Chapter-9

Development of the Theory of Meaning: From Dignāga to Dharmakīrti

The idea of *Apoha* is one which kept Buddhist, Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika thinkers busy for several hundred years: The Buddhist in explaining and defending it and the Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika in attacking and criticizing it, if not purposefully misunderstanding the same. However, the idea of *apoha* is one which is easily misunderstood, particularly when reduced to summary formulae such as: "*Apoha* is the theory that a word indicates an object merely through the exclusion of other objects."[1] Although apparently simple enough, such a description quickly leads to a mass of philosophical problem. Therefore, the objective of the present work is to have an incisive and in-depth study of the Buddhist theory of meaning, '*Apohavāda*', on the basis of primary source materials/texts such as: *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, *Pramāṇavārttika*, *Tattvasaṃgraha*, and *Apohasiddhih*. In the preceding chapter, I presented the brief summary of the three stages of *Apohavāda* from Dignāga to Ratnakīrti. The present chapter deals with the first stage, i.e., negativism of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti and tries to demystify many false assumptions associated with their doctrines in order to show their real significance. For this, my procedure will be the following: The first part mainly deals with

the four theories of import of word advocated by the realists, namely: *Vyāktivāda*, *ākṛtivāda*, *jātivāda* and *vyāktyākṛtijātivāda*. The second part ponders over some supporting concepts/key ideas/issues which when understood provide us access to the context of *apoha*. These key ideas/issues are: (i) The two levels of truth, (ii) Problem of universal, (iii) The notion of naming process, (iv) The notion of negation, and (v) The notion of exclusion. The third part constitutes the Sautrāntika background of the *apoha* theory which greatly influenced Dignāga, comprising Vyāḍi's view of differentiation, Bhartṛhari's concept of universal and Sautrāntika's concept of nominal negation. The fourth part is the very soul of this chapter. It devotes itself to the study of Dignāga's '*anyāpoha*' on the basis of his primary source text *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. It mainly includes the following issues, namely: (I) Parallelism between a linguistic symbol and the inferential symbol, (ii) Import of *Jātiśabda*, (iii) *Sāmānādhikaraṇya* (co-referential), and (i) Demonstrative *Apoha*. And finally, the fifth part presents the Dharmakīrti's *Apoha* theory, on the basis of his *Pramāṇavārttika*, where I will highlight the point that Dharmakīrti as usual marked an important new step in the development of the *apoha* theory and that he and Dignāga should not be treated just alike. And it was Dharmakīrti who discussed the theory of *apoha* in the greatest detail, but his successors could not cover all the details of his theory.

Four theories of Import of word

A more comprehensive clarification of Indian theories of meaning can be made by taking the parameters of individual (*vyākti*), configuration (*ākṛti*), universal (*jāti*), as follows:

Theories	Import of words	Upholders
1. Individualist Theory (vyāktivāda)	Individual[2]	Sāṃkhya
2. Configurationalist Theory (ākṛtivāda)	Configuration[3]	Jainas
3. Univeralist Theory (jātivāda)	Universal[4]	Mīmāṃsā
4. Theory of Composite Denotation (vyāktyākṛtijātivāda)	All three i.e. individual, universal, and configuration[5]	Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika

These theories are so inadequate that they invite serious objections, which I will discuss below:

Objections to Individualist theory[6]

1. The opponents of it maintain that if a word '*gau*' merely denotes an individual, say cow, we cannot employ it to convey another cow.

2. Again, the conception of all the individuals belonging to a class being absolutely impossible, the full relationship of a word with its meaning can never be apprehended and consequently the communication of thought by means of words would be impossible.

3. Further, in many instances, words refer to universals and not to individual alone. For example, law provides that man is not to be killed. If the word 'man' here means a particular man and not a man in general, a person may kill all men he comes across except any one particular man.

   For these reasons the Individualist theory of the import of word is concluded to be unsatisfactory.[7]

Objections to Configuration theory

1. The image of an object varies from individual to individual.

2. The image of an object is not a relation to an action such as sending.

3. If somebody is told to bring a cow, he does not bring the pictures of the earthen model of a cow.

4. Configuration is never common, but always particular.

5. If a word 'cow' denotes the configuration of a cow then we cannot use such expression as 'the cow is white', because it is absurd to call a shape as having a color.

   Hence, this is also unsatisfactory.[8]

Objections to Universalist theory

1. According to the Buddhists, if the universal is distinct from the individual, they must appear to be so, if they are regarded identical, what is the good of accepting *jāti* over and above *vyākti*?[9]

2. Patañjalī refutes this theory as follows:

   - A universal cannot have any gender or number and thus it cannot be regarded as the referent of a word.[10]

   - Again, commands and action are not possible with universals. A universal cow cannot be ordered tobe confined.[11]

   - If universal is one it cannot be present in different individuals and at different places at the same time.[12]

   - If this theory is accepted then the distinction of one individual would lead to the distinction of all.[13]

3. Naiyāyikas object that verbal expressions referring to motion, such as 'bring a cow' etc., cannot be said to refer to the universal.

Because the universal, being incorporeal (*amūrta*) by hypothesis, is incapable of motion.

Thus, this also is unsatisfactory.

Objections to Theory of composite denotation

According to the Buddhists, the contention of the Naiyāyika that universal (*jāti*), individual (*vyākti*) and configuration (*ākṛti*) are the connotation of words falls to the ground, because these conceptual vagaries are unsubstantial fictions, pure and simple.[14] Thus, this philosophical system rejects this whole parameters of class, individual, etc., and asserts that they are not relevant to the import of words.

But, it was not sufficient for the Buddhist logicians merely to criticize the realists account; they had to offer an account of their own. Therefore, they developed a unique semantic theory, '*Apohavāda*', according to which, the function of a word is to exclude that to which the word does not apply, the word 'cow', for instance, does not convey the knowledge of all the individual cows, as they are innumerable, nor does it convey the knowledge of a real universal 'cowness', as it is non-existent. All that it communicates is 'the exclusion of non-cow'. Then the meaning of both the words 'cow' and 'non-cow, consist in the negation of each other. But, before we construe the doctrine in detail as presented in his land mark work *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, it is imperative to understand certain supporting concepts/key ideas, which will enable us to much more adequately understand the meaning of *apoha*. Moreover, without these ideas which support the concept of *apoha*, it appears either as absurdly contradictory to common experience or as trivially true. These supporting concepts are the following:

