaya-vyatiriktaṃ kārāṇāṃ yad-balena kvacit kadācicca bhavanti śakyam avaśātum | sa eva bāhyo 'rtha iti."

28. Nyāyabinduṭīkā 16: "tasmād adhyavasāyaṃ kurvad eva pratyakṣaṃ pramāṇaṃ bhavati | akṛte tv adhyavasāye nila-bodha-rūpatvenāvyavasthāpitaṃ bhavati vijñānam."

29. Nyāyabinduṭīkā 16: "naitad evam | yasmāt pratyakṣa-balotpannenādhyavasāyena dṛṣṭatvenārtho 'vasīyate notprekṣitatvena | darśanaṃ cārtha-sākṣātkaraṇākhyam pratyakṣa-vyāpāraḥ | utprekṣaṇaṃ tu vikalpa-vyāpāraḥ."

30. T. 29, 349a.

31. Cf. Nyāyabinduṭīkā 16: "sva-vyāpāraṃ tiraskṛtya pratyakṣa-vyāpāram ādarśayati. . ."

32. T. 31, 889c: "又若自許不於識外緣其實事，應有有法自相違過。然法稱不許. . ."

33. T. 31, 888c. This treatise at the very outset (888b) groups the realists' views into two: (1) the atoms themselves as real substances (*dravya*) constitute the perceptual object; (2) a unified complex is the perceptual object (*Sautrāntika*). The first group is further elaborated as two: (1a) the individual atoms themselves; (1b) the agglomerated form generated by virtue of the mutual assistance of the atoms existing together (an interpretation of the *Vaiśiṣṭika* view). See also Dignāga's opinion (*pratyakṣa-pariccheda*) in Masaaki Hattori, *Dignāga, On Perception: Being the Pratyakṣapariccheda of Dignāga's Pramāṇasamuccaya from the Sanskrit Fragments and the Tibetan Versions* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 33, and n. 2.17.

34. Translation (with slight adaptation) by Hattori, *Dignāga*, 26.

35. See *ibid.*, 25, and n. 26.

36. See the statement by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla in *Tattvasaṃgraha of Śāntarakṣita with the Commentary of Kamalaśīla*, ed. E. Krishnamacharya, 2 vols., Gaewad's Oriental Series 30–31 (Baroda: Central Library, 1926), stanzas 1239–1242, especially on p. 374; cf. Hattori, *Dignāga*, 83 n. 26, which also cites Mallavādin's *Dvādaśāra-nayacakra*, 59.2–60.1, where *kalpanā* is explained in terms of *nirūpaṇānusmaraṇa-vikalpanā*: "athā kā kalpanā | nāma-jāti-guṇa-kriyā-dravya-svarūpāpanna-vastv-antara-nirūpaṇānusmaraṇa-vikalpanā."

37. E.g., *Sarva-darśana-saṃgraha* 46 and 368–371, which classifies the Buddhist schools in terms of *ākāravāda*.

38. Cf. Pu Guang's commentary on the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, T. 41, 27a; and Kuei Ji's commentary on the *Vijñapti mātratā siddhi* (成唯識論, T. no. 1585) in

T. 43, 269c, 318a.

39. H. Saddhatissa, ed., *The Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha of Bhadantācariya Anuruddha and the Abhidhammatthavibhāvini-ṭīkā of Bhadantācariya Sumaṅgalasāmi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 17.

40. *Mahāvibhāṣā* (T. 27, no. 1545), 408c–409a.

41. Cf. P. Pradhan, ed., *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu* (Patna: Jayaswal Research Institute, 1975), 54: “*matih prajñā dharma-pravicayaḥ.*” See also Jaini, *Abhidharmadīpa*, 70: “*dhiḥ prajñā dharma-saṃgrahādy-upalakṣaṇa-svabhāvā.*”

42. *Mahāvibhāṣā* 36a; **Nyāyānusāra* 623b.

43. **Nyāyānusāra* 741b. See also *infra*.

44. *Mahāvibhāṣā* 929a.

45. Cf. *Mahāvibhāṣā* 45c, which states explicitly that the *ākāra* of this form is *prajñā*. *Mahāvibhāṣā* (42c, 43a) explains that within two moments, one can come to acquire such a knowledge with regard to the totality of dharmas.

