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Charlene McDermott A comparative investigation of the awareness of *duḥkha*

I. INTRODUCTION

One Gnostic myth has it that the very stuff of which the material universe is constituted is nothing but the externalized and solidified suffering of the abandoned lower Sophia, wandering alone in outer darkness and afflicted by the four blind passions (fear, grief, bewilderment, and supplication). Each of these, in turn, after being detached from her is said to have been transmuted into one of the four traditional elements. The influence of Gnostic pessimism (with or without its attendant dualism) on subsequent Western thought is, thanks to the work of Hans Jonas, so widely recognized that the matter need not further detain us. Nor do we need to pause here to argue for the existence of numerous Eastern parallels (or near parallels) to the Gnostic view of the phenomenal world. We merely mention in passing one of the most graphic, and in an odd way the most personally significant, of these world models. Tibetan Buddhist lore depicts the sufferer in *samsāra* as a lone hair floating in a vast sea of freshly churned yak butter. For such extremes of unction, the Buddhist eightfold path is said to provide a solution—better, a dissolution.

Mythology and folklore aside, the actual experience of *duḥkha* (literally, “pain,” “suffering,” “disharmony,” “frustration,” “ill,” “sorrow”) would seem to be well nigh universal, albeit there are racial, religious, national, sexual, and individual variations in human thresholds of and reactions to it.¹ A catalogue, were one to be compiled, of *duḥkha*’s alleged *raison d’être* and the suggested means for coping with it would run the whole gamut from the earlier-mentioned Gnostic construal of suffering as a granitically stubborn aspect of material reality against which battle is to be waged, to a masochistic uncritical revelling in it—productive at best of sexual excitation and at worst of pulp literature, to a weary and sceptical shrug of the shoulder, and so forth.

The late Indian Buddhist epistemological or *pramāṇa* school with which this article is primarily concerned and whose inception as an independent tendency within Buddhism can be dated to about the time of Dignāga (ca. 480–540 A.D.) adopts the alternative of regarding each person’s experience of *duḥkha* as pregnant with an epiphany of sorts. Hence a sufficiently deep awareness of the mechanism by which one brings about his own encavement in *duḥkha*—spins out, as it were, a *duḥkha*-saturated phenomenal world—is ipso facto a revelation of that world as the sky-flower or phantasmagoria that it is. Thereupon liberation from *duḥkha* is achieved. The foregoing, of course, is nothing more than a truncated paraphrase of the well-known four noble truths (*āryasatya*) of Buddhism,² which Dignāga and his school subscribe to in common with all the other Buddhist sects.

What, among other things, makes the approach of Dignāga, his most celebrated follower Dharmakīrti (ca. 600–660 A.D.), and their successors worthy

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of separate study is their utilization of specially designed *speculative* adjuncts (complementary to the generally accepted *practical* means) for the progressively deeper penetration through the veil of phenomena (*samvṛti*) to an ultimate insight into and unity with the *āryasatyas* themselves. Hence, with the help of Dignāga and by focusing on Dharmakīrti and his commentators, on the one hand, and a few Western psychologists and epistemologists, on the other, in what follows we shall attempt “to pierce the obscurity of those minute processes which prepare human misery and joy . . . that delicate poise and transition which determine the growth of happy or unhappy consciousness.”³ Though Dharmakīrti’s overridingly soteriological concern also impels our quest for insight into these matters, our primary *philosophical* aim, in what follows, is to map out a preliminary description of the Buddhist *pramāṇavādins*’ theory of consciousness and thus to underscore the need for a more refined categorial framework within which the further investigation of internal awarenesses of various sorts can proceed.⁴

Propter brevitatem, we pass over the history of the evolution of the *pramāṇa* school’s key concepts from those of their predecessors, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist. The writings of Sarathchandra, Sinha, Jayatilleke, and Schmithausen are particularly illuminating in this regard and will help to counterbalance any impression that the analysis with which we are dealing sprang full-blown from either Dignāga’s or Dharmakīrti’s head.⁵ Likewise, we cannot here detail the theorizings of Dharmakīrti’s successors, though an exhaustive exploration of the experiencing of *duḥkha* would surely make use of the works of Jñānaśrīmitra (ca. early eleventh century) in the Indian tradition and the commentaries of Rgyal-tshab (ca. late fourteenth century) in the Tibetan, to name two of the more important continuators of Dharmakīrti’s philosophizing.

To begin with, an examination of the awareness of *duḥkha* must be placed in a larger epistemological context. *Pratyakṣa* (direct awareness in general) is one of two distinct *pramāṇas* (literally, means of valid cognition), the second and only other *pramāṇa* which the members of the Dignāga school countenance as legitimate being *anumāna* (inference). It suffices for the purposes of the present study to note that, in contradistinction to *pratyakṣa*, which is a *direct* means of attaining knowledge, *anumāna* provides us with merely *indirect* or mediated knowledge.⁶

Pratyakṣa must be, as a matter of definition (Sanskrits *lakṣaṇa*): (a) free from conceptual construction (*kalpanāpodha* or *avikalpa*) and (b) nonillusory (*abhrānta*).⁷ In the Dignāga-Dharmakīrti tradition, a list comprised of the following four *pratyakṣas* is standard: (1) ordinary sensory awareness (*indriyapratyakṣa*); (2) so-called mental sensation (*mānasapratyakṣa*); (3) direct introspective awareness or self-awareness, proprioception (*svasaṃvedanapratyakṣa*)—namely, of one’s cognitive and other psychological states; (4) yogic direct awareness or yogic “intuition” (*yogipratyakṣa*).⁸ Of these, the first three are found in all ordinary persons, whereas the last occurs only in those suffi-

ciently evolved. Note that this list is not intended to be exhaustive or final. Rather, as one of Dharmakīrti's Tibetan commentators says: "that the number of distinct varieties of direct awareness is four, is relative to certain investigative purposes."⁹

We have treated (1) sensory awareness or *indriyapratyakṣa* at length elsewhere,¹⁰ as have several other scholars. In fact, the problem of human awareness of the "external" world has received the lion's share of attention (Eastern and Western), a circumstance not to be wondered about, since the average man's survival needs are best served thus. That this is by and large true of the Buddhist *pramāṇavādins* as well, might at first seem puzzling, because *saṃsāric* survival is most emphatically *not* the summum bonum for them. However, given Buddhist philosophy's avowed aim to extricate its creators, purveyors, and students alike from *saṃsāra*'s thralldom, the Buddhists are obliged to speak to the condition of the hearer, who stands in need of what philosophizing has to offer, precisely because of his prepossession with that illusory realm. Hence, Dharmakīrti's heavy use of materials germane to *indriyapratyakṣa*.

