

# Dharmakīrti's Improvement upon Dignāga's Work

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In the preceding chapter, I determined/concluded that Dignāga made mistakes and he was severely criticized for that. Now in the present chapter I intend to highlight the Dharmakīrti's improvement upon Dignāga's mistakes in order to make his system acceptable by addressing the following two questions:

1. What are the mistakes, Dharmakīrti thought that Dignāga had made?
2. How did Dharmakīrti correct these mistakes?

The first question which I have posed above, is already answered in the last chapter and in this chapter my concern is mainly with the second question, i.e., to investigate the measures taken by Dharmakīrti to correct it. Since the main objective of this chapter is to show, that Dignāga's work attained its final purpose in Dharmakīrti's work. I do not mean to suggest that Dignāga entirely fails to respond, but only that his response appears inchoate and not fully worked out, particularly in comparison with the works of Dharmakīrti. Ernst Steinkellner's judgment here is insightful: 'It is Dignāga's service for the development of Indian logic to have formalized the logical nexus for ground and consequence in fact rules it is Dharmakīrti's service to have answered the question about the ground for the logical nexus'.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, even Jinendrabuddhi and modern scholars Stecherbatsky and Hattori have similarly maintained and read Dignāga as an

incomplete Dharmakīrti.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, there is a need to have a deeper understanding of Dharmakīrti's tradition/epistemology as presented in his *magnum opus Pramāṇavārtika (PV)*, originally written as a commentary on Dignāga's major work, the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*.<sup>3</sup> My procedure for this would be the following: Firstly, I will discuss the nature and characteristics of valid cognition in Dharmakīrti's tradition. Secondly, I will highlight Dharmakīrti's improvement upon Dignāga's work, which will help to establish the Dharmakīrti's epistemology and ontology. Thirdly, I will deal with the problem that, How can perception be valid if its reliability depends on perceptual judgments, which are conceptual and hence in principle not valid (since they are not inferential)? For this, I will delineate two distinctive answers to this question among Dharmakīrti's commentators. One is a revisionist trend associated with Dharmottara (750-810), and the other is a more literal interpretation associated with the Tibetan polymath Sa-skya Paṇḍita (1182-1251). Where the former seeks to coordinate perception and conception through modifying the understanding of perception; the latter struggles with the problem raised by Dharmakīrti's system without modifying its basic terms. Fourthly, I will seek to highlight that Dharmakīrti's concept of '*Arthakriyākāritva*' which shows a way as to how despite the limitation of sense perception, we can bridge the gap between the real perceptual and the constructed conceptual. Lastly, my discussion attempts to capture the range and movement of Dharmakīrti's whole tradition and to explore the following Dharmakīrti's conclusion:

1. Valid knowledge exists and is verifiable through successful activity.
2. Knowledge is purposive and applicable to attain human goals.

3. Non-contradiction/non-deceptiveness and causal efficiency are the two criteria of the validity of knowledge.
4. Valid cognition could only be achieved and verified through direct cognition (*pratyakṣa*) and indirect cognition (*anumāna*).
5. Correspondence (*sārūpya*) between the objects and knowledge is the sole criterion of truth and falsity of cognition.
6. The ultimate reality of sense data (*svalakṣaṇa*) is beyond all doubts. Thus, the unique event is ever-dynamic, self-destructive energy manifesting itself in the form of assemblages of atom, which stimulates our different senses and fulfills human goals.

Besides, Dharmakīrti does indeed make several original contributions to Indian thought, but his intention is just to formulate a coherent system at once interpretative of our every day experience (*vyavaharīka*) and true to age-long Buddhist precepts.

Now with this much of background, we are in a better position to start with the first part of my chapter, i.e., to examine valid cognition which is central to Dharmakīrti and his tradition.

### **Valid Cognition (*saṃyagjñāna*)**

Briefly, like his model Dignāga, Dharmakīrti (600-660 A.D.) is essentially preoccupied with questions regarding the nature of knowledge or rather its Indian equivalent *pramāṇa*. The interpretation of the word *pramāṇa* reflects itself the debate among Buddhist and Hindu thinkers. For the former, *pramāṇa* means 'valid cognition', whereas for the latter, this word refers to 'means of valid cognition' in accordance with its grammatical (instrumental) form. Regardless of how the term *pramāṇa* is interpreted,

the essential preoccupation of the thinkers whose ideas we are examining is epistemological. Indian epistemology examines the nature of *pramāṇa*, its scope, basis, reliability, and the like. This is the central concern of Dharmakīrti and his followers.

In the introductory verse of *Nyāyabindu*, Dharmakīrti spells out the significance of the study of valid cognition (*saṃyajñāna*). He says that because the success of an action undertaken for the fulfillment of any human purpose depends on the action's being preceded (caused) by valid cognition, therefore valid cognition must be understood properly:

**‘saṃyajñānapūrvikā sarvapuruṣārthasiddhīr tād vyutpādyate’<sup>4</sup>**

The above verse makes it clear that Dharmakīrti's analysis of valid cognition is meant to facilitate the success of actions undertaken for the attainment of desired objects and the avoidance of unwelcome ones. Thus, in that it expresses an important side of Dharmakīrti's pragmatism, to wit, that the arena of action undertaken for the attainment of desire is his context for the treatment of right cognition. Furthermore, Dharmakīrti does not say that right cognition is itself sufficient condition for fulfilling a goal. Right cognition is then to be a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition for the success of any human action, such that without right cognition successful human action would be impossible.

Thus with the first *sūtra* of the *Nyāyabindu*, Dharmakīrti implies that he is concerned with right cognition within the sphere of desire and suffering and is not concerned with the transcendent perspective of one who has realized *Nirvāṇa*. In the *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti does not elaborate on the possibility of transforming desire back into the pristine

state of compassion, as part of his defending the Buddhist way.<sup>5</sup> But, concerning right cognition his question is rather: How is that successful human action is dependent upon right cognition?

Dharmakīrti's answer is that there can be no successful human action about that which is unreal (*asat*), such as the horn of a hare, or a sky-lotus, though ideas of such things can appear in cognition. In other words, cognition can be of the real or of the unreal. The former is right cognition (or knowledge), the latter wrong cognition or error. We should pause here a little, because a comprehensive discussion of this constitutes the core subject matter of the fourth part of this chapter, while discussing the concept of *arthakriyā*.

