



HAL
open science

[Recension] Jean-Marie Verpoorten, La
Prakaraṇapañcikā de Śālikanātha, chapitre 6, section 1,
Le moyen de connaissance valide et la perception, Traité
Mīmāṃsaka d'épistémologie [Textes Philosophiques
Sanskrits 1. Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de
Louvain 70].

Matthew Kapstein

► To cite this version:

Matthew Kapstein. [Recension] Jean-Marie Verpoorten, La Prakaraṇapañcikā de Śālikanātha, chapitre 6, section 1, Le moyen de connaissance valide et la perception, Traité Mīmāṃsaka d'épistémologie [Textes Philosophiques Sanskrits 1. Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain 70].. Indo-Iranian Journal, 2019, 62, pp.181 - 189. 10.1163/15728536-06202003 . halshs-02503278

HAL Id: halshs-02503278

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-02503278>

Submitted on 9 Mar 2020

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Book Reviews



Jean-Marie Verpoorten, *La Prakaraṇapañcikā de Śālikanātha, chapitre 6, section 1, Le moyen de connaissance valide et la perception, Traité Mīmāṃsaka d'epistémologie* [Textes Philosophiques Sanskrits 1. Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain 70]. Leuven: Peeters, 2018. xxii + 215 pp. ISBN 978-90-42-93497-9. €89,-.

For students of classical Indian thought, Jean-Marie Verpoorten requires no introduction. His many contributions, devoted above all to the Mīmāṃsaka traditions (and detailed in the excellent bibliography of the present work, pp. xx–xxi), have been characterized throughout by an admirable precision that is perfectly exemplified here as well.

At issue is a topic that has not yet received extensive treatment in current work on Indian philosophy, the theory of *pramāṇa*, and of perception (*pratyakṣa*) in particular, developed within the Prābhākara-mīmāṃsā line of interpretation. The work studied here, the *Prakaraṇapañcikā* by Śālikanātha (late 8th—early 9th c.), one of the most highly regarded thinkers of this line, has been the object of a summary exposition by the late K.T. Pandurangi (*Prakaraṇapañcikā of Śālikanātha with an exposition in English*, Delhi 2004), but only short passages have been investigated in detail in earlier scholarship. (The “Préambule,” pp. 3–7 of the present volume, supplies a thorough account of work on Śālikanātha and his writings to date.) *La Prakaraṇapañcikā de Śālikanātha* advances the special area of research on Prābhākara-mīmāṃsā philosophy, to be sure, but, by taking up some of the key issues in Indian systems of epistemology overall, it does so with reference to topics that will be of broad interest to those engaged in research on Indian philosophical systems. Because Śālikanātha, throughout this section of his work, is engaged in sustained debate with the Buddhist *naiyāyikas* Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, as well as with the rival Bhāṭṭa-mīmāṃsaka tradition, Verpoorten's contribution is of immediate interest for aspects of Indian philosophy that have been the focus of sustained attention in recent years.

Following an introduction that presents a useful summary of the contents of the work (pp. 9–12), Verpoorten's edition and translation of the text offers a painstaking analysis of and commentary upon it, whose thorough line-by-line presentation is unusually apt for pedagogical purposes. For those studying Sanskrit philosophical works, *La Prakaraṇapañcikā de Śālikanātha* may be recommended as an exceptional tutor that, in its notes and references, also serves as a comprehensive guide to the scholarship relevant to the several areas it touches.

The two main parts into which the text is divided treat the essential definition of *pramāṇa* (pp. 29–72) and, among epistemic operations, perception (*pratyakṣa*) in particular (pp. 75–197). The first includes Śālikanātha's critiques of the definitions proposed by the Buddhists (pp. 33–45) and Bhāṭṭa-mīmāṃsaka-s (pp. 47–59), followed by the author's account of what he holds to be the correct, Prābhākara position (pp. 61–72).

The lengthier section on perception, in its turn, is divided into twelve chapters. In the first of these, chapter IV (pp. 75–85), the point of departure is a critique of the definition of *pratyakṣa* in *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.4. Of particular interest here are discussions of Nyāya optical theory and Vaiśeṣika atomism. The investigation of the Nyāya position is further developed in chapter V. Chapters VI, VIII, XIII and XIV focus upon the theories of Dharmakīrti and other Buddhists, including, *inter alia*, discussions of the important and much-debated questions of the *ākāra* (translated by Verpoorten as “forme” or “aspect”), *sahopalambhaniyama* (“la règle de la coperception”), and *svasaṃvedana* (“conscience de soi,” “auto-conscience”). Properly Mīmāṃsaka views are emphasized throughout the remaining portions, where Prabhākara's own definition of perception—as an evident (*sākṣāt*) cognition in which the cognizing subject (*mātr*), cognized object (*meva*) and the cognitive operation (*pramā*) itself are given (p. 128)—is treated in chapter X. The volume as a whole is completed by useful indices of names and works cited (pp. 199–202) and of Sanskrit terms (pp. 203–207).

