

Dharmakīrti's Dual Philosophical Identity

Pradeep P. Gokhale

Savitribai Phule Pune University
'Maitra', 28/4, Jagtap Dairy
Vishal Nagar, Pune, Pin 411027, India

e-mail: pradeepgokhale53@gmail.com
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5363-2760>

Abstract:

In the paper, the author addresses the question of Dharmakīrti's philosophical identity afresh. While acknowledging both the elements, external realism of Sautrāntika and idealism of Yogācāra, the author does disagree with the claim which is sometimes made, that Dharmakīrti's idealism as his ultimate position and accepts realism only at conventional level. The author shows how Dharmakīrti in *Pramāṇavārttika* oscillates between the two positions and that he must have been attracted to both the positions for different reasons. He was attracted to idealism from critical point of view, when he was critical about the limitations of Sautrāntika realism (which itself can be called critical realism). He was attracted to realism for its capacity to explain the diverse phenomena and lead human beings to their goals. The author denies the claim made by some scholars that Dharmakīrti's idealism can be called just an epistemic one. He argues that it did have a metaphysical dimension which is hard to defend. The author shows that Dharmakīrti's idealist stance has adverse implications to the realist epistemology and logic which constitute his mainstream position; the implications, which Dharmakīrti does not take up for discussion.

Keywords: Sautrāntika, realism, Yogācāra, idealism, epistemic idealism, metaphysical idealism, latent impressions, stance.

1. At the Outset

There is a problem about Dharmakīrti's philosophical identity. Scholars have diversely labelled him as Vijñānavādin (Yogācāra/Yogācārin), Sautrāntika, Yogācāra-Sautrāntika, a Mādhyamika mystic and Svatantra-vijñānavādin.¹ The two major identities attributed to him are that he was a Sautrāntika and that he was a Yogācāra. The third major identity is the combination of the two.

Dharmakīrti's position is a realist (of Sautrāntika variety) in *Nyāyabindu* and also in a large part of his commentarial work *Pramāṇavārttika*. However, in some verses of *Pramāṇavārttika* he critically examines the realist position and adopts idealism. Sometimes he confesses about his ignorance about idealist explanation of knowledge.²

Sometimes he appears to be equidistant from both. In Santānāntarasiddhi, Dharmakīrti claims that Sautrāntika type of argument is available to Cittamātra position also. He does not say that Sautrāntika position is wrong and Yogācāra position is correct.

After Dharmakīrti, Yogācāra seems to have dominated the development of Buddhist philosophy. So, some commentators and followers of Dharmakīrti (such as Vinītadeva, Prajñākaragupta, Śāntarakṣita, Kamalāila, Mokṣākaragupta, Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti) appropriated Dharmakīrti as a Yogācāra philosopher. They regarded some idealist sections of PV as expressing his final position and the large realist corpus as expressing secondary or lower truth.

Among modern scholars John Dunne and Birgit Kellner follow the dominant trend through their own arguments. On the other side there are scholars like Amar Singh who have emphasised the Sautrāntika identity of Diñnāga and Dharmakīrti.

On this background I will try in this paper to visit the problem of the philosophical identity of Dharmakīrti afresh. I will first give a brief exposition of the two stances of Dharmakīrti. In Section 2, I will understand them in interactive light. I will check how he responded to certain odd situations from the two stances and also consider how he makes transitions from Sautrāntika mainstream to the Yogācāra island and enters the mainstream again. In Section 3, I will try to understand the exact nature of Dharmakīrti's dual philosophical identity and conclude the discussion. In the Annexure, I will express my views on the question whether his Idealism really deserves the high status which is sometimes conferred on it.

2. Two Stances: An Exposition

2.1. Realist Dharmakīrti

Dharmakīrti, in his *Nyāyabindu* appears as a realist philosopher. He rests his epistemological-theory on the ontology in which unique particular (*svalakṣaṇa*) as regards as ultimately real (*paramārtha-sat*). He defines unique particular as that the cognition of which appears differently (that is, as more or less vivid) according to its nearness or remoteness.³ Only an external object can be near and remote from the knower and cause difference in the cognition due to the distance from the knower. This implies that Dharmakīrti regards external particulars as absolutely real. A unique particular according to Dharmakīrti is the object of perceptual knowledge. The perceptual knowledge grasps a unique particular without conceptualisation and without error.⁴ How is it grasped by the cognition? (How does it become 'grāhya' of cognition?) The question is not dealt with in *Nyāyabindu*. However, he deals with it in *Pramāṇavārttika*. There he says that to be a grasped object of cognition (*grāhyatva*) is to be understood as being a kind of cause of cognition. Here cause-hood consists of 'contributing own form (*ākāra*) to the cognition.'⁵ The external particular causes the cognition by contributing its form to the cognition.

Here there is one difficulty. Though the object which contributes its form to the cognition is real, being momentary, it does not exist at the time of the cognition. So here we have to talk of two types of objects. Object as cause and object as form (in brief: cause-object and form-object). Cause-object exists one moment before the cognition and form object is simultaneous with the cognition. Let us suppose that I am observing a blue colour patch on the wall. For a Buddhist it is not an enduring blue substance or a quality. But it is a momentary blue particular which occurs in a blue causal continuum. I observe a blue patch at the moment (n) means, the blue particular of the moment (n-1) produced a blue-form in my mind at the moment (n). At the time (n), the blue particular of the time (n-1) does not exist. But the next blue particular in the blue continuum exists, which is not an object of perception. Similarly, a blue form exists, which is an inseparable aspect of the 'blue-consciousness; at the time (n). Here the blue-particulars belonging to the continuum can be called sensibilia or unsensed sense data.⁶

Another question about perceptual cognition is its *pramāṇa*-hood. How to decide that a given cognition is true (*pramāṇa*)? We get two answers in Dharmakīrti's writings:

1. *Arthasvarūpam asya prāmāṇyam* [6, p. 84]: (Cognition having the same form as the object is the criterion of its truth). This is the criterion from cognition's side. How to decide that the object cognised is a real object? Here comes the second criterion.

2. *Pramāṇam avisaṃvādi jñānam; arthakriyāsthitiḥ avisaṃvādaḥ* [7, verse I.3] (The true cognition is that which is non-discordant with the object. Non-discordance of the cognition is nothing but occurrence of the causal function of the object). Accordingly causal efficacy of the object is mark of its realness.

The above two criteria are not identical. Moreover, they are applicable jointly, not alternatively. For example, in the case of simple phenomenal objects such as 'blue,' the first criterion is fulfilled as there is a blue colour outside and the cognition has a blue-form. There the second criterion is automatically fulfilled as production of 'blue' form in the consciousness is itself the causal function of the object. In the case of the material objects like water and fire, production of water image or fire image in mind is not sufficient because in the case of illusion or conceptual cognition, for example in the case of mirage when one has an illusion of water, one has water image in one's consciousness, but the object is incapable of quenching thirst. Or in the case of the inferential cognition of fire, one has 'fire' as the form of one's cognition. But the conceptual fire that one cognises does not have the burning function.

