Vergleichende Studien zur japanischen Kultur
Are Buddhist Pramāṇavādins non-Buddhistic?
Dignāga and Dharmakīrti on the impact of logic and epistemology on emancipation

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The question as to whether Buddhist logic and epistemology (pramāṇavāda) is of any relevance for the Buddhist striving for liberation still seems to be a controversial one. The controversy on this issue was initiated by the great Russian scholar Theodor Stcherbatsky1 in his famous Buddhist Logic, namely in the statements that pramāṇavāda “is a doctrine of truth and error. In the intention of its promoters the system had apparently no special connection with Buddhism as a religion, i.e., as the teaching of a path towards Salvation” (p. 2) and that according to Sa skya Paññita (1182–1251) “logic is an utterly profane science, containing nothing Buddhistic at all, just as medicine and mathematics” (p. 46). The role of epistemology has subsequently been dealt with in several contributions including Ernst Steinkellner’s “The Spiritual Place of the Epistemological Tradition in Buddhism” of 1982 (cf. n. 1) and “Tshad ma’i skyes bu” of 1983,2 Seiji Kimura’s “The Position of Logic in Tibetan Buddhism” of 1986,3 Leonard van der Kuijp’s “An Early Tibetan View of the Soteriology of Buddhist Epistemology” of 1987,4 David Jackson’s “The Status of Pramāṇa Doctrine According to Sa skya Paññita and Other Tibetan Masters” of 19945 and David Seyfort Ruegg’s “Ordre spirituel

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et ordre temporel" of 1995,6 to mention only the most important. Roughly speaking, in these contributions, in the various positions attributed to the Buddhist scholars, the science of epistemology and logic (hetuvidyā) is considered to be a Buddhistic science, a non-Buddhistic science, or – more conscientiously – a profane secular science that is common to the Buddhist and other Indian non-Buddhist schools such as the Naiyāyikas.

In this study, however, I will not consider the views of the scholars that have already been mentioned. Rather, I will focus on the explicit and implicit statements of Dignāga, the founder of the Buddhist epistemological tradition in the first half of the sixth century, that can be gathered from his main work, the Pramāṇasamuccaya (PS) and his own commentary thereupon, which have not yet received the necessary attention. In so doing, I will also make use of other related texts. To conclude, we will take a look at Dharmakīrti’s position and Dharmottara’s comments on it.

In the conclusion of his Pramāṇasamuccaya(vṛtti) (PS[V]), Dignāga elaborates on his reason for its composition and on his understanding of the role of pramāṇa. Two passages from this explanation that deserve closer examination are quoted by the Tibetan scholar Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364) in his famous “History of Buddhism” (Chos ’byün). In the first, Dignāga formulates, according to the commentator Jinendrabuddhi, his second or indirect (vyavahita) purpose (prayojana) for the composition of the PS(V). The first or directly (sākṣāt) stated purpose in the māṅgalaśloka is “to establish valid cognition” (pramāṇasiddhi) which in the Vṛtti thereon is explicated as meaning “to refute the pramāṇas of the opponents” (parapramāṇapratisēdha) and “to reveal the good qualities of one’s own pramāṇas” (svapramāṇagunodbhāvana). Bu ston refers to these passages in order to show that according to Dignāga, the works belonging to the pramāṇa tradition should be understood as constituting the written corpus of the science of logic, hetuvidyā, alone and may not be counted as also belonging to the so-called “internal science”, adhyātmavidyā, the Buddhist soteriology proper. As is well known, the Buddhists distinguish between five major branches of science or fields of knowledge (vidyāsthāna). As enumerated in Seyfort Ruegg’s Ordre spirituel (1995: 102; cf. n. 6), these five branches are:

(1) nān rig pa = adhyātmavidyā “Science intérieure”
(2) gtan tshigs rig pa = hetuvidyā “épistémologie et logique”,
(3) sgra rig pa = sabdavidyā (vyākaraṇa) “grammaire”

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(4) gsog ba'i rig pa = cikitsāvyādā “médecine”
(5) bzo rig pa = karmasthānavidyā (“arts, métiers et techniques”).

Among Tibetan scholars, long debates arose with regard to this traditional classification. It is especially in the tradition of the DGe lug pas, founded by Tsön kha pa (1357–1419), that we find strong arguments that the texts of the Buddhist epistemological tradition do not only have the purpose of explaining logic, etc., but also have a strong soteriological impact on the Bodhisattva’s path (mārga) to liberation and thus should also be subsumed under the category of adhyātmavidyā. An unidentified proponent of such a position is quoted and refuted by Bu ston in the following manner:

[Some] Tibetans say that the logical treatises (rtog ge'i bstan bcos, tarkairistra) of those [teachers mentioned before] and others (sogs pa) constitute the Abhidharma-piṭaka. This is not correct, as logical [works] are treatises of hetuvidyā and Abhidharmic [works] are treatises of adhyātmavidyā.

... de dag la sogs pa rtog ge'i bstan bcos rnams bod rnams mhorn pa'i sde snod du smra ba ni mi 'thad te | rtog ge gan thsigs rig pa'i bstan bcos yin la | mhorn pa ni nai rig pa'i bstan bcos yin pa'i phyir ro | ... (Chos 'byur 17b[666]4–5)⁸

He corroborates this with a quotation from Vasubandhu’s Vyākhyāyukti⁹ and another from the Mahāyānasūtrālankāra (MSA 1.12) and by two quotes from Dignāga’s PS(V).

tshad ma kun las btsus par yan | tshad ma dan gsal bya ne bar brjod pa nid kyis mu stegs pa'i 'dod pa shin po med pa'i phyir | der zen pa rnams ldog pa'i don du 'di brtsems pa yin gyi | 'di tsam gyis de bzin gsges pa'i bstan pa la gzig pa'i don du ni ma yin te | de'ichos ni rtog ge'i yal ma yin pa'i phyir ro | ldog pa las ni sbon pa'i cho shis nus 'bad pa med par rtogs par 'gyur te | bar du ma bskal ba'i phyir ro |¹⁰

