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Distortion as a Price for Comprehensibility? The rGyal tshab–Jackson Interpretation of Dharmakīrti

Is Enlightenment Possible? Dharmakīrti and rGyal tshab rje on Knowledge, Rebirth, No-Self and Liberation. Introduced, translated and annotated by Roger R. Jackson. Snow Lion Publications. Ithaca, New York, 1993. 571 pages.

The *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter, the second chapter of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, is unique in Dharmakīrti's writings. Dharmakīrti (ca. 600-660) is the sort of author who writes on the same issue several times, elaborating and refining his thoughts, sometimes modifying them radically. Of course, the major and general subjects of classical Indian epistemology, namely, perception and inference, are treated in one form or another in all of Dharmakīrti's writings, but there are also some specific topics, such as the determination of *vyāpti*, that run like a leitmotif through his work.¹ In stark contrast to that, religious issues are dealt with nowhere else but in the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter. This chapter therefore stands apart as representing the only period, early in his career,² in which Dharmakīrti wrote on religious issues (albeit in a philosophical manner) such as karma and rebirth, modes of meditation, the four noble truths, the Buddha's compassion and path to enlightenment, etc.

Although two monographs and a number of important papers have been written on the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter,³ it has received far less attention

1. Cf. E. Steinkellner, "Remarks on *niścayagrahaṇa*," *Orientalia, Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, eds. G. Gnoli and L. Lanciotti, Serie Orientale Roma 56.3 (Roma: 1988) 1427-1444.

2. Cf. E. Frauwallner, "Die Reihenfolge und Entstehung der Werke Dharmakīrti's," *Asiatica, Festschrift F. Weller* (Leipzig: 1954) 142-154 (= *Kleine Schriften*, pp. 677-689).

3. Cf. T. Vetter, *Der Buddha und seine Lehre in Dharmakīrtis Pramāṇavārttika*, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde 12 (Wien: 1984); V. A. van Bijlert, *Epistemology and Spiritual Authority*, Wiener Studien

than Dharmakīrti's work on inference, on which Steinkellner published his pathbreaking editions, translations and studies in the sixties and seventies,⁴ influencing decisively the course of Dharmakīrtian studies for many years to come. Therefore, Roger Jackson's voluminous book, which has been in the making for more than ten years⁵ and which contains a complete English translation of the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter as well as the important commentary of rGyal tshab dar ma rin chen (1364-1432) thereon, the *rNam 'grel Thar lam gSal byed*, should have been a major event in Dharmakīrtian studies.

Why this is not the case is due, I believe, above all to Jackson's lack of interest in Dharmakīrti. This may sound paradoxical in view of the book's title, but it soon becomes obvious as one reads through the translation. Besides, Jackson himself states this fact in no uncertain terms several times, and he should be recommended for at least making his stand clear.⁶ Jackson's interest centers on rGyal tshab's commentary; the translation of the verses is not meant to be faithful to their Sanskrit original, not even to their Tibetan translation, but only to their interpretation by rGyal tshab, as understood by Jackson. The work as a whole is also symptomatic for a current trend among scholars of Tibet who attempt to understand the Tibetan philosophical tradition "as such" independently of the decisive

zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde 20 (Wien: 1989); a number of papers mostly dealing with the initial verses of the chapter appeared in E. Steinkellner (ed.), *Studies in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition* (Proceedings of the Second International Dharmakīrti Conference, Vienna, June 11-16, 1989), *Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens* 8 (Wien: 1991). One should also mention the pioneering work of T. Vetter, *Erkenntnisprobleme bei Dharmakīrti* (Wien: 1964).

4. Cf. E. Steinkellner, *Dharmakīrti's Hetubinduḥ*. Teil I. Tibetischer Text und rekonstruierter Sanskrittext. Teil II. Übersetzung und Anmerkungen. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Sprachen und Kulturen Süd- und Ostasiens 4-5 (Wien: 1967); *Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇaviniścaya*. 2. Kapitel: Svārthānumānam. Teil I. Tibetischer Text und Sanskrittexte. Teil II. Übersetzung und Anmerkungen. Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Sprachen und Kulturen Süd- und Ostasiens 12, 15 (Wien: 1973, 1979). On the other hand, the *pratyakṣa* chapter is relatively neglected at the present, and I know of no one who currently works on it.

5. Cf. R. R. Jackson "Is Enlightenment Possible? An Analysis of Some Arguments in the Buddhist Philosophical Tradition, with Special Attention to the *Pramāṇasiddhi* Chapter of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*," diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1983.

6. Cf. pp. 11-12, 161, and with a different nuance p. 152.

background and long-lasting influence of the Indian tradition. This trend is perhaps understandable as a reaction to the type of scholarship that was dominant until recently, namely, to study only canonical Tibetan texts to gain access to the Indian Buddhist philosophical tradition and as an ancillary tool for its understanding. This tradition, which enjoys an illustrious past, is fortunately not yet defunct, but has certainly been marginalized, especially in North American Tibetology. Moreover, the tendency to view and evaluate the Tibetan tradition within the context and on the basis of the Indian tradition has been replaced by a penchant to present and interpret Indian materials through the eyes of their Tibetan exegetes, past and present. However, the results of this new, innovative but limited approach are largely flawed, both factually and methodologically. This was clear already some twenty years ago when scholars like Hopkins made their first contributions in this field,⁷ and it should have become even clearer by now.

The fact that Jackson's dealings with Dharmakīrti are at best perfunctory is clearly illustrated by his treatment of previous scholarship on Dharmakīrti. This is, no doubt, the most shocking part of the book. Thus, in a short and self-destructive chapter called "Scholarship on Dharmakīrti" (pp. 149-152) Jackson clearly shows that he has the habit of not only referring to, but also commenting on, books about which he has only the foggiest idea. Here are a few examples: Jackson recommends Potter's *Bibliography of Indian Philosophies* "not the least of whose virtues is its inclusion of Japanese scholarship" (p. 149). Now, Potter's tremendous and admirable work has many virtues, but perhaps its single most important drawback is the *exclusion* of Japanese scholarship. Similarly, Frauwallner's *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie* (1953) is said to "remain a treasury of information on Indian and Buddhist logic and epistemology." However, these topics are not even touched in that book. Stcherbatsky is credited with translating only "portions of Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu*." Similarly, Steinkellner translated the *Hetubindu* "in part." Both translations are complete. On the next page (p. 151) even the edition of the *Hetubindu* by Steinkellner seems to be incomplete ("the parts of the *Hetubindu* and *Pramānaviniścaya* edited by Steinkellner . . ."). Does Jackson know of portions of *Nyāyabindu* and *Hetubindu* that no one else is aware of? Most readers may be surprised to find out that "Ganganatha Jha's translation of Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṅgraha*, together with Kamalaśīla's *Pañjikā* (1937-

7. Cf. J. W. de Jong's review of J. Hopkins and Lati Rimpoche with A. Klein, *The Precious Garland and the Song of the Four Mindfulnesses*, in *Indo-Iranian Journal* 20 (1978) 136-139.

