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Section: Buddhist Studies

Panel: Scriptural authority and apologetics in the Indian religio-philosophical environment

Examination of the meaning of '*prāmāṇya*' with special reference to its use for the Veda or 'verbal testimony' (*śabda*) in the *Codanāsūtrādhikaraṇa* of the *Ślokavārttika* and some Nyāya texts.

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In his *Gaṅgeśa's Theory of Truth* (2nd. ed., 1989), J. N. Mohanty distinguishes the two meanings of the word *prāmāṇya*: 'the property of being instrumental in bringing about true knowledge (*pramākaraṇatva*)' and 'the truth of knowledge (*pramātvā*)'. Moreover, he asserts that the *svataḥ* and *parataḥ* theories of *prāmāṇya* are concerned with *prāmāṇya* in the second sense, i.e. the truth of knowledge. But it is necessary to investigate whether or to which extent these statements of Mohanty's are supported by textual evidences. Above all, when the *śabdapramāṇa* is discussed, it often seems to be the case that the *prāmāṇya* is referred to as a property of *śabda*, not as a property of verbal knowledge. In fact one finds not a few instances of such use of the term in the *Codanāsūtrādhikaraṇa* of the *Ślokavārttika*, which provides us with what may be regarded as the earliest important theory concerned with the issue of *svataḥ- or parataḥ-prāmāṇyam*. In the present study I will also examine relevant portions of some Nyāya texts in order to see whether that use of the term is peculiar to (some) Mīmāṃsakas or not. By carrying out this task, I intend to throw a new light on the particular status of *śabdapramāṇa* in the context of *prāmāṇyavāda*.