Mānasapratyakṣa, second in the preceding enumeration, is a type of awareness introduced by the *pramāṇa* school for reasons never fully cogent even to their own membership—much less to their adversaries. We have included it for reasons of historical fidelity and because some of Dharmakīrti's glossators go to great and philosophically interesting lengths to defend and clarify its role.¹¹ Since it is not the topic of our primary concern, we will simply summarize by saying that it would seem to have hybrid status. Given Dignāga's earlier insistence upon a strict dichotomy between the sensory and the conceptual (about which we shall have more to say later), *mānasapratyakṣa* functions for some *pramāṇavādins* as an intermediary between the two, filling much the same sort of position as that for which the Kantian schematism was designed (and, we might add, kicking up just about as much philosophical dust). Since a great deal of energy has already been expended in attempting to exonerate *mānasapratyakṣa* from charges of being either a ghostly replica of (1) or a poor relative of (4),¹² we pass without additional delay to a consideration of (3) *svasaṃvedana*- and (4) *yogipratyakṣa*, because according to Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, these are the special modalities of awareness via which *duḥkha* is made manifest.

Following Dharmakīrti's analysis of *svasaṃvedana*, we shall summarize those aspects of the work of the contemporary psychologist R. E. Mason which either converge on Dharmakīrti's results or are thought-provokingly different from them, thereby hoping to gain new insights into some of Dharmakīrti's ideas.¹³ A few remarks on *yogipratyakṣa* will round off the discussion.

2. DHARMAKĪRTI ON *svasaṃvedanapratyakṣa*

First Dharmakīrti emphasizes *svasaṃvedana*'s conformity to the general definition of direct awareness or *pratyakṣa*. No arguments are provided at this point. Instead, Dharmakīrti appears to take it as self-evident that *svasaṃvedana* or

proprioception is free from the mediating agency of conceptual construction¹⁴ and is, moreover, not connected with speech.¹⁵

One comment. We can tease out of Dharmakīrti's acquiescence to Dignāga's division of *pramāṇas* into the direct or unmediated and the indirect, their common metaphysical commitment to a radical cleavage between that which is immediately apprehended in experience and that which is mediated by being encapsulated in a determinate conceptual construction. Conceptualization and the verbalization thereof comprise, for the Buddhist *pramāṇa* theorists, a process of fabrication which, although pragmatically necessary for all our judgmental activities and amenable to a very precise codification, is nonetheless ultimately false. Its validity, which is no more than its utility, is strictly limited to the phenomenal world, of which it itself is a constituent. Our concepts, and the terms that refer to them, comprise an elaborately reticulated collection of structures which stand between us and a direct encounter with reality, the latter being available to us only through *pratyakṣa* or direct awareness. We merely record, without attempting to justify, this view. Suffice it to say for now that the belief that our perceptual judgments presuppose, but are distinguishable from, a level of pure and immediate apprehension has a similarly deep entrenchment in the Western empiricist tradition, dating at least as far back as the time of William of Ockham.¹⁶

Descending from *svasaṃvedana*'s relationship to the genus *pratyakṣa* to an examination of its specific characteristics, *svasaṃvedana* is seen to have a very far-reaching scope including "desire, anger, pleasure, pain, etc. [In fact, as one's own immediate experience will attest] every consciousness [of a cognitive state] [*citta*] and every consciousness of special mental phenomena [other than cognitive] [*caitta*] is self-aware [or proprioceptive]."¹⁷ Dharmakīrti neither provides a definition of *caitta* nor does he single out for special treatment any of its subtypes; his itemization promiscuously blurs several specimens of *caitta* together, any one serving, in one context or another, as paradigm for the others. That this is not a fault peculiar to Dharmakīrti is clear from R. E. Mason's plea for extended research directed toward the achievement of greater precision in this area.¹⁸

Now the Naiyāyika philosophers (orthodox Hindu epistemologists who are the principal adversaries of the Buddhist *pramāṇavādins*) have argued against the self-awareness of pleasure (*sukha*), pain (*duḥka*), etc., positing instead, for each sentient being, a *manas* or internal, immaterial counterpart of the five material sense organs (*indriyas*), under whose jurisdiction the awareness of all such human psychic states is said to fall.¹⁹ Given the Nyāya philosophy of mind, according to which pleasure, pain, etc. and even cognition itself are construed as attributes or tropes (*guṇas*) inhering in a permanent substratum, the *ātman*²⁰ (in much the same fashion as blue, etc.) are thought to inhere in their respective material substrata, and given the older Nyāya definition of *pratyakṣa* as the result of a sense organ's contact with its appropriate object

(*indriyārthasamnikarṣa*), *manas*, or something like it, would seem to be required to apprehend pleasure, pain, and the other alleged attributes of the *ātman* on analogy with the apprehension of blue, etc. by the external senses.²¹

The Naiyāyika scholar Vātsyāyana (fifth century A.D.), as if to shore up *manas*, has even attempted to find canonical support for it in the *Nyāya Sūtras* themselves. But Dignāga correctly points out that *manas*' omission at the point in the *sūtras* where Gautama, the supposed *sūtrakāra* or *sūtra*-author lists the five traditional *indriyas*,²² has a significance which cannot be gainsaid. Gautama's successors contend that Gautama, if not explicitly, then at least tacitly, countenances *manas* as a sixth *indriya* or quasi-*indriya*, since he nowhere endeavors to refute the widely held opinion that it is to be admitted as such. Dignāga counters that, by parity of reasoning, Gautama's enumeration of the five material sense organs would then be gratuitous.²³