There is an element of ambiguity about the nature of external objects accepted in Sautrāntika Buddhism. To say that they are all unique particulars would be a simplistic answer. Which types of objects would be included under this category? It can be agreed in the case of visual perception (*cakṣurvijñāna*) that we perceive gross (*sthūla*) objects and not objects of atomic size. Dharmakīrti, as Sautrāntika accepts that gross objects are made of atoms. But unlike Vaiśeṣikas, who accept *avayavin* (composite whole) they do not attribute distinct identity to the collection (*samudāya*) of atoms. So, what is the object which causes the cognition? According to Dharmakīrti, collected atoms are the cause. As he says, "Some of the atoms with arise due to association with other atoms are called 'collected' (*sañcita*), they are the cause of the rise of the cognition."⁷

Vaiśeṣikas say, atoms cannot be seen, but their collections (*avayavin* – those composed of six atoms) can be seen. Dharmakīrti says, atoms cannot be seen individually, they can only be seen in a collected form. In general when Vaiśeṣikas say that we see a whole (*avayavin*) which inheres in its parts, Dharmakīrti says that we just see the parts collected in a particular way and call it by the name of a whole. The change of language has a lot of ontological implications.⁸ This leads to the problem of variegated-ness. Can there be a single variegated (*citra*) object? Dharmakīrti's answer is in the negative. At the level of objects there is only plurality, no unity. However, those plural particulars cause the cognition of 'unity with variegated-ness.' This appears as a discrepancy between cognition and objects. As the opponent says, "If it is not tenable to accept unity among the objects which appear as variegated, then how can there be unity and at the same time appearance of variegated-ness in that cognition?" [7, verse II.208]

Dharmakīrti's answer strengthens realism:

This follows from the strength of reality (=the true nature of things). This is what the knowledgeable people say. (However,) as you go on thinking (critically) about the things, the things go on getting shattered.

Do you mean to say that (just as there cannot be variegated-ness in a single object,) there cannot be variegated-ness in a single cognition also? If the things themselves like this, who are we to (to challenge that)?⁹

Here Dharmakīrti questions common sense realism according to which gross object (*sthūla*) is real and it causes its cognition, so that a gross thing can appear in cognition (This common-sense realism seems to be acceptable to Vaibhāṣika Buddhists or, from amongst the non-Buddhists, Vaiśeṣikas. Sautrāntika Dharmakīrti is a critical realist. According to him 'appearance of gross object' (*sthūlābhāsa*) does not exist either in reality or in a (true) cognition).¹⁰

2.2. Idealist Dharmakīrti

The specific structure of the direct cognition becomes the point of departure for his idealist argument according to which nothing outside consciousness can be said to exist. The ‘blue’ which is the content of the ‘cognition of blue’ and the ‘cognition of blue’ always exist together. There is no ‘blue’ content without being cognised and there is no cognition of blue without blue as its content. This is called the rule of co-cognition (*sahopalambhaniyama*) of cognition and its content. From this co-cognition Dharmakīrti argues that there is non-difference (*abheda*) between the two. This argument occurs in *Pramāṇaviniścaya*¹¹ and it is echoed in *Pramāṇavārttika* also.¹² The object of cognition (*svalakṣaṇa*) which was understood as sensibilia in the realist stance by Dharmakīrti is now taken to be sense-datum.

Of course, this non-difference, which Dharmakīrti calls ‘abheda’ between blue and cognition of blue, cannot be called absolute non-difference, but it is the relation of inseparability. This is because just as there can be ‘cognition of blue’, there can be ‘cognition of yellow’ also, which need to be distinguished from cognition of blue where we have to recognise cognition aspect to be common and content aspect to be different. That is why Dharmakīrti often talks about ‘*dvairūpya*’ (dual character) of cognition, consciousness and content being its two distinguishable aspects. But this too is not the final position of Dharmakīrti, because he is also seen to hold that the subject-object-duality in the cognition is a false duality.¹³ Hence, we come across two views as a part of Dharmakīrti’s idealism: That cognition is essentially dual in nature and that cognition is essentially non-dual in nature. Dharmakīrti in his idealist stance does not seem to have resolved this inconsistency.

Dharmakīrti in his idealist stance entertains different questions from Sautrāntikas. According to Sautrāntikas though the external object (say, the blue colour-patch) is not itself the content (*ākāra*) of cognition, it is the cause (*ālambanapratyaya*) of the cognition having that content. Therefore, the cognition is called that of the blue colour patch. Yogācārin does not accept this. According to him there is discrepancy what appears and what exists outside. What exist outside are atoms. There are no gross objects there. What appears in cognition is a gross form. So eternal object is not the cause of the form grasped in perception [7, verses II.321-2]. What is the cause then? The idealist Dharmakīrti gives two different answers.

1. According to one answer, immediately preceding cognition of a similar object is the cause of the cognition of the present object.¹⁴

2. According to another answer, when a cognition arises, a latent impression (*vāsanā*) is awakened in a person (that is, in a consciousness-series). The difference in cognitions is due to difference in latent impressions which are awakened [7, verse II.336].¹⁵

At the end of the debate the idealist considers an important question coming from the realist camp. In the realist framework, a distinction is made between two kinds of ‘*hetu*’ (cause). The cause which generates the effect (*kāraka-hetu*) and the cause (that is, the reason) which generates the knowledge of *sādhya* (*jñāpaka-hetu*).

“A sprout arises from a seed. (This is the case of generating cause). Fire is established from smoke. (This is the case of the cause as reason). This distinction the generating cause and the cause as reason rests on the acceptance of external objects.¹⁶

The idealist does not find any problem in it. He asks, “If even this distinction is conceptualised in relation to the appearances of their forms, as the one based on the cognitions which are regularly related in that way, what is inconsistent in it?”¹⁷

The realist does not find the answer satisfactory. He raises the following difficulties:

(If smoke and fire are just appearances and not real entities, then:) There will be a smoke, which does not arise from fire. There will not be knowledge of the cause on the basis of its effect. And if at all it (= the cognition of smoke) is regarded as the cause (of the cognition of fire), how can the cognition of fire occur invariably?¹⁸ (That is, the

inferential knowledge of a cause from the effect will not be based on necessary relation. Hence it will occur contingently.)

The idealist answers this objection:

Even in that case, the cognition of smoke-appearance would lead to the cognition of fire-appearance, given that the latter's latent impression is apt to be awakened. It will not give the knowledge of the (so-called real) fire.

The mind-continuum, which has an appropriate latent impression in its core, manifests the cognition of smoke-appearance. Hence the cognition (of the causal relation) arises of the form, "Smoke arises from fire."¹⁹

The point is that the inferential cognition of fire from smoke according to the idealist is due to awakening of the relevant latent impression (*vāsanā*) and not due to the necessary cause-effect relation between the external reals, namely smoke and fire. And even if we grant that the knowledge of cause effect relation does play a role in the inferential cognition of fire from smoke, the so-called knowledge of cause-effect relation is due to the awakening of the appropriate latent impression.

3. Dharmakīrti's dual Identity: An Interactive Account

3.1. Giving Two Responses to the Same Odd Situation

In *Pramāṇavārttika* one finds that Dharmakīrti's background position is realist. He accepts the things which have practical or causal efficacy. In fact, the authenticity (*pramāṇa-hood*) of a cognition, rests on the reality of its object in the sense of causal efficacy (*arthakriyā-samarthatva*). In continuation with this realist framework, he presents the theory of two *pramāṇas*, that is, two types of knowledge, direct knowledge and indirect knowledge- perception and inference. He tries to defend in this epistemology four types of perception (sense-perception, mental perception, self-manifestation and Yogic knowledge) and two types of inference (inference for oneself and inference for others) based on three kinds of *hetus* (reasons): own-nature, effect and non-apprehension.

