

CAN A VIJÑĀNAVĀDI CONSISTENTLY ADMIT THE EXISTENCE OF OTHER MIND? DHARMAKĪRTI VS RATNAKĪRTI

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Abstract

In the history of classical Indian philosophy, the contribution of the Buddhist philosophers is unique and extraordinary. For almost more than one thousand years Indian philosophical tradition has seen the debating attitude consisting of the Nyāya and the Buddhist philosophers as the proponent and opponent on philosophical issues through 'refutation and conjecture' (khaṇḍana-maṇḍana) and later on, the continuation of this debate between AdvaitaVedāntin Śaṅkarācārya and the Buddhist philosophers, and then again through the debate between the Advaita and Nyāya philosophers when the Buddhist philosophers— in the stature of Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Dīnāga and Dharmakīrti— are no more alive. On account of internal weakness, like moral degradation and lacking of logical vigour facing the revival of Vedic-Upaniṣadic thought-web through the great Śaṅkarācārya and his disciples and of external attacks from the Muslims, which results in physical destructions of the Great Institutions like Nālandā, Vikramaśīlā and other Mahāvihāras and forceful conversion to Islam by the patronage of Muslim rulers, conjointly Buddha's Saddharma along with its philosophy, contribute towards the decline and the driving way of Buddhism from the soil of India at large with the solitary exceptions that remained in the hill tracts among the tribal people. But the rich cultural heritage was preserved mainly in translation by the Tibetan (Bhoṭadeśa) and Chinese scholars. Some of the texts were copied in Sanskrit, the language of their origin, were preserved by them. Because of recent restoration of some of them and the bringing back of manuscripts by Mahāpaṇḍita Rāhul Sāṅkrīyāyāna India regained a part of its past glory of cultural heritage.

Keywords: *khaṇḍana-maṇḍana, AdvaitaVedāntin, Vedic thought, Upaniṣadic thought, cultural heritage*

1. Some Preliminary Remarks about Dharmakīrti's *Sāntānāntarasiddhi* and Ratnakīrti's *Sāntānāntaradūṣaṇa*.

It is indeed true that it is very difficult to understand the development of Indian Metaphysics, Epistemology, Logic unless one is acquainted with the subtle polemics and noises introduced by the Buddhist philosophers. Since most of the original Sanskrit

works of this school of philosophy were lost due to Muslim invasion and many of these books were preserved in Tibetan and Chinese translations, the Buddhist primary works, especially stock of the works on Mahāyāna is very poor in Indian languages. However, a good sign of the twentieth century is that some of the works have been re-translated from Tibetan to Sanskrit. It is also true that in most of the philosophical debates in classical Indian philosophy the Buddhist philosophers were the opponents (*pūrvapakṣa*). So without knowing the arguments of the Buddhist philosophers it becomes impossible to get a comprehensive picture of the development of argumentative tradition in the cultural democracy of India. The contribution of the Buddhist philosophers in metaphysics, epistemology, logic and morality deserves special mention. There are four major schools of Buddhist philosophy – Sautrāntika, Vaibhāṣika, Madhyamaka and Vijñānavāda – the first two are realistic and the last two are idealistic in spite of subtle differences among them.

1.1 Dharmakīrti and *Santānāntarasiddhi* (Arguments for the Existence of Other Mind)

Dharmakīrti (7th Century AD) in his *Santānāntarasiddhi* argues that the existence of other mind can be established even from the view-point of Vijñānavāda School of Buddhist Philosophy. Ratnakīrti (11th Century AD) in his *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇa* has raised objections against this claim. But before entering into the philosophical debate it is better to have some informative account about both the philosophers with their Buddhist background. According to the Vijñānavāda School, which is also known as Antarajñeyavāda, the so-called ‘object of knowing is nothing but consciousness’ which is distinctively internal in nature. According to this view, there is no independent reality of the external world with all its furniture of material objects. Whatever is known is nothing but the representations of consciousness (which is totally internal). Apart from mind or consciousness nothing exists. Mind, consciousness, intention, wills, internal states (*antaḥkaraṇa*) etc. are used as synonymous words in Buddhist philosophy. In Sanskrit it is called *citta* which is the organ of internal cognition.¹ An important question arises here: Is it acceptable on the view of Vijñānavāda that there exists other person apart from one’s own mind? How

