

Pramāṇa-vārttika Svopajñavṛtti 1:1–10

Translated by Richard P. Hayes and Brendan S. Gillon

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N.B In the marginal notations, “G#.#” refers to the page and line numbers of Gnoli’s 1960 edition, “M#.#” to the page and line of Malvania’s 1959 edition.

Om. Homage to the Buddha.¹

G1.1

Homage to him who is universally good, whose manifestations are divested of the snares of conceptualizing and are profound and lofty, and whose light spreads in all directions.

Usually people are addicted to vulgarity and lack the wisdom equal to the task [of understanding learned treatises]; they are not only disinterested in what is said well, but, being afflicted with the filth of envy, are even hostile towards it.

Therefore, although I believe this work to be of no use to others, my heart, its determination increased through repeated study of eloquent works for a long time, has become eager for it.

Since the discrimination of the beneficial from the unbeneficial depends upon inference, and because there are misbeliefs regarding it, in order to give a correct account of inference, I have said:

G1.8, M1.7

1. Evidence is a property of the subject of the inference. It is pervaded by a member thereof. It is of exactly three kinds, because the inseparability [of evidence from what it indicates] is restricted [to just those three kinds of evidence]. [Any property] other than those is spurious evidence.

The subject of the inference is a property-possessor, for there is a synecdochic usage of the [expression for] the whole in the sense of a part. It might be argued that there is no synecdochic usage, since synecdoche would be purposeless. But that is not so. For synecdoche has the purpose of denying [that to be evidence it is sufficient to be some] property of just any possessor of the [establishable] property. Since it [sc. the

G1.12, M1.10

*The published translation, along with an English commentary, appears in Hayes & Gillon (1991).

individual subject of inference] is one part of that [subject of a whole comprising the establishable property and the suspected possessor of that property], synecdoche has the purpose of specifying [as a candidate of the evidence] a property of the property-possessor that is suited for synecdochic usage of that [expression for the subject of inference as a whole]. And thus, [by using the expression “subject of inference” synecdochically], we eliminate properties such as visibility [as properties that can serve as evidence for the presence of any further property in the subject of sound].

It might be argued that the expression “property” already establishes a property-possessor on which it depends, so the possessor of the establishable property is established implicitly through the term “property-possessor” on the grounds of proximity. But that is not so, because the property-possessor which is an observed precedent is also proximate. From the expression “property-possessor” one assumes [that] the possessor of the establishable property [is intended], because the [property’s] presence in the property-possessor that is an observed precedent is established by the [expression of] pervasion of its member. [But] repeating what is already established would be expected to be for the purpose of restriction, as when we express [the evidence’s] absence in the absence of the establishable property even though its dissociation from what is of a different class is already established by saying that it is present only in what is of the same class.² The expression “subject of inference,” moreover, has the purpose of eliminating the difficulty in understanding when the object is known implicitly.

It might be argued that, given [that the evidence is defined as] being a property of the subject of the inference, that which is expected to be a qualifier of it [sc. the subject] is unique because of non-recurrence elsewhere. But that is not so, because I shall show that the qualification is in the sense of excluding its not belonging [to the subject], as in the expression “Caitra is an archer indeed,” rather than in the sense of excluding its belonging to another, as in the expression “Only Arjuna, son of Pṛthū, is an archer.”

[Re: the statement in verse 1 “**Evidence is a property of the subject of the inference. It is pervaded by a member of it.**”] On the authority of the author’s intentions, a member of it means a property of it, not a part of it, because the word “subject (pakṣa)” does not express the whole.

Pervasion is the pervasive property’s necessary presence in a certain situation or the pervadable property’s presence only in a certain situation. This says that both association and dissociation are made certain individually, each through its own means of acquiring knowledge, as is the property of the subject.

The three [kinds of] evidence are those that have the characteristic of being an effect, a natural property or non-apprehension. For example, there is fire here, because of smoke. This is a tree, because it is a Shinshapa tree. There is no water-jug on a certain specific site, because there is no apprehension of that which meets the conditions of an apprehension. If there were, it could only be something whose presence was apprehensible; it could not be otherwise. That is why it is described as “**that whose presence meets the conditions of an apprehension.**”

Two among those are methods of establishing an actuality, and one is evidence for denying. For when there is a natural connection, one object is not erratic with respect to the other object, and that [natural connection] is because they are of the same nature. It might be argued that if they are of the same nature, there is no difference between the establishable and the establishing [properties]. But that is not so,

G1.15, M1.13

G2.7, M1.17

G2.11, M1.20

G2.12, M2.1

G2.14, M2.3

G2.19, M2.6

because as I shall explain, the distinguishing of properties is a [heuristic] device. Thus [Dignāga] said “This entire distinction between the instrument of inference and what is to be inferred is without exception due to the act of distinguishing property from property-possessor, which is situated in the intellect.” Distinguishing them as property and property-possessor is made by an image in the intellect; an object is not also [so made], because differences in the understanding, being self-sufficient, do not depend upon objects. In case of belief in an object owing to a subject matter that is constructed of those [non-objective differences in the understanding], there would only be failure to reach the object.