1. The two levels of truth.

2. Problem of universal.

3. Notion of naming process.

4. Notion of negation.

5. Notion of exclusion.

1. *The two levels of truth/reality*

The distinction between a conventional or empirical reality (*saṃvṛti*) and the ultimate or transcendental reality (*paramārtha*) is very fundamental to Buddhism.[15] The empirical reality includes all kinds of mental and linguistic activities such as form-creating, symbolizing, hypostatizing, conceptualizing, categorizing, judgmental and discursive thinking, etc. Moreover, it is the world of universals (*sāmānayalakṣaṇa* or generally characterized phenomena or events). All our practical behavior can be reasonably accounted for, or explained, only at this level. Whereas the ultimate level is beyond concepts (*pratyaya*), hypostatizing thought (*kalpanā*), and language. Further, it is also the world of unique particulars (*svalakṣaṇa* or specifically characterized phenomena or events). Moreover, the point to be noticed is that here the difference between the two truths is not ontological, but conceptual. The true nature of reality, because of the intrinsic incapacity of mind to know it and minds further activity to engage itself in the interplay of concepts and judgments, is concealed and mind-created forms and other properties are superimposed on it. This is the conventional truth of the reality. But, when this subjective functioning of mind is analyzed and its hollowness is realized, the hypostatizing, form-creating and symbolizing activities dissipate.[16] Actually, there is a communication gap between the realist and the Buddhist, realist are talking

at ontological level, whereas Buddhist are at conceptual or empirical level. Thus, it is clear that the nature of truth and meaning varies in accordance with the type of world we talk about. And those who do not know the distinction between these two, can never know the true import of the Buddhist teaching.[17] Lastly, we can present the discussion so far in the following way:

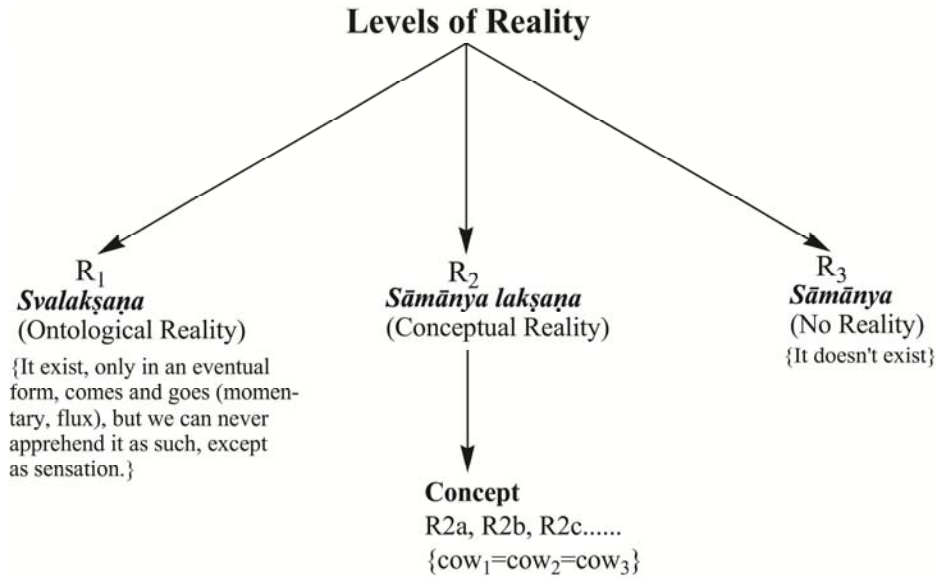| Ontology (*sattā*)	Knowable (*prameya*)	Epistemology (*pramāṇa*)	Field of Operation (*kārya kṣetra*)
1. Transcendental (*paramārtha*)	Unique particular (*svalakṣaṇa*)	Sensation/ perception (*pratyakṣa*)	Momentary particular (*nirvikalpaka*)
2. Phenomenal (*saṃvṛtti*)	Universal (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*)	Inference (*anumāna*)	Static Universal (*savikalpaka*)

2. *Problem of universal*

The concept of universal and the problem arising out of it form one of the most fundamental and debated topics of Indian as well as of western philosophy. The cardinal issues raised in all discussion concerning universals are:

1. What justification do we have for grouping many different things under the same general term?

2. Can we invent an independent term for any perceptible group of things?

3. Should there be a universal rule that everything must belong to a particular group, to which a perceiver can relate it?

4. Is there any entity which is, in some sense, present in all things?

Questions like these have given rise at various times in the history of philosophy to what is generally known as the problem of universal. The Buddhist rejects the reality of universals altogether. The universal, according to him, is an unreal fiction, as it is not given in sense-apprehension. It is the form constructed by the understanding in order to comprehend the flowing reality. Moreover, universal is a concept, having absolutely nothing corresponding to them in the real world. Further, Buddhist holds that universal, although not an extra mental reality is mistaken for 'being-with-existence' because its assigned properties are apprehended in many continuants as empirical particulars.

The decisive point to be noticed is that Dignāga uses the two terms, *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* (continuants) and *sāmānya* (universal) in different senses.[18] The former is used in the case of a continuant which is constructed on the bases of direct sense perception, while the latter is used for a universal property located in many continuants, The universal property is called universal having the characteristics of being one (*ekatva*), eternal (*nityatva*), and located in each instance of a certain class of continuants-cum-individuals (*pratyekaparisamīptī*).[19] Further, Dignāga accepts the empirical reality of *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, but denies the same in the case of *sāmānya*. This can be explained with the help of a following diagram:

Levels of Reality

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                    Levels of Reality


        R₁                    R₂                      R₃
   Svalakṣaṇa          Sāmānya lakṣaṇa            Sāmānya
 (Ontological Reality)  (Conceptual Reality)     (No Reality)
 {It exist, only in an eventual                  {It doesn't exist}
 form, comes and goes (momen-
 tary, flux), but we can never
 apprehend it as such, except
 as sensation.}                Concept
                               R2a, R2b, R2c......
                               {cow₁=cow₂=cow₃}
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Therefore, Dignāga does not commit to universal any ontological status of being-with-existence (*sat*) in either primary or secondary sense. If assigned, they will create a number of insurmountable philosophical problems, identity absurdities, confusions and perplexities. Universal thus is an explanatory presupposition, an imagination of mind.
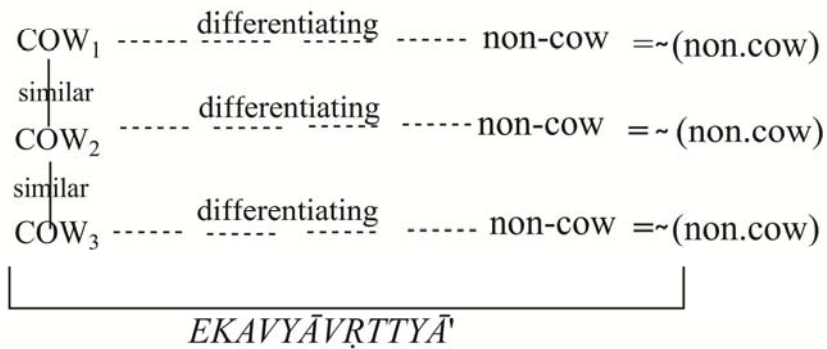
3. *Notion of naming process*