To add to the not inconsiderable embarrassment that the espousal of *manas* seems to spawn, the question of *manas*' nature or essence is answered by the Nyāya philosophers with no more than a contrastive nod in the direction of the (external material) *indriyas*. *Manas* is simply said to be internal and immaterial, the same sort of move for which Gilbert Ryle has taken the Cartesians to task,²⁴ in their "mythologizing" about the mental. In fact, the question of *manas*' nature seems to be unanswerable because it ought not to have been put in the first place. To insist on *manas* as the inner sense which apprehends psychic *guṇas* (and likewise to hypostatize an *ātman* as substratum of these *guṇas*) is to succumb to reification unnecessary for an adequate explanation. Both cases involve, if you like, a category mistake. Carrying Buddhist tenets unflinchingly to their logical terminus (a task which even Dignāga's *Buddhist* predecessors fall short of accomplishing, since *manas* figures as a separate substance up to and including the time of Dignāga's immediate precursor, Vasubandhu), Dignāga and Dharmakīrti use the term *manas* to refer not to an autonomously existing entity but to a concatenation of processes, energies, functionings, and "mindings."²⁵

One of course, at this juncture, could question the very possibility of apprehending *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc., at all, but the fundamentality of the occurrence of these data in everyday experience is a matter which never gives Dharmakīrti (or most Western theorists, aside from a few materialists) pause. Thus if *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc. are indeed apprehendable, and are apprehended neither by any of the five traditional senses²⁶ nor by *manas*; it would seem that, under pain of either fabricating still another entity whose function it is to apprehend *sukha*, etc., or discarding the law of the excluded middle, *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc., must be apprehended by themselves; that is, they must be self-aware or proprioceptive.²⁷

Doubtless this conclusion is unpalatable to the Naiyāyikas at least in part because of their flat-footed denial that *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc. can ever partake of the nature of self-awareness. For as is implicit in what has already been noted above, in the Naiyāyika view, even *cognition* (much less *sukha*, *duḥkha* and

other noncognitive psychic phenomena) is not per se thought to be possessed of self-awareness. Rather, all the cognitions and affects of a given individual are regarded by the Nyāya philosophers as co-attributes, distinct from one another, but alike inherent in one and the same *ātman*; that *ātman* is not only their substratum, but the agent for whom, through the instrumentality of *manas*, the resultant apprehension of the object of awareness (for example, pleasure, pain, cognition, etc.) takes place. And none of the four factors—agent, instrument, object, or result is, according to the Naiyāyikas, reducible to any of the others.

Dharmakīrti could not disagree more strongly. Given a single moment of consciousness, it is certainly possible (and often desirable) to abstract separate aspects of that moment for purposes of analysis. But on what grounds can it be established that a cognition or other psychic phenomenon is, in actuality, distinct from the means or result of its being registered?²⁸ Pain is, for Dharmakīrti *felt* pain. The pain and the apprehension of it are one and the same, so much so that it would be a decided strain for him to conceive of an un*felt* pain adrift in some limbo and awaiting the deflection of an active awareness in its direction.

Similarly, Dharmakīrti finds it difficult to grasp the intent of the Pickwickian use of the word cognition (*jñāna*) by the Naiyāyikas, since they also divest that term of any element of self-awareness. As a result, their theory calls for, in the case of any first-order cognition, a second-order cognition or awareness (*anuvyavasāya*, in Nyāya terminology) which, while also not able to cognize itself, is capable of cognizing the given first-order cognition through *manas*. But then a cognition of the cognition of the cognition is needed, etc. The Nyāya explanation, so it appears, fails to get off the ground unless the Naiyāyika is willing to concede that self-awareness does occur somewhere along the line.²⁹ But, in point of fact, human consciousness (writes Dharmakīrti) “is like a lamp [which], since it has luminosity as its own nature, is illuminative even of itself, nor does it require another lamp for the manifestation of its own form. So also cognitive and non-cognitive mental states [*cittacaittā*] do not require other cognitions [*jñāna*] apprehension of their [respective] natures.”³⁰

Dharmakīrti is not content with a merely negative critique of an opposing view; his own theory also stands in need of some positive support. And later on in the *pratyakṣa* chapter of *PVM*,³¹ Dharmakīrti will establish to his satisfaction the fact of self-awareness. See also *PVM*, p. 239, lines 485 *ff.*, where a confirmation of the existence of self-awareness is elicited from considerations relating to the phenomena of memory. Here, however (*PVM*, p. 176, beginning with line 251), Dharmakīrti approaches the matter from a different angle. Let us return for a moment to the Nyāya characterization of *jñāna*, *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc., as *guṇas* inhering in a common substratum or *ātman*. Dharmakīrti would agree that there is indeed a commonality among *jñāna*, *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc., but it is *not*, as the Naiyāyikas seem to think, a *commonality of substratum*.

As Dharmakīrti sees it, it is commonality explainable in terms of etiology. “There is a single cause, describable as the aggregate or totality of sense organ, object and consciousness.”³² More precisely, “The emergence of pleasure, etc. is seen in case there is consciousness as immediately preceding contiguous cause [that is, the immediately preceding moment of the stream of consciousness is a causal factor], [this consciousness being] directed upon the production of the effect, and commensurate with that sense organ which has attained its [appropriate] object.”³³ Furthermore, and this is assumed by Dharmakīrti without proof, “since like causal factors produce like [results],”³⁴ and “pleasure, etc. arise from a cause not different from cognition [or consciousness] [*vijñāna*], how can they [pleasure, etc.] be construed as non-cognizance [or nescience] [*ajñāna*]?”³⁵ It follows that, at least in some respects, pleasure, pain and cognition are alike, or nearly so [*vā kincit*].³⁶

Actually, qua *act* of direct introspective awareness (*svasamvedana-pratyakṣa*), each elementary psychic phenomenon is cognitive—and this holds as well for feelings of pleasure, pain, etc., as it does for cognition itself.³⁷ Qua *objects* of that introspective awareness, our feelings of pleasure, pain, etc. are not, per se cognitive, whereas our cognitions (namely, our sensory awarenesses and conceptual constructions) tautologously are. (On the one hand, these sensory awarenesses as well as some of our concepts (let us call them “cognition₁”) have reference to external objects; on the other hand they are themselves apprehended or experienced by a constantly concomitant introspection, a meta-cognition or “cognition₂,” as it were, whose objective facets include non-cognitive psychic phenomena along with cognition₁’s.)³⁸