Though Dharmakīrti's sustained position in *Pramāṇavārttika* is realist, his realism is not naïve realism like that of Vaibhāṣikas, or that of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas but it is more critical. Though he accepts the existence of atoms as the real particulars, he does not accept the reality of composite wholes (*avayavin*) as real. This is consistent with his anti-substantialist position (Nairātmya-vāda). This anti-substantialism is important for Dharmakīrti from soteriological point of view also. It is through realisation of this non-substantiality only one can be free from cravings and attachments and be ultimately liberated. Secondly whereas non-Buddhist schools accept something as eternal yet having causal efficacy, Dharmakīrti asserts that whatever is real must have causal efficacy and whatever has causal efficacy must be momentary.

This gives rise to two odd situations and Dharmakīrti gives two different responses to each situation.

Oddity 1: In reality there are only distinct objects (atoms). They are many. But they cause a cognition in which a single gross form appears.

Realist response: Things are like this by nature. ("If things themselves approve of this, who are we (to question that)?")²⁰

Idealist response: Appearance of an object is an illusion. Consciousness is in fact non-dual [7, verses II.212-213].

Oddity 2: Since the objects are momentary, the object which is grasped does not exist at the time of the cognition itself.

Realist response: The experts in reasoning understand that to be grasped by cognition is to be a cause of the cognition; the object contributes its form to the cognition.²¹

Idealist Response: Since the external object does exist at the time of its cognition, the cognition cannot be that of the external object. The object which appears at the time of the cognition must be intrinsic to the cognition.²²

3.2. Understanding Dharmakīrti's Transitions from Realism to Idealism and Back

In the *Pramāṇavārttika* there are two occasions on which Dharmakīrti shifts from Sautrāntika to Yogācāra and goes back to the Sautrāntika main stream. I have called them Round trip I and Round trip II.

3.2.1. Round Trip I [*Pramāṇavārttikam*, II.211-219]

Sautrāntika's criticism of gross (*sthūla*) object becomes a point of transition from Sautrāntika to Yogācāra position for Dharmakīrti. A gross external object which appears to be there is unreal! So far Dharmakīrti was arguing from the side of objects. Now (from *Pramāṇavārttikam* II.212 onwards) he starts arguing from the side of cognition. Cognition is in fact part-less. But it seems to have two parts. 'Ascertainment' (*pariccheda*) is its intrinsic part. The other part (that is, the gross-appearing object) appears to be there outside. The indivisible cognition appears to be divided into parts which is an error.²³ He then argues that if one member in a dual consciousness is absent, then the duality itself is violated. Hence the essence of consciousness is non-dual [7, verse II.213]. He also describes things as indefinable (*lakṣṇasūnya*) and essence-less (*niḥsvabhāva*) [7, verse II.215].

Having presented an idealistic and non-dualist position in seven verses [7, verses II.212-218] he comes back to realistic position when he says, "Hence, those who set aside the essence of things, pretend to be inattentive (to the objections against realism) like an elephant with one eye closed, and conduct deliberation on the external objects only from the peoples' point of view (*lokabuddhi*)".²⁴

He then defends the position that atoms can be the objects (*grāhya*) of cognition in the sense of the cause (*hetu*) of cognition [7, verses II.223-4].

3.2.2. Round Trip II [*Pramāṇavārttikam* II.319-398]

The second-round trip of Dharmakīrti from Realism to Idealism and back commences when he becomes critical about the Sautrāntika's concept of *pramāṇa* as '*arthasārūpya*' ('having the same (or similar) form as the object') Finding a problem with the position, Dharmakīrti assuming the stance of a Yogācārin, asks "What (exactly) is the cognition of the object?" (Sautrāntika replies,) "It is what is called the perceptual cognition." (Yogācārin asks,) "In what way (=By what relation) is it the cognition of the object?" (Sautrāntika answers,) "By the relation of having the same form." (Yogācārin responds,) "This relation is variable." (That is, a perceptual cognition does not invariably have the form of the real object; for example, if it is illusory).²⁵ Dharmakīrti in the stance of a Yogācārin continues a long debate [7, verses II.321-397] with a Sautrāntika to show that what appears in cognition cannot be established to be based on an external object. On the contrary it is legitimate to think that it must be rooted in the cognition itself. These are some of the major claims he makes:

1. Cognition itself becomes manifest in the form of an object.

2. Cognition and its object are not two different things. Both the subject (*grāhaka*) and object (*grāhya*) are identical with consciousness. But they appear as different due to ignorance/error.
3. Self-manifesting cognition is the result of a true cognition. For a Sautrāntika every consciousness is self-conscious also. But a Yogācārin regards self-consciousness as the ultimate nature of every consciousness.
4. One of the arguments for negating external source of cognitions is from the intersubjective difference in cognitions. The so-called same object could be desirable (*iṣṭa*) for one and undesirable (*aniṣṭa*) for someone else. This difference in cognitions cannot be rooted in the objects themselves [7, verse II.343]. They are rooted in the latent impressions of the respective subjects.

But at a crucial point, when the Yogācārin Dharmakīrti tries to explain the inference of fire from smoke in terms of appropriate latent impressions, the Sautrāntika Dharmakīrti interrupts and says, “This is the position of the learned ones. We are, however, describing phenomena by accepting the external world as the basis. (The commonly acceptable fact remains that:) cognition has two aspects: (consciousness and content) and it is established by the rule of co-cognition.”²⁶

4. Observations and Appraisal

From the brief account of Dharmakīrti’s presentation of the two positions in *Pramāṇavārttika*, I argue that the two positions of Dharmakīrti may be regarded as his two stances. The realist stance is more stable, sustained. This realism is critical about substantialist and soul-regarding realism of other schools such as Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā and Sāṅkhya. So, his realism can be called critical realism. But when he becomes critical about some aspects of the critical realism itself, he turns an idealist. But Idealism is not his stable or sustained position. Out of the 1453 verses of the whole of the *Pramāṇavārttika*, less than one hundred verses support idealism. These verses occur in the middle of the discussion of perception. We have seen above the two occasions on which Dharmakīrti makes transition from realism to idealism and returns to realism. How to understand this phenomenon? I want to discuss the following questions in this context:

1. What is the nature of Dharmakīrti’s idealism? Can it be called purely epistemic rather than a metaphysical one?
2. What is the logical relation between the two positions? Can the idealist position follow from the Sautrāntika realism? What are the implications of idealism to the Sautrāntika epistemology and logic?
3. Which was the main position of Dharmakīrti-Sautrāntika realism or Yogācāra Idealism? Or both from different perspectives?

4.1. Was Dharmakīrti’s Idealism Purely Epistemic?

I have argued above that Sautrāntika and Yogācāra can be regarded as the two stances of Dharmakīrti. So he cannot be identified as just a realist or an idealist. Are the two positions compatible? It has been argued that his idealist position was epistemological in nature. Accordingly, consciousness of blue has blue content (or ‘form’, *ākāra*) and consciousness is directly aware of the content and is not aware of anything external. John Dunne [3, p. 59] calls this epistemic idealism. Dan Arnold [2] endorses the view and adds that epistemic idealism can be regarded as the view common to Sautrāntika and Yogācāra. That is because even according to the Sautrāntika position of Dharmakīrti the direct object of the cognition is mental; the so-called external object of cognition is the cause of the cognition, not its direct object.

