

THE  
**ELEMENTS OF INDIAN LOGIC**

WITH

The Text and Hindi & English Translations of  
**TĀRKASANGRAHA** (*Buddhikhandā*)

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## CHAPTER II

### PRAMĀNA (THE MEANS OF VALID KNOWLEDGE)

We have already pointed out that valid experience is called *pramā* by Indian philosophers. It may also be noted that the object of valid knowledge is called *prameya*. The means by which the subject (*pramata*) acquires the valid knowledge (*prama*) of an object (*prameya*) is called *pramāna* by them. The mere presence of a subject (*pramata*) and an object (*prameya*) will not bring about knowledge (*prama*). Some other factors also must be operative before knowledge can arise in the knower or subject. The most essential of these factors without the presence of which in spite of the subject and the object being present knowledge would not arise at all or a particular kind of knowledge would not arise is called *pramāna* (essential means of knowledge). It is thus defined as the most essential (*sadhakā tama*) of the causes of *prama*. The cause (*karana*) which is most essential (*sahakā tama*) is called (*prana*). Hence *pramāna* is said to be the *karana* of *prama* in *Tarṭasāgraha*. To illustrate what is meant by *pramāna* let us take the case of the perceptual knowledge of an object. Perception of an object is due to many factors which must be operative before the rise of knowledge. But, of all the causes one namely, the coming of the object in contact with the senses of the knower is particularly necessary for bringing about perception of the object. Without the contact of the object with the sense-organ of the subject perception cannot be produced. Moreover, the presence of the subject and the object and the activity of the mind which are causal factors in perception are also causal factors in other kinds of knowledge inference,

comparison etc. Hence they are not particularly but generally, necessary for perception. The only factor which is peculiar to perception is the contact with senses. Hence it is regarded as the *pramāna* of perceptual knowledge. In the same way there is a cause peculiar to each kind of knowledge, which, in addition to the causes generally required for the production of all kinds of knowledge, must operate before that particular kind of knowledge can arise in the knower.

### THE NUMBER OF PRAMĀNAS

As already pointed out in the last chapter, Indian philosophers have differed very much with regard to the number of the kinds of knowledge, and so, with regards to the number of the means of knowledge (*pramānas*)

The number of the *pramānas* (indispensable causes of *pramā*) recognised by thinkers of different schools of Indian thought goes upto ten, out of which the six mentioned in the last chapter, namely, *Pratyakṣa* (Perception), *Anumāna* (Inference), *Śabda* (Verbal Testimony of an authority), *Upamāna* (Comparison), *Arthapatti* (Necessary Assumption) and *Anuplabdhi* (Nonapprehension) are the most important, and are recognised by the most prominent and influential schools of thought. The rest four are *Ātithya* (Tradition), *Chesā* (Gesture), *Parīkṣa* (Elimination), and *Sambhāva* (Inclusion).

Of these *Pramānas*—

1. The Chārṅakās recognise only one *pramāna*, namely, *Pratyakṣa*, as the source of right knowledge
2. The Vaiśeṣikās, the Jainas and the Buddhists recognise two, namely, *Pratyakṣa*, and *Anumāna*
3. The Sāṅkhya and Yoga schools recognise only three, namely, *Pratyakṣa*, *Anumāna* and *Śabda*

4. The Naiyayikas recognise only four, namely, *Pratyakṣa*, *Anumana*, *Śabda* and *Upmana*

5 Some Mimamsakas (followers of Prabhākara) recognise five, namely, *Pratyakṣa*, *Anumana*, *Upamana*, *Śabda*, and *Arthapatti*

6 Another group of Mimamsakas (followers of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa) and the Vedantists of Sāṅkara (*Advaita*) school recognise six pramanas, namely, *Pratyakṣa*, *Anumana*, *Śabda*, *Upamana*, *Arthapatti* and *Anupalabdhi*

7 The scholars of the *Puranas* (Historians) recognise eight pramanas, namely, *Pratyakṣa*, *Anumana*, *Śabda*, *Upamana*, *Arthapatti*, *Anupalabdhi*, *Atihya*, and *Sambhava*