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⁷ On the different positions of Tibetan scholars regarding the role of pramāṇa, cf., e.g., Jackson 1994 (cf. n. 5).
¹⁰ = PSV Peking 5702, 176b8–177a2 (translated by Kanakavarman and Mar thun Dad pa'i sras rab). The translation prepared by Vasudhararakṣita and Ža ma sen rgyal reads (Derge 4204, 85b1–3): gsal bar bya ba dan | 'jal bar byed pa sgrub dka' ba nid kyi mu stegs can 'di la shin po med par bstan pa'i phyir dan | de la spro ba rnams bzlog par bya ba'i don du 'di brtsems so | 'di las de bzin gsges pa'i bstan pa la 'jug pa ma yin te | de'i chos rtog ge'i spyod yul ma yin pa'i phyir ro | log na ni ston pa'i chos nub ne bar mhorn nas dka'sla med pa thob par 'gyur ro | riṇ du bskal pa'i phyir ro |
Both passages to which Bu ston refers are, as already mentioned, from the end of the PS(V). In his Chos 'byun, the translation of the first passage corresponds exactly to the translation of the PSV prepared by Kanakavarman and Mar thun Dad pa'i ses rab, while the text of the verse is exactly the same as that found in Vasudhararakṣita and Za ma Señ ge rgyal mtshan's translation of the PS that is available only in the Derge edition (4203). The verse text that is incorporated into the translation of the PSV by the same translator team differs slightly.13

Obermiller did not identify the quotations and tried to make sense of the text as given by Bu ston. A closer look at the translation of the PSV and at Jinendrabuddhi's commentary, the Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā (PSṬ), however, reveals that the text Bu ston made use of was perhaps not well transmitted,

13 = PS Derge 4203, 85b3–4, translated by Vasudhararakṣita and Za ma señ rgyal; variant reading for dpyad par bya ba'i rigs in PSV (by the same translator team) Derge 4204 85b4: dpyad par bya ba'i 'os. In the translation by Kanakavarman and Mar thun Dad pa'i ses rab the verse reads (Peking 5700, 12b8–13a2): thub pa'i dbañ po'i bstan pa las ni yun rin ņams gyur ba || gan yin rtog ge'i lam gyis choś ņid 'grod par byed ma yin II de lta na yän de bzin gšegs pa'i rtog ge'i mtshan ņid ni II gal te rnam par 'gyur bar 'gro bar byed dam rtag par gyis II

The two quotations from the PS(V) read, according to the translation of E. Obermiller (History of Buddhism [Chos-hbyung] by Bu-ston. I. Part. The Jewelry of Scripture. Heidelberg 1931: 46): “It (the Pramāṇa-samuccaya) has been composed in order to cause those, that adhere to heterodox views, to abstain from them, since they are false, – by discussing the modes of cognition and their (respective) objects. It does not, however, intend to convert anyone to Buddhism by these means only, for the Doctrine is not the object of dialectics. (But), if (heretical views) are rejected, the Teacher’s Doctrine is studied and apprehended without difficulty, since all the numerous impediments are withdrawn.

Moreover, the same work has the following verse:
He, that leads to the Absolute Truth by the way of Dialectics, will be very far from the Teaching of Buddha and fail. Nevertheless, if the essence of the Lord’s Teaching will endure change, it is advisable to probe it (by Logic).”

13 In a different reading this verse is also quoted by dPa’ bo gTsug lag phren ba in his mKhas pa’i dga’ ston and erroneously attributed to the Pramāṇaviniścaya; cf. Jackson 1994: 100 n. 31 (cf. n. 5): “... rnam ņes las I rtog ge’i lam gyis choś ņid la khrid na II bde gšegs bstan las cher bsrins ņams pa yin II ston pa bla na med pa’i bstan pa yän II gal te gzan du gyur na dpyad pa’i rigs II” = mKhas pa’i dga’ ston 852,6–8.
and that it also displays incorrect translations. In the following table the major different readings are listed.\textsuperscript{14}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chos 'byun/PSV\textsuperscript{k}</th>
<th>PSV\textsuperscript{y}</th>
<th>PST\textsubscript{T}\textsuperscript{15}</th>
<th>PST ms B 258b4ff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ñe bar brjod pa ñid kyis</td>
<td>sgrub dka’ ba ñid kyis</td>
<td>byed dka’ ba ñid kyis</td>
<td>ðurvihiitatvena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’di tsam gyis ma yin</td>
<td>’di las ma yin</td>
<td>’di tsam gyis ma yin</td>
<td>na tv iyatā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ldog pa las ni</td>
<td>ldog na ni</td>
<td>log pa rams ni</td>
<td>vyāvṛtās tu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bar du ma bskal pa’i phyir</td>
<td>rīṇ du bskal pa’i phyir</td>
<td>bar śīn tu rīṇ ba’i phyir</td>
<td>viprakṛṣṭāravāt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first entry in the first row, ñe bar brjod pa ñid kyis, which corresponds to sgrub dka’ ba ñid kyis in Vasudhararaksita’s translation and byed dka’ ba ñid kyis in Jinendrabuddhi’s PST\textsubscript{T} (Peking 5766, 352b1), is a rendering of Sanskrit durvihiitatvena, durvihiitatvā meaning here “being not fixed properly”. Thus, ñe bar in Bu ston’s text and in the PSV\textsuperscript{k} may be understood to represent a badly transmitted ēs par, meaning “in a faulty manner” or “incorrectly”. However, as both translations of the PSV are not very reliable and full of misunderstandings, I am not sure if we are allowed to correct the Tibetan text here, although it could easily be argued for. The next phrase to be examined more closely is the last one on the list, which Obermiller understood as “since all the numerous impediments are withdrawn”. In the translation of Vasudhararaksita, rīṇ du bskal pa may be understood as meaning “remote for a long time” or “very far away”. The wording in the Tibetan translation of Jinendrabuddhi’s commentary, which we owe to dPañ lo Blo gros brtan pa (beginning of the fourteenth century), whose translation, despite his working alone without a Sanskrit Pañdit, is of very high quality, displays here simply a word by word translation without any interpretation. According to Jinendrabuddhi the two terms viprakṛṣṭā and antara refer to the dharmatā, the essence of reality, as understood when listening to the assumptions of the heretics and as understood when listening to the teaching of the Buddha respectively. As the teaching of the Buddha is fixed properly (suvihiita) whereas the teachings of the heretics are not (durvihiita), dharmatā is easily under-

\textsuperscript{14} The first row shows the text of Bu ston and the translation of the PSV by Kanakavarman and Mar thun Dad pa’i šes rab. The second row contains the readings of the translation prepared by Vasudhararaksita and Ža ma Seň ge rgyal mtshan. In the third and fourth row one finds the corresponding Tibetan and Sanskrit texts of Jinendrabuddhi’s commentary thereon.