Dignāga rejects the notion of real resemblances among the pure particulars as the basis of application of general terms, as this would conflict with their absolute uniqueness. Nor, he argues, can it be that there is some one entity inhering in all instances of blue by virtue of which they are all properly called blue, since it is impossible to give a satisfactory account of the relation between universal and particular. The word itself is the thing that objects have in common. The Buddhists maintain that mind's intrinsic incapacity to know the fundamental entities as they are and the similarity in the appearances (*sādṛśya*), in respect of their causal efficiency, of such

entities passing away in a series gives rise to the false notion of a continuant like chair. All this happens unknowingly within the knower's cognitive constitution. But, when such continuants are further taken, in our day to day perception which is inferential and interpretive in nature, as similar in appearance, we conveniently classify them under one category, each member of which denoted by the same general term, say 'chair'. This can be explained with the help of the following diagram:
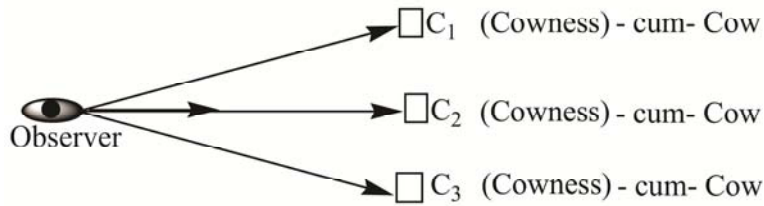
Buddhist View:

Functional Similarity is the basis of 'sameness'

$$COW_1 \text{ ------ differentiating ------ non-cow} =\sim(non.cow)$$

similar

$$COW_2 \text{ ------ differentiating ----- non-cow} =\sim (non.cow)$$

similar

$$COW_3 \text{ ------ differentiating ------ non-cow} =\sim(non.cow)$$

EKAVYĀVṚTTYĀ'

Realist View:

Universal is the basis of the Notion of sameness

$\square C_1$ (Cowness) - cum- Cow

$\square C_2$ (Cowness) - cum- Cow

Observer

$\square C_3$ (Cowness) - cum- Cow

C_1, C_2, C_3 = One class, because they Possess Cowness

We, Dignāga argues, call all individual cows as 'cow' because they function similarly, i.e., they differentiate each cow from non-cow. This is functional similarity without any ontological commitment and not because they possess universal 'cowness' as realist believes, which is the cause of the notion of sameness. Moreover, according to the Buddhist, they are not same but only similar and because of '*bhedāgraha*' (non-apprehension of difference) we are not able to distinguish between them. But, according to realist, it is '*ābhedāgraha*' (apprehension of non-difference among species) as they are similar or identical due to the presence of universal (cowness) in them which produced the concept of universal to which a word referred. Therefore, according to them the process is opposite.

The following diagram shows the realist scheme of relation among individual cows, universal cowness, and the word 'cow', which derives its meaning from it:
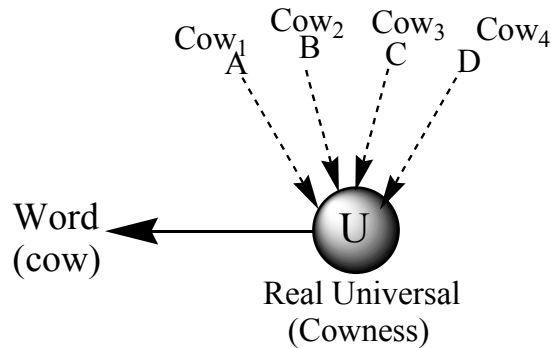
The whole matter is thus summed up from all this, it follows that naming process requires, two conditions, namely: (i) Incapacity to distinguish between the two objects, i.e., '*bhedāgraha*' and (ii) Performing same function of differentiating, cow from non-cow i.e., '*ekavyāvṛttyā*'.

Buddhist scheme of conceptualism will be:

Concept Universal
(Cowness)

Word ——————→ ⬤ **U**
(cow)

A   B   C   D
cow$_1$ cow$_2$ cow$_3$ cow$_4$
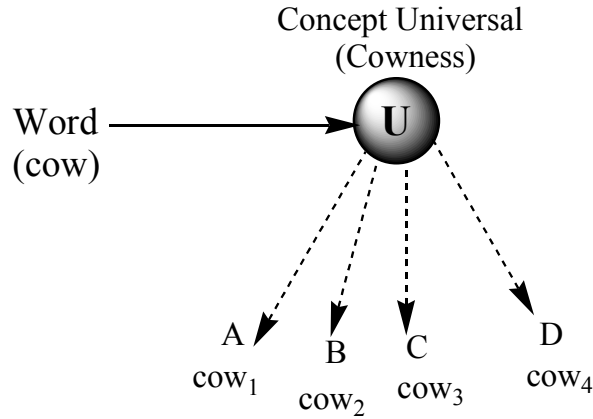
Further, Radhika Herzberger[20] summarizes Dignāga's point on the theory of name as follows:

(1) Names denote objects on the basis of shared features.

(2) What is denoted by a name on the basis of a shared feature is neither an intrinsic feature (*svalakṣaṇa*) nor a shared feature (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*), but objects which are members of a class.

(3) Names have multiple denotations.

(4) Demonstratives are the only mode of singular denotation.

(5) Two or more names can denote the same objects.

Since names are general terms and a name applies to a continuants-individual, we mistake the name for referring or denoting a genuine individual. Secondly, the general terms are instinctly taken as designating 'being-with-existent'. This commits us to their ontological status. Dignāga, in order to get rid of the problem of denotation in two cases - one, the case of a continuant-individual being taken as an instance of a 'universal-being' and second, the universal being itself, devised his *apohavāda* which safely

overcomes these difficulties. I shall dwell upon this issue in the fourth part of the present chapter.

4. *Notion of negation*

For the Buddhist logicians statements are of three kinds. The first kind is simple affirmative statements, e.g. 'This pen is red'. The second are simple negative statements, e.g. 'This pen is not blue'. The third kind is statements which are negative by implication, e.g. 'If this pen is red, then it is not blue'. It is this last conception of negation as negation by implication that is the key to understanding the assertion that the meaning of a word is the negation of the opposite. What is important here is that the meanings of the affirmative and negative statements are mutually dependent one upon the other and that the word differentiates everything in the world into two categories, e.g., pen and non-pen. This differentiation, based on the underlying connection between affirmations and negations as revealed by negation by implication, is the differentiation meant by Dignāga in his statement that the meaning of a word is the negation of the opposite.[21] More on it later on, in the next chapter of Śāntaraksṣta's theory of *apoha*.[22]

5. *Notion of exclusion*

The last concept that needs to be understood is one, which appears quite similar to *apoha*, and was propounded by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika/realist school. In realist's notion, universal is the cause of notion of sameness/commonness. From this position, however, it is difficult to explain the perception of differences. In order to explain differences, then 'exclusion' was theorized to be an actual universally present quality, which by being present in all things made them all different from one another. This quality of exclusion could easily be misunderstood as being much the same as *apoha*. But, the

difference between the two ideas lies in the different metaphysical systems which underline them. Exclusion is a material quality inhering in a real abiding external object. It is perceived by the subject as the distinction between objects which are otherwise similar, e.g., two bottles cast from the same mold. *Apoha,* on the other hand, is a description of the way in which concepts mean. *Apoha* is subjective and related to the way in which thought works, while exclusion is objective and related to the qualities of external objects. What is thought to be a real abiding by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is explained as only being a conceptual construct by the Buddhists.

Now, in the following pages, I intend to discus three aspects of *Apoha* theory, which will throw light on the fact that various theories might have influenced Dignāga in the philosophical scrutiny of the problem of meaning, but it was in all likelihood the Sautrāntika theory of nominal existence that provides him with the background for the formulation of the *apoha* theory

The Sautrāntika background of Apoha theory[23]

With a view to making some observation on the trends of philosophical thinking concerning meaning, which are assumed to have provided a background for the formulation of the theory of *anyāpoha*, I will direct my attention to the following three aspects of that theory, which M. Hattori presented in his article (1977):

1. The first is that the function of a word lies not in the direct reference to the object but in the differentiation of the object from other things (*apoha*).