46. There are four *ākāras* for each truth: for example, *duḥkha-satya*: *duḥkhatā*, *sūnyatā*, *anityatā*, and *nairātmya*. See Pradhan, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, 343.

47. *Mahāvibhāṣā* 53a. Cf. Pradhan, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, 108.

48. Cf. Pradhan, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, 399: “*kāśmīṇaṃ tāvat nāmalah ṣoḍaśabhyo 'nya ākāraḥ nāsty anāsravākāraḥ ṣoḍaśākāra-nirmuktaḥ.*” For the Vaibhāṣika tenet that the sixteen *ākāras* are *prajñā*, see also *ibid.*, 401.

49. *Mahāvibhāṣā* 399c–400a.

50. **Nyāyānusāra* 735c. Saṃghabhadra argues against an opinion held by certain masters that *anvaya* (類) here means “comparison” (比類): the comparison of facts not directly perceived with those that are directly perceived. It receives the name “*anvaya-jñāna*” as it is subsumed under “inference” (*anumāna*). Yaśomitra (in *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharma-kośa-vyākhyā*, ed. U. Wogihara, 2 vols. [Tokyo: Publishing Association of Abhidharmakośavyākhyā, 1932–1936], 542) explains *tad-anvaya* as *tad-dhetuka*—having the *dharma-jñāna* as cause—thus dissenting from the Vaibhāṣika view. Harivarman (in **Satya-siddhi*, 藏要 edition [Nanking, 1930], 245) too rejects the Sarvāstivāda definition above and declares his adherence to the sutra when giving the same opinion thus: “The knowledge of the present dharma is named *dharma-jñāna*. As it is said in the sutra, the Buddha told Ānanda, ‘With regard to these dharmas, see thus, know thus, penetrate thus. Know the past and future [dharma] also thus. The knowledge of the remaining—i.e., the past and future—dharmas is named *anvaya-jñāna* . . . *dharma-jñāna* is *pratyakṣa-jñāna* (現智). Following this *dharma-jñāna* one deliberates and knows inferentially—this is called *anvaya-jñāna*.”

51. *Mahāvibhāṣā* 490c.

52. The Vaibhāṣika tenet is that *citta* and *caittas* co-arise necessarily. They are said to be conjoined (*saṃprayukta*).

53. T. 28, no. 1554, 987c. Tibetan version of *Abhidharmāvatāra*: “*shes pa bzhin du don gyi tshul gyi gnas lta bu’i rnam par rang gi don khong du chud par byed pa*”: “Just like *jñāna* which causes the understanding of *svārtha* (*svārtha-pratyāyana*) in the form of a representation of the *artha*.” Cf. Jaini, *Abhidharmadīpa*, 109: “*jñānavat | tadyathā jñānaṃ cakṣurādīn hetūnapekṣyārthaṃ vibhāvayati*”; and 111: “*jñānavat | tadyathā jñānaṃ cakṣurādīn hetūnapekṣyārthaṃ vibhāvayati*.”

54. Pu Guang seems to have gotten these two examples illustrating that consciousness simply arises with an image of the perceptual object from *Siddhi*(C) (成唯識論, T. no. 1585). Cf. *Siddhi*(C) 93c; and Kuei Ji’s commentary on *Siddhi*(C), T. 43, 493c–494a.

55. T. 41, 26b–c.

56. Cf. *Mahāvibhāṣā*, 79c.

57. Cf. Pradhan, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, 401: “*prajñākāraḥ | evaṃ tarhi prajñā sākāra na bhaviṣyati | prajñāntarāsam[pra]yogāt | evaṃ tu yuktaṃ syāt | sarveṣāṃ citta-caittānām ālambana-graḥaṇa-prakāra iti*.”

58. **Nyāyānusāra* 741b.

59. Saṃghabhadra does seem to acknowledge that *sākāra* in this context needs interpretation to avoid the difficulty pointed out by Vasubandhu, and he proposes a few of them (**Nyāyānusāra* 741a–b). Besides the one he gives in the conclusion here, another one given beforehand is that the *citta-caittas* are all said to be *sākāra* because they equally (i.e., simultaneously) with *ākāra* (= *prajñā*) operate on the object. This is compared to the term *sāsrava*: an object being equal to the *āsrava* is said to be “with *āsrava*” in the sense that it requires the same counteractive agent (*pratipakṣa*) as the *āsrava* itself.