### **Characteristic of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*)**

In *Nyāyabindu* and *Pramāṇavārttika*, Dharmakīrti refers to valid cognition as *pramāṇa*. Although he does not give a definition of valid cognition, he clearly indicates the characteristics of valid cognition, namely:

#### **1. *Avisaṃvādakajñāna* (non-deceptive, non-deceiving, non-contradicted cognition)**

In both *Nyāyabindu* and *Pramāṇavārttika* non-deceptiveness consists of an objects readiness to perform a function that relates to the way it is cognized. Dharmottara explains this characteristic of valid cognition in *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* in the following way: When a cognition presents (*pradārśayati*) an object to the knower, it has the ability to produce a volition (*pravṛtti*) in the knower which can prompt the knower either to attain the object (if it is desirable), or to avoid it (if it is undesirable), i.e., a cognition presents the object in such a manner that in case the knower had a

volitional urge to attain or avoid it, he would have been successful in attaining or avoiding it.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, Dharmottara points out, in this context that the objects with respect to which cognitions are deceptive or non-deceptive must be real, because only real things, that is, causally effective phenomena, have the capacity to perform functions. The relation between an object and its cognition can be either conceptually unmediated, as when we observe real objects, or mediated, as when we infer something through reasoning. In either case, the relation between valid cognition and real things is to be understood in practical terms. It transpires from the above that a valid cognition enables a knower to obtain the desired object. It has to be kept in mind that the object obtained must conform to the specific form or *ākāra* (color, shape, etc.) and the spatio-temporal characteristics of the object, which was originally presented in knowledge. In case the object obtained were of different form, and had a different spatio-temporal specification than the object initially presented in cognition, the initial cognition or presentation of the object cannot be said to be a non-deceptive cognition. For example, a jaundiced man sees a white conch-shell as yellow.

However, the pertinent point to be noted is that, the presentation of the momentary object or *svalakṣaṇa* cannot by itself, fulfill the human purpose, as it is not recognized as an object with definite characteristic. To this, Dharmottara points out that the momentary object must, after the immediate presentation, be interpreted by the superimposition of a concept on it. The presented *svalakṣaṇa* must thus be interpreted and recognized as an entity called water. This interpretation must remind the cognizer of the previously cognized water (which is capable of quenching thirst). The

recognition of water (hidden role of memory) produces in the knower a desire to have it. This desire in its turn produces volition to obtain it. In addition, this volition eventually leads to the obtaining of the desired object. Hence, Dharmottara urges, the initial valid presentation of the object is not the direct cause of obtaining the object. There are many intermediate processes. As it is not the direct cause of successful volition, Dharmakīrti refers to *saṃyagjñāna* as the antecedent (*purvika*) condition, which eventually causes a successful voluntary action.<sup>7</sup> We end this discussion here, we will discuss this in detail when we will examine Dharmakīrti's theory of perception in the following pages.

## **2. *Niyatajñāna* (definite cognition)**

A valid cognition can lead to the successful attainment of an object only if such cognition is connected with a definitely existing (*niyatā*) positive object (*bhāvastu*). An illusory/doubtful cognition (*viparyāsa*) like an optical illusion of water (i.e., mirage) is not a valid cognition.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, both perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*) are thus valid cognition in as much as both these cognitions are connected with definitely existing objects (former directly while latter indirectly)<sup>9</sup>, thus lead the cognizer to successfully obtain the objects cognized.

## **3. *Arthasārūpajñāna* (correspondence or similarity)**

In a valid cognition, Dharmakīrti insists, there must be an exact correspondence or similarity between the form of the object presented in the initial cognition and that of the object ultimately attained, referred as *arthasārūpya* other than the first two characteristics as mentioned above. Furthermore, he urges that the exact correspondence or similarity (*sārūpya*)

between the forms of an extreme particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) of, for example, fire, and that of its image (*pratibhāsa*) in perception, constitutes the validity of perception. In addition, the correspondence between the form of a concept, for example, of fire, which we inferred, and that of the extreme particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) of fire, which is the ultimate object (*pravṛtṭiviśaya=adhyasāyaviśaya*) of inference, to which it applies, constitutes the validity of inference.

#### **4. *Anadhigatārthajñāna* (novelty, object not already cognized)**

Several passages in Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* indicate that he holds that novelty is required for a cognition to be valid. Like in verse II 3a, he says: 'Since it apprehends what is already held, relative cognition (*saṃvṛtī-jñāna*) is not accepted as a valid cognition.'<sup>10</sup> A relative cognition, that is, a conceptual cognition that does not rely on reasoning, is not valid because it can only repeat what has been already cognized. For Dharmakīrti, however, novelty is not part of the definition of valid cognition. It is simply a consequence of his view of perception. We find confirmation that Dharmakīrti requires novelty in his *Nyāyabindu*, where he also defines valid cognition: 'With respect to this, valid cognition is only that which first sees an uncommon object.' Dharmakīrti further states that 'Because a recollection apprehends an already completely seen aspect, it is not a valid cognition'. This is so for the following reason: Having seen the uncommon real thing one states this is an uncommon thing, but such a judgment does not realize any previously unrealized object. Thus, there is clear evidence that for Dharmakīrti validity entails novelty, although novelty is not a definitional requirement for validity. Further, it was not meant to exclude



the second moment of perception (determinate perception, *savikalpakajñāna*) from being valid but the conceptual judgments that follows perceptions. This will become fully apparent when we consider the Dharmakīrti's theory of perception in the following pages. For the time being, let us examine the misconceptions/misunderstandings of Dharmakīrti's position, before moving to the analysis of perception, which provides the foundation of Dharmakīrti's system.

### **Misconceptions/Misunderstandings of Dharmakīrti's position**

There are two flagrant misconceptions about Dharmakīrti's epistemological position.

1. Dharmakīrti considered perception (*pratyakṣa*) to be valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) from the transcendental standpoint, and he considered inference (*anumāna*) to be so from the empirical or pragmatic point of view.
2. Dharmakīrti embraced a radical form of pragmatic theory of truth in his epistemology.

Regarding the first misconception, it is already remarked at the beginning that Dharmakīrti is concerned in his epistemology with valid cognition within the sphere of desire; he is not concerned with the transcendent perspective of one who has realized *Nirvāṇa*. Moreover, this misconception stems from Dharmakīrti's designation of perception as '*abhrānta*'<sup>11</sup> and inference as '*bhrānta*'.<sup>12</sup> These designations as well as some writings of contemporary Buddhist scholars<sup>13</sup> have given rise to the idea that perception alone is true source of knowledge of ultimate reality from the transcendental perspective. In reality, perception has been defined

by Dharmakīrti to be free from thought-construction and non-erroneous and the objects of perception are unique, extreme particulars, known as *svalakṣaṇas*. Dharmakīrti designates a *svalakṣaṇa* as *parāramārthasat*<sup>14</sup> (ultimate reality), in the sense that it is a real particular bereft of artificially superimposed generality. Since perception is said to cognized the *paramārthasat*, it is therefore taken as a source of knowledge from the transcendental standpoint. However, Dharmakīrti never intended to consider any normal human cognition as valid from the transcendental point of view. He treats both perception and inference as valid empirical cognition and both acquaints us with the real *svalakṣaṇa* (the former does it directly while the latter does it indirectly through knowledge of conceptual constructs, *vikalpas*).