Underscored throughout all of this is the nonultimacy of the polarization into correlative cognizing and cognized aspects, that is, into presentative act and the object of that act.³⁹ This structuring has no ontological foundation whatsoever, according to Dharmakīrti (albeit it has considerable descriptive value). In *PVM* 180, lines 266–267, he writes:

[The cognitive process] makes objects known which manifest [themselves] as reflected or imaged in [that process] itself. Thus [it is with] pleasure, pain, etc. [These are made known] through the very nature of the cognitive process. The production of these [namely, pleasure, pain, etc.] in cognition is quite unmingled with [that is, in isolation from] objects [*arthebyo kevalam*]. [In another way of putting it, contrary to the Nyāya realist’s insistence on a fundamental distinction between cognizing and the object of that cognizing [*arthajñānāyorbheda*] the nature of the object is one with [the cognition’s] own nature. But in that case, [the so-called object is no more than] an objective support (*ālamba*) which, in turn is an image—and this image] is [one with, because immanent in], the knowledge of the apprehension of the object.⁴⁰

Manorathanandin, the commentator, goes on to say: “Only nominally, but not on the level of the highest reality, is there an objective support.”⁴¹

From the preceding, it is clear that, for Dharmakīrti, the world is a world for, and sequestered within, sentiency. Even an awareness of blue, for example,

is no more than a presentative phenomenon (*within* the cognitive stream) whose intentionality is external (*bāhya*). A fortiori for an awareness of an awareness of blue (that is, for a cognition₂ of a cognition₁ of blue) and for an awareness of *duḥkha*.

Having resolved the issue of the self-awareness of *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc. and, by implication, established these as internal phenomena, Dharmakīrti now feels it necessary to deal *explicitly* with the internality of *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc., because another rival school, the Sāṅkhyas, have very vigorously maintained the contrary. The Sāṅkhya philosophers contend that *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc. constitute the very nature of the component *guṇas* of *external* objects. Since Dharmakīrti's refutations of the Sāṅkhya position involve matters which by and large have lost their topicality, we pass over these arguments and go directly to his conclusion that awarenesses of *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc. are such that their objects (insofar as these phenomena are provisionally bifurcatable into act and object) are internal. We do not ordinarily attribute pain qualities to "external" objects, though it is undeniable that the occurrence of awareness of pain, etc. in consciousness is intimately fused with the occurrence of awareness of blue, etc. (See commentary to line 255, p. 177, *PVM*: *yasyārthasya . . . nipātena sannidhānena te dhīsukhādayo jātāḥ*.) In Dharmakīrti's own words: "They [pleasure, pain, etc.], are indeed internal and, since self-awareness is [present], they are also sentient [or conscious phenomena]. Any form which [does] not thus [attain to] self-awareness is, in that case, not experienced [or apprehended] at all."⁴²

This conclusion, of course, comprises a crucial part of the basis for differentiating proprioceptive (*svasaṃvedana*) from sensory (*indriya*) direct awareness, for each of these modalities of functioning now supposedly can be seen to possess its own sphere of operation.⁴³ And Dharmakīrti's setting off *indriya*-from *svasaṃvedana-pratyakṣa* corresponds roughly to Locke's division of ideas into those of sensation and those of reflection, a division which, in modified form, has had a strong, continuous influence on Western epistemological discussions.⁴⁴

3. MASON ON INTERNAL PERCEPTION

On page 11 of his *Internal Perception and Bodily Functioning*, the contemporary psychologist R. E. Mason writes: "Human awareness is viewed as being directed in relative degrees [1] toward the individual's external environment, [2a] toward his cognitive (ideational) activity and [2b] toward his non-cognitive experiences."⁴⁵ Mason's study focuses on [2b], a species of internal perception or awareness; where [2a] and [2b] taken together are the counterparts in Mason's theory of Dharmakīrti's *svasaṃvedanapratyakṣa*,⁴⁶ while [1] corresponds to Dharmakīrti's *indriyapratyakṣa*. (See page 439 herein.) Mason's taxonomical scheme does not include a correlate to the *pramāṇavādin* notion of *mānasapratyakṣa* (not a regrettable omission, considering the complete absence of any

empirical evidence for the positing of this type of awareness by the Buddhist philosophers); nor does Mason mention (except in passing elsewhere in his book) anything analogous to yogic (or other forms of mystical) awareness (*yogipratyakṣa*).⁴⁷ Note that “perception” is used by Mason more or less synonymously with “awareness,” and is defined by him as “the initial reaction (or change) of the cognitive processes to sensory impulses.” (*IPBF*, p. 21.) (“Internal perception” is then taken to refer to “an individual’s awareness of his own internal environment, as contrasted to that of his external environment.” (*IPBF*, p. 11.)

Mason’s notion of awareness is, on the one hand, as vulnerably simplistic as is Dharmakīrti’s, if J. J. Gibson’s “information-based” theory of sense-perception is, as it seems to be, truer to the facts than are any of the traditional “sensation-based” theories. (See footnote 16.) On the other hand, Mason’s emphasis is obviously different from Dharmakīrti’s, in that one of Dharmakīrti’s primary concerns is to single out and give pride of cognitive place to an allegedly *preconceptual* level of apprehension within the perceptual process. To reflect Dharmakīrti’s concern in our translation, we have consistently rendered *pratyakṣa* as “direct awareness” and have reserved the term “perception” (or the phrase “perceptual judgment”) to designate the process of imposing conceptual and/or linguistic constructs on what is apprehended on the level of pure immediacy. Now Mason’s use of the term “awareness” (interchangeable as it is with “perception”) *does not necessarily* seem to *exclude*, as it does for Dharmakīrti, the presence of *conceptual elements*; though Mason does speak of awareness as sometimes recognizable apart from conceptualization or the enumeration of terms (*IPBF*, p. 23.)⁴⁸