60. Ibid.

61. T. 29, 736a.

62. Cf. Pu Guang’s explanation in T. 41, 135b.

63. Besides *prajñā*, *saṃjñā* also is a contributing factor for the *abhinirūpaṇā*. This is clear from the fact that its functioning is said to involve a synthetic comprehension of appearance (*nimitta*), name (*nāma*), and signification (*artha*). Thus, the *Avatāra* defines it as “that which understands, by combining conceptually (*saṃjñā*) the appearance, name and signification [of a dharma]. That is, with regard to matter like blue, yellow, long, and short [figures], etc. . . . dharmas like males and females, etc.: it understands them [in each case] by conceptually combining together (*eka-saṃjñā*) their appearances, names, and signification. It is the cause of *vitarka*” (T. no. 1554, 981c). Cf. Jaini, *Abhidharmadīpa*, 69: “*nimitta-nāmārthaikyajñā saṃjñā vitarkayoniḥ*.”

It is on account of the contribution from *saṃjñā* that mental consciousness is able to operate by means of name (= *adhivacana*), which is therefore said to be the additional perceptual object (*adhikam ālambanam*) of mental contact (*manaḥ-saṃsparśa*) (Pradhan, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, 144). Saṃghabhadra comments that it is “additional” because mental consciousness takes both *nāma* and *artha* as its object, whereas the five sensory consciousnesses do not take *nāma* as their perceptual objects (*Nyāyānusāra 506c). The functional difference that results from this factor of name is explained in the *Vijñāna-kāyaśāstra* as follows: “The visual consciousness can only apprehend a blue color (*nīlam*), but not ‘it is blue’ (*no tu nīlam iti*). Mental consciousness can also apprehend a blue color. [But] so long as it is not yet able to apprehend its name, it cannot apprehend ‘it is blue.’ When it can apprehend its name, then it can also apprehend ‘it is blue.’” (T. 26, 559b–559c; cf. *Nyāyānusāra 342a). This is in fact cited in part in Pradhan, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, 144, in this very connection: “*adhivacanam ucyate nāma | tat kilāsyādhikam ālambanam . . . | yathoktaṃ cakṣur-vijñānena nīlaṃ vijñānāti no tu nīlam [iti] | mano-vijñānena nīlaṃ vijñānāti nīlam iti ca vijñānātīti.*” The connection between *abhinirūpaṇā* and *saṃjñā* is also conspicuous in the Yogācāra definition of *saṃjñā* given by Sthiramati: “*Saṃjñā* is the grasping of the appearance of an object. The object is the perceptual object. [Its] appearance is its distinctiveness—the cause for establishing the perceptual object as a blue colour, a yellow colour, etc. The grasping of [this appearance] is the determination (*nirūpaṇā*) that ‘this is blue, not yellow’” (*Triṃśikā* 21).

64. Saṃghabhadra (*Nyāyānusāra 684a) speaks of the insight arising in *satyābhisamaya* as the 真現量證智.

65. *Mahāvibhāṣā* 217a.

66. Cf. Pradhan, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, 229; one making present a feeling is said to experience it: “*saṃmukhīkurvaṃs tu tāṃ vedayata ity ucyate.*”

67. The two in conjunction satisfying the fivefold equality (*samatā*): *āśraya*, *ālambana*, *ākāra*, *kāla*, *dravya* (see Pradhan, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, 62). In this case of a sensory perception, of course, the *ākāra* does not function prominently.

68. *Nyāyānusāra 374c.

69. *Mahāvibhāṣā* 42c; *Nyāyānusāra 742a–b.

70. *Nyāyānusāra 374c–375a.

71. *Ibid.*, 374c.

72. Candrakīrti criticizes this as a Sautrāntika doctrine. See Louis de La Vallée-Poussin, “Madhyamakāvatāra, Introduction au Traité du milieu de l’Ācārya Candrakīrti, avec le commentaire de l’auteur, traduit d’après l’aversion tibétaine,” *Le Muséon* 11 (1910): 272–358.

73. *Nyāyānusāra 574c.

74. See K. L. Dhammajoti, “Logic in the *Abhidharma-mahā-vibhāṣā*,” *Journal of Buddhist Studies* 2 (Colombo; January 2004): 180ff.