The question is, is Dharmakīrti’s idealism strictly epistemic, without metaphysical component? I want to claim that though Dharmakīrti’s idealism was epistemologically based, in its development, it tends to become metaphysical as well. For, Dharmakīrti raises the question against the realist: Why does any cognition which has a particular content, has that content and none other

at that time? What is the source of that content? The realist's answer that the the particular form of the cognition is due to the external object is not acceptable to the idealist Dharmakīrti. We have seen that Dharmakīrti in his idealist stance gives two different answers to this question. One is in terms of immediately preceding cognition which has a similar object (*samānārthaṃ vijñānaṃ samanantaram*, [7, verse II.323]) and the other is in terms of latent impression (*vāsanā*).

The first answer has an epistemological form but it is unsatisfactory. The answer is applicable if I have a series of cognitions of the series of similar objects. But in case one has cognitions of varying objects, that is, one is shifting one's attention from one type of object to another type, the immediately preceding cognition cannot be said to provide the source to the content of the next cognition.

The second answer is in tune with the typical answer of Yogācāra which refers to *ālaya-vijñāna* (store-consciousness) which is not itself conscious but consists of latent impressions or traces of past actions.²⁷ Hence Dharmakīrti argues that a cognition has a particular content due to latent impressions. I want to claim that since *vāsanā* is a transcendent entity, not given in the consciousness itself, the explanation of consciousness in terms of *vāsanā* does not remain purely epistemological, but tends to become metaphysical as a latent impression is always a transcendent thing. So, the two views: Sautrāntika view according to which content of a perceptual cognition is generally derived from an external object and the Yogācāra view according to which the content of a cognition is derived either from immediately preceding cognition or from latent impressions but never from external objects – are the two competing metaphysical views. We can say that both the views have a purely epistemological idealism as a common component. Both of them agree that the immediate object of any cognition is the form (*ākāra*) of the cognition itself. But they differ about the source of this form.

Another reason is sometimes supplied in favour of epistemic character of Dharmakīrti's idealism. Though Dharmakīrti in his idealist stance denies the existence of the external objects, he does not prove the non-existence of them. Here Dharmakīrti's idealism is compared with that of Vasubandhu. Vasubandhu in his *Viṃśatikā*, advances arguments against the realist view which regards the external objects as ultimately divisible into atoms. Vasubandhu tries to prove that external objects as well as atoms as their components cannot exist. This renders Vasubandhu's idealism metaphysical. Unlike Vasubandhu, Dharmakīrti does not advance any such argument against atomism. Hence it is argued that his idealism remains epistemic [2, pp. 16-17].

Against this it can be said that though Dharmakīrti in his idealist stance does not advance arguments against the existence of external objects, or atoms which are their ultimate constituents, he does make a clear assertion that “external objects simply do not exist.”²⁸ Hence his idealism is not metaphysically neutral. However, in that case why Dharmakīrti does not give arguments against the existence of external objects remains a question.

Kellner [5, pp. 117-8] points out that though in Dharmakīrti's logical framework a special type of reason called “non-apprehension” (*anupalabdhi*), is accepted for proving absence, the scope of this reason is very limited. It does not permit universal ontological denial. So, Dharmakīrti could not use it for proving the non-existence of atoms. Kellner's point is well-taken. However, it need not be a problem with Dharmakīrti's method of argumentation. For example, when Dharmakīrti denied the existence of the entities such as God²⁹ (*īśvara*), composite wholes³⁰ (*avayavin*) and universals³¹ (*sāmānya/jāti*) projected by Naiyāyikas, he does not use non-apprehension as reason for proving their non-existence, but uses arguments of *prasaṅga* type (‘reductio-ad-absurdum’ type). In fact, the arguments against atomism, which Vasubandhu advances in *Viṃśatikā* also are of Reductio-ad-Absurdum type. Vasubandhu does not try to prove non-existence of atoms directly, but brings out inconsistencies arising from the concept of atom (*paramāṇu*) understood in a particular way.³² This way was open to Dharmakīrti as well. But he did not go by that. This was possibly because even in his idealist stance he was not interested in condemning the external realism totally. He was ready to allow it as a logical possibility.³³

4.2. Implications of Dharmakīrti's Idealism to the Sautrāntika Epistemology and Logic

Though idealist position appears in *Pramāṇavārttika* in the course of discussion of the Sautrāntika theory of perception, it does not appear as a natural outcome of the latter, but only by questioning some of its basic presuppositions. As a matter of fact, the idealist analysis of consciousness has adverse implications to Dharmakīrti's Sautrāntika theory of *pramāṇas*. However, Dharmakīrti does not discuss these implications. Here are some examples:

The Status of *Svasaṃvedana*

While classifying perception, Dharmakīrti acknowledges four kinds: sense-perception, mental consciousness, self-conscious perception and Yogic knowledge. In this classification self-conscious perception (*svasaṃvedana*) is the direct awareness of mind and mental factors. All other types of perception can have external entities as their objects. But self-conscious perception cannot. Although we understand Dharmakīrti as accepting self-illuminating nature of all cognitions,³⁴ this only means that a cognition not only cognises its object, but also itself. This would mean that all types of perception are self-conscious perceptions *also*. In idealist concept of perception, all perceptions will be self-conscious perception *only*. Here a sharp distinction has to be made between two statements:

1. All cognitions are self-conscious also.
2. All cognitions are self-conscious only.

The first can be accepted by Sautrāntikas whereas the second can be accepted by Yogācārins only.

***Nirvikalpaka-savikalpaka* Distinction**

In Sautrāntika epistemology a clear distinction is made between non-conceptual cognition (*nirvikalpaka-jñāna*) and conceptual cognition (*savikalpaka-jñāna*). In *nirvikalpaka*, the object is 'given'; it comes from an outside source. In *savikalpaka*, the object is mentally constructed. In Yogācāra, the objects (or contents) of all cognitions are mental. The distinction between 'given' and 'constructed' gets blurred.

Distinction Between True and False, Real and Unreal

According to Sautrāntika, a true cognition is that which is non-discordant (*aviasmṃvādi*) with the real object and false cognition is that which is discordant with it. Similarly, a real object is that which has a specific causal efficacy (*arthakriyāśakti*); an unreal object lacks it. Both these distinctions get blurred in Yogācāra epistemology. For example, real water is that which can be drunk, which quenches your thirst. That is its causal efficacy. The water seen in mirage is not real because it does not have the causal efficacy. According to Yogācāra there is no real water. The so-called real water is just water-appearance. The so-called unreal water is also water appearance. No distinction can be made between them. Both the cognitions are equally false as the cognitions of (external) real water. The concept of real as causally efficacious will be available here also. But it will have a very limited scope. Only consciousness will be real and it will have efficacy to produce another consciousness. Or if consciousness as well as its contents (*ākāra*) are real then there can be the inferences about the contents of consciousness as well. But there cannot be inference about anything beyond them. In fact many a time causal efficacy gets dropped as the criterion of the real in Yogācāra. Since the object is given in the cognition as its content, it is not the cause of the cognition. Still content of a cognition is called real, simply because it appears in a cognition; not because it causes a cognition.