The important point to be noted is that, the real that is talked about is not ultimate reality, *Nirvāṇa*. The reality with which Dharmakīrti is concerned here is reality bound up within anthropology whereby human beings are seen to undertake actions to satisfy their needs. It is an existent phenomenal reality which has causal efficacy (like that of quenching thirst) and, as such different from a thought-construction which lacks such an efficacy. It is called '*Paramārthasat*' in order to distinguish it from a thought-construction (*vikalpa*), which is designated by Dharmakīrti as *saṃvṛtisat*.<sup>15</sup>

Now, regarding the second misconception we are mainly concerned with those issues that repeatedly surface throughout his work, they are the fundamental elements of his conceptual system that make all of his argument possible. They are namely:

- (i) Does Dharmakīrti embrace a pragmatic theory of truth?

(ii) Was Dharmakīrti a pragmatist?

(iii) Whether validity of cognition depends on pragmatic value, normative truth, or requires both?

Besides, it is not my intention here to address to each of these questions mentioned above separately, but they are certainly taken care of in the following discussion.

The tendency to describe the Buddhist view of truth as a form of pragmatism has a long tradition. A long-lasting confusion needs to be clarified. Professor Karl Potter asserts that Buddhism consider validity (*prāmāṇya*) in terms of workability.<sup>16</sup> Professor J.N. Mohanty, however, contends that it is only true of Dignāga, Dharmakīrti and their followers that they equate validity with practical workability.<sup>17</sup> Even Professor D.J. Kalupahana has emphasized the pragmatic aspect of Buddhism and undervalued the importance of tradition as a source of truth.<sup>18</sup>

In our opinion, however, proper case should be taken in the use of term 'Pragmatism' as a blanket designation of the Buddhist theory of truth. However, a proper scrutiny will reveal that Dharmakīrti as far as his fully developed conception of valid cognition is concerned, is not a pragmatist. Although Dharmakīrti insists on the practical bearings of knowledge and language, he does not insist that their meanings come exclusively from practical concerns. Knowledge, according to Dharmakīrti, functions in relation to practical concerns, but it cannot be defined in terms of practical workability, i.e., its criteria are not exclusively pragmatic. Non-deceptiveness may be purely pragmatically understood, but in this case, it cannot by itself constitute validity. Buddhism insists on the practical consequences of knowledge, but a similar insistence is found in the Nyāya

system also. They maintain that *saṃvādatva* of the *pravṛtti* (voluntary action) which follows from valid cognition, is the criterion of valid cognition; but it does not hold this *saṃvādatva* constitutes the defining property of a valid cognition.

Moreover, this practical emphasis is very different from adopting a pragmatic theory of truth. According to which the expression ‘this is true’ is interpreted as meaning ‘this leads to appropriate result’. In such a theory, the obtaining of appropriate results is not only a necessary, but also a sufficient condition of truth. Whereas, according to Dharmakīrti’s account of truth, we required both pragmatic and normative elements in order to avoid lucky and coincidental cases from the purview of valid cognition. The difficulty involved in the pragmatic interpretation of the validity of cognition can be illustrated with the following apparent case of valid cognition:

‘Imagine that we are seeking water on a hot day. We suddenly see water, or so we think. In fact, we are not seeing water but a mirage and when we reach the spot, we are lucky and find water right there under a rock’. At this the question that inevitably arises in our mind is, ‘Can we say that we had genuine knowledge of water?’

The reply is obviously no; it is just by chance/luck/coincidence and not a genuine case of knowledge. Thus, practical success is clearly not enough to determine the validity of cognition.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the example cited above is quite similar to the cases cited by Edmond Gettier in his attacks against the Tripartite definition of knowledge, in western philosophy, as JTB (justified true belief).<sup>20</sup> Where Gettier claims that the tripartite definition of knowledge is inadequate and there is a need of fourth

clause/criterion other than three clauses as mentioned above (JTB), in order to exclude lucky and coincidental cases from the cases of genuine knowledge.

Thus, in order to solve the difficulties involved in the pragmatic interpretation of validity, Dharmakīrti in his later *Ascertainment*, says valid cognition is to be defined in practical terms with a normative addendum. Further, in support of this he says, 'Perception and inference are valid cognitions because they are non-deceptive with respect to the purpose of the action in the application toward an object after having determined it'.<sup>21</sup> This account gives a double characterization of valid cognition. The first is practical, cognition is valid in as much as it helps us to fulfill a purpose. The second introduces a normative or intentional element, a cognition is valid if, and only if, the object we are seeking is determined correctly, i.e., a valid cognition must be directed toward its object in accordance with the nature of the object.<sup>22</sup> This is what Dharmakīrti intends to capture in his account of valid cognitions.

However, the crucial point to be noted is that this normative element of non-deceptiveness of a valid cognition is, however, limited to the conceptual domain. That is, normativity is the domain of thought only and has no direct relation to real things. The other type of valid cognition, i.e., perception, apprehends real things. But, perception cannot provide cognitive articulation (being of non-propositional nature) and boils down to a passive encounter with things in their momentariness. Thus, perception cannot, however, be appraised in normative/cognitive terms in isolation from conception, as it is contentless (has no cognitive content). This leads to the following questions:

1. If the validity of perception required that of conception, what would then be the foundation of such conception?
2. How can Buddhist epistemology hold that perception is foundational, if its cognitive state is derived from its appropriation by conception?
3. How can they even argue that perception is valid if experience becomes cognitive only by interpretation?
4. How Dharmakīrti can bring normativity, which is conceptual, back in touch with reality?

For the time being, we end our discussion here only, because we will discuss this at greater length in the third part of this chapter, where I will delineate two distinctive answers to these questions among Dharmakīrti's commentators. In addition, for that, it is imperative now to discuss Dharmakīrti's theory of perception, which will highlight Dharmakīrti's improvement upon Dignāga's work and provide background for the third part of this chapter.

### **Dharmakīrti's account of perception (*pratyakṣa*)**

We now turn our attention in understanding Dharmakīrti's theory of perception, which is central to his system. Dharmakīrti after spelling out the importance of the study of valid cognition (*saṃyagjñāna*) in the introductory verse of *Nyāyabindu*, immediately proceeds to declare that there are two types of valid cognition, namely: Perception and inference.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, Dharmakīrti's view about the nature and types of valid cognition is based on a principled ontological distinction between real individual objects called *svalakṣaṇa* and conceptual constructs called

*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*. Conceptual constructs are fictional properties, agreed upon universal, that we project on to reality despite their not being part of the fabric of reality. The main function of the distinction between real things and constructs is to support an epistemology that differentiates and limits knowledge (or, valid cognition) to two types, perception and inference. These two types of cognition are distinguished not because of their modes of apprehension but mostly because of their objects: whereas perception relates to real individuals through experience, inference apprehends unreal conceptual constructs because of reasoning (Dharmakīrti's epistemological typology=*pramāṇavyavasthā*). Furthermore, the whole weight of Dharmakīrti's epistemological program rests on a satisfactorily account of the unmistaken nature of perception. Once this epistemological status of perception is secured, inference can be grounded in reference to perception. Therefore, I intend to bring to limelight the nature, definition and types of perception at some length.