2. The second aspect is that *apoha* is similar in nature to the universal, which is recognized as 'real' by the Naiyāyikas and buy the other realists.[24]

3. The third aspect is that *apoha* is not a real entity like the universal of the realists. It is a product of conceptual construction and has no objective reality.

The point to be noticed is that: Of the above-mentioned three aspects that characterize the *apoha* theory, the first originate from Vyāḍi's view of differentiation (*bheda*), the second from the Bhartṛhari's concept of universal and the third aspect seems to originate from Sautrāntika's concept of nominal existence. We will discuss this one by one in detail.

1. *Vyāḍi's view of differentiation*

The view that "a word function to differentiate the objects from other things" is known to have been held by Vyāḍi, a pre-Patañjalī Vaiyākaraṇa. Among the early Vaiyākaraṇas there was a divergence of opinion regarding the meaning of a word and that of a sentence.

Vyāḍi's view: According to Vyāḍi, the meaning of a word is any specific entity (i.e. any cow and not a particular cow) of a class and the meaning of a sentence consist in the differentiation (*bheda*) of each specific entity from the other in the same class.

This can be explained as follows:

Sentence: Cow is grazing the grass on the field.

Differentiating of C_1 from $C_2, C_3, C_4,$ and similarly G_1, g_1, F_1 from their respective classes.
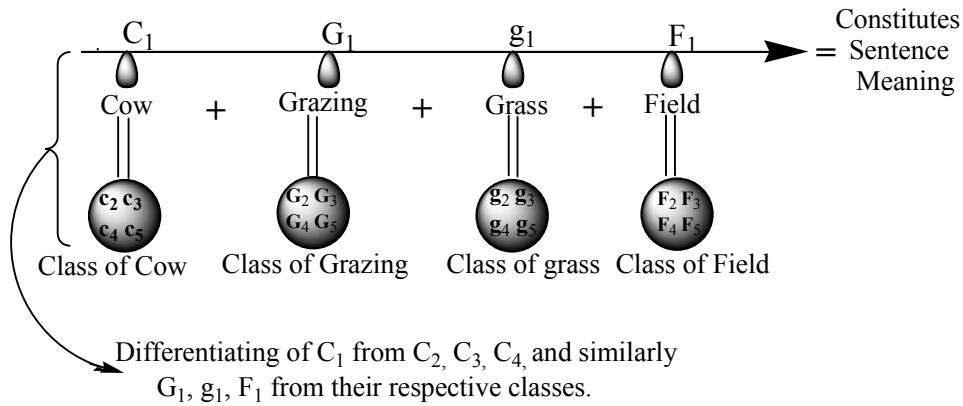
I.E., Totality of $C1 + G1 + g1 + F1$ = sentence meaning

Vājapyāyana view: The word refers directly to a universal and the meaning of a sentence is the relation of universals which are denoted by different words in the sentence (similar to Mīmāṃsā).

This can be explained as follows:

Universal of Cow, similarly UG, Ug, and UF are universal of their respective classes.
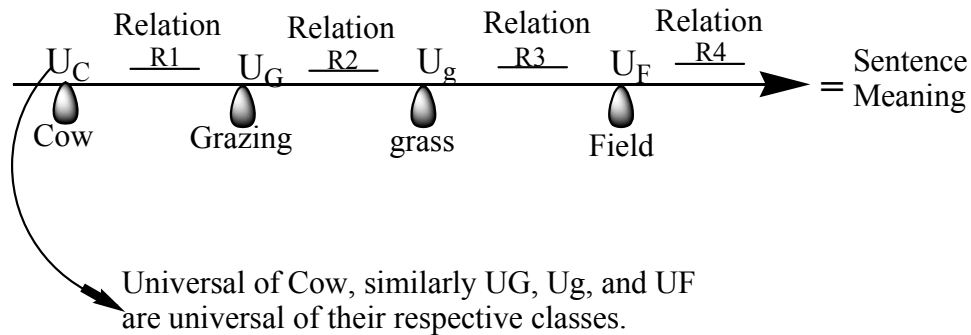
I.E., $R_IU_C + R_2U_G + R_3U_g + R_4U_F$ = Sentence Meaning

These two views are often contrasted with each other in the works of the Vaiyākaraṇas and the Mīmāṃsakas of the later period.25

It can be noted that the Vyāḍi's concept of differentiation (*bheda*) has a close affinity to the Buddhist concept of *apoha*. According to Vyāḍi the word 'cow' in the sentence 'Here is a white cow' (*atra śukla gauḥ*) refers to any cow regardless of its color, and the word 'white' (*śukla*), which is syntactically connected with 'cow' functions to differentiate the white cow from the cows of any other color. In the same way the word 'white' means anything that is white, and the word 'cow' connected with it functions to differentiate the white cow from the other white things.

But there is an essential difference between the two theories that should not be overlooked. According to Vyāḍi, the function of differentiating the object from other thing is attributed to the word, only when it is used in a sentence and not when it is uttered alone, outside the sentence. Whereas, Buddhists attribute the same function unconditionally to any single word.

2. *Bhartṛhari's concept of universal*

The view that the universal existing in many similar specifics constitutes the objects of a word necessarily implies that, when a word is applied to the object, the specificity of the object is disregarded.[26] Now the idea that verbal cognition ignores the specificity of the object is expressed by the Buddhist with the term *bhedāgraha*, i.e., the non-apprehension of difference among species. This term is almost synonymous to *apoha* for them, since *apoha* is commonly attributed to many specific entites which are totally different from one another. Worth noting is that Bhartṛhari uses the term '*bhedā`poha*'for that. He says, it is through neglecting the difference among species that one has the consciousness of resemblance or of identity in respect to them.[27]

However, unlike the Buddhist, Bhartṛhari firmly maintains that the universal has objective reality. He is acquainted with the view held by the Buddhist idealist that identity is subjectively ascribed to different objects on the basis of the identity of ideas,[28] but he does not endorse it. He insists that there are universals existing in cognition, in words and in objects.[29]

3. *Sautrāntika's concept of nominal existence*

The view that a word refers to universal, which is merely the concept constructed mentally is a special characteristics of the Buddhist and this thought constitutes an important aspect of the *apoha* theory. Among the Buddhists, the Sautrāntikas are known to have developed the idea of 'nominal existence' (*prajñapti-sat*), that which is conventionally assumed to exist but has no objective reality. Moreover, it seems likely that Dignāga is indebted to this Sautrāntika view of the universal for the formulation of his *apoha* theory. For instance, in *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, V.12,[30] Dignāga explain why many words are applied to a single object. They are not synonymous with each other because each word has its own meaning, denoting only one aspect of the object through excluding those things which do not have that aspect. In all likelihood Dignāga framed this thought on the basis of the Sautrāntika theory of nominal existence.[31] Thus; we can say that Dignāga is certainly benefited from the Sautrāntika's concept of nominal existence, while shaping his philosophical doctrine.