¹ The Sanskrit word *citta* is used in Buddhist philosophy in broader sense. What is meant by the Sanskrit words *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahamkāra*, *antaḥkaraṇa* etc. in other schools of Indian philosophy is covered by the word *citta* in Buddhist philosophy. In Vedānta philosophy these are several *vṛtti*-s or objects or effects of *antaḥkaraṇa*. These effects are called the features of the mind by the Buddhists. Wishful state or intention qualifies the *antaḥkaraṇa*, it is meant by the word *manas* or mind. When the *antaḥkaraṇa* is qualified by the feature of certainty, it is known as *ahamkāra*. For the feature of memory it is called *citta*. When there is a contact of *antaḥkaraṇa* with an external object, there arises its feature as the form of an object. This is called *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*. The Buddhists’ use of the word *citta* covers all these connotations.

to explain then other's thoughts and emotions? Are they mere appearances without any real background? A realist philosopher, like a Sautrāntika, argues that the behavioural actions of other persons have similarity with our own. The 'other' is not a shadow or mere appearance of my mind. Here Dharmakīrti has affinity with a classical Sautrāntika philosopher. But, in addition, what he has done is that he claims that from Vijñānavāda standpoint also it could be proved. The Vijñānavāda school of Buddhist philosophy itself admits of different levels of reality, and the ultimate reality is called *ālaya-vijñāna* which is non-dual. The other mind exists as the mind-universal. We cannot reduce the status of the world to a fictitious zero. It has functional value and for this sociology of knowledge is possible only on the recognition of the existence of other mind on the basis of analogical argument. This interpretation of the mind-universal and other issues from Vijñānavādi standpoint saves it from falling into solipsism. A Vijñānavādi, who denies any real status to the external world, considers the phenomenal world as one's mental representation. Dharmakīrti, in spite of his affiliation to Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda, authored this treatise and developed an independent view on other minds (*paracitta*) and argued for its existence.

It may be interesting to note in the passing that not much historical evidences extended to us about his life. But there is a view prevalent among the scholars that in any day of 614 AD he was born in a Brahmin family and in a place named *Trimalaya* in Southern part of India. Trimalaya in those days was a part of the kingdom called *Cūḍāmaṇi*. His father's name was Korunanda and Dharmakīrti was referred as the son of Korunanda, Korunanddāraka. In *Siddhiviniścayatīkā* of Akalaṃkadeva Dharmakīrti is addressed as Korunanddāraka.² His basic education began with Vedic Studies and later on achieved mastery in logic, grammar and other sciences of those days. It is believed that Dharmakīrti was initiated to Buddhism by Dharmapāla, the then chief Acārya of Nālandā Mahāvihāra.³ Later on Dharmakīrti became the disciple of Īśvara Sena and with his guidance he learnt *Pramāṇasamuccaya* of Diñnāga and authored a elucidatory note on it. It is also believed that Dharmakīrti was also well trained in Vajrajāna Buddhism. But no strong historical evidences are extended to us in support of this belief. It is also a prominent belief among some scholars of history of Buddhism that Dharmakīrti's tenure in Nālandā is mostly a period between 633--640 AD. However, his main contribution is considered in Buddhist logic and Epistemology. *Pramāṇavārttika* is by far his greatest contribution. It is a commentary on *Pramāṇasamuccaya* of Diñnāga. Apart from *Pramāṇavārttika*, there are six other

² See, Anantavīrya, Akalaṃkadeva's *Siddhiviniścayatīkā*, 1 & 2 vols. Ed. Mahendrakumar Jaina Nyāyācārya, Bhāratīya Jñānapīṭha, Kaśī, 1959 (vol. 1), p.54

³ Dharmapala's direct disciple Śīlabhadra (who was originally from Bengal) succeeded him as the chief Acārya of Nālandā Mahāvihāra in 635 AD.

works authored by Dharmakīrti. These are *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, *Nyāyabindu*, *Hetubindu*, *Sambandhaparīkṣā*, *Vādanyāya* and *Santānāntarasiddhi*. *Santānāntarasiddhi* was lost in Sanskrit, the language of its composition but survived in Tibetan translation. From Tibetan translation *Santānāntarasiddhi* had been translated into Russian language by Th. Stecherbatsky in 1922 and this Russian version was translated into English with the title *Establishment of the Existence of Other Minds* by Harish C. Gupta and included in *Papers of Th. Stecherbatsky* in 1969. Mangala R. Chinchore reconstructed it into Sanskrit and another reconstruction into Sanskrit was done by Jeta Sen Negi. Both the reconstructed texts are published by Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sāranāth in 1997. But English translation with Sanskrit version of the text with necessary explanatory Notes is yet to be done.