39), remains one of the finest and most useful sources for our understanding of late Buddhist ontology and epistemology,” or that “[t]he only general text on Buddhist thought that contains reliable information on the *pramāṇa* tradition is that of A. K. Warder (1980).” One may or may not agree with the last two judgements, but other statements of Jackson are simply wrong, no matter how generously one may wish to consider them. Thus, Gnoli (1960) (i. e., his text edition with critical notes, entitled *The Pramāṇavārttikam of Dharmakīrti. The First Chapter with the Autocommentary*) is supposed to have translated “a significant portion of the *Svārthānumāna* chapter.” On the other hand, Satkari Mookerjee (1968) (*The Pramāṇavārttikam of Dharmakīrti [Svārthānumāna chapter, verses 1-51]*) is said to have edited the *Pramāṇavārttika*. However, the partial Sanskrit text appearing at the end of the book is a mere reprint, whereas Mookerjee’s main achievement, the translation, in collaboration with Hojun Nagasaki, of the first fifty-one verses and extracts from *Karnakagomin’s* commentary, is never mentioned.

All these examples are taken from the above mentioned chapter, but there is more in the same vein throughout the book. Let me point out just a few more examples. Ravigupta’s commentary is not on Prajñākara’s *Pramāṇavārttikālankāra* (as claimed in pp. 114-115), but on Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavārttika*. This is worth mentioning because Jackson’s misrepresentation is based on Stcherbatsky’s *Buddhist Logic*, and therefore a widely repeated mistake. Incidentally, the name of Devendrabuddhi’s commentator is Śākyabuddhi (not Śākyabodhi, as on pp. 114-115). In the introduction to his glossary (p. 503), Jackson refers the reader to Nagatomi (1957) part D and Steinkellner (1967)ref for “a complete index of Dharmakīrti’s Sanskrit and Tibetan terminology.” However, Steinkellner’s index does not contain a word of Sanskrit, and can neither be used for Dharmakīrti’s “Tibetan terminology,” as it is a *pāda*-index to the Tibetan translation of Dharmakīrti’s verses. As for the index in Nagatomi’s dissertation, it covers only the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter. On the other hand, Miyasaka’s complete index to the *Pramāṇavārttika* (Sanskrit–Tibetan and Tibetan–Sanskrit) is not mentioned (*Acta Indologica* 3, 1973-1975, and 4, 1976-1979). (After the completion of this review there appeared M. Ono, J. Oda and J. Jackson, *KWIC Index to the Sanskrit Works of Dharmakīrti*, Lexicological Studies 8 [Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 1996].) It would be tedious to enumerate the more trivial mistakes, such as wrong years of publication, etc. However, it seems symptomatic that the name of a prominent Dharmakīrti scholar and translator, Tilmann Vetter, is rendered “F. Tillmann Vetter” in the Preface (p. 11) and “Vetter, F. Tillman” in the Bib-

liography (p. 524); this is obviously a contamination with “Tom J. F. Tillemans.” On p. 151 at least “F.” is dropped (“Tillman Vetter”), and on p. 533 Jackson finally hits the mark with “Tilmann Vetter,” only to regress to “Vetter, F. Tillmann” in the Index (p. 570)!

To return to Dharmakīrti’s “root-text.” Jackson had at his disposition a copy of Nagatomi’s translation of the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter. It would have sufficed, at least in the majority of cases, simply to quote Nagatomi’s quite literal and accurate translation in order to provide a good framework for rGyal tshab’s commentary. However, Jackson decided to present the verses only through rGyal tshab’s eyes, and since rGyal tshab did not read the original Sanskrit text, Jackson too decided to ignore it altogether and sometimes even the Tibetan translation, in order to produce a translation which is “geared toward rGyal tshab rje’s interpretation, which does not always accord with a straightforward reading of the Tibetan verses themselves” (p. 12). The results of this approach are quite disastrous and the translation fails the reader on all three levels. It is not faithful to the Sanskrit original, nor to Sa skya paṇḍita and Śākyaśrībhadrā’s outstanding Tibetan translation—Jackson would admit that in general, but he does not suspect how often this is the case⁸—nor even to rGyal tshab rje’s interpretation.

The initial verses of the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter are notorious for their difficulty. Yet they have been translated into English several times, and three of the translations, by Nagatomi, Katsura and van Bijlert, even appear in Jackson’s bibliography. Had Jackson relied on any of these, he may not have solved all problems of interpretation—something which cannot be expected at the present stage of Dharmakīrtian studies—, but he could certainly have presented a reasonable translation. Instead we get an often misleading concoction out of bits and pieces of rGyal tshab’s commentary on the verses. Worse, since usually there is no note to the contrary, we have to assume that Jackson’s translation also represents the literal meaning of Sa paṇ’s translation. Let us take a look at the first verse:

pramāṇam avisamvādi jñānam, arthakriyāsthitiḥ |
avisamvādanam, śābde ’py abhiprāyanivedanāt |

tshad ma bslu med can śes pa |

8. For he says (p. 12): “I have tried to indicate those places where rGyal tshab rje significantly departs from the straightforward reading [of the Tibetan translation].”

don byed nus par gnas pa ni |
mi slu sgra las byuñ ba yañ |
mñon par 'dod pa ston phyir ro |

Jackson's translation:

AUTHORITY IS NON-DECEPTIVE COGNITION;
 [NON-DECEPTIVENESS] ABIDES WITH REGARD TO [CAUSAL]
 EFFICIENCY.
 NON-DECEPTIVENESS ARISES FROM WORDS, TOO,
 BECAUSE THEY SHOW A MANIFEST DESIRE [TO SPEAK].

My translation:

A means of knowledge is a cognition which does not belie [its promise].
 Non-belying [means] standing firm in respect to efficient action.
 [Non-belying may occur] in verbal [cognition] too,
 because it communicates the intention [of the speaker].

First, it is unlikely that *sthitī/gnas* here means “to abide.” Following Prajñākaragupta, who glosses it with *avicalana*,⁹ I take it in the sense of “to stand firm,” i. e., not to deviate. That is, when a cognition is correct, it leads, or more precisely: has the capacity of leading, to efficient action. In any case, non-deceptiveness is a property of a cognition or of a means of knowledge, it does not reside or abide “with regard to” [= in?] “[causal] efficiency.” More importantly, there is absolutely no evidence that rGyal tshab (or Sa pan) used *gnas* in the sense of “to abide.” rGyal tshab (*gSal byed* 229.18-20) merely states that . . . *btso bsreg la sogs pa'i don byed nus par ran gis ji ltar g'zal ba ltar gnas pa ni las la mi slu ba yin la | de ran gi ño bo myon t sam gyis rtogs pa'i nes pa med pa'i phyir |*. Jackson translates somewhat awkwardly and partly wrongly (pp. 176-177): “. . . because how could there ABIDE an auto-comprehension with REGARD TO THE [CAUSAL] EFFICIENCY of cooking, burning, etc.? Non-deceptiveness is in regard to [potential confirmatory] action; it definitely is not cognized merely by an experience of [a cognition's] own essence.” One can clearly see that *nus pa(r)* is not translated, that *ran gis [ji ltar] g'zal ba ltar* cannot be interpreted as a compound “auto-comprehension,” which serves as the subject of *gnas pa* (as final predicate), and that *nes pa* is not an adverb (“definitely”). More misleading, however, is Jackson's explanation of the above (n. 2 thereon):

9. Cf. PVA 4.4: *tasyāḥ sthitir avicalanam avisamvādanam vyavasthā vā*.

A cognition of a patch of blue is immediately and self-evidently authoritative, so the apperception of that cognition cognizes not only the cognition's contents, but its non-deceptiveness, too. On the other hand, a cognition of fire on a distant hill is subject to subsequent confirmation or disconfirmation, and thus is not immediately and self-evidently authoritative.