Mason goes on to unpack “non-cognitive inner experience” as including “so-called feelings, drive states, internal (organic) sensations, and so forth.” (*IPBF*, p. 11.) Though Dharmakīrti’s “desire, anger, pleasure, pain, etc.” (p. 436 herein) is a mere itemization of concrete examples of the *first* of the types of noncognitive inner experiences presented in Mason’s inventory, both lists are alike in being open-ended—Mason’s, pending the accumulation of sufficient data to justify expansion and the introduction of more precise distinctions; Dharmakīrti’s, very likely because he could see no ulterior point in ramifying and refining his account.⁴⁹ The important point is that, according to Mason, an *awareness* of an inner experience is itself always *cognitive*, regardless of whether the object of that awareness is cognitive or not;⁵⁰ and this Dharmakīrti also feels is irrefutably true of any instance of *svasamved-anapratyakṣa*. (See p. 438 herein.) The philosophically burning issue of the ontological status of the “act-object” and other such distinctions, does not even give Mason pause. But, like Dharmakīrti, Mason, while maintaining the need for analysis in the service of increased understanding,⁵¹ continues to view experience as integrative. Thus nothing Mason says militates against the adoption of an instrumentalist attitude, (such as Dharmakīrti’s) towards the

ultimate significance of the “act-object” and other distinctions, laid down in the course of the analytic process.

Mason’s *IPBF* is aimed at “the establishment of specific criteria for the psychological states of the human organism . . . [so] that thereby psychological states and human functioning generally may be subjected to far more precise and accurate scientific study than has heretofore been possible.” (*IPBF*, p. 16.) However, no more than Dharmakīrti is Mason interested in developing a theoretical account of human functioning just for its own sake. Both men take as their point of departure the basic fact of the pervasiveness in life of “activity of a purposeful character,”⁵² “the most fundamental purpose, or function, being ultimately (according to Mason) the survival of the organism.” (*IPBF*, p. 22.) (Mason nonetheless, does, concede that “in man . . . the ascertaining of the purposefulness of a given behavior is not so simple.” (*IPBF*, p. 22.)) Neither Dharmakīrti nor Mason would deny that, in this connection, an understanding of the noncognitive areas of human experience, which “constitute the ‘ends’ of day to day motivation,”⁵³ is of paramount importance—the more so, as Mason sees it, because modern civilization, with its emphasis on cognitive ideation, has paid relatively little attention to these areas. (*IPBF*, p. 26.)

For Mason, though decidedly not for Dharmakīrti, it is axiomatic that the desiderated outcome of an increased awareness of noncognitive phenomena, is “a more adequate adjustment on the part of all persons. Thus goals, strivings, and interpersonal relationships can be better directed and gauged by a more realistic awareness of human needs and internal states.” (*IPBF*, p. 401.) To this end, Mason hopes to screen out the universal implications of empirical measurements and reports, in the hope that sufficient research will yield normative data.⁵⁴ (Dharmakīrti, of course, simply presupposes the univocity of human experiences of *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc., and, on a certain level, he is surely correct; on another, the nuances of individual response as revealed by the empirical data are well worth attention.)

Because of the limitations of time, we shall forego considering the interesting technical and historical facets of Mason’s presentation; likewise, our point by point comparison of specific features of Mason’s and Dharmakīrti’s work will have to be curtailed. What emerges plainly enough, however, from the comparisons and contrasts already set out, is the overall similarity in their investigative frameworks, if not in their methodologies and presuppositions. Now, Mason’s forte is obviously in the area of methodology. There is an undeniable value in attempting to amass evidential support for one’s descriptions of the etiologies of and interrelationships between the various aspects of the processes of human awareness; and the rather nebulous Buddhist theory could doubtless profit from the utilization of such evidence. We have seen earlier, for instance, that Dharmakīrti’s delineation of the types of inner awareness is insufficiently developed—that he does not deem it to his purpose

to set off, for example, sensory stimulated pain from the pain of unpleasant feeling states. Nor does he, in general, seek empirically observable correlates in corroboration of his conclusions.⁵⁵ But if Mason's strength is in the solid grounding and refinement afforded by his approach, the Buddhists' is in their radical questioning of ultimate human goals—which culminates in the replacement of adjustment and the maximum realization of desired ends, by transcendence through the extirpation of desires.

Beyond this critical attitude, Dharmakīrti and his school may well have something else to offer Mason and company. For the Buddhist *pramāṇavādins*, maximal penetration into the workings of the human psyche, and in particular into the significance of the experience of *duḥkha*, is to be had only through the fourth and crowning *pramāṇa* or means of valid cognition—yogic direct awareness.⁵⁶ Western psychology's comprehension of yogic and other "mystical" alterations in states of consciousness is just in its infancy, and, as most Western psychologists now would readily admit, urgently needs to be deepened and expanded. Buddhist "psycho-philosophy" has already made considerable headway in this regard.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The whole of the epistemological enterprise is, for Dharmakīrti, propaedeutic to the extraction of a lone hair from its oleaginous environs and ought to be judged according to whether it succeeds in contributing to this project. We conclude by drawing *saṃsāra's* tether to its full length, thereby to see it in all clarity as a chain of our own forging. Analysis converges on "a sorrow which is in the end a vision,"⁵⁷ and that vision a transcendence. To spell out things in terms of their relationship to our introductory myth (page 433 herein), just as the material world is therein naively seen as the objectification of the Sophia's sufferings, so the somewhat more sophisticated Buddhist mythos depicts moments of psychic energy, polarized by primordial *avidyā* into subject and object. These crystallize into, respectively, an apparently autonomous and enduring ego on the one hand, and a world of independent objects, on the other—and between the two there is a self-perpetuating resonance of *duḥkhas* and *sukhas*, ever ancient, ever new. This, then, is the fabric of *saṃsāra*. Unamuno's "to live is to suffer," comes to mind. For, if Dignāga and Dharmakīrti are correct, "Woe is me" is not only a lament; it is, *saṃsārically* speaking, an analytic statement. But precisely in and through the experience of *duḥkha*, the witness⁵⁸ to that suffering is propelled into a new mode of seeing, whereby he oversteps his *doleo ergo sum*.

NOTES

1. But then there are also idiosyncratic individual and cultural differences in the experiencing of,

for example, blue, snow, rectilinearity, etc. See M. H. Segall, D. T. Campbell, and M. J. Herskovits, *The Influence on Culture on Visual Perceptions* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966).

2. See Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*, chap. I, section 6, subsection 1, pp. 54 ff. (For complete reference see note 4(3).) See also, for example, E. Conze's *Buddhist Thought in India* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1967), p. 34; A. K. Warder's *Indian Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970), pp. 102–103.