An effect also has a natural connection, because its natural property arises from that [cause that the effect indicates]. These two cognitions of what is to be inferred [namely, a natural property and a cause], despite not having their appearance because of not arising in their immediate presence, are nevertheless not erratic with respect to them, because they arise from them. Therefore, like sensation they are a means of acquiring knowledge. For in the case of sensation, too, its being a means of acquiring knowledge consists only in its not being erratic with respect to its object, because that which can come into being in the absence of something is deviant from it. And what, aside from one thing’s arising from another thing, is its not being erratic with respect to that other thing? Because things that are by nature independent of one another do not necessarily occur together. G3.3, M2.9

2abc¹. An effect is evidence for all the natural properties in the cause in virtue of which the effect is inseparable from the cause. A natural property is also evidence for [another] natural property that results from nothing more than the presence [of the evidence].

If an effect is indicative [of something] because it arises from it, then the relation between the indicatable and the indicative [holds] throughout, since the relation of product and producer [holds] throughout. That is not the case, since what comes into being in the absence of something does not necessarily arise from it. Therefore, **an effect is evidence for all the natural properties in the cause in virtue of which the effect is inseparable from the cause**, since the condition of being their effect is restricted in virtue of just those properties that do not come into being without those [natural properties in the cause]. It might be argued that this entails that the relation of product and producer holds partially. That is not the case, because when the [effect’s] specific property that is produced by those [specific properties of the cause] is grasped, it is accepted [as indicative of them]; and when the [effect’s] general properties that are particularized by the specific property that is a sign are grasped they are accepted [as indicative].³ In case the intention is to express an unparticularized general characteristic [of the effect], that is not admitted [as indicative of the properties of its cause], because it is erratic. G3.9, M2.15

A natural property is also evidence for [another] natural property that results from nothing more than the presence [of the evidence].⁴ The word “evidence” is supplied [from the preceding discussion]. For an object has the nature of only what results from nothing more than it, but not of what is dependent upon something further. G4.1, M2.23

Because that which was not present in its presence will not necessarily be present at a later time, because causes are erratic concerning their effects.

3. Non-activation of the means of acquiring knowledge has the outcome of [one's] not acting towards that which is not present. Some non-activation, provided that it has the characteristics of evidence, has cognition of an absence as its outcome.

Non-apprehension is **non-activation of the means of acquiring knowledge, having the outcome of [one's] not acting towards that which is not present.** It has the outcome of inhibiting cognition of, speech about and action upon a present thing, because those [activities] are preceded by apprehension. The types of evidence for denying the present and affirming the absent have the same nature. For instance, either presence is just apprehension having the characteristic of the aptitude of an actuality or it is the activation of a cognition depending on that [actuality], because the functions of cognition of, speech about and action upon a present thing arise from it. And non-apprehension is the absence of things that are absent.

G4.5, M3.1

Some non-activation, provided that it has the characteristics of evidence, results in cognition of an absence. Non-apprehension is evidence. Its characteristic is a qualifier whose presence meets the conditions of an apprehension.

G4.13, M3.6

If absence [is established] in this case through the sign of non-apprehension, the absence of apprehension also must be established by a further non-apprehension. Therefore, because of an infinite regress, there could be no awareness. Suppose an absence of apprehension could be established without [further] non-apprehension [serving as a sign]. Then the absence of a presence could also be established in the same way; non-apprehension [as a sign] would be of no use. But suppose the establishment of non-apprehension is by means of the apprehension of something else, so that non-apprehension is established through sensation. Why, then, is the absence not established by the presence of something else in the same way?

G4.15, M3.7

But when only this sort of non-apprehension is the absence of things that are not present, then one who is not aware of cognition of, speech about and action upon an absent thing because his cognition is confused, even though the subject matter is well established, is introduced to the linguistic convention by being shown the subject matter [through a statement] such as “This is a cow since it has the nature of being a collection of dewlap and so forth.” And the objection concerning the observed precedent not being established is also countered in the same manner, because it is observed that one is not aware of cognitions even when one is aware of their subject matter.