This is not what Dharmakīrti and rGyal tshab are saying. The distinction they make is not between the perception of a blue object etc., and the inference of fire. Both these types of cognition have to be confirmed by efficient action. The distinction is rather between apprehension of an object and self-apprehension of a cognition; and it is only the self-apprehension of the cognition which need not be confirmed. rGyal tshab clearly refers to vv. 4d-5a: *svarūpasya svato gatiḥ | prāmānyam vyavahāreṇa*. "The cognition's own form is apprehended by [the cognition] itself. [Its] validity [is determined] by everyday practice." However, Jackson seems to have missed the reference, perhaps because he translates vv. 4d-5a as follows (p. 180): "COGNITION [EXPERIENCES] ITS OWN ESSENCE FROM ITS OWN [SIDE]; AUTHORITATIVENESS [IS COGNIZED] THROUGH DESIGNATION." It goes without saying that validity or authoritativeness cannot be cognized by a mere "designation," that *vyavahāra* and its Tibetan translation *tha sñad* do not mean "designation" here, and that rGyal tshab does not interpret *tha sñad* in this sense. In fact, rGyal tshab says correctly (*gSal byed* p. 232.8-10: . . . *tshad ma yin pa'i cha de dus physis byun gi don byed snari can gyi tha sñad pa'i tshad ma ñid las rtogs dgos par mthon ba'i phyir* |. But Jackson mistranslates again (p. 182): ". . . because we see that the authoritativeness part must be cognized through authoritativeness that is a designation that has an apparent object that arises at a later time." Clearly, one should translate ". . . through the means of knowledge that consists in everyday practice in which efficient action appears (lit. which has the image of efficient action) . . ." The main problem in Jackson's translation is due to a misunderstanding of the word *snari*, "appearance," which like the Sanskrit word *ābhāsa* (not *ābhasa*, as in the glossary on p. 508, under "fallacy") can be used in the sense of "false" (e. g., in *hetvābhāsa*, "false reason," i. e., something which only has the appearance of a reason, but is not really a reason)—hence Jackson's translation as "apparent (object)." However, in the present context *snari* does not mean "appearance" in any pejorative sense, but simply the appearance by which the cognition is characterized, i. e., the image that appears in it, i. e., its inner object or its content.

rGyal tshab refers here explicitly to Devendrabuddhi's explanation, and Jackson notes rather vaguely the reference as *PVP* 220/3-4. I can only assume that he has in mind *PVP* 220d1-2, which, however, does not agree with his explanation: 'o na ji ltar tshad ma ñid nes par bya ze na | tha sñad gyis ni tshad ma ñid | dus phyis 'byun ba can gyi don byed pa'i yul can gyi ses pas so | "[Objection:] How can validity be determined? [Reply:] 'Validity [is determined] by everyday practice,' [that is] by a cognition which is characterized by an object that consists in an efficient action which arises at a later time.'" However, Jackson misunderstands both Devendrabuddhi and the paraphrase by rGyal tshab. It is not the case that (p. 182, n. 15) "Devendrabuddhi's point (*PVP* 220 / 3-4: rGyal tshab rje has paraphrased) seems to be that the authoritativeness of any cognition (even an apperception) is dependent upon a subsequent designation for its *ascertainment* as authoritative." Besides the fact that *tha sñad* / *vyavahāra* could not possibly mean "designation" here, neither Devendrabuddhi nor rGyal tshab nor, of course, Dharmakīrti claims that "apperception" (or better, self-perception or self-apprehension, as are the more usual, more transparent and more accurate translations for *svasamvedana*, *ran rig* and similar expressions) depends on anything that arises subsequently. The point is simply that the existence of a cognition is perceived immediately by self-apprehension and needs no further collaboration or confirmation; the existence of an object like something blue, on the other hand, has to be confirmed by a subsequent efficient action in everyday practice.

So much for the first half of the verse. Concerning its second part, let me just note briefly that the translation "THEY (i. e., words) SHOW A MANIFEST DESIRE [TO SPEAK]" is not only inaccurate, inasmuch as words cannot show a manifest desire to speak, but also mistaken, inasmuch as *abhiprāya* means "intention," i. e., what a speaker wishes to express with specific words, not "manifest desire [to speak]," i. e., the mere fact that a speaker wishes to speak. Also, "manifest" is redundant even in Jackson's interpretation. His quaint translation obviously results from a too literal understanding of Sa paṅ's partially mechanical translation of this frequent and unproblematic technical term with *mñon par* (= *abhi-*) 'dod pa. I doubt that the correct interpretation of the second half of the verse is that (pp. 177-178, n. 4) "[a]n aural cognition is an authority simply because it non-deceptively apprehends a word, or sound, that a speaker desires to express." As words or sounds are not "expressed" (only their meanings are expressed), I assume that Jackson means "a word, or sound, that a speaker desires to pronounce or voice." However, it is not the word as mere apprehended sound that is the issue here—its apprehension would be a simple

case of sense perception (*pratyakṣa*), like the perception of smell, flavor, etc. It is rather the word as *meaningful* sound that is involved here: the means of knowledge that has its meaning as its object is called *śabda*, and it is included in inference (*anumāna*). Dharmakīrti explains his intention in the next verse (2), where Jackson switches over to the correct understanding of “word” as meaningful sound (cf. “THE OBJECT THE SPEAKER [DESIRES TO EXPRESS]” in his translation of the first half of the verse). However, the translation of this verse is not only completely removed from the Sanskrit text, but also from Sa paṅ’s clear and faithful Tibetan translation. Jackson presents us with a largely meaningless conglomeration, made up of the individual words of the Tibetan translation without regard for their syntactical connections. I do not think that it is necessary to comment in detail on it.

vaktrvyāpāraṣayo yo ’rtho buddhau prakāśate |
prāmāṇyam tatra śabdasya nārthatattvanibandhanam |

smra ba po yi byed pa’i yul |
don gañ blo la rab gsal ba |
de la sgra ni tshad ma yin |
don gyi de ñid rgyu can min |

My translation:

The validity of a word relates to the thing that forms the object of the speaker’s activity [and] appears in the cognition [of the hearer] (i. e., to the meaning of the word); it does not depend on the reality of [that] object.

Jackson’s translation:

WORDS IN THE [ŚĀSTRAS] ARE NOT CAUSE-POSSESSING REAL
OBJECTS, AUTHORITIES; THEY BRING ABOUT
IN THE MIND A CLEAR [APPEARANCE OF] SOME OBJECT
THAT IS THE OBJECT THE SPEAKER [DESIRES TO EXPRESS].

Sometimes, I must admit, I have great difficulties understanding the peculiar mode of expression chosen by Jackson. Verses 5d-6, relating to the second characterization of a means of knowledge in 5c, are a good example (p. 184):

[AUTHORITY] ALSO IS THE ELUCIDATION OF AN OBJECT NOT COGNIZED [BEFORE].