Now, we have reached to the soul part of this chapter and the preceding discussion will paves the way for understanding this part of Dignāga's *anyāpoha*. At the word level, Dignāga (ca. 480-540 A.D.), the Yogācāra epistemologist, offered us a theory of meaning known as '*anyāpoha*' in his landmark work *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. This meaning theory

entails many logical, epistemological and metaphysical problems and for this reason it was discussed practically by every philosopher of the post-Dignāga period. *Apoha* played a very significant role in the formulation of many logical concepts. However, because of its formal nature it has been the theory most misunderstood, not only by its opponents, but also in some cases by a few Buddhist thinkers. The reason behind this is mainly that when Dignāga first promulgated this theory of *Apoha* establishing the negative essence of meaning in the fifth chapter of his *PS*, he seems to have explained it in terms of pure negation without any positive reference. Many works on the subject are available in Tibetan translation,[32] but it is mainly from its representation by the opponents Buddhism like Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, Uddyotakara and Bhāmaha that we get some clear ideas about the original form of the theory of *Apoha*. They all criticize the theory on the assumption that it is a purely negative approach. But, in the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, Śāntarakṣita suggests that when Dignāga denied the positive import of words, it was on the ground that from the logical point of view, words did not have any reference to a positive entity.[33] So, there is a need to construe the doctrine of '*anyāpoha*' in detail as presented in his *magnum opus Pramāṇasamuccaya*.

Dignāga's theory of meaning

The theory of *apoha* is primarily directed against the pluralistic conception of a static reality in which universals are postulated as physical facts. Moreover, this a theory of explanation sought to explain the true meaning and functioning of *kalpanā*-generated linguistic entities, their

interrelationship, and our ontological commitment to what they stand for. Thus, the *apoha* theory seeks to establish the following points:

1. That concepts and words have no direct relation to reality; the belief in their objective reference is a transcendental illusion.

2. The objects of conceptual cognition are universals which are pure thought-constructions.

3. That conceptual knowledge, though ultimately false, is empirically valid, because it has an indirect causal relation to reality.

Now, before pondering over the fifth chapter of *PS*, it is imperative to understand the Dignāga's position, which holds '*apoha*' as 'total negation of all other's (*anyāpoha*) and accepts the existence of something positive only implication,[34]through a diagram:
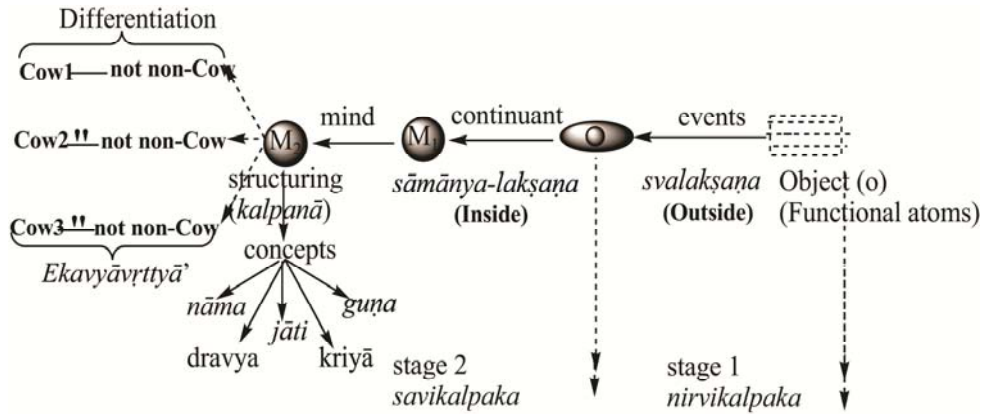
According to Dignāga, reality is eventual but in the perceptual process of the subject, the flow of the eventual reality is taken as a spatio-temporal continuant, so this flow in constructed as a continuant in the subject, mind. And they are further associated with conventional concept and language like '*nāmajātyadiyojanā*'. Moreover, the common notion of cow is established in different cows due to performing similar function of

differentiating cow from non-cow and not because of a universal 'cowness' as realist believes.

With this much of background, now we are in a better position to start with our analysis of fifth chapter of *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, as presented by Hayes in his book (1988).

The discussion of words and their applicability is the principle subject of discussion in the fifth chapter of *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. The chapter comprises fifty verses, not counting those that Dignāga quotes from other authors that deal with a variety of topics all of which have some connection with language. Beginning with the contention that a linguistic sign functions in the same way as an inferential sign (*liṅga*) to produce general knowledge, Dignāga then discusses the content of that general knowledge so produced. What this amounts to is a discussion of what it is that an individual linguistic sign such as a word expresses. This discussion takes up the first 13 verses, or about the quarter of the chapter. Following this is a discussion of co-reference (*sāmānādhikaraṇya*), the principle that two or more words with different intensions may apply to the same object or set of objects, and the qualification relation (*viśeṣaṇaviśeṣyabhāva*) whereby one linguistic expression qualifies or narrows the scope of others. This discussion as a whole deals with the problem of how a string of symbols functions together to produce knowledge of complex states of affairs, and it takes up the next 12 verses. The next 13 verses after that deal with the principle that words applicability to a particular object precludes the applicability of certain other words to that same particular. The key problem here is to determine which words are precluded and which are not precluded once a given word is applied to an object or set of objects. The

final quarter of miscellaneous questions such as the meanings of sentences, the meaning of singular terms, and the learning of the meanings of words. Since it is in the first three quarters of the chapter that Dignāga's most original ideas emerge, I shall concentrate on what is contained there only. In the very first *kārikā* of the fifth chapter of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* called "*Apohapariccheda* or *Anyāpoha-parīkṣā*", Dignāga discusses the nature and function of a word:

> *na pramāṇāntaraṃ śabdam anumānāt tāthāhi tat/*
>
> *kṛtakatvādivat svārtham anyāpohena bhāṣate//*[35]

Word-generated knowledge is not a different source of knowledge from inferential knowledge; the word designates its own object by negating other than what it designates just as the inferential sign having been genuine establishes what is to be proved.[36]

The *kārikā* clearly says that the process of knowing derived from a word or a linguistic sign is similar to the process of knowing from inferential sign. It is important to bear in mind that this statement is made with reference to what knowledge a person acquires upon hearing a symbol used. The claim is that a verbal symbol tells its hearer something about the object to which it is applied in the same that a piece of evidence tells its observer something about the object in which it occurs as a property, and moreover the nature of what each of these two things tells about its respective object is essentially the same in each case. Thus, what Dignāga saw as the parallelism between linguistic sign and inferential sign requires some elucidation.

We may begin with some fairly obvious observation of what sorts of things are required in order for a person to acquire knowledge as a result of hearing a verbal symbol, as quoted by Hayes:

Characteristics of the hearer

1. The hearer of the symbol must know that the conventions that have been established with respect to the use of that symbol to stand for certain things.

2. The hearer must know that the speaker of the symbol that the hearer hears is using the symbol in conformity with those conventions.

