

Kundakunda and Umāsvāti on epistemic faculties*

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ABSTRACT

In the period of fourth–fifth centuries CE, Kundakunda and Umāsvāti, being one of first philosophers in Jainism, lay foundations for the subsequent development of Jaina epistemology. One of key concepts for them is cognitive faculty of the soul, which is treated by them the ultimate seat of consciousness and cognitions. The chapter discusses the complex structures of epistemic faculties, variously developed by both thinkers, and certain ramifications of the structure and the nature of epistemic faculties imposed by the idea of omniscience of strictly religious, not philosophical, provenance.

KEYWORDS

Kundakunda, Umāsvāti, Umāsvāmin, Jainism, epistemology, cognitive faculties, *upayoga*, omniscience

Kundakunda and Umāsvāti are reckoned among the first genuine philosophers in the tradition of Jainism, representing its two sectarian divisions: the Digambaras ('the Sky-clad', i.e. naked) and the Śvetāmbaras ('the White-clad', so called due to monks wearing white robes), respectively. They mark the second historical stage in the development of that religious-philosophical movement of ancient India and a shift from the canonical period, primarily focused on religious, ascetic and moral issues, in which philosophical reflection, including epistemology, did not play any prominent role, to the post-canonical, classical period, characterised by the development of a range of philosophical theories, including the doctrine of multiplexity of reality (*anekānta-vāda*). These two authors are both the cornerstones of later developments in Jaina philosophy and equally problematic when it comes to their identity and dating.

Jainism, originally an ascetic religious movement of fifth century BCE, with one of its founders, Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, did not develop any concrete philosophical thought at its very beginnings, and was primarily concerned with moral issues pertinent to the ultimate goal of salvation; their best known doctrine of multiplexity of reality (*anekānta-vāda*) was a

product of later centuries, in fact initiated by their rival group, the Ājīvikas.¹ A more consistent system of epistemology and ontology likewise developed gradually, and did not form a systematically elaborated whole before fourth century CE. One of those who were responsible for the systematisation of Jaina philosophical thought were Umāsvāti and, to a lesser degree, Kundakunda.

Traditionally believed by the Digambaras to flourish in South India some time before the first and third centuries CE, or even in the first century BCE, Kundakunda is in most probability a 'collective author' to whom a number of works (the number of 84 is sometimes mentioned) are ascribed which were composed, all in Prakrit, compiled and expanded over a span of a few centuries between the late third / early fourth and eighth centuries somewhere in Karnataka and adjacent regions. Most important of them, which also evince certain cognate doctrinal core, despite a range of serious differences, are *The Quintessence of Sermons* (*Pavayaṇa-sāra*; PSā), *The Quintessence of Doctrinal Points* (*Samaya-sāra*; SSā), *The Quintessence of Five Extended Elementary Bodies* (*Pañcatthiya-saṅgaha*; PAS), *The Quintessence of Restraint* (*Niyama-sāra*; NSā), the latter perhaps doctrinally and in its layout the closest to Umāsvāti. These deal with ontological, epistemological and ethical issues, including the idea of karmic retribution (*karman*), omniscience (*kevala*) and final liberation (*mokṣa*). It is rather unlikely that all these works go back to one and the same actual author, inasmuch as they evince a range of discrepancies. In most probability, 'Kundakunda' should be interpreted to stand for a certain tradition that developed in South India. In addition, Kundakunda represents a rare strand within Jainism which lays emphasis on reflection, meditation and spirituality more than on asceticism and penance.

To determine the identity is even more complicated in the case of Umāsvāti. The Śvetāmbaras maintain that he penned *The Treatise on Reality* (*Tattvārtha-sūtra*; TS), also called *The Treatise on the Comprehension of Reality* (*Tattvārthādhigama-sūtra*), and provided his own commentary on it titled *The Commentary on the Comprehension of Reality* (*Tattvārthādhigama-bhāṣya*; TBh). The Digambaras claim, on the contrary, that *The Treatise on Reality* was composed by a Digambara author Umāsvāmin, who was a direct disciple of Kundakunda, whereas a certain Śvetāmbara Umāsvāti wrote his *Commentary on the Comprehension of Reality*. It seems most probable, however, that *The Treatise on Reality* (TS)—the first ever Jaina work in Sanskrit—was written around 350 CE by Umāsvāmin, who perhaps was neither Digambara nor Śvetāmbara, but belonged to still another Jaina subgroup, no longer known, and was subsequently commented in Sanskrit by both a Śvetāmbara Umāsvāti around 400 CE, who lived in North India (Bihar), and a Digambara Pūjyapāda Devanandin (6th c.) of Karnataka. The same Umāsvāti is said to also have written *A Discourse on the Joy of Tranquility* (*Praśama-rati-prakarāṇa*; PRP), though the same authorship is uncertain. *The Treatise on*

Reality is revered by both Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras as a most authoritative text which systematises the Jaina doctrine. In this sense, it plays a similar role in Jainism to that of Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Higher Doctrine* (*Abhidharma-kośa*) in Buddhism.

For practical needs dictated by this paper, I will speak of 'Kundakunda', simplifying things a bit, as one personage representative of a few centuries long tradition and focus on early textual layers of the works ascribed to him from the period between ca. 3rd/4th – 5th centuries, and will take 'Umāsvāti' to be the author of *The Commentary on the Comprehension of Reality* (ca. 400 CE) only, who heavily relied on Umāsvāmin's *Treatise on Reality* he commented upon and who adopted his ideas *en masse*. Despite sectarian divisions, the distance in space of two thousand kilometres and two different languages of their works, both Kundakunda and Umāsvāti display a number of similarities, also when it comes to epistemology.

Both Kundakunda and Umāsvāti introduce in their works a concept of cognitive faculties (*upayoga*). This category comprises all possible cognitive processes that may or may not result in a true belief, however—with Jaina strongly realistic attitude—they are all reality-oriented. This does not have to lead to a paradox. The Jainas believe that whatever enters our cognitive apparatus is a result of a contact of our cognitive apparatus and the reality, unlike in Buddhist idealistic schools, such as Yogācāra, or Vijñānavāda ('Mind-Only Doctrine'). Were there no external reality and no contact with it, our minds would be blank. It is the reality which provides cognitive faculties and the minds with some input. Also the subjective, introspective aspect of our minds are a reflection of and reaction to the external, mind-independent reality. Those cognitive criteria which are not true are such because they misrepresent the reality. What is primarily understood under cognitive faculties are sensory and extrasensory perceptions, memory, testimony, inference, induction, etc. These are processes related to the acquisition of knowledge, its processing, organisation and preservation. Cognitive faculties as such are not considered to be aimed at the production of true belief, but only some of them, i.e. those which fall into the category of cognitive criteria (*pramāṇa*), or sources of valid cognition.