There is doubt among scholars regarding the exact philosophical position of Dharmakīrti. According to Pradeep P. Gokhale, Dharmakīrti's position is a dual position.⁴ But saying this he does not mean it either as a 'joint position or synthetic position'. However, for Gokhale, the 'two positions are not logically compatible with each other'. In our understanding, Dharmakīrti, perhaps, independently approached the same problem from different perspectives. It is possible to infer that the very socio-political situation prevailed in the then time might be the cause of making apparent effort to show that from the Vijñānavādi (internalist) standpoint also the recognition of the existence of other minds is possible.⁵

Dharmakīrti's position is 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.⁶ According to Gokhale, "sometimes he appears to be equidistant from

⁴ In one of his recent papers Gokhale has informed us that "scholars have diversely labelled him (Dharmakīrti) as Vijñānavādin (Yogācāra/Yogācārin), Sautrāntika, Yogācāra-Sautrāntika, a Mādhyamika mystic and Svatantra-vijñānavādin. ⁴ 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."—*Studia Humana*, vol 12: 1-2 (2023), pp. 66-77

⁵ In Gokhale's own words, "There is a problem about Dharmakīrti's philosophical identity. Dharmakīrti's position is 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." See, "Dharmakīrti's Dual Philosophical Identity", *Studia Humana*, vol 12: 1-2 (2023), pp. 66-77

⁶ 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 (PV II.353), "If the cognition somehow appears without assuming the form of the object, how does it grasp an object? Really, I also do not

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.”⁷ John Dunne and Birgit Kellner have placed Dharmakīrti’s position in a hierarchical order from the realist Sautrāntikaposition to the Vijñānavāda position. Unlike John Dunne and Birgit Kellner, Dharmakīrti for Gokhale, “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.”⁸ Gokhale tries to find out a kind of ambivalence between Dharmakīrti’s approach a kind of ambivalence between the Sautrāntika and Vijñānavāda positions. According to Gokhale, “Dharmakīrti 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.”⁹ There is also attempt among modern thinkers to interpret Dharmakīrti’s position as pure and unmixed variety of epistemological idealism. But a close reading of his philosophical treatises at once shows that it is not appropriate to ignore the elements of metaphysical idealism in Dharmakīrti. He tried to draw the implications of Idealism which considerably curtails and obstructs the scope of the Sautrāntika epistemology and logic. I agree with Gokhale that seeing from pure logical point of view these two positions are not compatible, rather a case of *mis-matching* ‘with each other’. It seems that Dharmakīrti applies different standpoints in different texts. What might be the cause of shifting of standpoints is a matter of investigation. Could there be a socio-political reason for that? Or he was aware of logical consequence of solipsistic position of *Cittamātra* philosophy in its simplistic understanding. So far as the text *Santānāntarasiddhi* is concerned Dharmakīrti seems to take two different philosophical perspectives to deal with the issue of other minds.

It is interesting to quote Gokhale here again as he said, “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

know.”

(*yathākathāñcittasyārtharūpaṃmuktvāvabhāsinaḥ | arthagrahaḥkathāṃsatyaṃnājanē’hamapīdrśam*||) 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.

⁷ *Studia Humana*, vol 12: 1-2 (2023), p. 67

⁸ Gokhale refers to the opening sentence of the *Nyāyabindu* of Dharmakīrti. There he states that ‘the twofold right cognition leads to attainment of human ends’ (*puruṣārthasiddhi*). In the *Nyāyabindu* Dharmakīrti’s position is a case of external realism.

⁹ *Studia Humana*, vol 12: 1-2 (2023), p. 67

beings to their goals.¹⁰... 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."¹¹

But if we agree with the Vijñānavādi, then we cannot infer the existence of other minds from the bodily movements like going or speaking etc. as the *kāryaliṅga*, the effect as probans/ reason just as we infer the existence of fire from the perception of smoke. Smoke is the effect and fire is the cause and basing on smoke as effect-probans (*kārya-liṅga*) we infer the existence as of fire (*kāraṇa-liṅgī*). If there is nothing real as the external object, then about that unreal thing there cannot be any cognition like the bodily movement or speech-action. Neither by perception nor by inference can we have the cognition of the external world. Verbal Testimony (*śabda-pramāṇa*) in such a state of cognition is not helpful. It is the reveller of the external object. Dharmakīrti (600-660 AD) is usually designated as Svātantrika Sautrāntika-Yogācāra philosopher, because if we closely read his *Santānāntarasiddhi*, we will see that he has gone beyond the usual boundary of both the schools. As an interpreter of philosophical issues he used his freedom to exercises his choice in the line of constructive criticism.