   Similarly, in order for a word (linguistic sign) to be competent to yield knowledge, it must have the following three characteristics:

1. The word must be applicable to the subject of discourse. (*pakṣa*)

2. The word must be applicable to objects other than the subject of discourse that have that which is to be learned through the word. (*sapakṣa*)

3. The word must be restricted in application to that which is to be learned through it. (*vipakṣa*)[37]

   With this much of background, now we should dwell upon the following issues mentioned in the outset, one by one in detail.

1. Linguistic sign = Inferential sign

Dignāga first got the idea of *anyāpoha*, while working on the essence of the inference. He then applied it to verbal knowledge (*śabda*) and came to believe that *anyāpoha* was the common function of both inferential and verbal knowledge; therefore he could include verbal knowledge under the category of inference. That an inferential mark in the case of inference

proves that which is to be proved by means of the 'negation of others' is discussed by Dignāga in the second chapter of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (*Svarthānumāna*). Take for instance the case in which one infers fire on a mountain from smoke, its inferential mark. In this case the 'fire' is not a real, blazing fire possessing various attributes such as flames, heat, and soon, but fire in general, common to all individual fires. But fire in general does not exist as an independent entity, and is nothing but a constructed through the 'exclusion of others', or the negation of every thing that is not fire. Dignāga's view regarding inferential marks was: 'An object has various properties, but they are not cognized in their totality by means of an inferential mark. It (i.e., an inferential) produces the cognition of those (properties) to which it is connected through the exclusion of others.[38]

The word functions in exactly the same way to denote its object. Objects have various aspects, but (the diversity of the object) is not understood in its totality by the word. It (i.e., the word) produces the effect of the exclusion of others in accordance with its relation (with the object).[39] Let us take the example of a particular kind of tree. People may use the word *khadira* to refer to it, but they can also refer to it by terms such as tree (*vṛkṣa*), substance (*dravya*), earthy (*parthiva*), or existent (*sat*). These words all refer to the same object. In other words, they merely refer to one aspect among the various properties of the object, such as its *khadira*-ness, treeness, and substanceness. If words referred to the object itself, this would mean either the various words applied to the same object were all synonymous or that the object denoted by these various words was one and yet had many distinct realities. Therefore, the function of the word is deemed to consist solely in differentiating the referent from other things.

The word 'tree' (*vṛkṣa*) function solely to differentiate the object from 'non-trees' (*avṛkṣa*) and there does not exist any real entity corresponding to this word Thus, the gist of Dignāga's *apoha* theory is not that the word does no more than denote the object through the 'exclusion of others' (*anyāpoha, vyavaccheda, vyāvṛtti*.) or denote that portion (*amśa, bhāga*) of the object that is differentiated from other things (with object itself, color or form different from the other aspects).[40]

Moreover, in a smoke-fire inference, we infer from seeing smoke present on a hill to fire's presence on the hill. In the usage of the word 'tree', the word denotes its referent through its meaning which determines the referent. We are not sure whether wherever is smoke there must be fire, so we can only bare the inference on the non-observation of smoke's being present where fire is absent.[41] Similarly, we are not sure whether everything denoted by the word 'tree' must be determined by the appearance it evokes. We can only bare the signification of the word on the non-observation of its application to non-trees.

In this way, Dignāga showed parallelism between linguistic sign and inferential sign because of a functional similarty between the two. The general question of why one should adopt an *apoha* interpretation, or why one should accept rather than properties, is answered by showing that there is no other suitable candidate for what it is that linguistic sign express. So the discussion now turns to why it is that the individual (*bheda* or extension), the genus (*jāti* or intension), the relation between the two (*sambandha*), and the locus of the genus (*jātimat* i.e., an individual qualified by a genus, although this last term is interpreted in various ways) cannot act as the referent of a word.[42]

2. *Import of Jātiśabda*

In the *apoha* chapter of *PS*, Dignāga puts forth a series of arguments to show that a class-word, such as 'lotus' expresses neither particulars (*bheda*) or a class-character (a genus) nor the character's relation to a particular or a particular possessing the character, and concludes that a class-word as well as quality-word, etc., signifies its own objects by means of preclusion of others.[43] Moreover, as I pointed out earlier that Śāntarakṣita also supports Dignāga's claim that a particular cannot be cognized through verbal symbol in his *TS* 871-879. And, on the question of relation which holds between the words and the things symbolized by them Dignāga is very close to Bhartṛhari's view on the same topic.[44] And lastly Dignāga examines this relation and establishes that it is not instantiation,[45] because (a) it is grammatically subordinate, (b) applied figuratively, (c) it is not the case of analogy since there is a difference in the form of an idea, as in the metonymical application of thing to a servant.[46]

3. *Sāmānādhikaraṇya*

Dignāga extends the domain of 'exclusion' (*apoha*) from lexical meaning to the meaning of complex expression like compounds and sentences. In the stock example, "blue lotus", a word that names a property excludes those objects that lack that property, i.e., 'blue' excludes all those objects which are 'non-blue' and so it divides the universe into the class of things to which the word is applicable (*anvaya*) and the class of thing to which the word is not applicable (*vyatīreka*). If the two words are combined to form a larger unit of expression then each of them excludes some of the items from other's domain. Thus the word 'blue' in the compound 'blue lotus' (*nīlotpala*) eliminates all those things to which the word 'blue' is not

applicable, while the word 'lotus' eliminates from the extension of the word 'blue' all those blue things to which the word lotus is not applicable. In theory, any two words will remain in grammatical agreement (*sāmānādhikaraṇya*) unless their mutual exclusion forms a null set. Thus, Dignāga argues that it is his doctrine that satisfactorily explains some common fact about usage of words. As, mentioned above, if we use the words blue and lotus to express a 'blue lotus' the two words should be co-referential (*sāmānādhikaraṇya*). Yet, none of the alternative approaches, according to Dignāga, can explain the fact. Moreover, the word blue and lotus while differing in what they exclude, become converged (*samūdita)* at one place, i.e., a blue lotus, and so are co-referential.[47]

4. *Demonstrative Apoha*

So far we have focused on class-words and quality-words, which for Dignāga, are too generic to pick up a particular object. But can a demonstrative like 'This' or 'That' properly express a perceptual particular? The question is whether general words alone need *apoha* operation and a demonstrative is immune to *apoha* negation because the demonstrative does not denote its object through a shared property but does so directly.[48]

We can answer this question with the help of an example of an affirmative sentence which is frequently used in our everyday transaction: 'This is a chair'. We can analyze this sentence in a realist way as follows: 'This', which is a demonstrative, ostensibly refers to a continuant-individual which has a spatio-temporal status and when used in isolation does not assign any predicate to the object. But in the above sentence it is predicted of 'chair' which is a generic name (*jātiśabda)* and which qualifies 'this', the individual. When the predicate 'chair' is used, 'this' becomes the individual

chair and the predicate 'chair', becomes the universal 'chair'. The same sentence can be paraphrased as 'This chair has chairness' which says three things:

1. There is an individual chair.
2. There is universal chair located individual chair.
3. There is a possessive relation between individual chair and universal chair.[49]

For Dignāga, as long as a demonstrative is used and no *Kalpanā*-generated descriptive or predicative words (*nāmajātyādi*) are used, there is no need of applying the *apoha* operation. In Buddhism, the referent of this, a continuant-individual also is constructed and denied entity, but it has its pragmatic use in our world. Therefore, there is no need of subjective a demonstrative to *Apoha* operation which in Dignāga's case is a purely linguistic device.[50]

Further the complexity and strength of the *apoha* doctrine seem to consist in its multiple functions.