8. The *Tantrikas* (students of the *Tantras*) recognise nine pramanas, namely, *Pratyakṣa*, *Anumana*, *Śabda*, *Upamana*, *Arthapatti*, *Anupalabdhi*, *Atihya*, *Sambhava*, and *Chesta*

9 Some thinkers admit all the ten Pramanas, namely, *Pratyakṣa*, *Anumana*, *Śabda*, *Upamana*, *Anupalabdhi*, *Arthapatti*, *Atihya*, *Sambhava*, *Chesta* and *Pariksa*

Thinkers who recognise a less number of indispensable means of valid knowledge (*Pramanas*) try to bring the rest under one or the other of those which they admit

### THE NATURE OF THE PRAMANAS

Perception (*Pratyakṣa*) — Perception (*Pratyakṣa*) as a *Pramana* (means of valid knowledge) is the contact of a sense-organ with its appropriate object resulting in its direct knowledge. For example the contact of the eyes with a tree, which produces the direct apprehension of the tree. The term contact is used here not in the sense of close proximity, as in popular speech but in a technical sense. It means the range of the activity of a particular sense. The range of the activity of each sense is different from that of another. The skin, for

example, reveals the tactile qualities only when the object touches the skin. But the eyes and the ears do not require their objects to come into so close proximity with them. All the schools of Indian thought recognise perception as a *Pramāna*, but the Chārṇwākas recognise it to be the only *Pramāna*. The Buddhists point out very emphatically that sense perception reveals to us not objects but the sensible qualities merely which cannot be expressed in words

2. *Anumāna* (Inference).—*Anumāna* is the means of knowing some thing which is not actually perceived by the sense, by virtue of some other thing being perceived, because the latter is so connected with the former (perceived one) that wherever the former (perceived one) is present the latter (the unperceived one) must also be present. Every act of inference thus involves two things, namely, (1) perception of something which is a sign or mark of the presence of another thing and (2) remembrance of the general rule that wherever the one is present the other is also present. Both combined result in the inference that the thing signified by the sign exists where the sign exists. The general rule (*Vyāpti*), which is remembered on the perception of the sign (*linga*), has been learnt in the past through repeated experience of the co-presence (*anvaya*) and co-absence (*vyatireka*) of the sign (*linga*) and the signified object (*lingi*). For example, through repeated experience of smoke and fire being seen together, and it also having been observed repeatedly that wherever fire is not present smoke is also not present, one comes to form a conviction in his mind that wherever there is smoke there is fire. Smoke thus becomes a sign (*linga*) of the presence of fire (the *lingi*). If, now, smoke is perceived anywhere and it is remembered that wherever there is smoke there is fire, the inference is irrefutable that there is fire also there, although

it is not revealed by perception. The source of its revelation is inference

Anumāna is admitted as a source of new knowledge by almost all schools of Indian philosophy. The Charvakas alone take exception to it. They say that inference may give us probable knowledge but not sure and valid knowledge. There remains a doubt with regard to the existence of the inferred object until it is verified by direct experience. No generalisation, they say, is free from limiting conditions, and there is no guarantee that what has been true in the past will be so in the future. It is really a very serious question whether inference gives us any new knowledge. In all inferences we remain within the field of our knowledge previously acquired through perception. This kind of inference, which we have illustrated above, and which is the kind of inference admitted by the Indian logicians, is at its best, a kind of remembrance and expectation. If there is anything new and previously unknown it is the presence of the signified object in the place (*pakṣa*) where the sign is observed. It is *this* knowledge which is newly produced and of which the peculiar cause has to be sought for. The peculiar cause of this knowledge is inference (*Anumāna*). Hence it is regarded as a source of new knowledge by Indian logicians.

3 *Upamāna* (Comparison) as a source of knowledge admitted by Indian logicians is not the same as 'Analogy' of the Western logicians. It has a much restricted sense. An example, which is the stock example of all Indian logicians, will illustrate the sense in which we have Comparison as a source of new knowledge. A man has heard the name *garaya* but does not know which animal is denoted by this term. He is anxious to know the animal called *garaya*. A forester who knows the animal tells him that the *garaya* is an animal like