For Umāsvāti, who is by spirit a systematizer, the notion is an umbrella term covering a range of mental dispositions and types of cognition, which were previously distinguished by early Jaina epistemology. For Kundakunda, who is much less systematic in his expositions, the idea of cognitive faculties fulfils a function of an intermediary link between the living beings (*jīva*, *ātman*), i.e. the souls being actual cognitive subjects, and the world which serves to explain how the former's actions may lead to desired (salvation-bound) and undesired consequences and how one is entangled by *karman* in the mundane world of transmigration (*saṃsāra*). He is more interested in analysing how respective cognitive faculties may

contribute to the salvific goal, and which of them have negative results, detrimental to one's real happiness or ultimate salvation.

According to Umāsvāti, who develops a systematic typology of all cognitions and cognitive acts, cognitive faculties are the defining characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*) of the living being, innate to it (TS/TBh 2.8), a view shared by Kundakunda (NSā 10 ff.; PSā 2.42; PAS 17, 27 ff.; SSā 36), but also found in the canonical literature (e.g. Uttar 28.10–11). The living being is also characterised by other natural states (*pāriṇāmika*) such as animateness (*jīvatva*), emancipatability (*bhavyatva*), i.e. the ability to attain liberation at some point, or non-emancipatability (*abhavyatva*), i.e. the lack of such ability, existence, individuality, agency to act and to experience, endowment with qualities and properties, limitedness in space, subjection to a beginningless influence of *karman*, composition of spatial units, immateriality, eternity etc. (TBh 2.7). These all contribute to the living being's identity and distinctiveness, none of these is, however, considered a defining characteristic of the living being whereby it is differentiated from the inanimate world (*ajīva*). What makes a living being the living being par excellence are cognitive faculties. It would be wrong to say that the living being is endowed with or possesses cognitive faculties. Rather, it consists in them and they are its true essence. This conviction leads Kundakunda, on numerous occasions, to equate the living being (*jīva*), or the cognitive subject (*ātman*), with cognition: 'There is the accepted view that cognition is the cognitive subject. Without cognition there is no cognitive subject. Therefore cognition is the cognitive subject, and the cognitive subject is cognition, not otherwise' (PSā 1.27); 'The cognitive subject has the extension of cognition' (PSā 1.23); 'The cogniser is of the nature of cognition' (PSā 1.28; NSā 169–170); 'The soul is made of consciousness and cognitive faculties' (PSā 2.35, 42). This equation will serve Umāsvāti to provide a unique, non-standard definition of perception (*pratyakṣa*), or direct cognition as such a kind of cognition which is directly (*prati-*) related to the 'eye' (*-akṣa*), and the ultimate 'eye', or the perceiving organ, is the living being as such. It should be borne in mind that the Jainas understood the living being (*jīva*) primarily as the cognitive subject (*ātman*), or the soul, i.e. the animate, immaterial and cognising substance which transmigrates through various bodies, entrapped in the mundane world. Even at the lowest possible stage of its existence—in Jainism known as immobile *nigoda*, so primitive that several souls have to share one simple body—the living being is said to still possess some elementary cognitive faculties and is capable of cognising, albeit in an extremely limited manner, just with the sense of touch.

Strongly relying on earlier canonical tradition (Viy 2.10.9[2], 8.2.22–23), Umāsvāti sets to classify all epistemically relevant mental phenomena, i.e. cognitive faculties into two main branches, developing an earlier Jaina classification into cognition (*jñāna*) and perceptual experience (*darśana*; lit. 'seeing, perception'). The former is called distinct, i.e. having definite

contents (*sākāra*), whereas the latter is classified as indistinct, having no definite contents (*anākāra*) (TS/TBh 2.8–9). Umāsvāti does not elaborate on this distinction and on what ‘having definite contents’ actually means, but the terms were relatively well known in his times and sometimes explained as ‘manifest’ (*vyakta*) and ‘unmanifest’ (*avyakta*), respectively (STP 2.11, 14). This early division goes back to the earliest times (4th–3rd c. BCE) when the Jainas, with hardly any epistemology at all, merely distinguished two such cognitive faculties of knowing (*jñāna*) and seeing (*darśana*). This extremely robust model gradually developed and the terms changed their meaning. In times of Umāsvāti, cognition, manifest and of definite contents, came to cover cognitive acts which present an object with some details, whereas perceptual experience, not manifest and of non-definite contents, merely presented an object as such, without any particular details of it: through it, one could merely become aware of its presence. Clearly, such a distinction posed a serious problem: how could one become aware of a mere presence of an object, say a mango tree, through such perceptual experience without cognising any particular features of the mango tree which would distinguish it from, say, a jujubee tree? To know that there is a mango tree in front, not a jujubee tree, one stands in need of additional information or details. If these are not presented through perceptual experience (*darśana*) than one is incapable of determining what kind of tree, if any tree at all, is in front, ergo perceptual experience cannot fulfil its function of presenting an object to our mind, inasmuch as long it remains without any definite contents and presents no particulars of the object, what it presents to the mind can equally be any tree, any reptile, any stone or silicon chip: in informing the cognitive subject that *something* is there, it provides no information at all for something *is* always there. However, if some details are already presented to our cognition through perceptual experience to an extent enough so that one is capable of determining that one sees a mango tree, not a jujubee tree, than the distinction between perceptual experience and cognition collapses. This confusion resulted from a desire to preserve an earlier distinction and accommodate it within a new framework of concepts, a commonplace attitude in India to retain traditional concepts and theories which had earlier been conceived of by past masters and were treated as sanctity. However, an important Jaina philosopher and epistemologist Siddhasena Mahāmāti (ca. 710/720–770/780), erroneously identified with Siddhasena Divākara (ca. 450–500), radically does away with the distinction into cognition and perceptual experience (*darśana*), clearly confusing for a consistent epistemologist (NA).