Inference

Inference as *pramāṇa* can be accepted in Yogācāra also. But it will be riddled with many issues in its actual application. According to the theory of inference, *pakṣa* (the *dharmin*, which is the subject of inference) should be existent and acceptable to both the parties in debate. According to Yogācāra, consciousness (or the content of it) alone is real; hence that alone can be the subject of any inference. But inference also needs pervasion which is to be proved in similar and dissimilar cases (*sapakṣa* and *vipakṣa*) outside the *pakṣa*. But according to Yogācāra there is nothing outside. So, no genuine instances (*dṛṣṭānta*) are available for the idealist thesis. However, idealists such as Vasubandhu had a tendency to use instances from everyday life (such as dream, waking stage and hallucinations) and mythological beliefs (such as world of the dead and Hell) which belong to outside world for proving the idealist thesis which denies everything outside.

Types of Inference: *Svabhāvānumāna*

Coming to Dharmakīrti's classification of inference, a Yogācārin can appreciate *svabhāvānumāna* (inference based on own-nature) insofar as it can stand on pervasion as conceptual inclusion between the sign and the signified without observed instances. The inferences such as "This is a tree because it is a Śimśapā," or, "A word is momentary because it is real," will be out of picture because they are about external objects. "Consciousness is momentary because it is real" is permissible.

Types of Inference: *Kāryānumāna*

The other kind of inference, that of effect from cause will also have serious limitations in Yogācāra tradition. Out of four types of causes (*pratyaya*) accepted by realist Buddhists, *hetu* (accomplishing cause, for example, sense organ), *ālambana* (object as cause), *samanantara* (immediately preceding cause) and *adhipati* (governing cause), only two, namely *samanantara* and *adhipati* can be accepted by Yogācārins. External object as cause is specifically denied by them. Similarly, there is a difficulty in accepting *hetu* (for example, visual sense organ as the cause of visual perception) in so far as it is material in nature. *Samanantara* is accepted, as immediately preceding consciousness gives rise to the succeeding consciousness in a consciousness-series. *Adhipati* is accepted for explaining 'inter-series' relation between one mind series and another mind series.³⁵ Again, this causal relation is strictly accepted as between two consciousnesses, belonging to the same series or different series. The typical causal relations we observe in the world, like between seed and sprout, or fire and smoke are not acceptable in the Yogācāra framework. Let us see how a problem arises in Yogācāra framework with respect to inference of fire from smoke.

Inference of Fire From Smoke: A Case Study

An oft-quoted example of inference is the inference of fire from smoke. In Dharmakīrti's scheme it is an inference of cause from effect. However, smoke and fire as the external objects as well as the causal relation between them are not available to Yogācāra. The inference of fire from smoke, therefore, cannot be defended in the Yogācāra framework. However, we have seen above that Dharmakīrti in his idealist stance tries to defend the inference on the basis of 'the mind series which has an appropriate latent impression as the core' (*tadyogyavāsanāgarbhaḥ cittasantānaḥ* [7, verse II. 397]). Can this be a satisfactory explanation of inference of fire from smoke? Latent impressions could be occasioning conditions of inferential knowledge, but they cannot be the validating conditions. For example, someone may infer fire from smoke due to the particular latent impressions one has formed. Another person may infer smoke from fire due to some other latent impressions. We know that inference of fire from smoke is sound, but that of smoke from fire is unsound. That is because there can be fire without smoke but there cannot be smoke without fire.

And we know this on the basis of the observation of the outside world and not on the basis of the subjective latent impressions we have formed. We cannot define sound inference as the one caused by an appropriate latent impression and unsound inference as the one caused by the inappropriate one, because which impression is appropriate and which inappropriate will be ultimately determined by the actual relation between smokes and fires. Hence the explanation of a sound inference just in terms of ‘appropriate latent impressions’ is quite inadequate. Dharmakīrti perhaps realises the inadequacy of the explanation which he gives in verse II.397. That is why he abruptly breaks the discussion with the (ironical) remark that ‘this is the view of the learned ones’ and resumes the talk based on the external world.³⁶

Anupalabdhi (Non-perception) as a Hetu

Dharmakīrti in his theory of inference acknowledges three types of *hetu*: *svabhāva*, *kārya* and *anupalabdhi*. We have seen that *svabhāva* and *kārya* as the *hetus* can be available in Yogācāra with many limitations. There is a more serious problem about *anupalabdhi-hetu*. This type of *hetu* is used for proving absence of a thing provided that the thing under consideration is capable of being perceived (*upalabdhi-lakṣaṇa-prāpta* or *drśya*). The idea that a thing exists (outside consciousness), but it is not perceived because it is remote (in space or time or own nature) itself presupposes the existence of external objects. Hence *anupalabdhi* as a *hetu*, is contrary to idealism. Secondly the so-called knowledge of absence of the form, “In this colour patch there is no blue,” ‘blue’ is very much a part of content of the cognition though it is said to be absent. Hence in idealist framework, there cannot be a genuine cognition of absence of an object, as it will go against the rule of co-cognition, which says, “Blue and cognition of blue are always together.”

The general point here is that Yogācāra idealism cannot be ‘based’ on the Sautrāntika theory of *pramāṇas*, but it becomes possible only by violating or incapacitating many aspects of the latter. However, Dharmakīrti is silent on this point. Though on certain occasions he regards idealism as the superior position obtained by criticising the external realism of Sautrāntikas, he does not try to develop idealist epistemology as a comprehensive alternative epistemology.

4.3. What is Dharmakīrti’s Main Position – Realism or Idealism? Or Both From Different Perspectives?

Given that Dharmakīrti supports both the positions – Yogācāra idealism and Sautrāntika realism in their respective contexts, the question can be asked as to which of the two positions according to Dharmakīrti was more acceptable. It is not easy to answer the question in categorical terms. Among modern scholars Amar Singh [1] strongly argued for the position that Dharmakīrti’s final position was Sautrāntika. The main grounds for his argument are *Nyāyabindu* and *Pramāṇavārttika*. About *Nyāyabindu* it is more or less obvious that it agrees with the Sautrāntika Realism in its epistemology and ontology. Amar Singh finds substantial continuity between *Nyāyabindu* and *Pramāṇavārttika*. He discusses many allegedly idealist verses from *Pramāṇavārttika* and tries to show that they are in fact favourable to Realism. However, Amar Singh’s efforts are incomplete and somewhat unsystematic. He takes up some verses from *Pramāṇavārttika* (verses II.320, 338, 365, 398) and tries to show that Manorathanandin’s pro-idealist commentary on them is flawed. But leaves many other verses (for instance, verses II.335, 336, 388-397) which strongly suggest that Dharmakīrti there is supporting idealism. Similarly he rejects Vinītadeva’s interpretation of Santānāntarasiddhi which showed Dharmakīrti’s affiliation to ‘mind-only’ thesis and claims that there Dharmakīrti was speaking as a Sautrāntika and was telling the Yogācāras that the argument for the existence of other minds which is available to the realists is also available to the idealists. A question here is: why should Dharmakīrti help idealists unless he himself had affinity towards idealism? Hence understanding Dharmakīrti’s position exclusively as Sautrāntika realism and treating idealism simply as his rival position (*pūrvapakṣa*) doesn’t seem to be fair enough.