### **Nature of perception**

The nature of perception is directly related to the question of the 'given' in the Buddhist logico-epistemological tradition, especially in the writings of Dharmakīrti. For Dharmakīrti 'aspects' (*ākāra*=sense data= impression) is the form of the object stamped on cognition that allows us to differentiate among our experiences. Moreover, consciousness does not apprehend external objects directly but only through the mediation of aspects. It stands as intermediary between experience and object. It is relevant to both conceptual and non-conceptual cognitions. Further, *ākāra* is the aspect of the object in the consciousness as well as the aspected consciousness itself.

Thus, consciousness has two aspects, namely: (i) Objective aspect (*grāhyākāra*), this is the form that a mental state assumes in order to bring about knowledge of an external object. (ii) Subjective aspect (*grāhākāra*-internal knowledge of our own mental state), the feature that ensures that we are aware of the objective aspect, the representation of the object. However, these two parts do not exist separately. Rather, each mental state consists of both and hence is necessarily reflexive.

### **Dharmakīrti's definition of perception**

The idea that perception is a direct awareness is evident from Dharmakīrti's definition of perception as:

*'tatra kalpanāpoḍhamabhrāntam pratyakṣam'*<sup>24</sup>

He opines that both being free from conceptual construction (*kalpanāpoḍhatva*) and non-erroneousness (*abhrāntatva*) jointly constitute the sufficient condition of perception. Accordingly, he defines perception as cognition, which is devoid of conceptual construction and non-erroneous.

The question that arises at this stage: Whether Dharmakīrti is justified in adding the term non-erroneous (*abhrānta*) in his definition.

Dharmakīrti, however, is of the opinion that it is true that the expression, *kalpanāpoḍham* (free from conceptions), differentiates perception from inference, perceptual judgmental cognition and conceptual errors (*vikalpajābhrānti*). But, according to him, there are two types of errors, namely: (i) Conceptual error (*vikalpajābhrānti*) and (ii) Perceptual error (*indriyajābhrānti*). If all error were conceptual errors, then the use of the term '*Kalpanāpoḍha*' would have been sufficient in the definition of *pratyakṣa*. However, since there are many errors which are not due to



*kalpanā*, but are due to defects of sense organs known as perceptual errors like the cognition of double moon,<sup>25</sup> a fiery circle,<sup>26</sup> trees moving backwards,<sup>27</sup> and the cognition of fiery columns in water.<sup>28</sup> According to Dharmakīrti, in order to exclude these perceptual errors from the arena of perception, the addition of the term 'abhrānta' in the definition of *pratyakṣa* is necessary.

Moreover, in *Pramāṇavārttika* Dharmakīrti clearly classifies *pratyakṣābhāsa* into four kinds, three produced by *kalpanā* (*bhrānti*, *saṃvṛtisajjñāna* and *anumānānumānikam jñānaṃ*) and the fourth due to defective sense organ (*sataimiraṃ*) is the case of erroneous but non-conceptual perception.<sup>29</sup> Now, in order to avoid and take care of this fourth type of *pratyakṣābhāsa*, the definition of *pratyakṣa* should include, Dharmakīrti urges, the term, 'abhrānta'.

### **Interpretation of the term 'abhrānta'**

Another issue that has occupied traditional commentators is the interpretation of the term *abhrānta* (non-erroneous or unmistaken). There is a controversy among Buddhist philosophers regarding the meaning of the term. Dignāga's commentator Jinendrabuddhi holds, under the influence of jaundice when we see a white conch as yellow, our perception is mistaken. Nevertheless, we are able to correctly identify the conch. Therefore, this mental episode is valid and cannot be but a perception (since it is non-conceptual). Similarly, Vinītadeva, an idealist commentator of *Nyāyabindu* holds that *abhrānta* (non-erroneous) is synonymous to *avisamvādaka* (non-deceptive).<sup>30</sup>

Dharmottara criticizes both the commentators on the following grounds. For the former, he says Jinendrabuddhi confuses for not understanding that the vision of a yellow conch cannot perceive a conch, because such an object must be white and nothing white is perceived. Moreover, perception operates on the totality of the object without making differences, which are necessarily conceptual. Therefore, either we see a conch with its full set of qualities (among them, white) or we do not see the conch at all. In addition, for the latter, Dharmottara argues that if the terms are synonymous then Dharmakīrti's definition of *pratyakṣa* will suffer from the defect of repletion (*punaruktidoṣa*) and would become redundant.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the term 'abhrānta' is added not only to exclude inference but also to avert mistaken notion (*vipratipatti*) that perceptual errors are valid cognitions.

#### **Dharmakīrti's definition of kalpanā**

Dharmakīrti realizes that Dignāga's definition of *kalpanā* as association of name etc. to a thing has the defect of being too narrow (*avyāptidoṣa*). It does not include the conceptual understanding (based on *kalpanā*) of infants, the deaf, and the dumb. Although they cannot, as a matter of fact, express themselves in language, yet they have conceptual awareness/knowledge of what is conducive to good and what is not (*iṣṭanistasādhanatābodha*) i.e., judgmental knowledge. Accordingly, the conceptual cognition of infants and the deaf and dumb can also be called *kalpanā* with the help of Dharmakīrti's revised definition of *kalpanā* as 'a cognition the content (*pratibhāsa*) of which is capable of being associated with verbal expression.'<sup>32</sup> Thus, Dharmakīrti's definition has the advantage

of being applicable to all cases of conceptual understanding, which are actually associated with words, and which have the ability (*yogyatā*) of being associated with words.

Now, we are in a better position to answer those questions, which I have just posed above regarding the validity of cognition, which requires both practical value and normative truth. Briefly, we summarize what we have concluded from the preceding discussion. Dharmakīrti's theory of valid cognition is meant to account for the validity of both types of cognition. It must account for perception, which is the foundation of knowledge. Perception's validity is hard to account for, however, in cognitive terms, since this cognition is contentless. Hence, it is better appraised in pragmatic terms. Perception is valid in that it leads to appropriate results. This is not, however, sufficient, since this would include Gettier-like cases. To exclude them, Dharmakīrti needs to add a normative criterion. This criterion cannot be met, however, by perception itself, but only by conceptual judgments induced by perception. Perception passively holds an object that is categorized by conceptions. Only this latter type of cognition can provide the normative element we discussed. Thus, Dharmakīrti's final statement about the nature of valid cognition is the following, 'a cognition is valid if, and only if, it has the ability to bring about some possible practical results in accordance with the intentional determination of the appropriated object.' This determination is normative in that it refers to standards that allow us to decide whether this cognition is correct or not. This normative element, however, is not part of the fabric of reality. It comes from our conceptual frameworks, which arise as the result of our experiences. Hence, the normative element is not arbitrary or purely a

prior. Nevertheless, it is not dictated by reality itself. How can they help us to cope with reality? This explanation, however, creates serious difficulties within Dharmakīrti's system that we already alluded to. Dharmakīrti's solution is to coordinate perception and conception. The former provides the contact with reality. The latter provides the norm (normative/cognitive element). Together, they allow us to distinguish truth from falsity.