\textsuperscript{15} Derge 4268, 312b1-6 = Peking 5766, 352b8-353a7.
stood upon hearing the teaching of the Buddha, i.e. dharmatā as an object of
cognition is near (antara), whereas it cannot be understood upon hearing the
assumptions of the heretics, because it is remote (vīprakṛṣṭa). Dignāga’s for-
mulation of the indirect purpose for the composition of his PS(V) can thus be
understood roughly as follows:

I composed this [work] in order to turn those who adhere to (žen pa rnam) the as-
sumptions of the heretics away from them, because they are without essence as the
valid cognitions (pramāṇa) and their objects (prameya) [as taught by the heretics] are
not fixed properly. However, by [doing] that much (iyāt) I do not aim at their in-
truction into the teaching of the Tathāgata, because his dharma is not in the realm of
logic. But those who are turned away [from the assumptions of the heretics] can easily
understand [dharmatā] after hearing it, as it is absent/remote [from their teaching] and
present in/near to [his teaching].

In the next statement Dignāga explains why the dharma of the Buddha, al-
though not in the realm of tarka, nevertheless has to be examined by tarka:

[Those] who lead (khrīṅ) to dharmatā by way of tarka have gone far away from
(sudrīraṇasaṭa) the teaching of muni. Nevertheless, the characterization (laksana) of the
dharma [as propounded] by the Tathāgata has to be examined as long as (yadi) it un-
dergoes a change.16

To understand more clearly, further information can be gained from Dign-
āga’s own comments and from Jinendrabuddhi’s explanations. To begin with,
dharmatā as propounded by the Tathāgata is not in the realm of tarka, while
the object of cognition (prameya) of all Tirthikas is to be known through
tarka only, as the objects imagined by them cannot be perceived.17 This im-

16 Jinendrabuddhi on this verse (PS1 ms B259b2–6; PST Derge 4268, 313a5–313b3 =
Peking 5766, 353b8–354a6): sudrīraṇasaṭa tv iti, unnāragapravitattavāt. sudrīrman naṣṭas
ne māṇḍrasaṃsāmat, ye tarkapatthena dharmatāṃ nisčinvantī, tasyāḥ atarkaviśayatvāt. 
yady apy etad evam tathāpī tathāgatadharmalaksanāṃ parikṣayatvāy c
etad upayāti
vikriyāṃ tirthikaparikalpapadārthavat. etad uktāṃ bhavati – tarkaviśayatvenābhypa-
gataī api tirthikām āmādayaḥ padārthāḥ tarkena vicāryāmāṇaḥ vikriyante, yathā śāstre
tesāṁ vyāvasthāpi tathā nāvatīṣṭhanta ity arthah. tathāgatapradvitādharmanām
aviparitāḥ svabhāvo nairāmyādīdv vicāryāmano na vikriyate, yathā darśito vyāvahārī-
kenānāmanā tathaśvikalpābhivyātata ity arthah. etenā yady api tarkaḥ paramārthaviśayau
bhavati, tathāpī yathāvasthitam vastu sāmānyarūpaḥ sācāyaṃs tattvādhiśamānākālo
bhavatiiti sticitam. Underlined words may have been taken from Dignāga’s verse.

a tasyāḥ atarkaviśayatvāt em. (de rtog ge’i yul ma yin pa ņid kyi phyir T): tasyās

b tathāgataḥ-dharma-laksanāṃ em. (de bzin giegs pa’i chos kyi mtsan ņid T):
tathāgatatalaksanāṃ ms

c parīkṣayatvāt em.: parīkṣatām ms

d nairāmyādīdv em.: nairāmyādī ms

17 For the text cf. below, n. 32.
plies that dharmatā is the object of perception, and such an interpretation is corroborated by Jinendrabuddhi. When commenting on the phrase taddharma-syātarkagocaratvā it he says that here tarka is a synecdoche for correct cognitions on a pragmatic level, i.e., the perception and inference of normal people, and that the dharma is an object only of the supra-mundane correct cognition. Moreover, the entities (padārtha) assumed by the heretics (tīrthika) to be the object of logic (tarka) such as the soul (ātman) still undergo a change when being analyzed (vicāryamaṇa) by tarka, because in the way they are taught by the heretics these objects do not exist. The nature of the entities made known by the Tathāgata such as selflessness (nairūtya), however, does not undergo a change when being analyzed. He concludes that although the nature of entities is thus not the realm of tarka, an entity (vastu) that is made known as it is in its general form (sāmānyarūpena) is helpful to understand reality (tattvādhamgamarūpa).

The information that can be gathered from these two statements of Dignāga is that neither the Buddhist teaching as such, nor the introduction into their teaching of the opponents and those confused by them is the aim of his writing the PSV. He only aims at turning them away from their flawed teachings so that they can then easily grasp the words of the Buddha. In addition, according to Jinendrabuddhi: As long as the heretical opponents teach false categories such as an eternal soul, etc., which do not stand a critical analysis, Buddhists have to write works on logic in order to help the heretics and their followers get rid of these incorrect conceptions and to understand reality.

At first glance this seems to confirm Stcherbatsky’s assumption with regard to Buddhist logic and epistemology that “[in the intention of its promoters the system had apparently no special connection with Buddhism as a religion, i.e., as the teaching of a path towards Salvation], although Stcherbatsky never mentions a source for this opinion.

A passage from the Bodhisattvabhūmi (BoBhū) may be adduced as another possible source for the negative classification of pramāṇavāda or hetuvidyā. There we read indeed that the five vidyāsthānas or śāstras consist of, besides adhyātmavidyā, the three external (bāhyaka) śāstras and the mundane (laukika) śāstras of art and technology, the three external being epistemology (hetuśāstra),19 grammar (śabdaśāstra), and the healing of diseases

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18 PSṬ ms B258b6–7; PSṬ Derge 312b1–2 = Peking 353a1–2: . . . ity āha – taddharma-syātarkagocaratvāt. tarkagrahaṇam vyāvahārikāpramāṇopalaksanārtham. lokottara-syaiva hi pramāṇasya viśayo bhagavato dharmaḥ prayāyāmavedyaḥ, na vyāvahāri-kasyeta arthah.