Independently from the division into cognition and perceptual experience, still at a very early stage, the Jainas had worked out a classification of five kinds of cognitions: (1) sensuous cognition, (2) testimonial cognition, or knowledge based on testimony or derived from linguistic symbols, (3) clairvoyance, or telesthesia, (4) mind-reading, or telepathy, and (5) absolute

knowledge, or omniscience.² Also this scheme was adopted by Umāsvāti and incorporated into his integrated model of cognitive faculties. Combining various strands of early Jaina epistemological thought, Umāsvāti developed what I elsewhere call Model XI³ (Fig. 1).

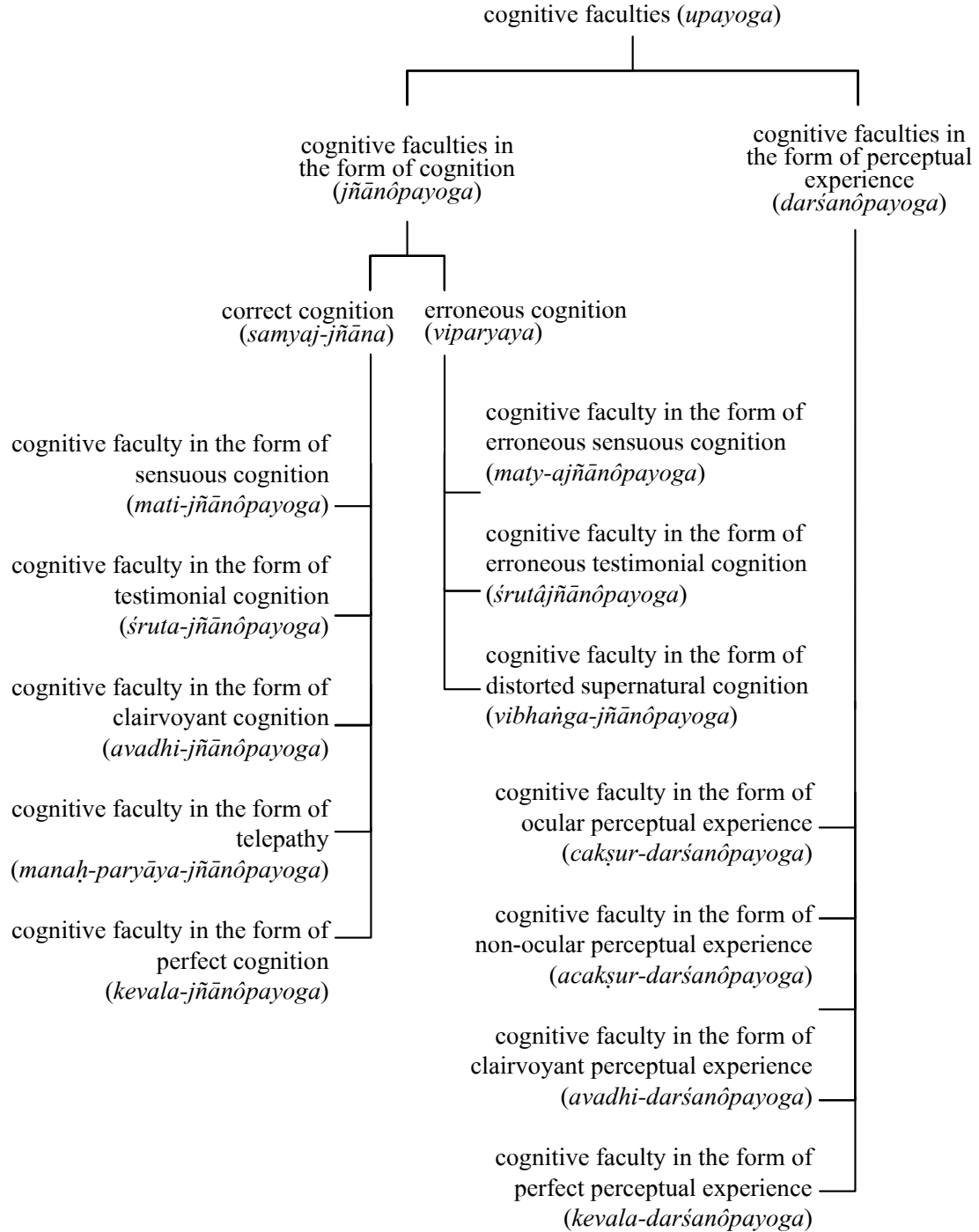


Fig. 1: Umāsvāti's model of cognitive faculties (TS/TBh 2.8–9).

This general typology of cognitive faculties bifurcates into two major headings of cognition and perceptual experience. Conspicuously, only cognitions can be either true or false, whereas all kinds of perceptual experience are consistently considered to be always true, inasmuch as they find no erroneous counterpart in the classification. This is left without any clarification but we can presume that it could be explained in a similar way as Vasubandhu (followed by Dignāga and Dharmakīrti) did with perception (*pratyakṣa*) in his *Rules of Debate* (*Vāda-vidhi*; VāVi) by conceiving it as ‘knowledge that arises from the thing alone’ (BIJLERT (1989: 45 ff.)), and thereby true by default, inasmuch as there is no space for interference of factors external to it (such as conceptualisation) which could adversely affect the veracious process of perception. Since also in this case, perceptual experience is directly triggered by the cognised object, it has to be pure, uncontaminated, inasmuch as there is no interference of conceptual thought which brings in conceptually constructed ideas which superimpose a range of ramifications on the cognised object as it is being presented to the mind. However, Umāsvāti does not yet know the distinction into non-conceptual (*nirvikalpaka*) and conceptual (*savikalpaka*) cognitive acts, on which the Buddhist explanations of the veracity of perception rest. So in Umāsvāti’s model, perceptual experience is always true inasmuch as it always correctly reproduces the object in a most general way. In other words, indistinct perceptual experience, having no definite contents, is produced or activated whenever an object is simply there. When an object is not there, perceptual experience is not activated. This pattern of consistency grants the process of perceptual experience its truthfulness. What it represents is simply the presence of an object of a given class, without any additional individual details of its essence. However, cognitive faculties in the form of perceptual experience are never discussed in the context of validity, which concerns only cognitions (*jñāna*). Perceptual experience is never found in the list of cognitive criteria (*pramāṇa*) and is not treated as a reliable and valid cognitive instrument in its own right. For this reason, it seems to be a fossilised remnant of an earlier theory.

