



## Omniscience and Religious Authority. A Study on Prajñākaragupta's Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkārabhāṣya ad Pramāṇavārttika II 8–10 and 29–33, by Shinya Moriyama

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Chapter 4 discusses pregnancy among nuns and how the monastic law codes solved this problem. Even though apparently there were cases in which nuns were driven away from the community, this was not done so on account of their being pregnant but because they were suspected of having violated their promise of celibacy. In other cases, however, women who became pregnant before becoming nuns were able to give birth and raise their children within the monastic compound. The final chapter reconsiders renunciation and revisits the existing *idées fixes* regarding the attitudes of Indian Buddhist monasticism to the family, which are presented as being conducive to the competitive religious marketplace that was ancient India.

Importantly, Clarke suggests that one of the implications of the current work may be that when looking at Buddhist monastic life and comparing it to Christian monasticism, for example, we need to be particularly careful of how we load even the most common terms we employ (such as ‘monasticism’ and ‘renunciation’) with cultural baggage. While this excellently-researched book questions the idealised notion of monastic practices, the author himself claims it raises more questions than it answers.

Clarke has convincingly dismantled the persistent notion that sutra literature is the most representative of Buddhist practice. The most important take-away is that Buddhist monastics were not, and were even far from, antisocial; if those involved in the study of Buddhism only take heed of this outstanding deconstruction, then Clarke has achieved no common feat.

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**Omniscience and Religious Authority. A Study on Prajñākaragupta’s *Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkārahāṣya ad Pramāṇavārttika* II 8–10 and 29–33**, by Shinya Moriyama (Leipziger Studien zur Kultur und Geschichte Süd- und Zentralasiens 4), Zürich-Berlin, LIT Verlag, 2014, ix + 313 pp., €49.40, ISBN 9783643904775

The middle period of the Buddhist epistemological tradition in India saw a decisive turn, with the works of Dharmottara (~740–800 CE) and Prajñākaragupta (~750–810 CE), two followers of Dharmakīrti (around 600 CE), from pure commentaries on the master’s works to in-depth analyses and creative philosophical interpretation. In their works, consisting of both extensive commentaries and topical essays, they focused on problems in Dharmakīrti’s *oeuvre* as well as less-elaborated subjects and questions of consistency. These works then became influential in the final period of the tradition for transmitting, clarifying and developing Dharmakīrti’s thought. In later portrayals, Prajñākaragupta was seen as having emphasised the religious aspects of Dharmakīrti’s writings, and it is in this respect that the work under review is of considerable merit.

First of all, it must be pointed out that Part II of Moriyama’s work provides critical editions of two more sections of Prajñākaragupta’s huge commentary, the *Pramāṇavārttikālaṅkārahāṣya* (PVABh), whose first edition contains 648 densely-printed pages. These sections are those on *Pramāṇavārttika* (PV) 2.8–10 (PVABh 32,19–42,18) and 2.29–33 (PVABh 50,19–53,5). Both the Sanskrit text and the Tibetan translation have been

critically edited and presented synoptically, thus expanding on the critical editions and translations that have already been provided by Motoi Ono, of PVABh on PV 2.1–7 (PhD dissertation, University of Vienna, 1993, published in Vienna in 2000), and by Eli Franco, of PVABh on PV 2.34–72 (Vienna 1997).


Moriyama's edition is based on Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana's edition (1953) of a unique, complete manuscript that he found in Sa skya during his third journey to Tibet in 1936 as well as on the photos of the manuscript that are kept at the Bihar Research Society, Patna. These were published in facsimile by Shigeaki Watanabe in 1998. Although the photos are not always of good quality, by adducing the manuscript, minor testimonia, and the Tibetan translation in the Derge and Peking versions, Moriyama has corrected numerous misprints and mistakes in the *editio princeps*. The edition is excellent in all respects and accompanied by a richly-annotated English translation with footnotes providing various philological information, detailed explanations of the arguments, and relevant references to other sources from the historical context.

The two PVABh sections chosen for this publication deal with the most prominent topics in the disputes between the leading philosophical traditions of India at the time—the theistic Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, the atheistic Mīmāṃsā, and Buddhism. These disputes culminated in the seventh-century polemics between the Mīmāṃsaka Kumāriḷa and the Buddhist Dharmakīrti. Omniscience was considered by many to be a decisive precondition for authority on topics related to knowledge about matters beyond ordinary epistemic reach and the ultimate goals of life. But Kumāriḷa saw the eternal impersonal Veda as the only available authority, and thus he criticised this conception of omniscience extensively. This provoked the Buddhists to develop two lines of argumentation for strengthening their position: on one side, it was necessary to refute the omniscience of God; on the other, it had to be established that the Buddha is omniscient.

In the first section (PV 2.8–9c), it is demonstrated within a lengthy digression that there is a contradiction between God's eternity and His being a source of valid knowledge, that is, being an authority. This leads to the following criticism of God's existence, which points out the logical faults in such proofs. It is significant for Prajñākaragupta's focus that among God's qualities, omniscience is shown as being impossible not only logically, but also due to the moral argument of theodicy. The proof of God's omniscience and his creatorship are shown to be mutually dependent; the core of the Buddhist refutation is seen in the absence of a generating cause of God's omniscience. It is the concept of a generating cause that paves the way for accepting omniscience in the case of a buddha. Already Dharmakīrti used the process and character of the yogic perception of true objects to explain how a buddha's omniscience is generated: a bodhisattva's mind is clarified through repeated practice of inference. This culminates in an 'inference of all aspects', which is attained, according to Prajñākaragupta, through ongoing meditation on all causal relationships and has the character of immediate awareness, that is, it is perception itself.

In the broad study of Part I, Moriyama explains Prajñākaragupta's interpretation of Dharmakīrti by placing his arguments within their historical context. Through his analyses and acute observation of often minute conceptual differences, Moriyama provides a detailed account of the development of the controversies on these topics, from the polemics in the period between Kumāriḷa and Dharmakīrti to the attacks of the Naiyāyika Bhāsarvajña (tenth century CE) on Prajñākaragupta. Moriyama convincingly shows how Prajñākaragupta goes beyond Dharmakīrti's mainly logical approach and elaborates on epistemological and ethical aspects, including their repercussions in the ontologies of the various participants in the debate.

The book concludes with an appendix, a bibliography and indices. Noteworthy is the appendix for its list of quotations in Jayanta's sub-commentary on the PVABh, most identified, a valuable resource for future research on Prajñākaragupta's tradition.

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