The text itself is divided into 122 passages (T 1–T 122) distributed over 147 paragraphs. In each of these, Verpoorten provides first a brief introduction summarizing the argument of the passage at hand, followed by the Sanskrit text and annotated translation. As is often the case in Sanskrit treatises on *pramāṇasāstra*, many of these passages are difficult and even the commentator (Nārāyaṇa-bhaṭṭa of Jaipur) offers little help in resolving all the details. Verpoorten, I believe, provides credible interpretations throughout and often succeeds brilliantly in his readings of particularly problematic issues. An example is his treatment of the six types of “conjunction” (*saṃyoga*) between sense organ and object proposed by Uddyotakara in the *Nyāyavārttika* and briefly cited by Śālikanātha (p. 76). In this case, where only the unexplained list of the six is to be found in the primary text, and Nārāyaṇa-bhaṭṭa's glosses add noth-

ing at all, Verpoorten, in notes 153–160, carefully traces out the treatment of the issue in both Sanskrit and contemporary sources to show just how it functions to explain not just the bare perception of an object, but also that of the properties and universals that inhere in it, as well as, in some instances, the perception of its absence. (As Verpoorten mentions in n. 160, this last case is not in fact admitted by the Prābhākara-s and is included here only to fill out Uddyotakara's list.)

Inevitably, in a work such as this, there are also rare points that may merit further reflection. For instance, in his discussion of Dharmakīrti's definition of perception, Śālikanātha (p. 103) writes: *api ca arthasya vitteś ca sahopambho nīyataḥ; sa ca bhedaṁ anīyamavyāptāḍ vyāpaka-viruddhopalabdhyā nivrta bhede 'vatiṣṭhamāno 'bhedaṁ anumāpayati.* (The resolution of the vowel sandhi in some cases here follows the convention adopted throughout the present work.) Verpoorten (p. 104) translates: “En outre, la coperception (*sahopalambha*) est de règle (*nīyata*) entre l'objet (*artha*) et [son] idée (*vitti*)²⁵⁵. Et cette [coperception] est absente (*nivrta*) d'une perception (*upalabdhi*) en contradiction (*viruddha*) avec son objet (*vyāpaka*) puisque la différence (*bheda*) [entre l'objet et son idée] est incompatible avec la règle (*a-nīyama-vyāpta*)²⁵⁶; ladite [règle de coperception] permet, étant constante (*avatiṣṭhamāna*) dans la non-distinction (*abheda*)²⁵⁷ [de l'objet et de son idée], d'inférer (*anumāpayati*) leur identité (*abheda*) [métaphysique?].”

This very well exemplifies the meticulousness that characterizes Verpoorten's approach throughout and he succeeds, to be sure, in capturing the essence of the argument as presented by Śālikanātha. However, the *vyāpti* relationship that is key here has not been so well clarified as it might, particularly in the rendering of *vyāpaka* as “objet,” with the result that the treatment of argument as a whole is imprecise. Verpoorten to his credit recognizes that there is a problem here and begins n. 256, “Passage peu clair mettant en jeu la phraséologie du Navyanyāya ...,” though the reference to the latter school is certainly anachronistic. Things become clearer, I believe, if we first specify that, in the present argument, it is *sahopalambha*, “coperception,” that is the pervaded phenomenon (or middle term, *vyāpya*), whose “pervader” (or major term, *vyāpaka*) is identity (*abheda*). The argument therefore asserts that because difference is pervaded by the absence of the “rule” (*anīyamavyāptāḍ*), coperception is devoid (*nivrta*) of any perception opposed to the “pervader” (*vyāpaka-viruddhopalabdhi*), that is to say, identity. In other words, where there is difference of idea and object, there is no coperception of them, from which it follows by contraposition that, where there is coperception, there is identity.

More than all else, however, points such as these highlight Verpoorten's masterful analysis and interpretation of an extremely challenging Sanskrit philo-

sophical text, inviting the attentive reader to delve into the nuances and, on some few occasions, to arrive at new formulations.

La Prakaraṇapañcikā de Śālikanātha is the first volume published in the series Textes Philosophiques Sanskrits edited by Christophe Vielle. Its standard of excellence marks an auspicious beginning to this venture and we look forward to the appearance of further contributions to the study of Sanskrit philosophical literature within it.

Matthew T. Kapstein

École Pratique des Hautes Études, PSL Research University, Paris,
and the University of Chicago
mkapstei@uchicago.edu