Let us analyse this model of cognitive faculties step by step. The first broad category are cognitive faculties in the form of cognition, which can be either correct or erroneous. The subcategory of correct, true cognitions comprises five kinds (TS/TBh 1.9–30). The first of these is cognitive faculty in the form of sensuous cognition (*mati-jñānôpayoga*). Interestingly, sensuous cognition is not simply sensory perception, for Umāsvāti also provides a range of terms to explain its nature (TS/TBh 1.13). These include memory (*smṛti*), recognitive cognition (*saṃjñā*) being a faculty of conceiving abstract ideas, inductive thinking (*cintā*), also responsible for associations, and determined cognition (*abhinibodha*). He further (TS/TBh 1.14) explains that sensuous cognition is conditioned by sense organs, which implies its five subvarieties related to the five sensory spheres, and the mind, which in turn embraces all kinds of mental

operations and representations. It consists of four stages (TS/TBh 1.15). The first stage, which corresponds to what was ordinarily in India considered perception *per se*, is called sensation (*avagraha*), i.e. the contact of a sense organ and the object. It is defined as ‘unmanifest apprehension in the form of direct perception (lit. sight) of respective sensory data through respective sense organs’, where ‘unmanifest’ (*avyakta*) should be understood in the sense of indistinct or indefinite kind of grasping (bare grasp) an object, without its distinct characteristics and free from correlation with conceptually constructed ideas. Further, Umāsvāti explains that it has two kinds (TS/TBh 1.17–19). The first kind is the sensation of unclear momentary manifestation (*vyañjanâvagraha*), possible in the case of the senses of touch, taste, smell and hearing. This involves mere activation of a sense organ which comes into a brief direct contact with a sensory datum. The sense organ becomes activated, without yet fully grasping the datum. What is required is a direct contact between the sense organ and the object, which is possible only in the case of four senses. Umāsvāti never provides more detailed explanations or illustrations, but an example could be a situation when the sense of hearing of person who is half-asleep becomes merely activated by the sound and the person is awakened but is not even aware that it was a sound which has awakened him or her. The second kind is the sensation of the object (*arthâvagraha*), which is possible in the case of all sense organs, including vision and the mind, both of which proceed without any direct contact with the object. At this stage, one is aware of the nature of the sensory data and determines that one’s sensory apparatus has been activated by, say, a tactile stimulus, not by visual or auditory. In this case, also inner mental states are treated as potential data for the mind, which acts as a quasi-sense.

The second stage is cogitation (*ihā*), or speculation as regards the character of sensory data and mental events. It is primarily an internal, often subliminal, process of analysis by putting forward various hypotheses as regards what the object actually is. It is defined as ‘an investigation of particular characteristics to determine them with certainty which, after a certain aspect of an object has been sensed in the preceding stage, attempts to know the remaining aspects of the thing.’ As in other cases, after providing a definition proper (real definition) of a notion, Umāsvāti offers a range of synonyms (definition by synonymy), which in this case are presumptive knowledge (*ūhā*), reasoning or suppositional knowledge (*tarka*), examination (*parīkṣā*), reflection or inquiry (*vicāraṇā*) and investigation or an attempt to know (*jijñāsā*). These synonyms imply that—even though initially cogitation was conceived of as a very brief stage in the process of perception leading from a sensation of a bare datum to final conceptualisation and categorisation of it—all kinds of reasoning, such as induction, inference etc., of a developed epistemology will have to ultimately be included in this category, inasmuch as the whole model does not provide specific compartment to allocate to them.

The third stage is perceptual judgement (*apāya*), which is generally considered to remove doubt as regards the character of the sensory data and to determine the source of the sensation. We can call it a stage of hypotheses or speculation. It is defined as ‘a removal (sc. conclusion) of the mental process examining the pros and cons [of hypotheses submitted in the phase of cogitation] in the form “this [alternative] is correct”, “that [alternative] is not correct”, after the object has been sensed.’ The synonyms given are: abandonment (*apagama*), rejection [of the wrong alternative] (*apanoda*), dismissal [of incorrect suggestions] (*apavyādha*), which connote the process, as well as a range of past passive participles, which imply the resultant object of the process: ‘[alternative] which has been perceptually judged’ (*apeta*), ‘[alternative] which has been abandoned’ (*apagata*), ‘[alternative] which has been dismissed’ (*apavidha*), ‘[alternative] which has been rejected’ (*apanutta*). Even though many philosophers viewed it differently, for Umāsvāti, this is a phase when erroneous hypotheses are removed, and, only implicitly, what remains is the accurate hypothesis, or true determination of the object.⁴ Such phrasing which equates processes (abandonment, rejection etc.) with the result (the abandoned, the rejected etc.) is rather curious, but a way to make sense of it is to suggest that perceptual judgement is not simply a negative process of elimination of incorrect hypotheses but it also includes the result of such inquiry: the process and the result are inseparable. The resultant judgement implicitly contains a positive element, namely the hypothesis which proves correct.

The final stage is retention (*dhāraṇā*) of the conclusion of the perceptual judgement, which ultimately becomes a source for future reminiscence and memory. It is defined as ‘final comprehension which is a proper conclusion of sensuous cognition and ascertainment of the object’. Definition by synonymy mentions determination, certainty, understanding, knowledge. We can compare it to saving the final data to the hard disk to retrieve it in the future.

To provide an illustration of how sensuous cognition works, which Umāsvāti does not do, first one’s vision is triggered by an indistinct data (sensation), i.e. a vague perception of an object in a distance. Then one speculates what that object is, e.g. ‘Is the thing in a distance a person or a column?’ (cogitation). Since one notices that the object is moving, the hypothesis that it is a column has to be rejected (perceptual judgement), and the resultant true cognition of the form ‘this is a person’ is accepted and remains in memory (retention). In ordinary cases, such processes are extremely brief and rather subconscious. As we can see, that process of sensuous cognition is rather complex and cannot be reduced to mere perception.