19 Unfortunately the BoBhū does not say which texts should be regarded as belonging to hetuvidyā, etc.
The term *bāhyaka* is used in Buddhist texts to refer to the outsiders, the heretics, as opposed to the Buddhist insiders (*abhyanantaraka*). This is confirmed, e.g., by Yaśomitra who, following Vasubandhu, divides normal human beings into insiders and outsiders, the insiders being included in the group of the Buddhists and the outsiders not. This characterization of epistemology as a science of the heretics may be regarded as a possible source of confusion not only for modern scholars, but also as a source for the assumption as found in the later Tibetan tradition that epistemology is a science shared by both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. While this passage from the *BoBhū* may have been a basis for a negative attitude towards epistemology, I, on the contrary, consider it to provide the clue for placing the study of epistemology into a wider context. It is also stated here that a Bodhisattva is engaged in, or strives for, all five sciences (*... imāni pañcavidyāsthānāni, yāni bodhisattvāḥ paryeṣate*). And he has to study and master all of them in order to obtain omniscience. The aim of his study of *hetuvidyā* is, among others, to defeat the teachings of the opponents. Thus, although it is an external science, it is being practiced by a Bodhisattva.


21 Yaśomitra’s *AKV* (ed. Shastri, Varanasi 1987) 150,15–16 (on *AKBh* [ed. Pradhan, Patna 1975] 42,28–43,1): *prthagjano vā dvividha iti, abhyantarakaś ca bāhyakaś ca asa-muchinnakusaśalamulā abhyantarakaḥ, bauddhāhasangṛhitavat, samuechinnakusaśamulā tu bāhyakaḥ, tadviparyayāt. Also a passage from the *BoBhū* itself suggests that the term *bāhyaka* is used to mean heretics (*BoBhū* 222,6–8 = *BoBhū* 152,20–21; cf. n. 20): *ito bāhyakesu tīrthikescu paṛvaṃ ca tīrthikadṛśṭarīteṣu satteṣv arthacāryā bodhisattvāṃ duskarī. 22 *BoBhū* 105,24–106,2 = *BoBhū* 74,19–21 (cf. n. 20): *sarvāni ca iti pañca vidyāstha-nāni bodhisattvāḥ paryeṣate...* *nuttarānyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhī mahaṃśasmaṃabhāra-paripāramārtham, na hi sarvatraiva aśikṣamānaṃ krameṇa sarvajñājanānaṃ anāvarenaṃ pratilabhate. 23 *BoBhū* 105,13–16 = *BoBhū* 74,11–13 (cf. n. 20): *hetuvidyāṃ bodhisattvāḥ paryeṣate...* *sāstrasya durbhāṣṭādurlupatītāyā yathābhūtaspārjñānārtham paravādānīṣapārjñānaṃ cābhrānānaṃ asmiḥ chāsane prasāḍayā prasamānaṃ ca bhūyobhāva.
Let us now, following this path, take a look at another locus classicus for the formulation of the notion of the five sciences, namely, *Mahāyānasūtrakārakāra* (MSA) 11.60, ascribed to Maitreya, with its commentary, the *Bhāṣya* (MSABh). It reads:

Without being engaged in the five branches of science, [even] the highest Ārya becomes in no way omniscient. Thus, he is indeed engaged in them in order to defeat and aid others, or for the sake of his own gnosis.

The five branches of science are the internal science (*adhyātmavidyā*), epistemology, grammar, medicine, and the science of art and technology. Thus [the author of the verse] shows the aim for which the Bodhisattva has to be engaged. In order to obtain omniscience, [he is engaged] in all without differentiation. In particular, he is now engaged in epistemology and grammar for the sake of defeating those who are not disposed to omniscience (*tad sarvajñatvay anudhāmitva*), [i.e., those who have not yet attained the necessary spiritual conviction in the Buddhist teaching]. [He is engaged] in medicine and the science of art and technology in order to give aid to those already striving for it [i.e., omniscience]. [He is engaged] in the internal science for the sake of his own gnosis.

Here the division of the four *vidyāsthānas* into external and mundane is not applied, and it is also clearly stated that a Bodhisattva has to master all five sciences in order to obtain omniscience, that is to say, in order to obtain liberation.

With these two passages from the *BoBhū* and the *MSA(Bh)* we thus have a framework offered by the Buddhist tradition itself in which the study of the science of epistemology, in addition to the sciences of grammar, medicine, and arts and technology, is a necessary requirement on the path to liberation.


26 The idea that a Buddhist adept has to study grammar, logic, etc., or even the doctrines of the heretical schools is also found in the *Abhidharmahāvibhāṣā* (大毘婆沙論), extant in Chinese translation only. I owe this information to Ikuhisa Takigawa, M.A., Tokai
Now the question remains as to whether Dignāga’s account regarding his aim for composing the PS(V) relates to and fits into this frame. To begin with, I have, as expected, not been able to locate any explicit statements, neither in Dignāga’s writings nor in the texts of the scholars belonging to the Buddhist epistemological tradition, that clearly express such a relationship. However, if we look at Dignāga’s aim, namely, turning the opponents away from their incorrect views, and at the aim of the study of epistemology as formulated in the passages of the BoBhū and the MSABh, namely defeating non-Buddhists, the two aims are somewhat in harmony. Also Dignāga’s other concept, namely that the dharma of the Tathāgata is not in the realm of logic, has its corresponding passage in the MSA(Bh). The same idea is formulated in MSA 1.12, where we read that logic is assumed to be a basis for the foolish, and thus, that it [i.e. Mahāyāna] is not in its realm (… bālāśrayo mataś tarkas taṃsyāto viṣayo na tat). This idea that the dharma or the dharmakāya of the