AFTER ONE HAS COGNIZED THE OWN-NATURE [OF AN OBJECT],
(6) ONE ATTAINS THE COGNITION OF THE GENERIC [IMAGE].

“SOME COGNITION OF AN OWN-MARK
NOT COGNIZED [BEFORE]”—THE QUOTATION’S INTENT IS THAT
INVESTIGATION [REVEALS] THE OWN-MARK.

Is this translation intelligible? I, for one, could only start to make sense of it by working slowly and painfully from the Sanskrit and the Tibetan texts back to the translation.¹⁰ But surely most readers would like to use Jackson’s translation in order to understand Dharmakīrti’s verses, not the other way round.

Part of the problem with Jackson’s translation is the rather eccentric way in which he translates Sanskrit and Tibetan technical terms. Conveniently, Jackson provides us with an English–Sanskrit–Tibetan glossary (pp. 503–516) that is helpful to a certain extent. Without it the translation is sometimes almost unintelligible, for Jackson does not follow the mainstream of Buddhist *pramāṇa* studies in his choice of vocabulary. Next to amusing but innocuous neologisms such as **angin* for *yan lag can*—whole

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10. *ajñātārthaparakāśo vā, svarūpādhigateḥ param ||*
prāptam sāmānyavijñānam, avijñāte svalakṣaṇe |
yaj jñānam ity abhiprāyāt svalakṣaṇavicārataḥ ||

ma śes don gyi gsal byed kyan ||
ran gi no bo rtogs 'og tu ||
spyi yi rnam par śes pa thob ||
ran gi mtshan ñid mi śes pa ||
śes pa gan yin źes dgonś phyir ||
ran gi mtshan ñid spyad phyir ro ||

Or [a means of knowledge is] illumination of an unapprehended object.
[Objection:] The cognition of the universal that is subsequent to the apprehension of the own form [of the particular] would be [a means of knowledge].
[Reply: No] because [in the characterization of a means of knowledge just mentioned we] intend [only] the cognition in respect to an unapprehended particular, for the particular is examined [here] (or more literally: ... because the intention [of the characterization of a means of knowledge just mentioned] is “[That cognition] which is a cognition in respect to an unapprehended particular [is a means of knowledge],” for . . .).

(*avayavin*),¹¹ there are problematic, sometimes clearly mistaken, choices. For instance, *śaṅka* (for *śaṅkā*) is not “concern,” not even “perplexity,” but “doubt”; *svajāti / rigs 'dra* (or rather: *raṅ gi rigs 'dra*, cf. under “homogene”) is not “continuum,” but “of one’s own kind,” and I assume that Jackson has realized this also, because e. g., on p. 226 he translates *svajāti* with “homogene.” Still, I don’t see in which context *svajāti / raṅ gi rigs 'dra* could be translated as “continuum.” *Lakṣman* does not mean “example,” but “characteristic.” *Sihāna / gnas pa* does not mean “existence”; the semantic field of this word, as an action noun, ranges from “act of standing” over “staying, abiding” to “continuing,” etc. *bTags pa* occurs as a translation for *baddha* (“bound”) and *bandhana* (“binding, bondage”; “bond”), but *upacāra*, which is also translated with (*ñe bar*) *btags pa*, certainly does not mean “fetter,” but “metonymy” (“imputation” in Jackson’s terminology). The adjective “impossible” is not an equivalent for the noun *abhāva* (“inexistence, absence”). *Svabhāvahetu* is not a “reason based on synonymity,” but a “reason based on an essential property / the own nature [of a thing],” and *hetu* is not a “syllogism,” but a “reason.” *Jagat* cannot be rendered as “transmigrator”; although etymologically derived from the root $\sqrt{gā}$ (“to go”), it simply means “the (animate) world.” *Jvara* is not “sickness,” but “fever,” and *atyantaparokṣa* is not a “very hidden phenomenon,” but something “completely beyond the realm of the senses,” etc., etc.

Another problem in the rendering of technical terms, which is apparent already in some of the above examples, is Jackson’s recurrent difficulty with grammatical categories such as noun, adjective, etc. Thus, *viruddha* is not “contradiction,” but “contradicted” or “contradictory,” *sarvajña* is not “omniscience,” but “omniscient,” and *kalpanāgoḍha* (*sic*) is not “non-conceptuality,” but “free from conceptual construction.” An intriguing case is *abhimukhī*, rendered as “manifest phenomenon”; as far as I know this word does not exist in Sanskrit, and I suspect that it is the first member of the *cvi* compound *abhimukhībhūta* on the loose. The Tibetan equivalent given by Jackson, *mnion gyur*, correctly presents the complete adjectival form (“become manifest”). Moreover, the glossary abounds in mistakes regarding the diacritical marks and spelling in general of even commonplace Sanskrit words (compare this with Jackson’s introductory remarks, on p. 13,

11. Another neologism, which is symptomatic for the cavalier attitude towards Sanskrit terminology in the so-called “Hopkins school,” is **cittamātrin*. I thought that it had become well-known by now that this term does not exist in Sanskrit, but was surprised to find out that Jackson still uses it.

that he has “maintained precise transliterations rather than phonetic spellings in [his] rendering of both Sanskrit and Tibetan terms”); *kalpanāgoḍha* (cf. above), *āradhā* (for *śraddhā*, “faith”), *dikṣa* (*ḍikṣā*, “empowerment”) and *śrotavijñāna* (for *śrotravijñāna*, “aural cognition”) are just a few examples. These kinds of mistakes cannot but raise serious concern about Jackson’s command over the Sanskrit language in general and the technical terms of Indian Buddhism, as do some of his reconstructions of Sanskrit terms in the glossary (cf. e. g., *anḡin* referred to above, *aprativiparyaya* for “irreversible,” and *pratibhāsa* for “apparent object”). It would have been advisable for him, as a Tibetologist, to consult a Sanskritist for the preparation of such an extensive glossary, to make it a useful and reliable tool especially for non-specialist readers.

On the other hand, there are some pleasant surprises. *Indriya / dbaṅ po* is translated as “sense faculty.” It is indeed a most common mistake to translate *indriya* as “sense organ.” However, *indriya* never refers to the physical and visible organ, but to the capacity. Similarly, it is a most common mistake to translate *caḡsus* as eye. In the vast majority of cases, however, it means “sight”; when Indian philosophers want to talk about the organ, they use the word *golaka* (“eye-ball”). For instance, when Buddhists argue with Naiyāyikas whether *caḡsus* goes out to meet its object or not, they do not argue about whether the eye-ball goes out of its socket or not, to touch a distant object such as the moon. The same holds good for *śrotra*: in the vast majority of cases it does not mean “ear,” but “hearing,” and when some Indian philosophers claim that *śrotra* consists in *ākāśa* they do not ignore the fact that the ears (*kaṛṇa*) are made of flesh and blood. Similarly, when they say that the senses are invisible, they do not mean that no one can see eyes, ears, tongues, noses, and skins. Unfortunately, Jackson does not draw the consequences from his accurate translation of *indriya / dbaṅ po* as “sense faculty”; he still refers to the particular senses as “eye, ear, body, nose, tongue,” but at least he made a step in the right direction.