The second category, cognitive faculty in the form of testimonial cognition (*śruta-jñānōpayoga*), primarily comprises knowledge derived from Jaina scriptures. In fact, the scope of this faculty is primarily religious, the

contents of sacred lore and what spiritual teachers have imparted. Its subdivisions correspond to divisions of canonical texts alone. Surprisingly, this category does not comprise knowledge derived from others through language, as it was the case of verbal cognition of the Nyāya system. Why does Umāsvāti not mention perception, primarily being a non-conceptual faculty, in his typology, as it is normally done in India? When we compare sensuous cognition and testimonial cognition, we can observe that the reason for the distinction, crucial for the classification, was not epistemological but religious-pragmatic: the latter category comprises all kinds of cognitions derived from scriptures and spiritual teachers whereas the former comprised the remaining varieties of ordinary cognitions. Therefore, sensory perception, inference, memory etc. were grouped under one heading, even though all other philosophical systems in India did otherwise. For Umāsvāti, as well as for most other Jaina thinkers, philosophy, epistemology included, was at the service of religion.

The third cognitive faculty in the form of clairvoyant cognition (*avadhi-jñānôpayoga*) comprises supra-sensory abilities to perceive, it seems, macroscopic things that are beyond the reach of our senses (TS/TBh 1.21–23). Depending on whether it is inborn or a result of asceticism, its range and distance can differ. The next, cognitive faculty in the form of telepathy (*manah-paryāya-jñānôpayoga*), is a capacity to read in other peoples' minds (TS/TBh 1.24–25). What underlies this idea is a pan-Indian belief that mental processes and phenomena are somatic: they are spatially located in our minds in the same way as physical organs are located in our bodies, and mental representations of external objects or apperceptions have their own extensions and shapes. Ergo, they can be cognised by those who have developed special ability. In a way, this kind of supernatural perception is an extension of ordinary sensory perception: whereas the latter cognises sensorily perceptible macroscopic objects, the latter perceives more subtle spatially extended 'mental bodies'. However, whereas clairvoyance can be achieved by anyone irrespective of moral standing, telepathy requires the fulfilment of a range of moral requirements: only those most spiritually advanced are believed to be able to possess it.

The fifth and final is the climax of all cognitions tantamount to the realisation of the ultimate goal of human existence, liberation. Cognitive faculty in the form of perfect cognition (*kevala-jñānôpayoga*), or omniscience, seems in fact to be boldest epistemological claim ever made in India inasmuch as it is believed to consist in simultaneous cognition of everything: of all past, present and future things with all their qualities and modes. Not even the Buddha is reported to have made such a claim, whose omniscience was maintained to be potential.⁵ Only whatever he could concentrate his mind on, he would know it in detail and in all respects. Here, it is a corollary of absolute perfection, liberation and severing all ties with karman and mundane existence.

The way Umāsvāti and Kundakunda, following an earlier tradition, arrange all the five true cognitive faculties is clearly hierarchical (SSā 204, PSā 3.34).⁶ And that is not without reason. Both of them emphasise that the true cognitive faculties as well as their subdivisions form an upward sequence of cognitions the subsequent one is purer, subtler and more excellent than the antecedent. In fact, the hierarchy serves as an implicit proof that omniscience and an omniscient being, i.e. a human being who can perfect himself.⁷ I have elsewhere called this proof, frequently used by the Jainas and given a logical formulation, the argument from progression, and its structure is as follows:⁸ Let us take the arrow symbol \rightarrow to stand for any kind of precedence (hierarchical, temporal, causal etc.) so that ' $x \rightarrow y$ ' means ' x is superior in degree to y '. Further, let us assume a sequence of ordered pairs $x \rightarrow y$ such that

$$\forall y \exists x (x \rightarrow y),$$

viz. for any thing y there exists some other thing x such that x is superior to in degree to y (or ' y is subordinate to x '). Hence, there must be culmination, or highest possible degree of the quality:

$$\exists x \forall y (x \rightarrow y),$$

viz. 'there exists one thing x which is superior in degree to all y -s'. In other words, the progression from the least pure and subtle cognitive faculty in the form of the sensation of unclear momentary manifestation through more refined and purer forms of cognitive faculties has to bring one to the apex of all cognitive faculties which is the highest and purest of all. Obviously, the structure of such an argument, resembling the arguments for god's existence from the prime mover and from the efficient cause, is logically flawed.⁹

Interestingly, these five kinds of cognitive faculties in the form of correct cognition overlap with the idea of cognitive criteria (*pramāṇa*) adopted by Umāsvāti (TS/TBh 1.9–12) and Jaina thinkers preceding him from other systems. The model of five cognitions is divided into two main branches (Fig. 2).

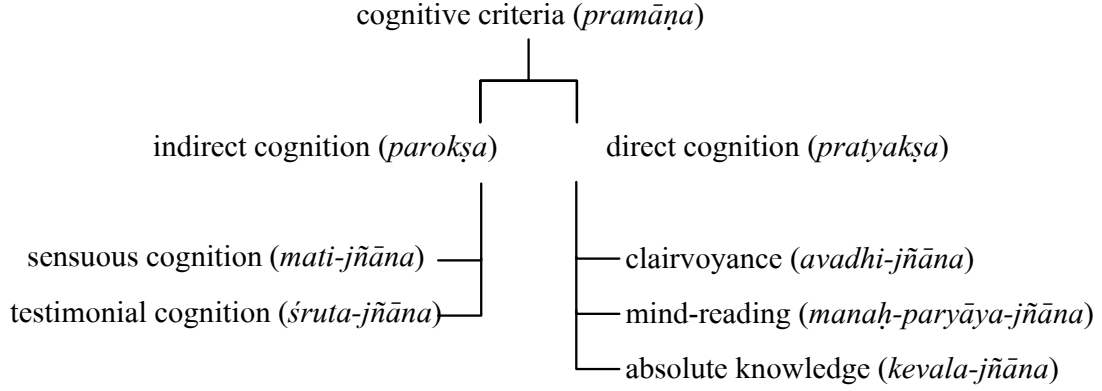


Fig. 2: Umāsvāti's model of cognitive criteria (TS/TBh 1.9–12).

Conspicuously, the first of these is called indirect cognition, or indirect cognitive criterion (*pramāṇa*), because both its subcategories are dependent on sense organs and/or the mind, considered intermediaries between the world and the ultimate cogniser, or the soul. The three remaining kinds of cognition represent three stages of direct cognition, or direct cognitive criterion, in the case of which the soul cognises directly without any instruments. In this way, what all Indian thinkers called perception (*pratyakṣa*), for Umāsvāti and other Jainas becomes indirect cognition (*parokṣa*). What for the Jaina was *pratyakṣa* would be classified by all other Indian thinkers as extrasensory perception, or yogins' perception (*yogi-pratyakṣa*).