University, who also provided the translations: Taishō 27, 885b09–13: 受持誦誦索怛勧獲毘耶阿毘達磨，通達文義分別解說。又能傍通世俗諸論，所謂記論因論王論諸醫方論工巧論等。或復兼善外道諸論，所謂 勝論 數論 明論 順世間論 離繫論等。{(One should) keep and read Sūtras, Vinayas and Abhidharmas, and, versed in their meanings, discriminate and explain them. Moreover, one can learn secondary secular sciences, namely, grammar (記論 vyākaraṇa), logic (因論 hetuśāstra), politics (工論 rājāśāstra), medicine (醫方論 śākyāśāstra), technology (工巧論 śilpakarmasthānaśāstra) and so on. Or one may study heretical doctrines, namely, Vaiśeṣika, Saṅkhya, Veda, Lokāyata, Nirgrantha and so on.” Cf. also Taishō 27, 905a11–15: 问四无碍解行云何？答有说，法无碍解以習數論为行加，義無礙解以習佛語為行加，詞無礙解以習聲論為行加，辯無礙解以習因論為行加。於此四處若未善巧，必不能生無礙解故。 “Question: What are the preparations (行 prayoga) for the four unhindered abilities (無礙解 pratisamvid)? Someone answers: Learning calculation is the preparation for the unhindered ability of teaching (法無礙解 dhammapratisamvid), learning Buddha’s words for the unhindered ability of understanding (義無礙解 arthapratīṣṭha), learning sabdavidyā for the unhindered ability of speech (詞無礙解 niruktipratīṣṭha), and learning hetuvidyā for the unhindered ability of explanation (辯無礙解 pratibhānapratīṣṭha), because unhindered abilities will never arise unless one is already skilled in these four preparations.” The parallel passage in the AK Bhī reads (419.20–420.2): असं का लिंे प्रतिसामविदम् गौतम बौद्धवाकनां शब्दाविद्या हेतुविद्या का पुर-। वाप्रयोगो यथाक्रमम्। नायपे एते अक्राकारसः ता उपदायित्र सङ्कोचः। बौद्धवाकनां एव तु सर्वसां नयणयो वाप्रयोणम् वर्णयंति। यस्या वाक तस्याव्यायम् चतुराश्च प्रतिसामविद्वादिभवति। नायेव एतानां प्रतिसामविद्म ।

27 Cf. also MSABh (ed. Lévi, Paris 1907) 3,10–11, where agocarāt of MSA 1.7 is explained: nāyam evam udāro gambhirāś ca dharmas tārīkānāṃ gocarah, tārīkānāṃ sastrasya tattvāmayupalāmbhād iti; cf. also MSA 1.17 with Bhāṣya.
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Buddha cannot be known through tarka or is acintya is not limited to the MSA, but is shared by probably all Buddhists.28

We have thus gained a wider context in which Dignāga’s scanty statements regarding the role of pramāṇa can be meaningfully understood. Needless to say, the basis for this assumption is not a broad one, and it also goes without saying that nothing in the wording of Dignāga indicates that it was really the BoBhū or the MSABh that he had in mind. But these texts, or at least the ideas referred to, must have been widely accepted among his Buddhist contemporaries, for they are the addressees of his statement. His explanation seems to be compelled by the need to justify why he, in addition to his works dealing with buddhavacana such as the Prajñāpāramitāpāraṇālaka and although the teaching of the Buddha is not subject to pramāṇa studies, nevertheless composed works such as the Nyāyamukha, the PSV, etc. The addressees may have been followers of the Madhyamaka, as Dignāga’s justification for his writing on pramāṇa as well as his theory of pramāṇa was heavily attacked by Candrakīrti in his Prasannapadā (Pras; ed. de La Vallée Poussin, Delhi 1992: 58,14–59,1).29

28 Cf., e.g., Divyāvadāna (ed. Vaidya, Mithila 1959) 432,17: śramaṇa gautama evam āha—gambhirō me dharma gambhirāvabhūsō durdṛṣṭo durambodho ‘tarko ‘tarkāvacaraḥ, sūkṣmo nipuṇapaṇḍitavijñāvedanīyaḥ: Asanga’s Mahāyānasangraha (ed. Lamotte, Louvain 1973, Tome I) 85,15–17 (on dharmakāya): bsam gyis mi khyab pa’i mtshan nīd ni de bāṃ nīd rnam par dag pa de so so rani gis rig par bya ba dan | ‘jig rien na āpe med pa dan rtog ge pa’i spyod yul ma yin pa’i phiyor ro II (transl. in Tome II, p. 274); Sthiramati’s Triṃśikāvijñānaptibhāṣya on Vasubandhu’s Triṃśikā k. 30 (Hartmut Buescher, The Triṃśikāvijñānaptibhāṣya of Sthiramati ... Vol. I. Ph. D. Dissertation, Univ. of Copenhagen, 2002) *53,5 (on anātrayavo dhūtah being a characteristic of dharmakāya): acintyas tarkācaraatvāt pratyaśi mavedyāvad drṣṭāntābhāvāc ca. Finally I would like to mention Bhāviveka’s Madhyamakākāryayārtikā (MHK) 3.285cd (speaking of dharmakāya): savikalpāvikalpena jñāntenāpya esā durdṛṣṭaḥ I. Here, Bhāviveka is clearly in accordance with Dignāga, for savikalpa-jñāna stands for inference (anumāna) and nirvikalpa-jñāna for perception (pratyakṣa), as is explained in the Tarkajñāla, cf. Christian Lindtner, Linking up Bhartṛhari and the Baudhāyas. Asiatische Studien 47/1 (1993) [195–213]: 210 n. 49. Lindtner’s assumption (p. 211) that Bhāviveka’s “terminology is a reaction against the epistemology of Yogācāra sākāra-vāda” seems to be an over-interpretation. For other passages in the MHK expressing the idea that the dharma is not an object of tarka, cf. Lindtner 1993: 208–210.

29 This passage is translated in Dan Arnold, Candrakīrti on Dignāga on svalaśaṇa. Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies 26 (2003) [139–174]: 156–157; in this paper Candrakīrti’s critique of Dignāga’s notion of svalaśaṇa is discussed. A critical edition of the first chapter of the Prasannapadā together with a translation is under preparation by Anne McDonald, Vienna. References to earlier treatments of this passage can be found there.
atha syāt – eṣa eva pramāṇaprameyavāyavahāra lautikō śmābhīḥ śāstreyānuvarnita iti, tadanauvānasya tarhi phalaṃ vācayam. kutārkikaiḥ sa nāsito viparītalakṣaṇābhidhānena tasyāṃśmābhīḥ sanyāgākṣaṇam uktaṃ iti cet, etad apy ayuktam ...