G4.20, M3.11

Thus both these [types of] non-apprehension are the same in that they both have as their outcome the inhibition of action on what is present through the absence of evidence for [that which is present] itself and through the presence of evidence for opposition to it. Because in the one case there is uncertainty while in the other case there is opposition. The first of them is said to be a means of acquiring knowledge, because it helps exclude action on what is present. But it does not help such things as the observation of dissociation, because there is uncertainty [with respect to that]. But the second is a means of acquiring knowledge here, because its outcome is certainty.

G5.2, M3.15

And owing to difference in method,

4. non-apprehension, which has absence as its object, is of four types: 1) establishment of an incompatible property, 2) establishment of the effect of an incompatible property, 3) disestablishment of the cause, and 4) disestablishment of the natural properties of that which is observable by nature.

Every denial results from non-apprehension. For instance, two types of denial may be made: by affirming something or by denying something. When there is an affirmation, one may affirm either what is incompatible or what is not incompatible. When there is the affirmation of what is not incompatible [with a given property], then there is no denial [of the property], because there is no incompatibility in occurring together. Even [when there is affirmation] of what is incompatible, there is no awareness of incompatibility without non-apprehension. For instance, knowledge of incompatibility arises from the absence of one thing coming into being, the causes of which are not yet exhausted, when another thing is present. And that [knowledge] results from non-apprehension. G5.9, M3.21

Alternatively, incompatibility consists in being characterized by the preclusion of [two properties] being apprehended with each other, as in the case of being permanent and being impermanent. Regarding that [incompatibility] too, it is said to consist in the non-apprehension of one thing through the apprehension of another. Because otherwise there is no establishing the absence of something unless apprehension of it has been excluded. Non-apprehension is well established in the case where the absence of one thing is established through the exclusion of another, since exclusion is the nature of non-apprehension. G5.14, M3.25

For that exclusion of the other object, too, [the evidence could be one of three things:] 1) [the exclusion] of the [other's] effect, 2) the exclusion of its cause, 3) the exclusion of what is neither its effect nor its cause. Among those [alternatives], since that which is neither a cause nor the effect [of a thing] has no connection [with the thing], how could it be [established] that the one must not be present when the other is absent? And even when there is no apprehension of an effect, since causes do not necessarily occur with their effects, how [could] the absence of that [cause be established]? Therefore it is only the non-apprehension of a cause that makes an absence known. G5.18, M3.27

But the non-apprehension of a natural property is absence in itself. In that case, only the cognition [of an absence] is established. Also when one states with reference to this [non-apprehension of a natural property] the absence of a pervadable property on the basis of the non-apprehension of a pervasive property, then the absence [of the pervadable property is] also [established]. G5.22, M3.30

This non-apprehension which has denial as its subject matter is of four types on account of its different methods. [One can have non-apprehension] G5.25, M4.1

1. **by establishing what is incompatible;** for example, because there is fire here, there is no feeling of cold. It should be understood that this statement includes the establishment of what is incompatible with a pervasive property; for example, because there is fire here, there is no feeling of hoarfrost.

2. **by establishing an effect of what is incompatible**; for example, because of smoke here, there is no feeling of cold.
3. **by disestablishing a cause**; for example, because of lack of fire here, there is no smoke.
4. **by disestablishing a natural property**; for example, because there is no apprehension, there is no smoke here. This includes the disestablishment of the natural property of a pervasive property; for example, because there is no tree here, there is no Shinshapa tree.

In every case when there is this non-apprehension that establishes an absence, the establishment and the disestablishment should be understood to be only of [the absence] of those things that are by nature observable and of what is incompatible with what is observable. Because there is no establishing the absence or incompatibility of anything else [than what is observable]. G6.7, M4.6

If one establishes an absence even by apprehending an effect of what is incompatible, then why does one not establish [an absence] by apprehending the cause of that [which is incompatible]? G6.9, M4.8

5. The apprehension of the causal conditions of what is incompatible with that [property which is to be disestablished] is erratic when used when there is no incompatibility between the causal conditions [of the property to be disestablished and the property that is incompatible with it].