But, the pertinent question that comes to our mind is – How to stitch back together the two halves of his system, the real perceptual and the constructed conceptual?

In the following pages, I will look at two attempts/approaches to establish a bridge between perception and conception. The first attempts to deal with the problem by establishing a common to both types of cognition, thereby bridging some degree of cognitive coordination. The second attempts to build a bridge between the two types of cognition by giving to perception a more active role. Instead of being purely passive, perception becomes cognitively active. This transformation marks a new trend in Buddhist epistemology, whose significance will become clearer when we examine their solutions. However, before that it is imperative to discuss about the hidden role of memory in the theory of perception defended by Dharmakīrti and his tradition. This may, at first seem a rather surprising topic to introduce in this discussion, for it is well known that memory is not valid in the technical sense of the term. Since it is not non-deceptive, the defining characteristic of valid cognition for Dharmakīrti. Thus, it may seem that memory must be irrelevant to perception. This view, I argue is mistaken, for perception crucially relies on memory in order to provide knowledge.

### **The hidden role of memory**

In Dharmakīrti's system, however, the exclusion of memory from the sphere of validity creates great difficulties like, 'perception in isolation cannot provide useful knowledge unless it is supplemented by perceptual judgments, which are nothing but memories induced by previous experiences. Hence, memory is necessary to perception. And yet, it is not valid!'

According to Dharmakīrti's system, the judgments that categorize perceptions and allow us to act successfully are forms of memory in two different ways: They apprehended an object which has been apprehended by perception previously but which is already gone (due to the momentary nature of reality). These judgments also subsume an individual under an already conceived (and unreal) universal category. Dharmakīrti describes such recollective consciousness as 'relative cognition'<sup>33</sup> (*saṃvṛtijñāna*) and excludes them from validity. But, this exclusion is harder to maintain for Dharmakīrti. Dharmakīrti himself does not seem to ever face squarely this tension. The task of clarifying the role of memory and its difficult articulation with perception has been left to his followers. I will not describe all of them, but I will; just mention two different roads taken by commentators (Dharmottara's and Sa-pan solutions).

### **Dharmottara's solutions**

Firstly, Dharmottara tries to bridge the gap between perception and conception by making a distinction between the function of perception and conception. Whereas the function of perception is to see an object, the function of conception is to conceive of a momentarily hidden object.<sup>34</sup> Our

perceptual experience are cases of seeing objects, not of conceiving of them. Therefore, a perceptual judgment conceives that we see an object, not that we conceive it. In such judgments, the function of seeing, which is perceptual, is taken over by conception, which is induced by perception, thereby making the object available to us. In being induced by perception, conception leaves aside its proper function (which is to imagine an object) and, so to say, assumes that of perception (which is to see an object). This account shows that perception is valid despite the fact that its object is made available to us only through the intervention of conceptions in the form of perceptual judgments.

Dharmottara's solution is hardly satisfactory, however, for two reasons: (i) It ignores that according to Buddhist epistemology conceptuality is not the passive internalization of perceived objects but an act of active construction that reflects the spontaneous and creative side of human understanding. (ii) Dharmottara's solution assumes rather than establishes a distinction in the function of perception and conception. Secondly, Dharmottara tries to deal with the problem by making a distinction between two types of object of cognition: The held (*grāhya*, appearance) and the conceived (*adhyavasaya*, conception). Furthermore, he is asserting that they have different held objects but similar conceived objects, thus establishing the unity of cognitive process, in which both types of cognition relate to the same object, albeit in different ways.<sup>35</sup>

### **Sa-Pan's solution<sup>36</sup>**

According to Sa-Pan (Sa-skyā Paṇḍita), the problem with perceptual knowledge stems from our necessary reliance on conceptual thinking,

which is a result of our inability to relate things as they are. Unlike noble beings, ordinary beings cannot operate by the power of meditative concentration. Instead, they relate to reality through concepts they construct on the basis of their experience. This necessarily entails distortions.

Moreover, according to Sa-pan, perception is like the fool; it sees objects but is unable to characterize them. This job is performed by conception, the blind and clever person skilled in describing what she does not see. Knowledge of the external world necessitates both seeing and conceiving and, therefore, requires the cooperation of these two cognitive elements, which are powerless in isolation. The cooperation between the two requires an intermediary because they do not apprehend the same objects. Sa-pan finds this intermediary in the reflexivity of apperception, or to put it in Dharmakīrtian terms, self-cognition (*svasamvitti*). Self-cognition or apperception is the factor of mind that ensures the transparency and immediacy of our mental states. When we are aware of something, we are at the same time cognizant of our awareness. This self-presenting is not objectified, for we are not aware of ourselves in quite the same way as we are aware of external objects.<sup>37</sup>

In this way, it may be concluded that, this reflexive factor, self-cognition or apperception functions in Sa-pan's interpretation as the pivot and warrant that ensures that conceptions operate on the objects given to perception's, there by indirectly keeping thinking in touch with reality. Since apperception inheres in perception as well as in conception, it can act as an intermediary without breaking the restriction imposed on the perception and inference, by keeping track the continuity of our psychic life. To produce knowledge, perception requires the cooperation of

perceptual judgments, which are memories. Under the guidance of apperception, perceptual judgments can help perception by remembering previously learned concepts in appropriate ways. In this way, apperception is the warrant of our ordinary knowledge about the world; it is indubitable. Although we can be mistaken about the nature of the objects of our perceptions, we cannot be mistaken in our immediate awareness of our experience. Thus, according to Sa-pan, the final word in Dharmakīrti's system is apperception, which links perception and conception.<sup>38</sup>

Now, we have arrived at the fourth part of our chapter (the 'soul' of our discussion so far), where we will explain the concept of '*arthakriyākāritva*', in Dharmakīrti's system. The concept of *arthakriyā* is an important constituent of Dharmakīrti philosophy. It is translated in his system in two ways: Causal efficiency and useful action. Moreover, Dharmakīrti introduces the concept of *arthakriyā* in order to answer the opponent's objection, why these phrases like 'it is capable of containing water, etc.' and 'as object of our purposive action' are used to describe the particular (*svalakṣaṇa*)? That is, this concept shows a discrepancy between the theory that things possess two functions and the theory of that a particular thing is without stability and spatio-temporal form. Further, the concept of *arthakriyā* is rooted in the motivation of bridging the gap between the individual experience and the common purpose. That is why there is need to study the significance of the concept of *arthakriyā* in Dharmakīrti's thought. Besides, my attempt in this chapter will be to explain how the term *arthakriyā* establishes an epistemology that brings together the two halves of his system, the real perceptual and the constructed conceptual. This endeavor is essential for the success of his

