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Einladung zum Vortrag

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A Road Not Taken in Indian Epistemology

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One of the most striking aspects of the debate about universals in Indian philosophy is that those who defended the reality of universals generally insisted that they are perceptible. Not only is this position opposed to that typically held by Western philosophers (at least until recently), but it seems to concede to the Buddhists the basic principle that for something to be real it must have causal properties; at the very least, it must be able to produce a cognition of itself.

In this talk I shall examine some of the arguments developed by the seventh-century Mīmāṃsā philosopher Kumārila Bhaṭṭa in favor of the perceptibility of universals (in the *Ākr̥ti-*, *Apoha-*, and *Vanavāda* chapters of his *Ślokavārttika*) while attempting to discern some of the deeper motives for adopting that position. I propose that Kumārila was led to do so by compelling philosophical considerations that emerged from his debate with the Buddhists (precursors to Dharmakīrti?) about the nature of meaning and inference.