3. George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (New York: Signet paperback, 1964), p. 163. It goes without saying that the character Lydgate, to whom Eliot ascribes this aim, had motives quite different from Dignāga's or our own.

4. The remarks that follow are based on:

(1) chapter 1 of Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, both the English translation from two Tibetan redactions by M. Hattori, *Dignāga on Perception* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), hereafter *DH*; and the Sanskrit fragments therefrom, H. N. Randle, *Fragments from Dignāga* (London, 1926), hereafter *DR*;

(2) chapter 1 of Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu* and the commentaries thereupon by Vinitadeva, Vinitadeva's *Nyāyabindu-ṭīkā*, ed. and trans. M. Gangopadhyaya (Calcutta, 1971), hereafter *NBV*; and by Dharmottara, *Nyāyabindu* of Dharmakīrti with Dharmottara's commentary (T. Stcherbatsky's Sanskrit edition, Bibliotheca Buddhica VII), hereafter *NBD*, respectively;

(3) those ramifications of (1) and (2) culled primarily from chapter 2 (the "pratyakṣaparicchedaḥ" or "chapter on direct awareness") of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* with Manorathanandin's commentary, *Pramāṇavārttika* with the commentary of Manorathanandin, ed. S. D. Shastri, (Varanasi, 1968), hereafter *PVM*, which are most germane to contemporary European philosophical and psychological analyses of the subject under consideration.

Our principle Western source, and the most comprehensive survey of internal awareness that we know of, is:

(4) R. E. Mason, *Internal Perception and Bodily Functioning* (New York: International University Press, 1961), hereafter *IPBF*. In addition, materials from a few other Western psychologists and philosophers have been employed where the heuristics of the discussion seemed to require them.

5. E. R. Sarathchandra, *Buddhist Psychology of Perception* (Colombo: 1958); J. Sinha, *Indian Psychology I: Cognition*, 2d ed. (Calcutta, 1958–1968); K. N. Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963); L. Schmithausen, "The Definition of pratyakṣam in the *Abhidharmasamuccayaḥ*," in *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Sudasien und Archiv für Indische Philosophie*, Band XVI, 1972, pp. 153–163.

6. See *NBD*, chapter 1, lines 2 and 3. See also *PVM*, pp. 98 ff.

7. See *NBD*, chapter 1, line 4. See also *PVM*, pp. 138 ff.

8. *NBD*, chapter 1, lines 7–11. *PVM*, pp. 158 ff.

9. See the commentary to the *Nyāyabindu* by the late fourteenth-century Tibetan Buddhist philosopher, Rgyal-tshab, entitled "Rigs-thigs-hgrel" (13-A-4).

10. See my "Direct Sensory Awareness: A Tibetan View and a Medieval Counterpart," *Philosophy East and West* 23, no. 3 (July, 1973): 343–359.

11. See T. Stcherbatsky's *Buddhist Logic, II* (New York: Dover, 1962), Appendix III.

12. In any case, *mānasapratyakṣa* is distinguishable from (3) *svasamvedanapratyakṣa* because, unlike the latter, the former does *not* have an internal object. Instead, *mānasapratyakṣa* is intent upon the second moment of the *external* object. See *Buddhist Logic, II*, pp. 319, 320.

13. The psycho-philosophy of knowledge, we feel, has much more to contribute to the resolution of Dharmakīrti's (among other perennial epistemological) problems than do the interpretative methods of either of the two disciplines taken in isolation from the other. This has already been irrefragably demonstrated by several of the essays in *The Psychology of Knowing*, ed. J. R. Royce and W. Rozeboom (London and Paris: Gordon and Breach, 1972). This book stands out in the recent and healthy crop of interdisciplinary literature as an object lessons in the benefits that accrue to "restoring those unnaturally separated disciplines [namely, psychology and philosophy] to their rightful intimacy in this matter [theory of knowledge]" (Rozeboom, himself, p. 25 of Royce and Rozeboom).

14. The commentary to line 249 (*PVM*, p. 175) classifies *svasaṃvedana* as a species of *pratyakṣa*, “since it is aconceptual (*avikalpatvāt*).”

15. *svasaṃvittimābhijalpānuṣāṅgini*. *PVM*, line 249. According to the commentator, its luminosity precludes there being any association with language. *tatastatprakāśo na śabdasaṅgatah*. (Commentary to *PVM*, line 249.)

16. J. J. Gibson’s arguments for an “information-based” rather than a “sensation-based” theory of perception seem to us persuasive and therefore to undercut much of what the *pramāṇavādins* (and the mainstream of Western empiricism) have to say about ordinary sensory perception in particular. See Gibson’s *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1966). Earlier criticisms of theories along the lines of that of Dignāga-Dharmakīrti by certain Gestalt psychologists and by Gilbert Ryle and M. Merleau-Ponty, inter alia, appear less compelling by comparison with Gibson’s and are anyway too well known to bear repeating.

17. *rāga dveṣasukhaduḥkhādīnām sarvacittacaittānām atmasaṃvedanam* . . . (Commentary to *PMV*, p. 175, line 249.) See also *NBD*, chapter 1, line 10 where Dharmottara’s gloss on *citta* as apprehensive of objects and *caitta* as apprehensive of special phenomena such as pleasure, etc. corresponds fairly closely to R. E. Mason’s subdivision of an individual’s inner awareness into that directed toward his cognitive activity and that directed toward his noncognitive inner experiences. See p. 16.

18. “In most research studies . . . the physiological changes have been meticulously measured, whereas the psychological states usually have been vaguely, variously, and subjectively described. Thus the description of psychological states poses essentially a semantic problem. . . . Basically, what is needed for the communication of psychological states is a system of differentiated references . . . that can consistently describe subjective experiences.” (*IPBF*, p. 13.)