As mentioned above, the initial verses of the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter are not easy, and it would have been a miracle if Jackson could have understood them in the way he approached them, that is, by merely reading rGyal tshab’s commentary with a contemporary Tibetan scholar, no matter how learned, without taking the trouble of reading not only Dharmakīrti’s verses themselves (which fortunately are preserved in the original language), but also the commentaries of Devendrabuddhi, Prajñākaragupta and Ravigupta, which were thoroughly studied by rGyal tshab before he undertook the composition of his own commentary and on which he relied heavily.

However, the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter contains also some (though not too many) relatively simple and straightforward verses, and there at least one could expect Jackson's translation to be more reliable. The inaccuracies and misunderstandings that result from Jackson's approach are perhaps easier to observe when one looks at those relatively simple verses.

The programmatic verse 34 forms a clear, simple and perhaps somewhat trivial example. It comprises the entire discussion on compassion and rebirth (vv. 34-131ab) in a nutshell: the proof for the Buddha's authority or reliability is compassion, and this compassion arises from repeated practice. The materialist opponent objects that repeated practice for more than one life is impossible, because the body is the support (*āśraya*) of cognition, and consequently when the body is destroyed, the cognition is destroyed too. Dharmakīrti rejects this objection by denying the very notion of support, or at least that the relationship between support and supported obtains between the body and the cognition:

*sādhanaṃ karuṇābhyāsāt sā buddher dehasamśrayāt |
asiddho 'bhyāsa iti cen nāśrayapraṭiṣedhataḥ |*

Sa skya paṇḍita's translation:

*sgrub byed thugs rjes goms las de |
blo ni lus la brten pa'i phyir |
goms pas¹² grub pa med ce na |
ma yin brten ni bkag phyir ro |*

Compassion is the proof [of the Buddha's being a means of knowledge].
That [compassion arises] from repeated practice.

[Objection:] Since the cognition rests on the body, the repeated practice
[of compassion for more than one life] is not established.

[Reply:] No, because [we] deny [that the cognition] rests [on the body].

Theoretically, there are two ways to construe the word *karuṇā*; either as a nominative (*sādhanaṃ karuṇā*; *abhyāsāt sā*), or as a first member of a compound (*sādhanaṃ karuṇābhyāsāt, sā . . .*). The first alternative is obviously better. Leaving aside for the moment problems of meaning, the

12. Read *pa*, as in Sa paṇ's *kārikā*-translation preserved in the Tibetan translation of Prajñākaragupta's commentary. Also the *kārikā*-translations in the commentaries by Devendrabuddhi and Ravigupta have this reading.

second alternative is not quite correct from the grammatical point of view. As a rule, a demonstrative pronoun such as *sā* should not refer to a word inside a compound (in this case *karuṇā*).¹³ However, Sanskrit is more flexible than English in this respect and usage does not always follow this rule. More specifically, there is one famous case where Dharmakīrti himself breaks it.¹⁴ Therefore, it is only highly improbable, but not absolutely impossible, that Dharmakīrti meant his verse to be read as in the first alternative. Indeed, Devendrabuddhi, Ravigupta and Manorathanandin explain this verse unanimously according to the first alternative.¹⁵ Only Prajñākaragupta presents both alternatives. Jackson, however, opts exclusively for the second alternative: “ACCUSTOMATION WITH COMPASSION IS THE ESTABLISHER.”

In all likelihood, this interpretation is not faithful to Dharmakīrti’s intention, but could it be faithful to the Tibetan translation of this verse? If the Sanskrit wording is slightly ambiguous, the Tibetan translation is not at all, and it does not agree with Jackson’s interpretation: *sgrub byed thugs rjes goms las de* ॥ “The proof is by compassion. That [compassion] is due to repeated practice.” Sa paṇ used the instrumental case-ending precisely in order to prevent that *thugs rje* would be misconstrued with *goms*, for the object of *goms* can be construed either with the particle *la* or directly; thus, if the instrumental had not been used, a literal translation such as *sgrub byed thugs rje goms las* could have been misunderstood in the sense of the second alternative. In order to prevent this possible error Sa paṇ even departs from the literal translation of the Sanskrit: he translates “The proof is by compassion,” rather than “The proof is compassion.” But why does Jackson misunderstand Sa paṇ’s intention and commits precisely the error that Sa paṇ wanted his readers to avoid? I see no other reason except that this is simply due to Jackson’s English translation of *abhyāsa / goms pa* as “accustomation.” First, it should be noted that “accustomation” is a rather unhappy rendering of *abhyāsa / goms pa* because this important term

13. The same rule applies in English as well. For instance, if one says: “Today is your birthday. This is an occasion for celebration,” “this” must refer to “birthday,” not to “birth-.”

14. Cf. *Nyāyabindu* 1.1, in *Pandita Durveka Miśra’s Dharmottarapradīpa*, ed. D. Malvania, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series 2, 2nd ed. (Patna: 1972).

15. Cf. *PVP*_(Pe) 18a1f. = *PVP*_(De) 16b3f.: *sgrub byed thugs rje . . . de* (i. e., *thugs rje*) *ni sgrub pa byed pa’o . . . goms las thugs rje žes bya ba de yin no* ॥ Similarly *PVV* 20.10: *sādhanam karuṇā*, and 20.12: *abhyāsāt sā*. *PVV(R)* 316a4 (= 631.4) and 316b2 (= 632.2) also construes in this manner: *sgrub byed thug rje žes bya ba . . . goms pa la (las?) žes bya ba . . . de nīd goms pa las*.

means an intensive and repeated practice, resulting in a habit (sometimes also called *abhyāsa / goms*), and not something one gets (passively) accustomed to. But more importantly, and unfortunately, the English word “accustomation” can be construed with an instrumental “with,” and this led Jackson, perhaps unconsciously, to construe *goms pa* also with an instrumental.

One more minor point in this connection: Jackson’s misunderstanding of the syntax goes not only against Sa paṅ’s translation, but also against rGyal tshab’s understanding. In a different context we find the following quotation (*gSal byed* p. 302.1-2): *sgrub byed thugs rje | ze thugs rje la sgrub byed kyī ston par mdzad do*. Jackson himself translates (p. 338): “[Dharmakīrti] shows compassion as the proof by the words, ‘compassion is the establisher.’” Why Jackson chose to interpret the syntax of the verse against the explicit words of rGyal tshab, remains unclear.

All this may seem very trivial, but one error leads to the next. If one reads *sādhanaṃ karuṇābhyāsāt*, what does one do with the remainder of the verse? *Sā* alone is not a sentence. Prajñākaragupta ingeniously construes *sā buddher dehasaṃśrayāt*, “that (i. e., compassion) is due to resting on the body of cognition.” The statement that compassion rests on “the body” of cognition is not entirely clear. One probably has to connect this to the discussion about the possibility of an unlimited increase of compassion in vv. 120-131ab. “The body of cognition” could then be interpreted as the own nature of the cognition, i. e., compassion can increase to the highest degree because it becomes the own nature of the Buddha’s stream of consciousness. This presupposes a rather rare, but not unknown usage of words meaning “body”; cf. Apte, s. v. “tanu” (3): “Nature, the form or character of anything.” Cf. also *P W*, s. v. “kāya” (7): “Natur,” “Eigenthümlichkeit.”