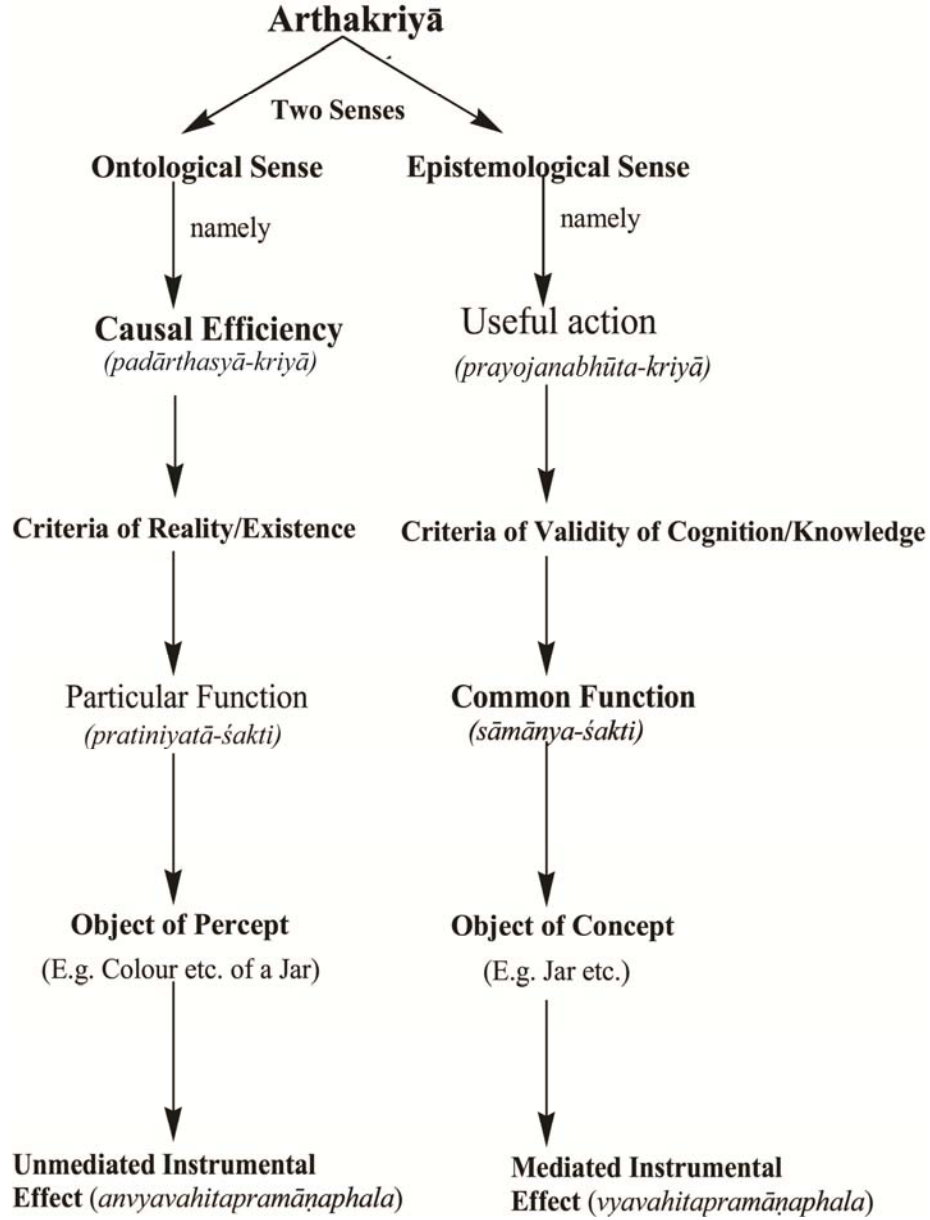


system. As we just saw, an account of the validity of cognition requires a normative element, which perception cannot provide. It also requires a relation with reality so that normative concepts can be connected with the real. Conception alone cannot provide such a link. Hence, Dharmakīrti's only solution is to coordinate the two with the help of the concept of *arthakriyā*.

Moreover, the passage that I have quoted above: 'There are two forms of correct knowledge (*saṃyagiñāna*): Perception and inference. They are correct because, one who determines the object (*artha*) by means of one of those two and then acts on that knowledge is not deceived (*na.....visaṃvādyate*) about that object's telic function (*arthakriyā*)'<sup>39</sup> emphasize the fact that, the notion of *avisamvāda* is placed unambiguously within the context of action. In short, awareness is *avisamvādin*, trustworthy or non-deceptive in that if one acts, the object obtained through ones action will be infallibly capable of the desired or expected telic function. This raises the question of what we mean by 'telic function', a notion that we shall now examine. Moreover, if we say that an awareness is trustworthy, because it is a cognition of *arthakriyā*, does this mean that object of that cognition functions so as to fulfill a specific purpose, or does it mean that the object is simply causally efficient, i.e., that it produces effects simpliciter? To demonstrate that both the telic meaning (i.e., 'purposeful action) and the causal meaning (causal efficiency) can apply to the term *arthakriyā*, we have to understand this concept under the Dharmakīrti's tradition.

**Arthakriyākāritva in Dharmakīrti's philosophy**

In Dharmakīrti's thought, *arthakriyā* has dual meaning/aspect, which can be sketch out with the help of a flowchart as follows:





of perception. Thus, in the sense that the particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) is the object of perception, the particular function is related to the particular and also to the concept of causal efficiency in that it can yield the visual cognition and so on.

Moreover, Dharmakīrti also uses the concept of *arthakriyākāritva* in its ontological sense to criticize the existence of permanent entities like God, *pudgala* and *ātman*. He states that an eternal God is non-existent because He would be incapable of producing effect either simultaneously or successively, i.e., He lacks causal efficiency, therefore unreal. Because, according to Dharmakīrti, causal efficiency is one of the characteristic of reality/existent. Earlier, Vasubandhu, recourse to the same reasoning in refuting the permanent *pudgala* of the Vātsīputrīya and the permanent soul of the non-Buddhist schools.

In the second sense, the term '*arthakriyā*', is used as a locative determinative (*tatpuruṣa*) compound composed of '*artha*' in the sense of 'human purpose' and '*kriyā*' 'action', understood broadly as the process through which a thing (*vastu*) fulfills human desire; thus, activity of a thing in regard to the fulfillment of a human purpose.

According to Dharmakīrti, it is in this sense, that *arthakriyā* is a criterion of validity of cognition/knowledge i.e., distinguishing veridical perception from non-veridical perception (illusion).<sup>43</sup> Further, it is in this content that Prajñākaragupta interprets *arthakriyā* in *pramāṇavārttika*, II.1 as: '*arthasya dāhapākadeḥ kriyāniṣpattis tasyaḥ sthitir avicalanam avisamvādanam vyavasthāvā.*' With Prajñākaragupta, *arthakriyā* means the fulfillment of a (man's) purpose such as burning, cooking, and the like, of which the basis is a valid knowledge. An erroneous knowledge that

mistakes what is not fire for fire fails to fulfill the cognizer's purpose of burning the fuel or cooking dinner with it. This second sense is derived from the first, for only on the basis of their causal capacity that the objects can fulfill such a function.