19. In fact, as A. B. Keith remarks on pp. 69–70 of *Indian Logic and Atomism* (Oxford, 1921), *manas* “has a double function to perform; on the one hand it mediates between the senses and the self; on the other hand it plays the part of internal sense, and has as its objects the working of the mind. It is interesting to note that feeling and volition are thus ranked on a par with cognitions as the object of internal perception.” Incidentally, the tendency to regard *manas* as a separate sense organ exists even in the *Upaniṣads*. (Note that the assumption of a distinct and separate form of *pain* sensibility can be found in the West at least as early as the time of Avicenna (eleventh century), though not until the late nineteenth century did the empirical search for specific pain receptors in the form of distinctive neural structures begin in earnest.) (See chapter 10 of F. A. Geldard’s *The Human Senses* (New York: Wiley, 1953).)

20. *eko’rtha ātma āśrayo rāgādibhiḥ saha yasyāsti tenaikārth āśrayiṇā vedyā rāgādāya iti kecana naiyāyikādayaḥ*. Commentary to *PVM*, line 250, p. 176.

21. In Dignāga’s words, “Given Naiyāyika presuppositions, either *sukha*, etc., are not objects of cognition, or *manas* is another *indriya*.” (*na sukhādi prameyaṃ vā mano vāstindriyāntaram*, *DR*, p. 13.)

22. *Nyāyasūtra* of Gautama with *Nyāyabhāṣya* of Vātsyāyana, ed. G. Jha, Poona Oriental Series 58 (Poona, 1939), I, i, 12. On the matter of the traditional enumeration of the senses, see Gibson’s *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, p. 49.

23. *DH*, p. 39, Db-k. 3b. “If it is considered [by the Naiyāyikas] that the mind, being mentioned in another’s [text], is a sense on the ground of its not being denied [to be a sense in their own *sūtra*], then the explanatory statement [in their *sūtra*] that the organs of scent (*ghrāṇa*), etc., are called senses would be useless because that could be established merely by not denying the theory of another school concerning the five senses.” (Continuing from *DR*, p. 13, my footnote 21: *aniṣedhād upāttam ced anyendriyarutam vṛthā*.)

24. G. Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949).

25. In the commentary to line 252 (*PVM*, p. 176) “*manas*” is expressly equated with “*jñānānām*” —literally “acts of cognizing,” “mindings.” (. . . *manasam jñānānāmapī tulyam*.) The Naiyāyika readiness to fabricate a substantive *manas* is as natural an outgrowth of their metaphysical presuppositions as Dignāga’s reductionist dismissal of it is of his Buddhist parsimony. (See also p. 12 for the Nyāya use of the word *jñāna*.)

26. See *PVM*, line 255ff. and commentary.

27. The Buddhist denial that awareness of *sukha*, *duḥkha*, etc., calls for a special receptor which supplements the classical senses calls to mind the psychologist J. J. Gibson's rejection of the need for specific additional receptors ("proprioceptors") for the registering of an individual's experience of his own bodily activities, in contradistinction to his perception of the external environment around him. (See *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, pp. 33ff.) Gibson's use of "proprioception" is an extension of the term as it was originally used by Sherrington in 1906. We, in turn, adapt "proprioception" to the present Buddhist context and use it in an analogical sense herein to refer to awareness of what is (saṃsārically) thought to be one's own (*proprius*)—namely, one's own mental happenings. In his essay "A Theory of Direct Visual Perception" (Royce and Rozeboom *The Psychology of Knowing*, p. 216), Gibson speaks of a reciprocity between proprioception and one's awareness of the world. "Proprioception is a kind of experience cognate with perception. Proprioception *accompanies* perception but it is not the same thing as perception. . . . The difference between perception and proprioception, then, is one of function, not a difference between the receptors stimulated." Compare with the Dignāga-Dharmakīrti rejection of *manas* in favor of *svasaṃvedana* just mentioned.

28. *PVM*, pp. 203–204, lines 348–350 and *PVM*, p. 205, line 354. See also *PVM*, pp. 201–202, lines 339–340, where Dharmakīrti explains the imputation of subjective and objective aspects.

29. *PVM*, p. 247, line 513–514, and *PVM*, p. 255, lines 539–540. Jain critics of Nyāya epistemology are also quick to point out this infinite regress. See J. Sinha, *Indian Psychology: Cognition*, 2d ed. (Calcutta, 1958), p. 215.

30. *yathā pradīpaḥ prakāśasvabhāvatvāt ātmanaḥ api prakāśako bhavati, svarūpaprakāśe ca pradīpāntaram na apekṣate. tathācittacaittā api svarūpāvabodhe jñānāntaram na apekṣante.* (*NBV*, p. 10; my translation, rather than the editor's.) Of course the analogy of the lamp must not be pushed too far in this Buddhist context. Consciousness is *not* here intended as *an enduring source* of an aggregate of energy-moments, each of which encompasses collucent cognitive and affective aspects; consciousness is simply that aggregate and nothing more. Note that the lamp metaphor is used as well by the Naiyāyikas, in conjunction with their theory of *anuvyavasāya*. It also plays an important role in the history of Western epistemology, where the numerous difficulties that attend it have been aired so often, there is no point in reviewing them here.

31. *PVM*, pp. 209–224, lines 368–425.

32. *eko heturindriyaviśayamanaskārādisāmagrilakṣaṇaḥ.* Commentary to *PVM*, line 251, p. 176.
33. *tasmīnindriye sārthe saviśaye yogye kāryotpādanam prati cetasi samanantarapratyaye sati sukhādīnāmapi jānma dṛṣṭam.* Commentary to *PVM*, 252, p. 176. The text goes on to say: "In that case, [the emergence] of pleasure, etc., or cognition is seen; those [arise] from that [cause] and not from another." (*dṛṣṭam sukhāder buddhervā tat tato nānyataśca te.*) (*PVM*, line 253.)

34. *tulyahetukatvāt tulyajātīyataiva.* (Commentary to *PVM*, line 252.)

35. *tatsukhādi kimajñānam vijñānābhinnaheturjam.* (*PVM*, line 251.)

36. See commentary to line 251, *PVM*, p. 176. *tasmāt jātam sukhādi . . . samānasāmagrī prasūtatvāt dvayam api jñānam syān vā kiñcit.* See also *NBV*, p. 10: *sarve hi cittacaittāḥ pratītisvabhāvatvāt svarūpajñāpakā bhavanti.*

37. Compare with Mason, p. 18, below.

38. Cognition₂'s are in no way to be regarded as independent of and supervenient on cognition₁'s; both are no more and no less than the self-luminous conscious moment itself.