On the other extreme end, we have scholars who regard Dharmakīrti's final position as an idealism of some sort. (Some modern scholars have called it epistemic idealism whereas I am inclined to call it a metaphysical one as I have argued already). Traditional upholders of the pro-idealist interpretation of Dharmakīrti generally appropriated him as a *Sākāra-vijñānavādin* (One who regards consciousness with its content as the ultimate reality). According to this appropriation, *Sākāravijñānavāda* was the ultimate truth (*paramārtha*) and Sautrāntika realism was only conventionally true (*Samvṛti-satya*). However, it is doubtful whether Dharmakīrti uses the terminology of *Samvṛti* and *Paramārtha* in that way. On the contrary he tries to defend the Sautrāntika concept of reality against the charge that it exists only according to convention (*Samvṛti*).³⁷ It is true that while defending Yogācāra he sometimes calls non-dual consciousness as the truth (*tattva*) and duality as error (*upaplava*). Many a time, however, he regards dual nature of cognition as true; and that is natural because his Yogācāra idealism is based on the rule of co-cognition (*sahopalambha-niyama*) which is essentially dualistic. On the other hand, in Sautrāntika stance he calls *svalakṣaṇa* as *paramārtha-sat* as it is causally efficacious. He uses the word '*saṃvṛti*' for universals (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) in that context.³⁸

Notable among modern scholars is Birgit Kellner who claims that out of the two views, idealism and realism, idealism is superior to realism according to Dharmakīrti. He gives three main reasons for his claim. One reason is that idealism "provides the more accurate analysis of cognition, yet realism remains the default level of analysis in most areas of philosophy in which Dharmakīrti engages, notably in his theory of inference" [5, p. 107]. The second reason he advances is that idealism is superior to realism from soteriological point of view also. "The idealist theory represents a level of analysis that corresponds more closely to how beings that are further advanced on the Buddhist path to liberation are to experience reality" [5, p. 107].³⁹ Kellner also claims that the fact that Dharmakīrti wrote the *Santānāntarasiddhi*, to prove the existence of other mental continua, and to avert the danger of solipsism is evidence to support that Dharmakīrti was generally committed to idealism [5, pp. 106-7]. Kellner's claims give rise to some questions.

1. It can be agreed that Dharmakīrti in his idealist stance raises legitimate objections against the realist thesis of external objects. But if the idealist analysis of consciousness is accepted, it will have adverse implications (which we will consider soon) to the theory of *pramāṇas* which he explains elaborately in *Pramāṇavārttika* and other works. Dharmakīrti does not discuss these implications. On the other hand, he abruptly breaks the presentation of the idealist approach to consciousness and comes back to realist framework.⁴⁰

2. Kellner observes that "realism remains default level of analysis in most areas of philosophy in which Dharmakīrti engages." What he means by 'default level of analysis', is not clear. One meaning of 'default' is a preselected option adopted by a mechanism. Realism is not a default analysis in this sense. It is not imposed by any mechanism on him. It is the position willingly and thoughtfully accepted by Dharmakīrti. At best Sautrāntika realism can be called his mainstream position and Yogācāra idealism can be an island which he visits on the way and rests there for some time for the intellectual satisfaction he obtains there.

3. Though in his idealist stance Dharmakīrti regards non-dual consciousness as the truth and duality as an error (*upaplava*), apart from such occasional references Dharmakīrti does not elaborate on the idealist soteriology. On the other hand, in the first chapter of the same text [7, verses I.148-281]. Dharmakīrti elaborately discusses Buddha's soteriology as centred on four noble truths. There he understands the notions of love for oneself (*ātmasneha*) and craving (*trṣṇā*) as the causes of suffering and freedom from cravings and the realisation of non-substantiality (*Nairātmya*) as the causes of Liberation. The analysis of suffering and liberation which Dharmakīrti gives there is quite suitable to the realist Buddhist framework and Dharmakīrti too does not make reference to idealism there.

4. Dharmakīrti's argument in *Santānāntarasiddhi* is not a convincing evidence to prove that he was committed to idealism. What Dharmakīrti tries to show in the work is that the argument for the existence of other mind continua, which is available to realists is equally available to the idealists. This does not necessarily imply that Dharmakīrti was either a committed realist as Amar

Sing thinks or a committed idealist as Kellner thinks. It can very well imply that both realism and idealism were equally important for him.

5. Conclusion

We have seen in Section 3 how Dharmakīrti addresses some odd situations from both the stances. We also saw how from the mainstream realist position he enters the island of idealism and also leaves it for the sake of the mainstream. In Section 4.1, I have tried to argue that Dharmakīrti's idealism cannot be called purely epistemic but it does have a metaphysical dimension. In Section 4.2, I tried to draw the implications of Idealism which considerably curtail and obstruct the scope of the Sautrāntika epistemology and logic. In Section 4.3, I have dealt with the two claims about Dharmakīrti's main position in his works: whether it is Yogācāra idealism or Sautrāntika realism. I have rejected both the claims. I find in Dharmakīrti's approach a kind of ambivalence between the two positions. He argues for idealism by criticising Sautrāntika realism, but does not engage much with it. He comes back to the Sautrāntika position and engages with it in a sustained manner.

Hence while understanding the dual philosophical personality of Dharmakīrti, I would like to put his two positions or the two stances not in hierarchical order, (as John Dunne and Birgit Kellner have done) but on par with each other. Dharmakīrti was attracted towards both and was clearly or vaguely aware of the limitations of both. He was attracted to idealism (of his variety) for its critical dimension. He was attracted to Sautrāntika position for its capacity to explain the diverse phenomena and lead human beings to their goals.⁴¹

I call Dharmakīrti's position as dual position, but I don't call it as a joint position or synthetic position. The two positions are not logically compatible with each other. Still Dharmakīrti is attracted towards both from different perspectives.

Annexure. Is Dharmakīrti's idealistic position strong enough to supersede his Sautrāntika stand?

Whether Dharmakīrti regarded Yogācāra idealism as his main position is one question. Whether the idealist position he presented really superseded Sautrāntika position is quite another. I will give my remarks about this second question now.

As I have argued, Dharmakīrti's idealism cannot be called purely epistemological, as it does not lack metaphysical component. The metaphysical component in Dharmakīrti's idealism is the rootedness of the content of cognition in the latent impressions (*vāsanā*) which are not directly given in the cognition.

Dharmakīrti's assertion of 'latent impressions' can be examined in this context. One of his arguments can be stated as follows:

Dharmakīrti points out that two persons (here 'persons' are to be understood as consciousness series) can have contrasting cognitions of the same object. One may cognise it as desirable (*iṣṭa*), the other as undesirable (*aniṣṭa*). In such a situation the two cognitions cannot be governed by the object itself ('*na nāmārthavaśā matiḥ*') [7, verses II.340-343]

What is it governed by then? Different persons have different cognitions with respect to the same or different objects. This distribution of cognitions ('*dhiyāṃ viniyamah*') happens because only a particular cognition awakens the latent impression in a particular person, this distribution is not relative to external objects [7, verse II.336].