1. It shows the negative indicatibility as well as positive ineffability of real.
2. It sheds on the interdependency of words and meanings, while accounting for certain linguistic facts underlying the expressive capacity of language.
3. It de-substantiates the notion of *artha*, dispensing with universal, and so provides a way of escaping the spell language casts on our mind.

Thus, significantly, Dignāga re-understood the expressive function of language with his *apoha* doctrine, while keeping in view the

integrity and utility of ordinary language. All in all, early Wittgenstein advocated his readers to take his propositions as a ladder for climbing up, then throw away the ladder and keep silence.[51] We need not to throw away the ladder but just keep it there. We need not for sake language but just need to use language in a way without being, so to speak, used by language. One way out is to understand a word-type as that which is differentiated from other, word-types[52] and understand a word signifying its own *artha* as done through precluding other *arthas*. We are then declined to substantiate the word, its meaning and the real thing and there is no need for positing universal.

Now, we have arrived at the fifth part of our chapter, where my concern will be, to show whether Dharmakīrti made any change in Dignāga's *apoha* theory or not.

Dharmakīrti's *Apoha* theory

My examination of Dharmakīrti's *apoha* theory focuses on a single distinctive feature of his theory, namely, the a priori factor present in our consciousness beginninglessly. I make here no pretense of giving a complete account of his theory; rather, my aim is to present a few among the many revealing points of the theory.

Pramāṇavārttika is a celebrated commentary on Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. But it is more than a text-based commentary. Dhamakirti on many issues differs from Dignāga and expounds his own views. For our present discussion the third chapter (*Svarthānumāna*) is more important where he discusses the different nature of linguistic sign.

We shall also select some pertinent *kārikās* from the first two chapters (*Pramāṇasiddhih* and *Pratyakṣaṃ*) of this significant work.

Dharmakīrti's improvement upon Dignāga's empiricist and phenomenological theory of meaning is that he tried to introduce an a priori factor to account for certainity in our knowledge and understanding. But the admission of an a priori element does not make universal a being (*bhāva*) in the spatio-temporal-causal system. Dharmakīrti's motive was to bring in at least conceptual certainity into our knowledge and understating so that our future behaviour is guided and predicatability is established in everyday transaction.[53]

Moreover, on the issue of the process of designating attributes to a continuant-individual, Dharmakīrti on the basis of a priori principles which are also in essence mental, talk of the discussion of own nature (*svabhāva*) and other-nature (*parabhāva*) at conventional level, which at ultimate level is not possible. All beings (*bhāva*), he says, maintain their identities according to their own natures. They are subject to differentiation on the basis of own-nature. But, when we fail to distinguish such different beings because of '*bhedāgraha*', we then succumb to the a priori principle. This is a matter of necessity.[54] Furthermore, in the chapter of inference (*Svarthānumāna*) where Dharmakīrti concretizes the theory of meaning: he states that by means of exclusion the word only indicates the difference between the two sets as

(Cow) $\Longrightarrow$ not (non-Cow)
Finite or   Infinite
Single set

Words have potential only to explicate this difference. They don't posit any essential nature of the entity (*vastu-dharma*). Words are included in inference but this does not amount to expounding that a word is equal to inference. In that case words will become an independent means of acquiring knowledge. Infact, words in Buddhist thought are related only to inference for one's self. Hence in *apoha* the nature of signification through a word is not contradicted by other means of knowledge.[55] *Apoha* refers to conceptual meaning (*bauddhartha*) through which the contextual elimination takes place in the mind.[56] Words do not establish any positive and real entity in themselves.[57] Further, Dignāga devoted most of his discussion of *apoha* to the analysis of the object of verbal knowledge or the meaning of the word, whereas, Dharmakīrti freely applied the principle of *anyāpoha* to the various problems related to conceptual knowledge (*vikalpa*), such as the object, the essence, the origin and the function of conceptual knowledge. Thus, to Dharmakīrti, it is a sort of 'working hypothesis' which is equally applicable to many problems of ontology, epistemology and logic.[58]This concludes our investigation of Dharmakīrt's *apoha* theory.[59]

But, this *Apoha* theory of negative approach towards meaning has been vehemently criticized by scholars like Uddyotakara, Kumārila and Bhāmaha. When, Dignāga declared that word imports a negation and neither an objective universal nor a particular, he only emphasized this negative implication of verbal import. He did not mean that negation was the primary and apparent connotation. But, Uddyotakara and Kumārila misunderstood the real significance of Dignāga's doctrine and raised objections which were uncalled for and irrelevant. We end this discussion

here because a comprehensive discussion of this constitutes the core subject matter of the next chapter. In the next chapter, I will sketch out the arguments given by the realists and the responses given by the Śāntarakṣita with special reference to *Tattvasaṃgraha*.

Notes and References

1. M. Hattori (1968), p.12.

2. According to this theory, the individual is the import of word, because for all practical purposes reference is made to the individual and never to the universal. The *Nyāya Sūtras* enumerate some such expressions. *NS*. II. ii, 61:

   yā śabda samūḥa tyāga parigraha saṁkhyā viddhyupacaya varṇa samāsa anubandhānaṃ vyaktāv upacārād vyaktiḥ.

3. This theory holds that it is the configuration (*ākṛti*) which is denoted by a word, because the determination of the exact nature of a thing is dependent on it. *NS*. II, ii, 64.

   'ākṛtistadapeksatvāt sattvavyavasthānasiddaḥ'.

4. The main arguments advanced in favor of this theory are: (i) that the universal is apprehended before the individual in verbal cognition, (ii) that a word is not found to give rise to a mixed conception, and (iii) that when the order, e.g., 'bring a cow' is given, the person receiving the order brings any cow he chooses. For more detail, see Pūrva Mīmāṃsā by Ganganath Jha, p.146.

5. Gautama, the founder of the Nyāya system, thinks that all these three taken together constitute the meaning of a word. (*vyāktyākṛtijātayastu padārthaḥ- Nyāya Sūtra* 2.2.65). It is not individual alone when we refer to but it is also a reality that an individual always participate in a universal, since a cow is a cow on account of the fact that it has something which makes it known as a cow i.e., universal 'cowness'. Moreover, it necessarily presents the image of the concerned object.

There is no hard and fast rule concerning the predominance and subordinating of these elements of meaning.

6. Śāntarakṣita also criticized the individualist theory in his *Tattvasaṃgraha*, Ch.XV, *K*. 871- 879. We will discuss it in depth in the next chapter.

7. See *NM*.I, p. 320.

8. For detail, see Satkari Mookerzee (1975), pp. 107-110.

9. *pṛthākatta vyakitato jatiḥ- Śāstradīpika* by Parthasārathi Miśra. 1.1.5.5.

10. *tathā ca liṅga-vacana-siddhiḥ- Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjalī- 1.2.3.64.

11. *codanāsu tasyārambhāt-* ibid.