If [the following objection] were to be [brought forth by Dignāga]: Exactly this practice in regard to means of valid cognition and the object cognized (pramāṇaprameyavāyavahāra) belonging to the worldly level has been explicated by us via the treatise (Śāstra), [we would reply:] Then the advantage (phala) to its explication should be stated. [Opponent:] This [worldly practice in regard to means of valid cognition and the object cognized] has been ruined by poor logicians (kutārki) through [their] stating of an erroneous characteristic (lakṣaṇa). We have asserted the correct characteristic of it. [Reply:] This too is incorrect ...

That Dignāga is Candrakīrti’s opponent in this passage is also corroborated by the unknown author of the *Lakṣaṇaṭīkā (LT),* recently edited by Yoshiyasu Yonezawa, a text consisting of notes on the Prasannapadā, the Madhyamakāvatārābhāṣya and the Catuḥsātakaṭāśikā. The relevant passages read: ... asmābhīr (Pras 58,14) dignāgādibhiḥ ... kutārki (Pras 58,15) iti dignāgaḥ ... (LT 142,15–17). 29 That is to say, “by us” means “by Dignāga, etc.” and in the statement beginning with the words “by poor logicians”, “Dignāga” is speaking. 30

Dignāga’s direct purpose for the composition of the PS(V) is, as we have seen above, “to establish valid cognition” (pramāṇasiddhi) which is explicated as meaning “to refute the pramāṇas of the opponents” (paraprāmāṇa-pratiśedha) and “to reveal the good qualities of one’s own pramāṇas” (svapramāṇagunoḍbhāvāna). However, he said nothing about the object of cognitions (prameya), as mentioned by Candrakīrti. Candrakīrti’s mentioning of prameya is nevertheless justified. For Dignāga, after having said that the detailed refutation of the proofs (śādhana), refutations (dūṣāna) and their pseudo-forms (abhaṣa) – these are referred to by ’di or de dag gi (cf. n. 32) – can be found in his Nyāya-, Vaiśeṣika- and Sāṃkhyaaparikṣā, states that the prameya (gžal bya) of all Tirthikas can be known only through tarka. But as their tarka does not stand a critical analysis, as he has shown in the PSV, the object too is refuted, although not explicitly. 32 The kutārkikas referred to by

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30 It is thus clear that kutārki may indeed not refer to Dignāga, as was proposed in David Seyfort Ruegg, *Two Prolegomena to Madhyamaka Philosophy.* Wien 2002: 43 n. 42.

31 PSV Peking 5702, 176b6–8: ’di rgyas par dag pa dañ gžal bya dbags pa ni rigs pa can dañ bye brag pa dañ gruhas can brtag pa rhams las sès par bya bo ll μu stegs μa thams cad kyi gžal bya ni rtags ges rtags pa yin te 1 de dag gi’i brtags pa’t don rhams mi mion sum gyi yul ma yin pa’i phyir ro ll rtags ge yari de ttags bzod pa ma yin no ll de’i phyir gžal bya dbags pa ma byas kyang byas pa ſid yin no ll = PSV Derge 4204, 85a7–
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Candrakīrti are thus all Tīrthikas who were refuted by Dignāga in his PSV, i.e., the adherents of the schools of the Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Sāṅkhya and Mīmāṃśa. Thus we can say that Candrakīrti presents the position of Dignāga correctly, summarizing only the main points.

Let us now, after this digression, have a brief look at Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇasiddhi chapter, the aim of which is to prove that the Buddha can metaphorically be said to be pramāṇa, which at first glance seems not to correspond to Dignāga’s understanding of the role of pramāṇa. In this chapter Dharmakīrti explains that the Buddha is reliable and makes new states of affairs known, and that by being endowed with these qualities, which are the defining characteristics of a valid cognition (pramāṇa) on a conventional level, i.e., perception and inference, he is metaphorically called pramāṇa.

In addition he also demonstrates that the pramāṇas assumed by the heretical schools such as the Veda or an eternal God (iśvara) cannot in fact be regarded as pramāṇa. That is to say, his pramāṇasiddhi consists of “refuting the pramāṇas of the opponents” (parapramāṇapratīṣedha) and “revealing the good qualities of one’s own pramāṇas” (svapramāṇagunodbhaṇa). The main addressees of his undertaking are certainly not Buddhists, but his heretical contemporaries, for to prove to a Buddhist audience that the Buddha is pramāṇa would constitute the fault of proving what is already established (siddhasādhanā).

Thus, although Dharmakīrti does touch on soteriological

85b1: de dag gis (read: gi) so sor dag pa daṅ gzhal bya so sor dag ba rgyas por ni bye brag pa’i rigs pa dan || rkaṅ mig pa’i rigs pa brag pa dag las sès par bya’o || mu stegs can thams cad kyi gzhal bya go bar byed pa ni rtoṅ ge tams ste || des yoṅs su brtags pa’i dānos po rnam ni mūn sum gyi yul ma yin pa’i phyir ro || de yin de bzhin du brtags na aphyad mi bződ do || gal te ‘di gan gāṅ gis na don la gzhal bar bya ba bkaṅ ce na l. Jinendrabuddhi’s comment ms B258b1-4 (Derge 312a3-6 = Peking 352b1-5): na kevalam nyāyarpārīṣāduśi prameyapratīṣedhaḥ kṛtaḥ, ihāpy arthaḥ, kṛta iti dārśanāt. saṃve-sāṃ cetiyātā. kasmāt punah pratyakṣagamyaḥ na bhavati aha — tatparikalpaśaṃpadārthānām ityādi. pradhānapurùṣadākālasamavāyāthinām apratyakṣaśayāḥ śīkṣita śīkṣitaśāvasthiśapanāṃ tarkagamyaḥ. na vimarādakṣama iti na vicārāma artha ity arthaḥ, yathā ca vicārāma na sahaute, tathā pratipādītām atā iti. yasmād evam na parīṣākṣamās tar-kāhā. tasmāt tadvaitasyaḥ prameyasyāpy arthaḥ tārthaḥ pratīṣēdo ‘tra kṛta eva veditavya iti.”

kṛtaḥ, ihāpy arthaḥ, kṛta iti dārśanāt. kṛta iti dārśanāt. kṛta ity ihāpy arthaḥ. kṛta iti dārśanāt* ms (‘di yin don gyzis pa’o žes ston pa gsuṅs pa T) 8 niłon sum yin pa’i yid kyis T
tadvaitasyaṃ em.: tattvagamyasyāpi ms (api n.c. T)


34 Similarly, texts which prove the existence of an eternal God (iśvarasiddhi) are written to convince those who do not believe in God, such as the Buddhists.