39. Recall that the philosopher George Berkeley, in the first of his three *Dialogues (between Hylas and Philonous)* also rejects his opponent's defense of an act-object distinction within perceptual cognition, though Berkeley bases his rejection on the rather dubious (and most un-Dharmakīrti-like) assumption that apprehension of light, colors, pain, etc., is an altogether passive affair. Again, in contrast to Dharmakīrti, Berkeley goes on to assign the awareness of pain to an enduring spiritual substance, instead of regarding the pain itself as a self-aware, punctiform surge of psychic energy.

40. *tasmāt sukhādayo 'rthānām svasaṃkrāntāvabhāsinām vedakāḥ svātmanascaisāmarthebyo janma kevalam. arthātmā svātmabhūto hi . . . arthānubhavakhyātirālabastu tadabhātā.* See also *PVM*, p. 282, line 275, which reiterates this position, although in the course of refuting the Sāṅkhya doctrine of awareness of pleasure, pain, etc. Compare this with Franz Brentano's words in *Psychologie von empirischen Standpunkt* (1874): "Every mental phenomenon is characterized by . . .

the intentional (and also mental) inexistence of an object, and . . . reference to a content, a direction upon an object (by which we are not to understand a reality in this case), or an imminent objectivity. Each one includes something as object within itself, although not always in the same way. In presentation, something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied. . . ." (English translation of this passage is in R. M. Chisholm, ed. *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology* (Glencoe, Ill., 1960.)

41. *na tū pāramārthikamāmbakatvaṃ nāma*. Commentary to *PVM*, p. 180, line 267.

42. *tasmāt ta āntara eva, samvedyatvāc ca cetanāḥ samvedanaṃ na yad rūpaṃ na hi tat tasya vedanam*. *PVM*, p. 182, line 274.

43. However, Dharmakīrti does not really provide an adequate criterion for assigning certain phenomena to the "external" and others to the "internal" categories. The question of how, for the purpose of analysis, one can distinguish the two via the *introspectible* characteristics peculiar to the one in contradistinction to those of the other, is admittedly prickly, even for contemporary psycho-philosophers. It may even be a wrongly put question, given its strongly "mentalistic" coloring (though what other way of putting it would be congenial to a thinker with Dharmakīrti's Vijñānavādin affiliations); and given the arguments in some circles in support of an overarching continuum of lived experience, with no radical qualitative gulf between, for example, awareness of sensoid and awareness of affectoid parameters. Yet if Dharmakīrti wants (as he *does* seem to want) his distinction between the "internal" and the "external" modalities of awareness to be provisionally viable, he ought to have backed it with a means for handling specific cases. His discussion simply is not refined enough, neither in its attempted demarcation of the "internal" from the "external," nor in its differentiation of phenomena which fall squarely within the domain of the "internal." See page 436 and note 18 herein.

44. The ambiguities in Locke's use of the words "perception," "idea," and "sensation," make it impossible to pinpoint the precise similarities and differences between his view and Dharmakīrti's. But there is a decided resemblance between the two philosophers in the respect just mentioned and also a very obvious difference, in that Locke's epistemological framework is that of a representative realist, whereas Dharmakīrti inclines strongly toward idealism.

45. Numbering mine. Mason, *Internal Perception*.

46. Except that for Dharmakīrti, awareness of one's cognitive states includes within its scope cognitions which arise from *pratyakṣa* as well as those which result from *anumāna*—and only the latter are, properly speaking, ideational or conceptual in Dharmakīrti's view. Minor differences aside, Mason and Dharmakīrti also concur in their stress on the different functionings open to a quantum of awareness.

47. On page 25 of *IPBF*, Mason does allude to the degree of emphasis in various cultures "on cognitive experience that may be more or less mystical . . . in nature." But unlike more recent investigators (most notably C. Tart, C. Naranjo, and R. Ornstein), Mason does not expatiate on the subject. It is nonetheless worthy of note that a cognitive dimension is ascribed to a mystical experience (albeit incidentally) in a publication dated as early as 1961.

48. But then Mason, unlike Dharmakīrti, does not have the various axes of a Buddhist metaphysician and epistemologist to grind. In any case, even if sufficient empirical data were available to buttress the rigid distinction Dharmakīrti wishes to make (and this is far from being the case, as is clear from, for example, Royce and Rozeboom, *The Psychology of Knowing*, pp. 44 ff.), it would not be appropriated as pivotal in Mason's theory.

49. Which is not to suggest that Dharmakīrti had any more data than Mason had available to him—on the contrary. But Dharmakīrti's orientation, unlike Mason's, is decidedly not toward the excavation and presentation of related physiological or other findings.

50. For Mason, immediate awareness need not entail *full* cognitive meaningfulness (*IPBF*, p. 41)—this in contrast to Dharmakīrti, for whom immediate awareness is *the exemplar* of cognitive meaningfulness. Nevertheless, Mason maintains that *any degree of awareness* (conscious or unconscious) *is*, as a matter of definition, *cognitive* (*IPBF*, p. 12). (Be that as it may, "awareness," as generally employed in *IPBF* does "refer to a conscious process that apparently represents a rather high level of neurological development." (*IPBF*, p. 33.))

51. "Internal experience needs to be analyzed to the extent that differential aspects can be determined in order really to understand the composite functioning." (*IPBF*, p. 51.)

52. *IPBF*, p. 22. As for Dharmakīrti, he, in fact, begins his *Nyāyabīṇḍu* with a detailed statement of the relevance of that work to human purposeful activity.

53. *IPBF*, p. 30.

54. More precisely, Mason hopes that a more penetrating study of inner sensory phenomena will result in a determination of the breadth and normative frequencies of human internal sensory experience and of the possible relationships of types of sensations with types of internal bodily structures and functions. (*IPBF*, p. 335.)

55. This criticism holds as well for some of the armchair deliverances on pain, etc., of certain contemporary Western philosophers, for example, Gilbert Ryle and Paul Grice.

56. A subject which has been dealt with by us at considerable length in a forthcoming study.

57. To use the words of the poet Ezra Pound.

58. The very etymological meaning of "martyr" (Greek "martyr" = "witness") bespeaks a Western appraisal of suffering which is not at odds with that of the Buddhist epistemologists.