For example, [a bad inference based on this kind of erratic sign is]: because there is firewood here, there is no feeling of cold. But when the causal conditions are incompatible, then [apprehension of one set of causal conditions] is indicative [of the absence of the other]; for example, because this person has the specific property of having a fire nearby, he does not have specific properties such as goose flesh and so on. It should be understood that this statement includes knowledge of the absence of an effect that is incompatible with a thing, even [when such knowledge is] derived from the effect of that thing; for example, because of smoke, this site does not have a man who is endowed with such specific properties as goose flesh and so on. And this establishment of what is incompatible with a thing was shown just above by the disestablishment of the cause. So, this non-apprehension is of eight types, according to the different methods. G6.13, M4.11

In that context, concerning the aforementioned apprehension of an effect of what is incompatible, 6.18, M4.16

K6. even in the case of [apprehension of] the effect of an incompatible, it is advisable to take into consideration its location and time. Otherwise it may be erratic, as ashes are in the establishment of the non-cold.

How, then, is the arising of an effect that is inferred through the complete cause included within the three kinds of evidence? G6.22, M4.19

K7. The arising of an effect which is inferred through the complete cause is called a natural property, because it has no dependence upon any further object.

That [arising of an effect] also does not depend on anything further than what is nearby in such manner [as a collection of causes], so a natural property of what is present is dependent upon nothing more than that [collection of causes]. For in that case it is only the possibility of the effect's arising from the complete cause that is inferred, because there is an inference of the aptitude of the collected [causes] to produce an effect. And the aptitude is dependent on nothing more than the totality [of causes], so it is only a virtual natural property that is inferred. G6.26, M4.22

But why is it that the effect itself is not inferred from the totality of causes? G7.1, M4.25

8. There is ambiguity in [inferring] an effect that is dependent upon the fruition of the potentials that are outcomes of the totality [of causes], because an impediment is possible.

For it is not the case that causal elements produce their effect just because they are complete, since the arising of an effect depends upon the fruition of the potentials that arise from the totality [of causes]. And because of the possibility of an impediment in the meantime, there is no inference of an effect. But the inference of a [causal] aptitude is not ruled out, because it depends upon no other elements. The totality of causes has the capacity to produce the effect through the successive fruition of potentials, because no other causal factor is necessary in the fruition of the potentials. Since the arising of the potentiality is caused by no more than the antecedent conditions of the same class, the aptitude is said not to be dependent on anything further. 7.5, M4.28

How, then, can there be knowledge of one thing, such as a visible property, through another thing, such as taste, that is neither cause nor effect? Also that G7.12, M5.3

9. knowledge through taste of the visible properties and so forth that are dependent upon the same totality [of causes] [comes about] by means of inferring a property of the cause, like [the inference through] smoke of the changing state of the kindling.

In that case, it is the cause that is inferred as being so [connected with the appearance of the visible property.] For what produces taste is the cause of taste, which is a causal factor coefficient with the material cause of the visible property whose potential is activated. It is like the production of smoke by fire, which is a causal factor coefficient with the material cause of a specific changing state of kindling. G7.16, M5.6

10. Without the activation of the potentials there is no taste. That same thing [sc., the activation of the potentials] is the cause of the other [properties that accompany taste]. Therefore, there is knowledge of things prior to it and contemporary with it, this knowledge being produced by a sign which is an effect.

For instance, **the cause of the other thing**, [that is,] the cause of the activation of the material causes of the visible property, **is just that without which there is no taste, namely, the activation of the potentiality**, [that is,] the propensity of its cause to produce an effect. Also that activation of the material cause of taste is coefficient with the activation of the material cause of a visible property. Therefore, taste, which enables the inference of just the sort of cause from which it has arisen, enables the inference of a visible property. **So in that case too there is knowledge of what is prior and of what is of the same time.** There is no knowledge of what is future, because that is erratic. **Therefore, this [knowledge] is produced by the sign which is an effect.** Therefore, there is no other indicative evidence, because [a sign] whose natural property is not connected is not necessarily inseparable [from that which it putatively signifies]. This explains the inference of rain from the commotion of ants and the agitation of fish. In that case too, the cause of the rain is the cause of the disturbance of the ants, namely, a fruition of elements. G7.18, M5.8

Notes

¹The salutation in Gnoli (G1.1) reads “namo buddhāya,” while in Malvania (M1.1) it reads “namaḥ sarvajñāya.” The Tibetan translators (D4216:261b.1) support Malvania with their “thams cad mkhyen pa la phyag ’tshal lo.” The salutation to the Tibetan translation of the verse text (D4210:94b.1) is to Mañjuśrīkumārābhūta (‘Jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa).