However, this unconventional usage of *deha* is apparently not recorded for the Tibetan equivalent *lus*. In any case, Jackson does not follow Prajñākaragupta’s second alternative all the way, but suggests something completely different (p. 223):

[THE LOKĀYATAS¹⁶] SAY: “[COMPASSION] IS NOT ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH ACCUSTOMATION, BECAUSE THE MIND IS BASED ON THE BODY.

16. Incidentally, Lokāyata is usually a name for the materialist school; its followers are called Lokāyatikas or Laukāyatikas.

The Sanskrit text at the source of this translation, however, reads as follows: *sā buddher dehasamśrayād asiddho 'bhyāsa iti cet*. We obviously have a little problem of gender here. The feminine pronoun *sā* is construed by Jackson with the masculine adjective *asiddhaḥ*. Moreover, the nominative *abhyāsaḥ* is rendered “through accustomation,” probably because of the inferior variant *goms pas* for *goms pa*.

Yet we have to remember that Jackson’s translation is not simply of the Sanskrit verses, but of their Tibetan translation, and not even of the Tibetan verses as they stand, but “geared towards rGyal tshab rje’s interpretation.” Since Tibetan does not make a distinction of grammatical gender, one may think that this is how rGyal tshab, and not Jackson, misunderstood the verse in question. Moreover, since Jackson does not indicate here that rGyal tshab departs from “the straightforward meaning,” we should assume that already Sa skya paṇḍita erred in this point.

If Jackson’s rendering of Dharmakīrti’s verses were really representative of Sa paṇ and rGyal tshab’s understanding, this would be a serious blow to our appreciation of traditional Tibetan scholarship. rGyal tshab was one of the two most important disciples of Tsoṅ kha pa. His *gSal byed* is considered to be one of the most important, perhaps the most important, *Pramāṇavārttika* commentaries in the dGe lugs pa tradition. If rGyal tshab’s (as well as Sa paṇ’s) understanding of Dharmakīrti’s verses were as poor as it would seem from Jackson’s interpretation, our respect and admiration for the great tradition of *Pramāṇavārttika* scholarship in Tibet would be indeed unjustified. Jackson for his part would suggest that rGyal tshab’s deviations from Dharmakīrti’s intention are to be accounted for by the time-gap, the development of philosophical systems and altitude: “any commentary, especially one separated from its root-text by seven centuries, several philosophical systems and the highest mountains in the world, necessarily distorts the original, but this distortion is a price that must be paid for comprehensibility” (p. 159). Does this imply that Dharmakīrti’s verses as such are so incomprehensible that any attempt to make them comprehensible necessarily means distorting them? It is hard to believe, but this seems to be what Jackson is arguing for in general, for he says in his preface (p. 11) that root-texts “are concise to the point of obscurity, and require commentary to be truly comprehensible.”¹⁷ Thus, the following reasoning is implied: all root-texts require commentary to be comprehensible. All com-

17. Cf. also further below on the same page: “It is a moot question whether in every case rGyal tshab rje reflects Dharmakīrti’s own viewpoint (it is highly doubtful that he does). . . .”

mentaries distort their original root-texts. Therefore, root-texts have to be distorted to be comprehensible. But if they are comprehensible only in a distorted form, i. e., incomprehensible in their real form, how can we claim that their real form is distorted in the first place? And how would Jackson know about rGyal tshab's distortion of Dharmakīrti without taking the trouble to read and try to understand the root-text in the original Sanskrit?

Should we really assume that rGyal tshab distorts Dharmakīrti's verses to the extent claimed (and presented) by Jackson? I fail to see clear evidence for such a distortion. It seems to me that Jackson underestimates rGyal tshab's competence and disregards his hermeneutical situation. Unlike Jackson, he did not read Dharmakīrti's verses in a vacuum. He knew the commentaries of Devendrabuddhi, Prajñākaragupta and Ravigupta, albeit in their Tibetan translation, and relied on them heavily—much more heavily than is apparent from Jackson's notes. For these precursors of rGyal tshab the basic text was obviously not incomprehensible, and on the whole their commentaries provide coherent and precise explanations without giving the impression of forced and artificial reading. Also, rGyal tshab's purpose was not to compose an original treatise but to explain Dharmakīrti's verses as clearly and accurately as possible. And the high regard for his commentary in the dGe lugs pa tradition is due precisely to this reason, and not because he interpreted the verses in an innovative or distorting manner. In this respect, Jackson's rendering of the verses in a radically different manner—sometimes in such a distorted way that one can no longer recognize them—goes against the self-understanding of the Tibetan exegetical tradition as well as against the historical context in which the commentary was composed. Besides, having read rGyal tshab's comments as carefully as I can, I claim that it is very often impossible to reconstruct the exact manner in which he understood the wording of the root-text. Unlike the Indian commentators rGyal tshab does not use the *pratīka* method of glossing; his comments are more general and discursive, not so closely tied to the *mūla*-text as the comments of some of his Indian precursors. He writes about and around the *mūla*-text, but does not explain it word for word.

The shortcomings of Jackson's method do not only bear on his "translation" of Dharmakīrti's verses, but also on his understanding of rGyal tshab's commentary. It should be obvious that in order to understand this text one has to be familiar with rGyal tshab's sources. Without that background, Jackson is often groping in the dark, especially when matters become slightly problematic. For instance, the Lokāyata position in the above quoted programmatic verse (v. 34) is represented by rGyal tshab as follows (Jackson's translation p. 223): "This follows, BECAUSE, since

MIND IS BASED ON THE BODY, when the body is destroyed, [mind] is also destroyed. For example, [mind] is a result of the body, as light [is the result] of a lamp; or it is a quality of the body, as capacity to intoxicate [is a quality of] liquor; or it is naturally based [on the body, and the relation is] like that between a wall and a drawing that depends on it.”

Let me start by emphasizing that Jackson’s translation is literal and perfectly correct. However, a literal translation is not enough to understand the examples and their implications, and indeed Jackson felt the need to explain this sentence. However, his explanation is more likely to confuse and mislead, than to enlighten the reader. It is likely to mislead the reader by suggesting that rGyal tshab himself designed certain reasons, e. g., being a result of the body,¹⁸ and provided their examples independently on the basis of his acquaintance with Indian Lokāyata sources, as Jackson claims that “[t]he probative reasons and examples are supplied by rGyal tshab rje. The examples, in particular, are stock Lokāyata similes” (n. 6). He then refers the reader to the section on Lokāyata in the *Sarvadarśanasangraha*, which is a convenient introduction to Indian materialism, but of little help and no direct relevance for the present context. Finally, he coaches us in modern philosophy and the “category mistake’ discussion initiated by Ryle.”