One can inquire further. Why do the latent impression and the way it is awakened differ from person to person? What is the basis for determining that the latent impression is functional in a person in a particular way? There is no convincing answer. Hence if the Sautrāntika view that 'there must be an external object, which is the real objective source of a true perceptual cognition' is dogmatic, then the Yogācāra view that the so-called true perceptual cognition has only a subjective latent impression as its source, is dogmatic as well.

This is not to suggest that latent impressions have no role to play in Sautrāntika theory of knowledge. Sautrāntikas distinguish between non-conceptual (*nirvikalpaka*) and conceptual (*savikalpaka*) cognition. The former is objectively based whereas the latter is subjectively based. Yogācārins on the other hand claim that every cognition, whether conceptual or otherwise is only subjectively based. And this raises a problem.

I am suggesting that exclusive emphasis on subjective source of cognitions can explain inter-subjective diversity of cognitions. But it cannot elegantly explain inter-subjective unity. For example, when a group of persons observes an event, they have similar non-conceptual cognitions. A Sautrāntika can explain this phenomenon simply by referring to the ‘fact’ that the event must actually be occurring there, which is the object of the cognitions of many persons. This path is not available to a Yogācārin. He has to give a tedious explanation that all the observers somehow have similar hallucinations, because similar latent impressions get awakened in them in similar ways. Hence ‘perception of a similar object’ by two persons (which is in fact a similar hallucination) becomes a matter of sheer co-incidence occurring to two mind-continua due to the mysterious match of their latent impressions. Sautrāntika does not have to take such a roundabout tour through a mysterious land. The Sautrāntika explanation has simplicity (*Lāghava*, parsimony) whereas Yogācāra explanation becomes cumbersome, inflicted by heaviness (*Gaurava*).⁴²

Hence although Dharmakīrti successfully brings out the deficiencies of the Sautrāntika position, the Yogācāra position which he presents as its alternative, leads to more problems than it solves.

References

1. Amar, S. *The Heart of Buddhist Philosophy: Dinnāga and Dharmakīrti*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1984.
2. Arnold, D. Buddhist Idealism, Epistemic and Otherwise: Thoughts on the Alternating Perspectives of Dharmakīrti, *Sophia* 47, 2008, pp. 3–28.
3. Dunne, J. D. *Foundations of Dharmakīrti's Philosophy*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2004.
4. Hatfield, G. Sense data, Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sense-data/> (The entry revised on August 19, 2021).
5. Kellner, B. Proofs of Idealism in Buddhist Epistemology: Dharmakīrti's Refutation of External Objects, In J. Tuske (ed.), *Indian Epistemology and Metaphysics*, London: Bloomsbury, 2017.
6. *Nyāyabindu*, In *Nyāyabinduṭīkā*, S. Shrinivasa (ed.), Sahitya Bhandar, Merath, 2007 (Third Edition).
7. *The Pramāṇavārttikam of Ācārya Dharmakīrti, with the commentaries Svopajñāvṛtti of the author and Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti of Manorathanandin*, R. Chandra Pandeya (ed.), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989.
8. *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣyam or Vārtikālaṃkāraḥ of Prajñākaragupta*, deciphered and ed. by R. Sankrityayana, Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Institute, 1953
9. Steinkelner, E. (ed.). *Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇaviniścaya, chapters 1 and 2*, Beijing-Vienna: China Tibetology Publishing House, 2007.
10. Viṃśikā/Viṃśatikā of Vasubandhu, *Ferenc Ruzsa – Mónika Szegei* (eds.), *Vasubandhus_Viṃśikā_A_critical_edition* ; Távol-keleti Tanulmányok 2015/1, pp. 127–158.

Notes

1. For an account of this diversity see [1, pp. 49-51].
2. A confirmed Vijñaptimātratāvādin would say that the particular form (*ākāra*) of an object is not due to the form of an external object, but due to the past impressions of actions belonging to the same series or *ālayavijñāna*. Dharmakīrti however says, “If the cognition somehow appears without assuming the form of the object, how does it grasp an object? Really, I also do not know.” (*yathākathañcit tasyārtharūpaṃ muktvāvabhāsinaḥ| arthagrahaḥ katham satyaṃ na jāne'ham apīdrśam*) [6, verse II.353] This implies a kind of agnosticism about external objects and not their negation. He is suggesting that the existence of external objects cannot be proved, but he is not affirming the non-existence of the external objects.