12. *na caikam anekādhikaraṇstham yugaput-* ibid.

13. *vināśa pradurbhāva ca sarvam lathā syat kim? vinaśyacca prāduṣyācca śvā mṛta iti śvā nāme loke na pracaret-* ibid.

14. Śāntarakṣita also criticized this theory in *Tattvasaṃgraha*, *K*-881-884.

15. See, Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamika Kār*ikā, XXIV.8:
    dve satya samupāśritya buddhānāṃ dharmade śanā/
    lokasaṃ-vrtisatyaṃ ca satyaṃ ca paramārthatḥ//

16. For details, see Prasad, H.S- Emptiness of language and Meaning: A Mādhyamika Formulation.

17. *MK*, XXIV.9-
    ye 'nayor na vijānanti vibhāyaṃ satyayor dvyoḥ/
    te tattvaṃ na vijānanti gambhiraṃ buddhaśāsāne//

18. Unlike Raddhika Herzberger (1986), pp.166-67.

19. *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, V, *K*.36d: *jātidharmavyavasthitīḥ*.

20. R.Herzberger (1986), p.168.

21. D. Sharma (1969), pp. 34-35.

22. Śāntarakṣita discusses two types of negation, namely: Simple (*niṣedha*) and Special (*paryudāsa*) and again this special is of two types conceptual (*buddhyātmaka*) and ontological (*arthātmaka*) in his *TS*, *k-*1002-1003. We will discuss this at greater length in the next chapter.

23. For detail, see M. Hattori (1977), pp. 46-58.

24. Ibid., *Vṛtti*: *sarvatrabhedād āśrayasyānucchadād kṛtsnārthaparisamāpteśca yathākramaṃ jātidharmā ekatva (nityatva) pratyekaparissamaptilakṣaṇa apoha evāvatiṣṭhante*....The universal is one (*eka*) although it exists within many specific entities, it is eternal (*nītyā*) existing at any time, and it occurs as an undivided whole in each individual entity (*pratyekaparisamāptī*). All these characteristic features apply to *apoha*.

25. For detail, see K.K. Raja (1963), p. 191.

26. *Vākyapadīya* III.1: *Jātisamuddeśa*.

27. Ibid., III.1.98.

28. Ibid., III.1.99: *anupravṛtteti yathābhinnā pratiyate/*
artho vyā vṛttarūpo pi tathā tattvengṛhyate//

29. Ibid., III.1.101:
jñānaśabdārthaviṣayā viśeṣā ya vyavasthitaḥ/
teṣaṃ duravadhāratvāt jñānādyakatvadarśanam//

30. *bahudhāpya abhidheyasya na śabdat sarvathā gatiḥ/*
svasaṃbandhānurūpyeṇa vyavacchedārthakāryasau//

31. Dignāga composed a short treatise dealing with the Sautrāntika theory of nominal existence, the *Upādāyaprajñaptiprakaraṇa*. Where he clarified nominal existence in three categories: Whole (*samūha*),

continuant (*saṃtāna*), and particular states or aspect (*avasthāviśeṣa*). For detail, see M. Hattori (1977), p.54.

32. Unfortunately, however the work where he is supposed to have first enunciated the doctrine, entitled *PS*, was lost in Sanskrit.

33. *TS*-1097:

    asaṃbhaso vidher ultaḥ sāmānyāder asambhavāt/

    śabdānāṃ ca vikalpānāṃ vastuto viṣayatvataḥ//

34. *PS*, V.2- The meaning of a word consists in a repudiation of the discrepant meaning.

35. *PS*, V.I.

36. See, Prasad, H.S. (2001), *JIPR*, pp. 131-162.

37. For instance, the three characters the word 'tree' should bear to be a genuine sign with the respect to a particular tree.

    (i) The word 'tree' is used to express the particular tree.

    (ii) It expresses at least a thing qualified by a conceptual tree-appearance (*pratibhāsa*), one that is evoked in one's mind when one hears the word.

    (iii) It never expresses things qualified by appearances-other than the tree-appearances, that are associated with its contrary words. This is a way of saying that it is never applied to what is dissimilar.

    Here (iii) may be rephrased as: It expresses a thing by precluding things qualified by other appearances, or it expresses a thing qualified by the preclusion of non-trees.

38. *PS*, II, *k*.13.

39. *PS,* V, *k*. 12.

    bahudhāpy abhidheyasya na śabdāt sarvathāgatiḥ/

svasaṃbandhānurūpyena vyavacchedārthakāry asau//

40. Dignāga succinctly expresses this idea of a hierarchy of concepts at *PS*, V.35. For example, Tree=not non-tree (include chariot but not maple or oak). Maple=not non-maple (excludes not only chariots (and everything else in the world that is not a tree), but also all trees like oaks, poplars etc.). For details, see Dan Arnold (2006) *JIP* 34: 415-478.

41. For details, see Katsura Shoryū (1991), p.140.

42. Hattori (2002), pp. 137-146.

43. The Sanskrit verse reads,

    na jātiśabdo bhedānāṃ anātmyavyabhi carataḥ/

    vācako yogājatuorvā bhedārthair apṛthakśrutaḥ//

44. Bhartṛhari posit three views regarding the relation:

    (i) That the relation between the expression and expressed is fixed.

    (ii) That the principal information that an expression conveys is of its own form.

    (iii) That a relation is essentially inexpressible.

    Dignāga rejects the first view because any concept of permanence goes against the basic premises of Buddhist philosophy. Dignāga does not say anything clearly regarding the second view and is in full agreement with third view. For detail, see Bhartṛhari, *VP*, I.25.

45. Haye's translation of the Sanskrit term *tadvat*.

46. *PS*, V.4.

47. For detail, see Chien-Hsing Ho (1996), *JIP*-24, pp. 541-562.

48. R. Herzberger (1986), p.170. For Herzberger a demonstrative directly denotes a spatio-temporal object, which is neither an *svalakṣaṇa* nor a *sāmānyalakaṣaṇa*.

49. For detail, see Prasad, H.S. (2001).

50. But, in the article, 'How not to avoid speaking'- A free exposition of Dignāga's *Apoha* doctrine, Cein-Hsing Ho says that demonsttatves are not immune from *apoha* negation '(i.e., the phrase this is a picture' would mean (this – not that is) not non-picture).Further, he has given various reasons for this. For detail see Chien-Hsing Ho (1996) *JIP* 24, pp.541-562.

51. Wittgenstein, (1971), p.151.

52. Dignāga applied the apoha method to the word (*śabda*) as well as to its reference.

53. This point is already discussed at great length in the 6th Chapter of Dharmakīrti's improvement upon Dignāga's work.

54. This view is presented by Prof. H.S. Prasad in (2001), which I am paraphrasing here.

55. *PV*, III.46.

56. Ibid., III.88.

57. Ibid., III.91-2.

58. For detail, see Shoryū Katsura- '*Jñānaśrīmitra* on *Apoha*', B.K. Matilal and R.D. Evans (eds.), Buddhist Logic and Epistemology (1986), pp. 171-183.

59. For detail, see R. Herzberger (1986), pp. 211-239. She has elaborated these and many other related issues. It is not possible here to evaluate her arguments in interpreting Dharmakīrti.