To understand rGyal tshab’s examples one does not have to consult the *Sarvadarśanasangraha*, a late doxographical work, where merely the power to intoxicate is mentioned as an example, in a completely different context than the one with which rGyal tshab is concerned here; nor is it necessary to be familiar with the ideas of Gilbert Ryle. It would have been more helpful to read the classical commentaries on this verse. Commenting on the materialist statement (in v. 34 above), Devendrabuddhi, who is followed by Prajñākara Gupta, Ravigupta and Manorathanandin,¹⁹ explains the relationship of support and supported as a general term that can be further analysed into three different relations:

- 1) a relation between substance and quality,
- 2) a relation between cause and effect,
- 3) a relation between capacity (*śakti*) and possessor of capacity.

18. These reasons, however, do not appear as reasons in Jackson’s translation, but rather as statements to be proved.

19. Cf. *PVP*_(Pe) 18a7 = *PVP*_(De) 16b1, *PVA* 53.21, *PVV(R)* 317a1 (= 633.1), *PVV* 20.18-20.

The first two relations presuppose that the relata are ontologically different; the third, that they are not:²⁰

If [the body and the cognition] are different, [the cognition] is supported by the body inasmuch as the cognition is a quality (**guṇa*) of the body, like the white [color] of a cloth and the sweet [taste] of sugar. Or [the cognition] is supported by the body, because it is an effect (**phala*) of the body, like the light (**prabhā*) [is supported] by a lamp (**pradīpa*). If, on the other hand, [the cognition and the body] are not different, [i. e., the cognition] is a capacity (**śakti*), that has the nature of the body . . .

Manorathanandin conveniently construes three inferences for the three interpretations of “support”:²¹

- 1) The cognition is supported by the body,
because it is its effect,
like light is supported by a lamp.
- 2) The cognition is supported by the body,
because it is its capacity,
like the capacity of intoxication is
supported by the intoxicating substance.
- 3) The cognition is supported by the body,
because it is its quality,
like whiteness is supported by a cloth.

The upshot of these inferences is, of course, that in all three possible modes of the relationship, when the support is destroyed the supported is

20. Cf. PVP_(Pe) 18a7f. = PVP_(De) 16b1f.: *don gžan ñid yin na blo ni lus kyi yon tan yin pa de liar na lus brten pa yin te | dper na ras kyi dkar po dan bu ram gyi mñar ba lta bu'o | yañ na lus kyi 'bras bu ñid yin pa'i phyir lus la brten pa yin te | dper na sgron ma la 'od lta bu'o | don gžan ma yin na yañ lus kyi bdag ñid du gyur pa'i nus pa yin pa ...*

The translations from Devendrabuddhi and Prajñākaragupta's commentaries are taken from chapter 4 in my forthcoming book *Dharmakīrti on Compassion and Rebirth*. (Published after the completion of this review; Vienna: 1997.)

21. Cf. PVV 20.18-21: *buddhir deham āśritā kāryatvāt, pradīpam iva prabhā, śaktirūpatvād vā, madyam iva madaśaktiḥ, guṇatvād vā, paṭam iva śuklatā. tredhāpy āśrayavināśe tasya nāśāt kuto janmāntarāṇi, katham vā teṣv abhyāsaḥ kṛpādeḥ? iti cārvākāḥ.*

destroyed with it. Therefore, when the body is destroyed the series of cognitions is interrupted. Prajñākaragupta quotes (or paraphrases) some Cārvāka examples to illustrate the point:²²

Thus, a mural does not last without a wall, nor step over to another wall, nor has it come from another wall. Or [it is] similar to [the case of] the colour which arises from the ripening of the mango fruit etc., [which does not last without the fruit, does not go to another fruit, nor has come from another fruit]. Or [it is similar to the case of] smoke, which is the product [of a certain fire], does not come from another fire, nor sets out to another fire. As for the power of intoxication (*madaśakti*), it rests on the intoxicating [substance], [and] it appears as something new because liquids like *kaṣāya*, etc., are mixed. When the [power of intoxication] is disappearing [in a certain intoxicating substance], it does not take another intoxicating [substance] as its support. In the same manner, specific senses, consciousness [etc., rest on a body and when destroyed in that body, do not go to another body, etc.].

rGyal tshab knows the above inferences, though curiously enough in a somewhat distorted form: the second and third inference are incoherently mixed up, and the capacity is said to be a quality: “[o]r it [i. e., mind] is a quality of the body, as capacity to intoxicate [is a quality of] liquor. . . .” Was rGyal tshab the first exegete to have contaminated the two possible relations and their examples? Or was he following Tsoñ kha pa’s understanding? Or, since the presentation of the issue in the earlier commentaries is straightforward and could hardly be misunderstood, shouldn’t we simply assume that the *gSal byed*, as available to us nowadays, contains a short

22. Cf. PVA 53.29-54.2: *tato na citraṃ kuḍyavirahitam avatiṣṭhate, kuḍyāntaram vā saṅkrāmaty āgatam vā kuḍyāntarāt. āmraphalādīpākarūpavad vā. kāryam vā dhūmo na dhūmadhvajāntarād āgacchati. nāpi dhūmadhvajāntaram prayāti. madaśaktis tu madyāśritā kaṣāyādirasasamparkād apūrvā prādurbhavati. vilīyamānā na madyāntaram avalambate. tathendriyacetanāviśeṣāḥ.*

Note, however, that Prajñākaragupta formulates these examples in the context of a theory according to which the body of the parents is the support of the cognition of the newborn. This theory must have been formulated some time after Dharmakīrti, and it is also unknown to Devendrabuddhi; cf. *Tattvasaṅgraha* of Śāntarakṣita with the commentary *Pañjikā* of Kamalaśīla, ed. D. Shastri, *Bauddha Bhāratī Series 2* (Vārāṇasī: 1968) v. 1892, and E. Steinkellner, *Dharmottaras Paralokasiddhi* (Wien: 1986) 11, where, however, the cognition (not the body) of the parents is taken as the cause of the newborn’s consciousness.

lacuna here?²³ Unfortunately, only one edition of the text is available to me, and I could not compare it with other editions.

Whatever the case may be, the question now arises: what is the use of studying rGyal tshab's commentary? It seems that as a historical source for, say, a better understanding of Dharmakīrti's opponents, the *gSal byed* would be of little help. (This statement is not occasioned merely by the above observation of an obvious confusion, but is based on the reading of the entire commentary). If one is interested only in the literal interpretation, neither the *gSal byed* nor any other Tibetan commentary could compete in simplicity and clarity with Manorathanandin's *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* merely because of the difference in the linguistic medium. As for philosophical acumen, brilliance in argument, originality of thought, etc., the *gSal byed* is certainly dwarfed by the towering achievements of Prajñākaragupta. However, rGyal tshab's commentary does not only consist in a literal explanation of the verses; it contains other features that prove useful, especially in those areas of exegesis that are neglected in the Indian tradition. There is one characteristic feature of Tibetan commentaries that is either completely lacking, or present only in a rudimentary manner, in the Indian commentarial tradition, namely, the structural analysis (*sa bcad*). Here, as far as I could see,²⁴ Jackson has done an excellent job. Although the overall structure of the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter as a loose commentary on the five epithets of the Buddha is clear, the inner structure within each section is sometime most obscure, and the way in which the individual verses are related to each other is often puzzling. Jackson not only translates rGyal tshab's analysis, but also conveniently groups the items together in an appendix (pp. 489-502), providing at the same time a most useful concordance between the verses of the *PV*, the pages in the *gSal byed* and the pages in his own translation.²⁵ Anyone who is interested in the structure of the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter will read these pages with great interest. Several issues that have been subjects of debate among modern scholars are reflected in rGyal tshab's analysis. For instance, the dividing line between the *anuloma* and *pratiloma* sections (i. e., the presentation of the Buddha's