Further, Dharmakīrti states that useful action corresponds to common function (*sāmānyasakti*). For example, in the phrase 'color etc. of a jar', the word jar, refers to the common function such as being capable of containing water etc. The concept of the common function, which things possess, is not an ontological concept, but it is a concept from the standpoint of daily life in which we use things for attaining our purpose, i.e. it is an object of concept (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) and is related to *sāmānya*.

Moreover, John Dunne has pointed out that the two senses of *arthakriyā* parallels the distinction between Devendrabuddhi's two types of instrumental effects.<sup>44</sup>

### **The two effects and the two senses of arthakriyā**

More specifically, it seems likely that something akin to Dharmakīrti's two senses of *arthakriyā* are presupposed by Devendrabuddhi in the formulation of his theory: The notion of a mediated instrumental effect presupposes the sense of *arthakriyā* as purposive action/telic function, while the notion of an unmediated instrumental effect presupposes the sense of *arthakriyā* as causal efficiency. In this section, we will explore how this might be the case.

#### *1. Mediated instrumental effect (vyavahitapramāṇaphala)*

When a cognition's instrumentality is defined in terms of a mediated effect, it is an instrument (*karaṇa*) because it is the most important factor in the

production of a subsequent effect, namely: The attainment of a human aim (*puruṣārtha*). As we have noted, the instrumental's effect is mediated (*vyavahīta*) because even though the cognition is instrumental, its function must be supplemented by later conditions and developments, if the desired effect is to be obtained. Thus, this way of defining instrumentality, i.e., 'mediated' emphasizes the second sense of *arthakriyā* as 'purposive action'. As noted above, *arthakriyā* is relevant to an instrumental cognitions trustworthiness. Now, if *arthakriyā* is understood as telic function, this means that an instrumental cognition trustworthy because it results in the activation of a cognition in which the accomplishment of one's goal appears. This is, as we have seen, Devendrabuddhi's way of explaining an instrument of knowledge in terms of a mediated instrumental effect.

2. *Unmediated instrumental effect (avyavahitapramāṇaphala)*

In contrast, when a cognitions instrumentality is defined in terms of an unmediated effect, it involves no appeal to a causal relation between instrument and effect. Because in this, a cognition is instrumental not because it is the most important factor in the production of some goal, but rather because it is that which is the primary factor in establishing that an 'effect', i.e., the *pramiti* itself. Since the instrumental cognition is thus occurring at the same time as the instrumental effect (*pramāṇaphala*), there can be no question of mediation, whether causal or otherwise. Now, consider the trustworthiness of an instrumental cognition that results in an unmediated effect, i.e., that cognition itself is the manifestation of the desired effect that is one's goal. An example would be the sensation of heat when, after seeing a fire from a distance, one finally reaches it and feels its warmth. Here the perception (the sensation of warmth) is itself the

fulfillment of one's aim. Hence, no further mediation is required in order for one's aim to be accomplished. The instrumental cognition in short, would be its own effect, which is exactly what is meant by an unmediated instrumental effect.

### **The Primacy of *Puruṣārtha***

Dharmakīrti himself does not explicitly tell us whether we should favor one approach or another, primarily because such a distinction is only inchoate in Dharmakīrti's work. In more recent times, however, Nagatomi and Steinkellner have noted that for Dharmakīrti, the primary meaning of *arthakriyā* was *puruṣārthasiddhi* (= *iṣṭānistasādhanāsādhana*), and the term meant 'causal power' only secondarily. If we correct in maintaining that these two different senses of the term *arthakriyā* correspond to the two different ways of construing the instrumentality of a cognition, then the emphasis on the telic function of *arthakriyā* suggest that the definition of an instrumental cognition in terms of a mediated effect, i.e., in terms of a human aim will also be the principal one in Dharmakīrti's work. Although Devendrabuddhi does not answer any explicit answer to this question, but he to appear to consider the establishment of instrumentality in terms of a human aim to be of primary importance, for when presenting Dharmakīrti's theory of instrumentality, he spend far more time on this way of defining an instrument of knowledge.<sup>45</sup>

We may now review how Dharmakīrti's double meaning of *arthakriyā* has affected post Dharmakīrti writers.

S.N. Dasgupta<sup>46</sup> on the Buddhist theory of momentariness and *arthakriyā* has pointed out that, with Vinītadeva (seventh cent. A.D.) The

word *arthakriyāsiddhi* means the fulfillment of any need such as the cooking of rice by fire. With Dharmottara, it means, action (*anuṣṭhiti*) with reference to undesirable and desirable objects. However, with Ratnakīrti (A.D. 950), it means efficiency of producing any action or event, and as such, it is regarded as the characteristic definition of existence (*sattva*).

Thus, we may conclude that, both Dharmakīrti and post-Dharmakīrti writers were well aware of both the senses of *arthakriyā*. The difference lies only in the significance, for the former useful action is the primary meaning of *arthakriyā* whereas for the latter, causal power.



### Notes and References

1. Steinkellener (1971), p. 202.
2. Hattori (1968), p. 14.
3. I have chosen to restrict my focus to Dharmakīrti's earliest and most extensive work, namely the *Pramāṇavārttika (PV)*.
4. *Nyāyabindu (NB)*, Ch.1, *kārikā*-1.
5. See *PV*, Ch.1, *kārikās*-126-28.  
*Nyāyabinduṭīkā (NBT)*, p. 4.  
'*praparthatkatvamapipravṛttiviśayapradarśakameva*'
6. *NBT*, p. 6.  
*Tacca pūrvamātram.....samyagjñāna hi satipurvaḍāṣṭasmarahaṃ,*  
*smaranādabhilāṣah, abhilāsātpravṛttiḥ, pravṛttiṣca prāptiḥ tata na*  
*sākṣādhetuḥ.*
7. *NBT*, p. 5.  
*yathā marīcikāṣu jalam*  
*sa cāsattvātprāptumaśakyah*
8. *NBT*, p. 4.  
'*pratyakṣam pratibhāsamānam myatamartham darśayati*'  
'*anumānam ca liṅgambaddham niyatamartham darśayati*'
9. *PV*, II: 3ab.  
*grhītagrahanām neṣṭam sāṃvṛtam dhīpramāṇatā*'
10. *NBT*, p.8.  
'*tatra kalpanāpoḍhamabhrāntam pratyakṣam*', we will discuss this again, when we examine *pratyakṣābhāsa* in the following pages.
11. *NBT*, p. 18.