The second large subcategory incorporated three cognitive faculty in the form of erroneous cognition (*viparyaya*), which were incorrect versions of the first three kinds of correct cognitions (TS/TBh 1.32): erroneous sensuous cognition (*maty-ajñānôpayoga*), erroneous testimonial cognition (*śrutâjñānôpayoga*), and distorted supernatural cognition (*vibhaṅga-jñānôpayoga*), or incorrect kind of clairvoyance. The essence of false representation of reality, which characterises these three erroneous cognitive faculties, was defined as *random* representation of *P* as non-*P* (TS/TBh 1.33). Randomness in such false representation is of crucial importance: if erroneous cognition consistently represented *P* as its opposite, non-*P*, exhibiting a persistent pattern, that could provide dependency and reliability needed for a true representation, for we would quickly learn that what our senses present as *P* is in reality non-*P*. By reversing the way the senses and our cognitive faculties represent the world in a *consistently* distorted manner we would be able to reconstruct the true picture. An illustration of such consistently inverted image is what is factually apprehended in our minds, after what is projected, due to the optics of the eye, onto the retina of our eye is mentally turned upside down. However, because erroneous cognitive faculties sometimes represent the world correctly and sometimes incorrectly, they cannot be relied upon,

hence are considered false. The ultimate reason responsible for cognitive errors is not physical or mental etc. but is of metaphysical or moral character. It is wrong conation (*mithyā-darśana*), or false belief, caused by one's dependence on *karman*, conceived of as extremely subtle matter which envelops the soul, or the perceiving organ *per se*. It is ultimately the *karman*, as Umāsvāti and Kundakunda believe, which is responsible for cognitive errors.

The second broad category is cognitive faculties in the form of perceptual experience (*darśanôpayoga*). The first two varieties, ocular perceptual experience and fourfold non-ocular perceptual experience, are indistinct cognitive faculties, with no definite contents, which rely on sense organs. Cognitive faculties in the form of clairvoyant perceptual experience and perfect perceptual experience, or omniperception, are indistinct counterparts of clairvoyant cognition and perfect cognition, or omniscience, respectively. There was a centuries-long, unresolved debate among Jaina philosophers concerning the status of cognitive faculties in the case of the perfected being (*siddha*), who has removed all enveloping karmic matter and attained liberation.¹⁰ Would the distinction into distinct cognition (*jñāna*) and indistinct perceptual experience (*darśana*) be retained or would these two merge into one, one being overridden by the other? Does it make sense to speak of two separate cognitive faculties: perfect cognition, or omniscience (*kevala-jñāna*) and perfect perceptual experience, or omniperception (*kevala-darśana*)? Umāsvāti was of the opinion that this functional division would be retained (TBh 1.31), an opinion shared by Kundakunda (PAS 29, 40; SSā 7) who would say that these two faculties continue to exist in a perfected being in the same way as the light and heat co-exist in the sun (NSā 159–171), and he only allocates functional dispositions to them, which practically become indistinguishable. However, the true nature of this perfect condition cannot be really articulated except through an imperfect language of similes or the language of everyday experience, just like a foreigner can understand things only in his own foreign language (SSā 8).

There is, however, another sphere in which the boundaries of cognitions and perceptual experiences seem to become blurred, and this is a problem both unintended and unnoticed by Jaina thinkers. We have already seen that perceptual experience is generally considered to be such cognitive faculty which has no definite contents (*anākāra*), is indistinct, or unmanifest (*avyakta*). At the same time, the very first stage of sensuous cognition called sensation (*avagraha*) when one becomes aware of the mere presence of an object of cognition thanks to a contact between a sense organ and the object is also explained by Umāsvāti, and likewise by many other Jaina thinkers, to be unmanifest or indistinct. Clearly this is one of the points where the classification of cognitive faculties into cognitions and perceptual experiences partly overlap.

In many respects, Kundakunda of *The Quintessence of Restraint* (NSā) shares Umasvāti's model of cognitive faculties, but there are some notable differences (Fig. 3). His cognitive faculties in the form of cognition bifurcate into what he calls essential cognition (*svabhāva-jñāna*), of which there is just one variety (perfect cognition), and extrinsic cognition (*vibhāva-jñāna*). The Sanskrit term *svabhāva-jñāna*, in fact really meaning 'cognition in the form of essential nature', was apparently selected by Kundakunda to emphasise that at the stage of perfection the cognising subject, or the soul, fully becomes cognition *per se*, regaining its true cognitive essence. The other category called *vibhāva-jñāna* emphasises that the eight varieties are merely imperfections and corruptions, to various degree, of the soul's true nature. The same holds true for the dual typology of perceptual experience, out of which, at the stage of essential perceptual experience, the nature of the cognising subject becomes identical with perfect perceptual experience.