35 Buddhists are addressed by such statements as to be found at the end of the chapter (PV 283–286; cf. Tilmann Vetter, Der Buddha und seine Lehre in Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇavārttika. Wien 1990: 172f.) According to the commentators Prajñākaragupta and
matters in order to establish the Buddha having become a *pramāṇa*, this is not in contradiction to Dignāga’s intention, but certainly an extension thereof.

How Dharmakīrti himself conceives of the role of *pramāṇa* is clearly formulated at the beginning of his *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (*PVin*) and at the end of its first chapter. In the opening section he states that he will compose the *PVin* in order to explain what correct cognition is to those who do not know, as this cognition is necessary for attaining that which is beneficial and for abstaining from that which is detrimental. While it is clear already from this statement that Dharmakīrti writes for those who do not understand correct cognition, in his closing section he is very explicit that he follows the same line as Dignāga. As the Sanskrit text — a critical edition of the first chapters is under preparation by Ernst Steinkellner — allows for a new interpretation of this final passage and as it also shows Dharmakīrti’s cautious approach as to whether external objects exist, I will present more than is necessary to illustrate Dharmakīrti’s view of the role of *pramāṇa*. In the last *kārikā* he states that even if one assumes the existence of an object external to cognition, this cognition has two forms, i.e., that of the object and that of cognition. Moreover, he says that the existence of this external object could be established on account of the cognition’s absence when this object is absent. On this he comments as follows:

The fact that the effect consisting in cognition is not brought about even when all other effective causes are present shows that [one] other cause is missing. This could be the

\[\text{Manorathanandin, these verses are intent on demonstrating that Buddha used only two *pramāṇas*, perception and inference, and also that the definition of inference is in accordance with Buddha’s teaching. Dharmakīrti does not speak about the definition of perception, as Dignāga himself already has shown that it is in accordance with the Abhidharma; cf. Masaaki Hattori, *Dignāga on Perception*. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1968: 88 n. 1.36. If we understand these verses as addressing, e.g., Mādhyamikas who claim that writing works on *pramāṇa* is futile and who accept four *pramāṇas*, then the circle in the “ECTE circle” and other circles become less round. For these circles, cf. John D. Dunne, *Foundations of Dharmakīrti’s philosophy*. Boston 2004: 233–245.}\n
\[\text{36} PVin (ed. Vetter, Wien 1966) 1.30,12–14: hitāhāpraṇaparīhārayor niyamena samyag- jñānapūrvavakatvād aviduṣām tadyutpādaarātham idam ārāhyate.}\n
\[\text{38} PVin 1.59 (the Sanskrit text is according to Steinkellner’s critical edition under preparation): bāhye ‘py arthe itato ‘bhedo bhāsamanārthatadvidhō | dvairūpyam tad dhiyo bāhyasiddhiḥ syād vyattirekataḥ II}\n
external object, unless someone [i.e. a Vījñāna- or Vījñāptivādin] were to assert that the absence of the effect is caused by the absence of a particular material cause [i.e. a particular imprint (vāsanā)]. [Question:] Inasmuch as he claims the object of every cognition to be lacking (vyātirecayam), how can he assert that a disturbed cognition (upaplaya) and [its] opposite are means of correct cognition and [its] opposite, since there is then no difference [between them]? [Answer:] When seeing an action that is untrustworthy, due to the deficiency of the imprints of a disturbed cognition not being connected [to the desired result], even to he who is not awakened, [he who is asked in this manner] could declare the one [cognition] to be apramāṇa. The other [cognition], which, as long as saṃsāra endures, has an uninterrupted connection [with the result] because its imprints are firm, [could be declared] here [in the world], dependant on its reliability in actions, to be pramāṇa. And it is this nature of the conventional means of valid cognition that has been explained. [Not only with regard to the ultimate means of valid cognition, but] also with regard to this [conventional cognition], others who are confused lead the world astray. Those, however, who cultivate the very wisdom born of reflection realize the ultimate pramāṇa, which due to its being devoid of error is immaculate [and] without return. Indeed, this too has been explained to some extent.

Dharmakīrti does not state explicitly, as Dignāga did, that he wants to turn those who follow incorrect teachings away from them, and that the dharma of the Buddha is not in the realm of tarka or saṃvyavahārikapramāṇa. The addressees, however, are the same: those in the world who have been led astray by the opponents. As he mentions that pāramārthikapramāṇa is realized by cultivating that very wisdom born of reflection, it is clear that he shares the view that the dharma of the Buddha is not in the realm of tarka. For saṃvyavahārikapramāṇa operates on the level of cintāmānya prajñā, whereas pāramārthikapramāṇa can be gained only through bhāvanāmāya

39 Cf. Jhānaśribhādra’s explanation (Pūnvī Derge 4228, 201b6–7; Peking 5728, 239b4–5):

idog pas phyi rol sgrub pa ’dis gan gi ishe rnam par šes par smra ba dag nam gi iče bar len pa ’i dhios po ’i bye brag gis byas pas ’bras bu sṃon po šes pa Idog pa yin par mi smra na phyi rol ’grub par ‘gyur ro ||

40 pramāṇa and itara of the compound pramāṇetaratāṇi are to be construed with itara and upaplage of upaplayetarayoh respectively.
Thus, valid conventional cognition is a tool for correctly analyzing, distinguishing and determining what one has heard or learned before. This is the procedure that Dharmakirti has shown in the passage to which he probably refers, among others, with the words *tad api leṣataḥ sūcitam eveti*, i.e., *PVin* 1.28 with his explanation and the verses quoted from the *Pramāṇavārttika* (*PVin* 1.29–31).