*bhrāntamhyanumānamsapratibhāse 'anartha' rthādhyavāsyena*

Buddhist logic, Vol. I, p. 24.

Stcherbatsky wrote, 'sense perception has been defined as the sensational core of perception, that part of it which remains when every bit of thought construction and imagination has been eliminated. But this is only a transcendental source of knowledge'. Stcherbatsky also commented: 'Thus, it is that inference is right knowledge empirically, but at the same time it is an illusion transcendentally'.

12. *NBT*, pp. 8, 17.
13. For details see, Gupta. Rita (2006), p. 12.
14. For details see, Potter K.H (1982), *JIP*, Vol. 12.
15. For details see, Mohanty J.N (1989), p. 230.
16. Kalupahana, D.J. (1991), pp. 16, 19, 272.
17. See Dharmottara's *Ṭikā* on Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavānīścaya*
18. For details see, Dancy. Jonathan (1985), ch.3, p.78.
19. For details see, Dreyfus (1997), p. 291.
20. Moreover, in order to avoid Getteir-type cases, Dharmottara and Dharmakīrti must hold that here truth does not mean just factuality, but something stronger, i.e., normative truth (truth in accordance with the proper standards of evaluation).
21. Dharmakīrti says in the *Asertainment* of valid cognition that, Perception and inference are right cognition because they are non-deceptive with respect to the purpose of the action when somebody engages in an object having determined it.

22. *NB*, Ch. I, *kārikā*-4.
23. Case of *indriyagate-vibhrama*
24. Case of *viṣagata-vibrama*
25. Case of *brhyāśrayashita-vibhrama*
26. Case of *ādhyatmika-vibhrama*
27. *PV*, Ch.II, *kārikā*-288.  
*trividham kalpanājñānamāśrayopaplavodhavam,*  
*avikalpakamekam ca pratyakṣābhām caturvidham*
28. For details see, Dreyfus (1997), p. 348.
29. Non-deceptiveness (*avisamṃvādi*) is not synonymous to non-mistakenness (*abhrānta*). The former is a function of the appropriate causal relation that a cognition has with reality and the later is a function of the cognition's accurate apprehension of things as they are. For details see, Dreyfus (1997), p. 317.
30. *NB*, Ch. I, *kārikā*-5.  
*' abhilāpasamsargayogyapratibhāsapratitih kalpanā'.*
31. *PV*, II. 3ab.  
We do not accept relative cognition (memory) as non-deceptive because they apprehend that which has already been apprehended. For further detail see, Dunne. John (2004), p. 289. Where Dunne explain the opinion of Devendrabuddhi, who instead of 'relative cognition' used immediately subsequent definitive determination (*pratyakṣaprṣṭhalabdhaniścaya*) for perceptual judgment. On Devendrabuddhi's view, in order to confirmed or determined the instrumentality of perception, the subsequent instrumental cognition (specifically, an instrumental cognition in which appears the

accomplishment of one's goal, or more simple translated, one in which the desired telic function appears) will either another perception (such as the sensation of the fire's warmth ) or an inference (such as the inferential cognition of the fire from its smoke). If one acts and has an instrumental cognition in which the desired telic function appears, then the initial perception that prompted action was instrumental. On the other hand, if one experiences no such confirming cognition- whether perceptual or inferential, then one cannot claim that the initial perception was instrumental. Further, if the instrumentality of the initial perception is to be confirmed by a subsequent perception, then that subsequent perception must itself not require further confirmation, it must be self-confirming otherwise, we would fall into an infinite regress.

32. For details see, Dreyfus (1997), pp. 354-364.
33. The question of whether Dharmottara succeeds in his enterprises will require further studies. It seems, however, highly problematic, for, Dharmottara does not seem to succeed in explaining the cooperation between perception and conception, which his account presupposes.
34. For details see, Dreyfus (1997), pp. 395-399.
35. For details see, the 5<sup>TH</sup> chapter on perception of this thesis.
36. A mere causal link or association of ideas, however, is not sufficient to ensure objectivity. Something stronger is needed to warrant the link between perception and conception. If Sa-pan is right, Dharmakīrtians find this link in apperception, which ensures the unity of our psychic life.

37. For details see, Dunne (2004), p. 256. '*dvividham saṃyagjñānam/pratyakṣam anumānam ceti na hy ābhyām arhaṃ paricchidya pravartamāno 'rthakriyāydm visamvādyate'*.PV.
38. *artha kriyā iti arthakriyā and arthasya kriyā arthakriyā*. For details see, Phillips. Stephen.H (1987), *JIP* 15, pp. 231-259
39. *NB*, p. 17.  
'*arthakriyāsamārthyalakṣaṇatvād vastunaḥ*', *sutra* 15 of the *Nyāyabindu* reads: The characteristic mark of a real thing (*vastu*) is its capacity for *arthakriyā* causal efficiency.
40. For details see, Nagatomi. M (1967), '*Arthakriyā*' *Adyar Library Bulletin* 31-32, pp. 52-72.
41. Moreover, there are various evidence in Dharmakīrti's thought, which proves that he believed in '*arthakriyākāritva*' as the sole criterion of judging validity and invalidity of knowledge, Dharmakīrti's clear indications are the following:  
'*pramāṇamavisamvādi jñānam, arthakriyāsthitiḥ*', *PV.*, I/1ab. (Valid cognition is non-contradictory, the establishment of it is through action towards an object).  
'*prāmāṇyam vyavahāreṇa*', *PV.*, I/7a. (Validity of cognition depends on its application).  
'*svalakṣaṇa-vicārataḥ*', *PV.*, I/8d. (Taking own-characteristic into consideration).  
'*sa pāramārthiko bhāvo ya evārthakriyā kṣamaḥ*', *PV.*, III/166cd. (Whatever is susceptible of action towards an object is ultimately real).

‘*tadevaparāmārthasat, arthakriyāsāmarthyādvastunaḥ*’, NB., I/14-15.(Because of capability of sustaining action towards an object of reality it is called the ultimate reality).

42. For details see, Dunne. John (2004), p. 272.
43. It underlines the importance of practical concerns in Buddhist philosophy. Reality is not an abstract domain of possibility but one of practical importance to sentient beings. Things are real in as much as they potentially affect beings. To use Dharmakīrti’s own example, the obviating of cold (*śīlapratikāra*) pertains, as a causal power, to fire that is real. However, that fire is said to be capable of *arthakriyā* in the sense that real fire can accomplish the useful purpose of obviating cold. Thus, the criterion of valid cognition came to be identified with that of reality, which resulted in the double meaning of *arthakriyā* in Dharmakīrti’s system. Of course, when he is dealing with reality by itself in the content of the traditional Buddhist polemics against permanent entities, the issue is primarily ontological and it is not necessary that the concept of useful action be attached to the concept of causal power. However, the double meaning goes with *arthakriyā*, where the term is used epistemologically.
44. Dasgupta, S.N (1932), Vol.I, p. 163, F.n-3.