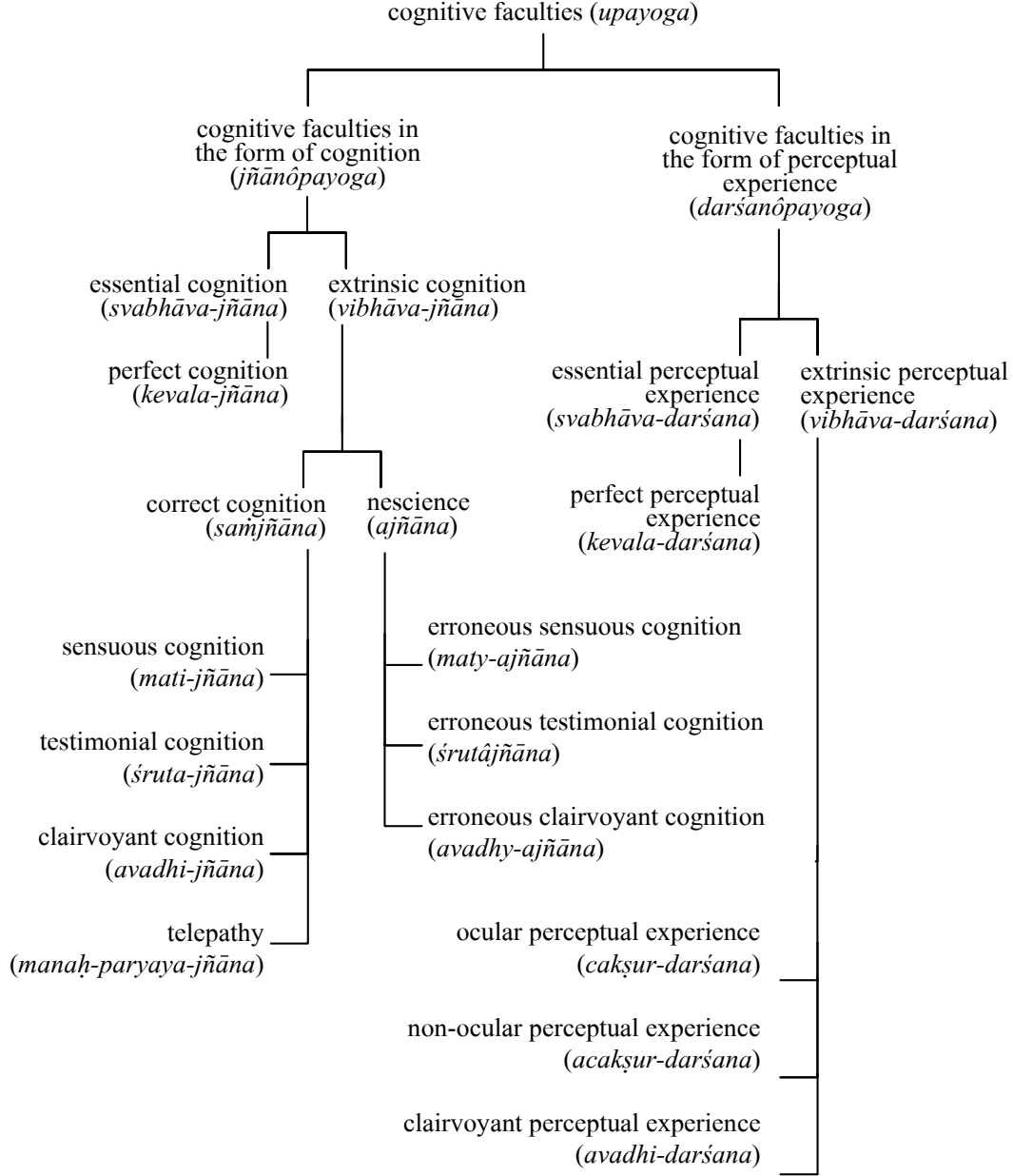


Fig. 3: Kundakunda's model of cognitive faculties (NSā 10–14).

Kundakunda of other texts, e.g. of *The Quintessence of Five Extended Elementary Bodies* (PAS)¹¹ or *The Quintessence of Sermons* (PSā)¹², is much less systematic and less epistemologically oriented. Instead, he focuses on the ascetic and religious path to the highest goal, liberation. His discussion of cognitive faculties is more akin to canonical descriptions of cognitive faculties which are usually mentioned there in the context of the path to liberation (*mokṣa-marga*), taken to consist in cognition (*jñāna*), conation (*darśana*), i.e. the proper ethical approach to life and correct worldview, conduct (*cāritra*) and ascetic practice (*tapas*) (e.g. Uttar 28.28.2). Kundakunda distinguishes three 'shades' of cognitive faculties, depending on how they serve the salvific goal, or three paths determined by

them. With pure (*śuddha*) cognitive faculties, when the various kinds of *karman*, or rather karmic matter obfuscating the soul like mineral dirt defiles a crystal, pure in its nature, the soul (*jīva*) becomes purified and attains liberation (SSā 6; PSā 1.9 ff.). With impure cognitive faculties, soiled by various obscuring, obstructing and deluding kinds of karmic matter, the souls becomes impure and falls down to painful existences in the circle of rebirth, such as animals or denizens of hell. The third option is that of auspicious (*śubha*) faculties, which even though not pure, are under the influence of righteousness and moral law (*dharma*), bring the soul to more auspicious existences in the *samsāra*, such as heavenly beings (PSā 1.9–16, 72, 2.64). These three paths emphasise the essential identity of the soul and its cognitive faculties. Like *karman*, all matter is alien to the cognising subject, or the soul (PSā 2.101), including the body alongside its sense organs. Sense organs, even though they form the basis of all ordinary experience and living beings use them as prime source of data and information, are only imperfect channels of acquisition of knowledge, made of the same material stuff which only obfuscates the inborn intrinsic cognitive faculties of the soul, which is by nature omniscient, but due to the material influence, is doomed to rely on the imperfect material instruments. The mechanism which sullies innately perfect cognitive faculties of the soul is the inflow of *karmic* matter (*āsrava*) into the soul (PSā 3.45; PAS 20–21) which binds it in two ways: impure or auspicious. But both these ways are, on the level of the ultimate truth, impure and inauspicious inasmuch the soul remains associated with the material world and suffering. However, since the attainment of liberation is almost impossible, one is encouraged to engage one's cognitive faculties in auspicious religious path consisting, e.g. of strict observation of religious vows, study of sacred texts, contemplation, generosity, teaching others, religious worship etc. (PSā 3.44–59). However, for someone who is seriously engaged in the path to liberation, such activities are only obstacles. It should be noted that such an inflow of *karmic* matter into the soul is caused by all activities (*yoga*) the living being undertakes in three ways, with the body, speech and mind.

What is important, both for Kundakunda and Umāsvāti, but also for all other Jaina philosophers, cognitive faculties are not faculties which evolved in the course of time or were created. They were not created because Jainism rejects the idea of god as an ultimate being who creates the world, including souls, or living beings, who establishes the moral law, etc. Living beings as ultimate cognising agents, ontologically absolutely different from the rest of the entities, are eternal, without beginning or end. Neither have their cognitive faculties evolved. *Potentially* the souls have always been omniscient and omnipercipient, but this potential has been thwarted by their entanglement in the material world from beginningless times. These cognitive faculties may develop and improve, which results in more auspicious rebirths. But they may likewise regress. All souls in all stages of transmigration are potentially the same, and humans are not treated as some

kind of extraordinary creatures with special cognitive faculties. Humans are an integral part of the world of essentially equal living beings.