23. A simple *aberratio oculi* could explain the confusion.

24. I could not systematically check the entire commentary, but only a sample of cases.

25. Some minor mistakes are inevitable in such a complex structure. E. g., p. 156, #211.211.222.231: "Disposing of the objection that [compassion, etc.] increase only from [accustoming of] a homogeneous substantial cause" (referring to vv. 127-128). This is precisely what Dharmakīrti himself claims for compassion. One has to read "jumping" instead of "compassion."

characteristics in the order of their arising and in the opposite sequence) is placed after v. 146c.²⁶

It is also interesting to note that the section beginning with v. 83 (on the parts and the whole, and on the atoms) is analysed as a second refutation of materialism, even though the terminology used by Dharmakīrti is typical of Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika. rGyal tshab certainly senses that there is a problem here, and says: “Even though this whole is a fundamental doctrine of the Vaiśeṣika, the opponent of these statements is the Lokāyatika because [this whole] is part of the refutation by way of analysis of the nature of the body as [something] which functions as support, when the Lokāyatika claims the body to be a special support of the mental cognition.”²⁷ Of course, such comments should not be accepted blindly, and our knowledge today of Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā texts is far superior to what rGyal tshab could have known from the texts at his disposition, but the comment as such is thought-provoking, and points at a genuine problem in Dharmakīrti’s text.²⁸

Another interesting characteristic of rGyal tshab’s commentary are the occasional short digressions into topics that are only implicit in Dharmakīrti’s work and were more fully developed in the Tibetan tradition, for instance the relationship between the Buddha’s authority and the means of knowledge, namely, perception and inference. Can one ascertain the teachings propagated by the Buddha simply by relying on one’s own faculties? And if this is the case, what is the point of proving the Buddha’s

26. Cf. M. Inami and T. F. Tillemans, “Another Look at the Framework of the Pramāṇasiddhi Chapter of Pramāṇavārttika,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 30 (1986) 123-142.

27. Cf. *gSal byed* 272.8-11: *yan lag can 'di bye brag pa'i rtsa ba'i 'dod pa yin kyan | rgyan phan lus yid blo'i rten khyad par can du 'dod pa na | rten byed pa'i lus kyi no bo la dpyad nas 'gog pa'i yan lag yin pas | gzun 'di dag gi phyir rgol ni rgyan phan yin no |*

Jackson, however, translates as follows (p. 272): “This ‘whole’ is a fundamental assertion of the Vaiśeṣikas, but when the Lokāyatas assert that the body is the special basis of mind, they are partly refuted by an analysis of the essential [aspect of] body that acts as a basis, [so] the Lokāyatas are the opponents in this verse.” The translation is typical and symptomatic: every word in Tibetan has an equivalent in English, but the syntactical relationships of the original are not respected in the translation. For instance, *'gog pa'i yan lag yin pas |* is translated above by “partly refuted.”

28. Cf. E. Franco, “Vaiśeṣika or Cārvāka? The mysterious opponent in Pramāṇavārttika 2.63-72,” *Asiatische Studien / Études Asiatiques* 48.2 (1994): 683-698.

authority? Or must one accept at least a certain part of them on faith? rGyal tshab says (p. 173) that without relying on the Buddhist scriptures one would not even think about such topics as selflessness, momentariness, etc., how much less infer them. But once taught by the Buddha, these topics can be checked and confirmed by perception and inference.

Finally, it is also instructive to observe that certain issues that have been much debated by modern scholars do not seem to have been raised at all by rGyal tshab. I looked in vain, for instance, for a statement concerning the circularity, or alleged circularity, in Dharmakīrti's writing concerning the authority of the Buddha and the validity of the means of knowledge (i. e., perception and inference establish the authority of the Buddha, and the Buddha establishes the validity of perception and inference²⁹). According to the introductory section (pp. 172-173) the authority of the Buddha has to be proved by perception and inference, more precisely, by the authority of his teachings which are proved by perception and inference.

To conclude, Jackson's work does not further our understanding of Dharmakīrti's verses; this was not Jackson's central concern anyway. But it also does not contribute much to our understanding of rGyal tshab's interpretation of Dharmakīrti's text, as long as this text remains in an indistinct haze. The book illustrates once more, almost dramatically, that a genuine understanding of the older indigenous Tibetan commentaries on Indian Buddhist texts, or of independent works mainly based on these texts, is not possible without a thorough, first-hand understanding of these "root-texts" and their Indian exegesis, of course in their original language if they are preserved in it. Any evaluation of a commentary such as the *gSal byed*, as to its faithfulness to the original, its expansions, additions and creative modifications, cannot proceed without a clear understanding of the very basis from which this evaluation has to start, namely, the "root-text." Without such an understanding it is neither possible to state that the *gSal byed* is "a useful gloss on Dharmakīrti" nor that it is highly doubtful that rGyal tshab reflects Dharmakīrti's own viewpoint (both statements on p. 11).

Nevertheless, *Is Enlightenment Possible?* is a very much needed introduction to rGyal tshab's thought in general, and demonstrates the subtlety and ingeniousness of the Tibetan scholastic tradition to a wider audience than the narrow circle of specialists. It will certainly contribute to the growing awareness outside this circle that Tibetan culture does not exhaust itself in the various branches of its religious mysticism and spirituality that

29. Cf. T. F. Tillemans, *Persons of Authority*, Tibetan and Indo-Tibetan Studies 5 (Stuttgart: 1993) 18-24.

have become known in the West, but that it also offers a sophisticated philosophical tradition. Jackson's painstaking tremendous effort of translating and annotating the *gSal byed* on the *Pramāṇasiddhi* chapter convincingly shows that the tradition of Tibetan Buddhism applied a rigorous philosophical analysis to its central religious values, such as rebirth, selflessness and liberation, and was moreover deeply concerned with basic epistemological and metaphysical questions, such as the mind-body problem. This tradition is still alive today in those of its exponents with whom Jackson had the good fortune to work, and we have to be grateful to him for sharing their knowledge with us and the philosophically interested general public.

ABBREVIATIONS

gSal byed: rGyal tshab dar ma rin chen, *rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed*. Vol. I (Sarnath: 1974).

PV: "Pramāṇavārttika of Dharmakīrti." Ed. Y. Miyasaka. *Acta Indologica* 2 (Naritasan Shinshoji: 1971 / 72).

PV_{Tib}: Tibetan translation of *Pramāṇavārttika* in *PV*.

PVA: *Pramāṇavārttikālankāra* of Prajñākaragupta. Ed. R. Sāṅkṛityāyana (Patna: 1953).

PVP: *Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā* of Devendrabuddhi. Pe = Peking no. 5717; De = Derge no. 4217.

PVV: *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* of Manorathanandin. Ed. D. Shastri. *Bauddha Bhārati Series 3* (Vārāṇasī: 1968).

PVV(R): *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* of Ravigupta. Derge no. 4224, references in brackets refer to the Taipei reprint.