²The Tibetan translation of this sentence gives a different sense from the Sanskrit. It reads “grub bzhin du bstan pa’i phyir yang smos pa yin par yang dogs par ’gyur te,” which would most naturally be translated as “Repetition would also be expected for the purpose of explaining while establishing.” It is likely that this Tibetan translation is faulty or was based upon a different Sanskrit reading from the one that has come down to us. Note that in their translation of the passage parallel to this in *Hetubindu*, Prajñāvarman and Dpal brtsegs rakṣita provide us with a nearly perfect rendering of this sentence: “grub kyang nges par bya ba’i phyir yang smos su dogs par ’gyur te” (D4213:238b.4), which Steinkellner (1967a, p. 31) translates into Sanskrit as “siddhe ’pi punarvacanam niyamārtham śaṅkyeta” and into German as “. . . [so] könnte man [immer noch] vermuten, daß es sich [hier] um ein nochmaliges Nennen [dieses Beschaffenheits trügers <des Beispiels>] zum Zwecke der Einschränkung [auf ihn allein] handelt” (1967b, p. 34). Given, however, that the sentence in question is giving Dharmakīrti’s reply to the line of reasoning in the immediately preceding sentence, one would expect that “kyang” in the Tibetan translation is being used adversitively here rather than in the sense of inclusion (*samuccaye*) and should therefore be translated into Sanskrit by “tu” rather than Steinkellner’s “api.”

³This sentence is so compact in the original Sanskrit as to be almost impossible to interpret without the benefit of commentaries. A more literal translation would be “No, because it is accepted when there is a grasping of the specific property producible thereby and of general properties that have the specific property which is a sign as their particularizer.” This, incidentally, would also be an accurate literal translation of the Tibetan rendering of this sentence (D4216.262b.6-7; P5717.406a.5-6), which reads “ma yin te, des bskyed par bya ba’i khyad par dang, rtags kyi bye brag gi khyad par can gyi spyi rnam gzung na, yin par ’dod pa’i phyir ro.” A translation following all of Karṇakagomin’s glosses (S28.7-15) on this passage would be as follows, his glosses being indicated by the material in square brackets: “No, because when a specific property [of the product] that is produced by those [specific properties of the producer] is grasped, [they are] accepted [as indicatable]; and when the general characteristics [of the product] that are particularized by the specific property that is a sign [are grasped, they are accepted as indicative.]” Exactly the same Sanskrit passage appears in the *Hetubindu* (Steinkellner, 1967a, p. 67). Steinkellner (1967b, pp. 57–58) translates it as follows: “Nein, weil, wenn man die durch die [besondereren Beschaffenheiten der Ursache] hervorgebrachten Besonderheiten [der Wirkung] erfaßt, [auch an die besonderen Beschaffenheiten der Ursache] und [ebenso] an die allgemeinen [Beschaffenheiten der Wirkung], die durch das besondere Anzeichen charakterisiert sind, gedacht ist.”

⁴The Sanskrit for this passage reads “svabhāve bhāvo ’pi bhāvamātrānurodhini [hetuḥ].” Because this

passage is in verse, its phrasing is particularly compact and could therefore pose some problems in interpretation. Fortunately, however, there is a counterpart of this passage in the *Hetubindu*, the Tibetan translation of which reads “de la srub pa’i chos kyi ngo bo tsam dang ldan pa can ni bsgrub par bya ba’i chos kyi rang bzhin gyi gtan tshigs yin no.” (D4213.240a.8) Steinkellner’s (1967a, p. 39) reconstruction of this passage into Sanskrit reads “tatra sādhanadharmabhāvamātrānvayini sādhyadharme svabhāvo hetuḥ,” which he translates: “Dabei is mit Bezug auf eine zubeweisende Beschaffenheit, die sich an das bloße Vorhandsein der beweisenden Beschaffenheit anschließt, das Eigenwesen Grund.” (Steinkellner, 1967b, p. 39) The passage could be rendered into English as “In that context, a natural property is evidence for a property to be established that is a consequent of the mere presence of the establishing property.” On the basis of this parallel prose passage in the *Hetubindu*, we take the phrase “bhāvo ’pi” in the verse of PV to stand for “svabhāvo ’pi,” an interpretation that is supported by the Tibetan translation “ngo bo yang” and by Manorathanandin’s commentary, which also treats the compound “bhāvamātrānurodhini” as meaning “that which is prone to follow the presence of the evidence.” Karṇakagomin’s treatment of the compound is similar in that it interprets “bhāva” as presence (*sadbhāva*) and specifies that it is the evidence (*hetu*) whose presence is in question here. The Tibetan translation, by rendering this occurrence of “bhāva” as “yod pa,” also interprets it in the sense of presence.

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