Both the above classification of cognitive faculties and the particular understanding of the cognitive subject, ultimately being the soul, or the living being in the true sense, would seem to make the mind as the seat of cognitive faculties or a set of cognitive processes redundant. However, the mind does have its role to play even though its role is rather limited and quite different from what(ever) the mind seems to mean for a Western philosopher. Being also, and more appropriately, called either ‘quasi-sense’ (*no-indriya*) or ‘not-sense’ (*anindriya*), the mind functions in the epistemic scheme of the Jainas merely as a sixth sense organ, an instrument of grasping mental data and organising sensory data transferred from the senses. However, the ultimate recipient and the true seat of consciousness remains the soul alone.

What would be the mind–body gap in Western philosophy or the division into *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, envisaged in the Cartesian tradition, would not hold for the Jainas, there is nothing which lacks spatial dimension. All entities are located in space and have spatial dimension, or extension. Having spatial extension is one of the basic properties of the soul (TBh 2.7), which is identical with consciousness and cognitive faculties. In other words, also cognitive faculties and all mental phenomena, which could be treated as qualities of the soul, extend in space, in the same way as the bodies (TS/TBh 2.39). Cognitive processes and mental occurrences are both located and extend in space. What makes souls (*jīva*), i.e. cognitive faculties *per se*, distinct from the material world (*ajīva*) is not extension but percipience and sentience. Entities which are not sentient and percipient are necessarily inanimate (*jaḍa*).

Unlike Kundakunda, Umāsvāti tries to explain how cognitive faculties interact with the matter and material body in an attempt to bridge the gap between the mind (or the soul) and the world (or the body). Following Jaina tradition, he enumerates five sense organs, which are the instruments for and serve the soul only (TS/TBh 2.15–19), and distinguishes two kinds of them: a physical sense organ (*dravyêndriya*) and a corresponding mental sense organ (*dravyêndriya*), which closely co-operate. The actual physical sense organ consists of a physical receptor (*nirvṛtti*), called ‘sensory channel’ (*indriya-dvāra*), and accompanying auxiliary paraphernalia (*upakarāṇa*), which can be inner (physically located within the body) and external (located outside), which provide help and protection to the sensory physical receptor. The mental sense organ, which interacts with the physical sense consists of two elements. One is a general psychic, cognitive predisposition (*labdhi*), the other is cognitive faculty (*upayoga*). The sensory predispositions are five in number, related to the sense of touch, taste, smell, seeing and hearing. All these components such as the physical receptor, its physical auxiliary paraphernalia and cognitive predisposition

are there, either dormant or activated, but they can fulfil their role once the respective cognitive faculty sets in, not without it. The cognitive faculty is what activates the whole sense organ and captures sensory data through it. The cognitive faculties in the form of sensuous cognition (*mati-jñāna*) are manifested through and with respect to the grasp of sensory data. This explains why cognitive faculties are given their Sanskrit name, *upayoga*, which literally means ‘application, usage’, lit. ‘cognitive application’. Cognitive faculties should therefore be understood as processes or manner through which the soul makes use of the physical sensory apparatus as well as actual application of the soul’s cognitive potential. As Umāsvāti explains, all the components of sense organs, such as the receptor etc., are products of the influence or *karman*. Various kinds of karmic matter operate and participate in the process of actual formation of sense organs. The reduction in the influence of *karmic* matter is immediately reflected in the subtlety of cognitive faculties till a soul may reach a stage when it is bound to no longer rely on physical sensory organs, as in the case of clairvoyance or telepathy.

Umāsvāti (TBh 2.19) provides a rare definition by synonymy of cognitive faculties, which are also called attention (*prañidhāna*), cognitive activity (*āyoga*), the essence of the soul (*tad-bhāva*) and the soul’s transformation (*pariṇāma*). Since cognitive faculties make up the soul and stand in the relation of essential identity with the soul, it implies that any cognitive process which involves a series of changes in mental images of cognitive representations of cognised objects is tantamount to actual changes within the soul. Cognitive faculties are considered one of two kinds of transformation of the soul, the other being non-cognitive activity (*yoga*).

The epistemological model which Umāsvāti and Kundakunda draw is not that of one-to-one accurate representation of the world. Physical cognitive faculties, such as sensuous cognition and testimonial cognition, as well as non-physical cognitive faculties, such as clairvoyance and telepathy, do not guarantee error-free grasp of the world, the obscuring and disturbing filter being the karmic matter which envelops the potentially perfect soul. The soul is believed to regain the full capacity of its cognitive faculties once it attains perfection, which is the moment of omniscience and final liberation. Omniscience, therefore, is the culmination of all cognitive faculties as well as of mundane existence.

Since, from its beginnings, Jainism has primarily been an ascetic religious movement which floated the promise of ultimate perfection, epitomised in the idea of omniscience which the soul becomes (not achieves!), with which it also attracted followers, any model of epistemology envisaged by its representatives would have to take into account all corollaries of such an idea of omniscience and a peculiar understanding of the soul. These were the constraints which the religious dogmatics imposed on the philosophical thought of Jainism.

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* Work on this chapter has been generously supported by the National Science Centre of Poland (Research Project: History of Classical Indian Philosophy: non-Brahmanic Schools, National Science Centre, 2011/01/B/HS1/04014).

¹ See BALCEROWICZ (forthcoming₂). On the Ājīvikas, also see BASHAM (1951).

² Since this is the earliest Jaina typology of cognitions, I call it Model I, see: BALCEROWICZ (forthcoming₁).

³ BALCEROWICZ (forthcoming₁); the model is also found in a very late canonical text *Paṇṇavaṇā-sutta* (Paṇṇ 9.1912–1914).

⁴ For detailed analysis, see BALCEROWICZ (1989).

⁵ On the idea of omniscience in Buddhism and Jainism, see JAINI (1974).

⁶ BALCEROWICZ (2013: 362–368).

⁷ For the Jainas, these were primarily men.

⁸ I discuss the structure of the argument in: BALCEROWICZ (2013: 341–346).

⁹ See BALCEROWICZ (2013: 345–346).

¹⁰ For discussion see TATIA (1951: 70–80).

¹¹ The classification of cognitive faculties in PAS (e.g. nine verses of PAS 40–42) is quite different from that of NSā.

¹² This text does not systematise cognitive faculties at all.