3. *Yasya arthasya sannidhānāsannidhānābhyāṃ jñānapratibhāsābhedas tat svalakṣaṇam* [6, p. 69].
4. *Tatra pratyakṣam kalpanāpoḍham abhrāntam* [6, p. 32].
5. *Hetubhāvād rte nānyā grāhyatā nāma kācana | tatra buddhir yadākārā tasyās tad grāhyam ucyate* // (There is no grasped-hood other than cause-hood. A cognition is said to be of that grasped-object, whose form the cognition assumes.). Also, *bhinnakālam katham grāhyam it iced grāhyatām viduḥ | hetutvam eva yuktijñāḥ jñānakārpaṇakṣamam* // [7, verse II.247] (If you ask, “How can an object belonging to different time be the grasped object?” Then (our answer is that) the experts in reasoning understand grasped-ness as cause-hood which consists in offering one’s own form to cognition.)
6. This is comparable with Russell’s early view on Sense data as reported by Gary Hatfield in Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: “Early theorists who considered sense data to be mind-independent typically thought of them as persisting through time. Russell, in early sense-data writings (1912: Ch. 1), viewed such data as existing apart from the mind as a special kind of thing (neither mental nor physical), which was commonly designated as a *tertium quid* or “third thing”, in addition to objects (such as a physical table) and the perceiver’s mental states. Such intermediary third things might be epistemically given only in the act of sensing them, but they would not depend for their existence on that act. This led to the notion of unsensed sense data (e.g., mind-independent patches of color), which were sometimes called “sensibilia” to indicate that they could be sensed if someone were at the right location, but that they existed in any case (Russell 1914b: sec. 3)” [4].
7. *Arthāntarābhisambandhāj jāyante ye’navo’pare | uktās te sañcitās te hi nimittam jñānajanmanaḥ* // [7, verse II.195].
8. See, for instance, [7, verse II.225].
9. *Idam vastubalāyātām yad vadanti vipaścitaḥ | yathā yathā’rthās cintyante viśīryante tathā tathā || kiṃ syāt sā citrataikasyām na syāt tasyām matav api | yadīdam svayam arthānām rocate tatra ke vayam* // [7, verses, II. 209-10].
10. This seems to be the content of [7, II.211].
11. *Sahopalambhaniyamād abhedo nīlataddhiyoḥ* [9, p. 39, verse k53ab].
12. *Nārtho’ samvedanaḥ kaścīd anarthaṃ vāpi vedanam | dṛṣṭam samvedyamānam tat tayor nāsti vivekitā* // [7, verse II.390]. [No object is seen without cognition and no cognition is seen without an object. Therefore, there is no separateness between the two.]
13. *Vibhaktalakṣaṇagrāhyagrāhakākāraviplavā* [7, verse II.331ab]. [That subject-form and object form are distinct in a cognition, is an error.] Also see [7, verses II.212, 354].
14. *Tatsārūpyatadutpattī yadi samvedyalakṣaṇam | samvedyam syāt samānārthaṃ vijñānam samanantaram* // [7, verse II.323]. (If the object of a (true) perception is supposed to have two characteristics: ‘having the same form as that’ and ‘arising from that’, then then immediately preceding cognition which has a similar object would be the object of the present perception). Again in verses II.391-2 he says that the object of cognition must be simultaneous with the cognition and identical with it. One can state the rule that the perceptual cognition will not occur if all other causes are present but the immediately preceding cognition is not. There is a point in inferring (external object as) another cause if this rule is not spoken of. This suggests that the idealist wants to replace ‘external object’ by ‘immediately preceding cognition’ (that is, *ālambana-pratyaya* by *samanantara-pratyaya*).
15. The idealist Dharmakīrti holds that even the inferential cognition of fire from smoke and the cognition of the cause effect relation between smoke and fire arise due to arousal of the relevant latent impressions, not due to the real existence of smoke and fire or the real cause effect relation [7, verse II.366-7].
16. *Bījād ankuraṇamāgner dhūmāt siddhir itīdṛṣī | bāhyārthāśrayiṇī yāpi kārakajñāpakasthitiḥ* // [7, verse II.393].
17. *Sāpi tadrūpanirbhāsā tathā niyatasāṅgamāḥ | buddhīr āśritya kalpyeta yadi va kiṃ virudhyate* // [7, verse II.394].
18. *Anagnijanyo dhūmaḥ syāt tatkāryāt kāraṇe gatiḥ | na syāt kāraṇatāyām vā kuta ekāntato gatiḥ* // [7, verse II.395].
19. *Tatrāpi dhūmābhāsā dhīḥ prabdhapatuvāsanām | janayed agnirbhāsām dhyam eva na pāvakaṃ | tadyogyavāsanāgarbha evadhūmāvabhāsinīm | vyanakti cittasantāno dhiyam dhūmo’gnitas tataḥ* // [7, verses II.396-7].
20. *Yadīyam svayam arthānām rocate tatra ke vayam?* [7, verse II.210cd].
21. ...*Grāhyatām viduḥ | hetutvam eva yuktijñāḥ jñānakārpaṇakṣamam* // [7, verse II. 247cd].
22. *Tasmād arthasya durvāram jñānakālāvabhāsināḥ | jñānād avyatiirekitvam...* [7, verse II.391abc].
23. *Paricchedo’yam anyo’yam bhāgo bahir iva sthitaḥ | jñānasyābhedino bhedaḥ upaplavaḥ* // [7, verse II. 212]. Here instead of ‘*bhedinau bhinnau*’ I am accepting the reading ‘*bhedino bheda*’ following the reading accepted in [8, p. 288].
24. *Tad upekṣitatattvārthaiḥ kṛtvā gajanimīlanam | kevalam lokabuddhyaiva bāhyacintā pratanyate* // [7, verse II.219].
25. *Kārthasaṃvid yad evedam pratyakṣam pravivedanam | tad arthavedanam kena tādrūpyād vyabhicāri tat* // [7, verse II.320].
26. *Asty eṣa viduṣām vādo bāhyam tvāśritya varṇyate | dvairūpyam sahasaṃvittinīyamāt tac ca sidhyati* // [7, verse II.398].
27. Manorathanandin combines the two answers when he interprets the term ‘*antarvāsanā*’ (which could be translated as ‘internal latent impression’ or just ‘latent impression’) in [7, verse II.336], as ‘the latent impression which exists inside the immediately preceding condition and which is characterised by the capacity to produce a specific cognition’ (*antarvāsanāyāḥ samanantara-pratyayāntara-vartinyāḥ niyata-jñāna-janana-yogyatā-lakṣaṇāyāḥ*). This means that he regards the latent impression as contained in the immediately preceding cognition. My point is that even if *vāsanā* is said to be contained in the preceding cognition, it is still a transcendent entity as it is not ‘given’ in the cognition.

-
28. *Nārtho bāhyo 'sti kevalam* [7, verse II.335d].
29. Against the Nyāya argument for God Dharmakīrti argues, “If the potter is accepted as crater of a pot on the basis of its structure, then he can be regarded as the creator of an anthill also” [7, verse I.15].
30. In [7, verses II.149-151] Dharmakīrti brings out the inconsistencies involved in the concept of *avayavin*.
31. Dharmakīrti in [7, verses III.152cd-156] brings out inconsistencies which acceptance of universals as real leads to.
32. Vasubandhu’s method in his refutation of atomism in [10, verses 11-15] is of Reductio-ad-Absurdum type.
33. This is suggested by his statement, *yadi bāhyo 'nubhūyeta, ko doṣo naiva kaścana* [7, verses II.333ab] (“If an external object is (said to be) experienced, what is the fault there? There is no fault at all”).
34. For instance, he says, “If a cognition does not cognise its own nature, how can it cognise the nature of something else?”, (*athātmarūpaṃ no vetti, pararūpasya vit katham* | [7, verse II.444ab].
35. *Anyonyādhīpatitvena viñapti-niyamo mithaḥ* [10, verse 18ab].
36. *Astyeṣa viduṣāṃ vādaḥ, bāhyam tv āśritya varṇyate* [7 verse II.398ab]. Here by the expression ‘*viduṣāṃ*’ Dharmakīrti probably refers to the idealist thinkers who are engaged in transcendental explanations by neglecting bare observational facts.
37. *Samvṛtyā 'stu yathā tathā* [7, verse II.4d]. Dharmakīrti says this in the context of two types of objects of the two *pramāṇas*. Dharmakīrti says there that out of the two types of objects whatever is capable of causal function (*arthakriyāsamartha*) is ultimately real (*paramārthasat*). The other type of object is called conventionally real. The two objects are self-characterised (*svalakṣaṇa*) and universally characterised (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*) respectively. The opponent says, “But everything is incapable”. Dharmakīrti replies, “The capacity of seed etc. to produce sprout etc. is seen (by us)”. The opponent argues, “But the causal capacity is accepted only at conventional level (*samvṛtyā*).” On this question Dharmakīrti simply replies, “Let it be as it is.” This suggests that causal efficacy as the criterion of the real is important according to Dharmakīrti even if it is accepted conventionally.
38. *Arthakriyāsamarthaṃ yat tad atra paramārthasat | anat samvṛtisat proktaṃ te svasāmānyalakṣe ||* [7, verse II.3].
39. This is in accordance with John Dunne’s description of Dharmakīrti’s method as the sliding scale of analysis. Dunne argues that his scale of analysis is also a scale of progression toward spiritual perfection [3, p. 61]. I have argued that though Yogācāra idealism was superior for Dharmakīrti from critical point of view, Sautrāntika realism was equally important for him from practical point of view. Both the views make spiritual perfection possible.
40. See, the Transition II discussed above.
41. As Dharmakīrti in the opening sentence of the *Nyāyabindu* says that the twofold right cognition leads to attainment of human ends (*puruṣārthasiddhi*). The *Nyāyabindu* theory is generally accepted to be following external realism.
42. It is sometimes suggested that though Dharmakīrti does not try to refute the existence of atoms, his idealism will be a strong metaphysical position if it is supplemented by Vasubandhu’s arguments against atomism. However, it is doubtful whether Vasubandhu’s arguments against atomism are conclusive. Arguably it rests on the confusion between what is physically indivisible and what is logically/mathematically indivisible. The concept of atom becomes paradoxical if it is regarded as a concrete particle which does not occupy space. Generally, atomist metaphysicians and scientists do not conceive of an atom in that way.