Dharmottara, the last author I would like to consider here, makes both points very clear. Commenting on *atrapi pare mūdhā visāṃvādayanti lokam* he says that it would be correct to explain only the definition of ultimate cognition if the world were not confused about conventional cognition. However, as long as those who are confused with regard to conventional cognition also continue to confuse others, there is no chance to introduce them to the ultimate way (*don dam pa’i ṭshul*). Thus, conventional cognition has to be taught to them in order to lead them to the ultimate way. **43** He explains how this is possible to the ultimate way as follows: The cause for realizing ultimate cognition is cultivation (*bhāvanā*). This cultivation operates with affairs that have been settled by conventional cognition. Thus, this conventional cognition, with the objects tested by it, is, when properly established, cause for ultimate cognition. However, objects of incorrect cognitions, when being cultivated in terms of their eternal aspects as taught by the heretics, are not cause for ultimate cognition. Therefore people, in order to introduce them to the ultimate way, first have to be turned away from their errors. **44**

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41 On the soteriological impact of *sāṃvyavahārikāpramāṇa* according to Dharmakirti and his commentators, cf. § 2 “Épistémologie et sotérielogie” in Vincent Eltschinger, Études sur la philosophie religieuse de Dharmakirti (II): L’āśrayaratvīrtī (forthcoming).

42 *bhāvanābalaśataḥ spaśtaṁ bhayaśād iva bhāṣate* ||
yaj jītāṇam avisaṃvāyād itat pratyaśkāṃ akalpakaṃ || *PVin* 1.28
yogīnām api śrutamayena jñāṇenaṁrthaṁ gṛhītvā yukticintāmayena vyavasthāpya bhāva-
yālam tanniḥpattau yat spaśṭābhāṣāi bhayaśād iva, tad avikalpakaṃ avitathavāśayam pramāṇaṁ pratyaśkāṃ, āryasatyadarsanāvad yatāḥ nirṇītam asmāhīḥ pramāṇavārt-
tike ..., translated in Vetter 1966: 73f. (cf. n. 36). The Sanskrit text is according to Stein-
kellner’s critical edition under preparation.

43 *PVinT* Derge 4299, 167b2–3 = Peking 5727, 195b4–5: *gal te tha sñad la rab tu sbyor ba’i šes pa ’di la yān ’jig rten rmo’i par ma gyur na ni don dam pa’i šes pa ’ba’žig gi mtshan ŋid bṣad par rigs pa yin na lot gan gi tse ’di la yān gzan dag bdag nīd rmo’i śin 1 gzan yan rmo’i par byed pa de’i tse de dag don dam pa’i ṭshul la ’jug pa’i skabs ga la yod lI don dam pa’i ṭshul la ’jug par bya ba kho na’i phyir kun tu tha sñad pa’i šes pa bṣad pa yin no ||

44 *PVinT* Derge 167b6–168a1 = Peking 196a2–5: *pāramārthikam api pramāṇaṁ na nir-
hetukam, na ca bhāvanāvyayatikā hetuh. bhāvanā ca sāṃvyavahārikāpramāṇaparic-
chimārthaḥvāyayā. tataḥ ca tat sāṃvyavahārikam pramāṇaṁ samyag nirūpitaṁ pāra-
mārthikajñānāhetuḥ sampadyate. tatas tadvīṣayato yathā paramārthaḥvāyayā eva. mithyā-
 jñānena hi viṣayikṛtā bhāvā nityādibhir ākārair bhāvyamānā na pāramārthikajñānani-
Up to now we have seen that these philosophers of the Buddhist epistemological tradition had a clear idea about what they were doing and for whom they were writing. The question as to whether they saw their activity in the framework of the five vidyāsthānas as outlined above cannot be answered with certainty. I have been unable to gain clarity concerning this understanding from the texts of the Indian tradition that follow Dignāga. Support for such an interpretation can be gained, however, from no less than Saska Pañḍita, who puts the study of pramaṇa into the framework of the five branches of sciences. In the opening section of his “Entrance gate for the wise” (mKhas pa rnams kyi 'jug pa'i sgo) – “the wise” being no one other than those who are omniscient\(^{45}\) – he tells us that the topics to be studied by the wise are the five vidyāsthānas, and to support this, quotes the very passage from the MSA that we have linked to Dignāga, i.e., MSA 11.60.\(^{46}\)

In conclusion we can thus sum up Dignāga’s, Dharmakīrti’s and Dhar-mottara’s concept of the role of epistemology as follows:

1) The addressees of epistemological works are primarily non-Buddhists.
2) The aim of these works is not to introduce the opponents to the teaching of Buddha, but to turn the adherents of heretical views away from these views by revealing the faults in the pramāṇa theories of the heretics and by revealing the good qualities of one’s own pramāṇas.
3) Although the Buddhist dharma is not subject to a critical analysis by means of conventional valid cognitions (pramāṇa), it has to be examined

\(^{45}\) mKhas 'jug (Sa skya Pañḍita Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan, mKhas pa mams 'jug pa'i sgo žes bya ba bstan bcos. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khañ 1981) 5,10–11: mKhas pa žes bya ba gañ yin že na l žes bya thams cad phyin ci ma log par žes pa yin la l ... A similar idea is found in MSA 11.2 where the wise man, here dhīmāṇ, is said to obtain awareness of all modes of reality (dhīmāṇ sarvākāraṇātām eti), the wise man being paraphrased as Bodhisattva in the commentary thereon (bodhisattvabhāvākāraṇātām prāpnoti); cf. Griffiths 1990: 100 (cf. n. 24).

\(^{46}\) mKhas 'jug 5.13–6.1: mKhas pa des bslab bar bya ba'i yul ni rig pa'i gnas lha ste l ... de 'aň mdo sde rgyan las |
rig pa'i gnas lha dag la mKhas par ma byas par ||
'phags mchod gis kyang thams cad mkhyen niid mi 'gyur te l
gzan dag tshar gcad rjes su gzun bar bya phyir dan ||
raň niid kun žes bya phyir de la de brtson byed || MSA 11.60
ces gzun pa ltar ro ||
as long as confused opponents lead the world astray. Wisdom born of reflection (cintāmayī prajñā) operates with conventional valid cognitions, and hence they are indirectly a cause for the realization of the ultimate pramāṇa.

Thus it is clear that in the intention of the promoters of pramāṇa studies this system apparently had a strong connection with Buddhism as a religion, i.e., as the teaching of a path towards salvation, and that they never considered themselves to be involved in non-Buddhistic activities.