According to Dharmakīrti, from the Yogācāra point of view also we can admit the existence of other minds. However, we cannot know directly the existence of other minds. He uses the words mind, consciousness, intention, will etc. as synonymous to mean consciousness or mind. It is different from the Naiyāyikas understanding of consciousness on the one hand, and from the Vaidāntika's understanding on the other. To him, consciousness itself is action in a sense. All our physical actions are caused by consciousness. But, how from Yogācāra point of view, is it possible to admit the existence of other mind? Dharmakīrti would have said that "philosophica; interpretation should always be in line of constructive critics."¹² For this we are to see Dharmakīrti's argument in *Santānāntarasiddhi*.

It is interesting to note in this connection that another important philosopher of Vijñānavāda school of Buddhism of 11th century AD is Ratnakīrti who refuted Dharmakīrti's arguments for establishing the existence of other minds (*paracitta*) in his small *prakaraṇa* treatise named *Santānāntaradūṣaṇa*. He tries to show flows in

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ *Studia Humana*, vol 12: 1-2 (2023), p. 67

¹² See, Kalidas Bhattacharyya, *Fundamentals of K. C. Bhattacharyya's Philosophy* Saraswat Library, 206, Bidhan Sarani, Calcutta (Pin 700006), 1975, p. ii

Dharmakīrti's arguments. He has quoted from Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttikain* in favour of his view. It is philosophically exciting to them in debate as the theorist and counter-theorist with regard to other minds. Let us have an outline of Ratnakīrti's works.

1.2 Rantakīrti and *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇa* (Objections against the Existence of Other Mind)

Ratnakīrti tries to show that the claim for the existence of other mind cognised through inference is unjustified. He advanced arguments from Vijñānavādi standpoint in *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇa*. The text was lost in India but retained in Tibet. Mahāpaṇḍita Rāhul Sāṅkṛtyāyāna brought it back to India as a photo copy of the original Sanskrit manuscript in palm leaves along with *Pramāṇvārttika* of Dharmakīrti and Sanskrit works of Jñānaśrīmitra. The Sanskrit text of *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇa* is included in *Ratnakīrti-nibandhāvali* edited with extensive introduction by its editor Professor Anantalal Thakur and published from K. P. Jaishal Institute of Patna in 1957. Both Ratnakīrti and Jñānaśrīmitra were renowned ācāryas, the great teachers, of Vikramaśīla Mahāvihāra. They were senior contemporaries of ācārya Dīpaṅkar Śrījñāna Atīśa. So far discovered, there are twelve treatises authored by Ratnakīrti and *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇa* is a small treatise of hardly 22 paragraphs and this is the last one in the collection published so far. These twelve treatises of Ratnakīrti are (1) *Sarvajñāsiddhi*, (2) *Īśvarasādhanadūṣaṇam*, (3) *Aposiddhi* (4) *Kṣaṇabhaṅgasiddhi (anvayātmikā)* (5) *Kṣaṇabhaṅgasiddhi (vyatirekātmikā)* (6) *Pramāṇāntarbhāvaprakaraṇam*, (7) *Vyātinirṇaya*, (8) *Sthirasiddhidūṣaṇam*, (9) *Citrādvaitaprakāśavāda*, (10) *Avayavinirākaraṇam*, (11) *Sāmānyadūṣaṇam* and (12) *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇam*. But *Avayavinirākaraṇam* and *Sāmānyadūṣaṇam*, these two treatises, are not included in the aforesaid *Ratnakīrti-nibandhāvali*. However, in *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇam* Ratnakīrti has often quoted Jñānaśrīmitra's *Sākārasaṃgraha* in support of his view. In various contexts he has mentioned Maitreyīnāthapāda with reverence. While examining the arguments in favour of establishing the existence of other minds Ratnakīrti does not directly mention the name of Dharmakīrti although a close reading of both the texts at once real that his main intention is to refute point by point the view of Dharmakīrti as expressed in *Sāntanāntarasiddhi*. He starts his refutation stating the *pūrvapakṣa*, the theory under scrutiny by saying 'some people argue' (*kecidāhu*) as if his opponent is a very insignificant thinker. This is not proper and customary academic etiquette in using language in the cultural democracy of classical Indian philosophy. But if we look at other philosophical works of Ratnakīrti, we find that he has expressed great reverence to Dharmakīrti with the word 'lord' (*bhagavān*). The reason for this discrimination is a subject of further research and investigation. Be that as it may, re-reading of Ratnakīrti's works with philosophical

attitude of ‘openness’ leaves impression that he is more interested in independent interpretation of Vijñānavādi philosophy from logical point of view. In this respect he succeeds Dharmakīrti as we argued that Dharmakīrti is an independent (*svatantra*) interpreter of both Sautrāntika realism and Vijñānavāda idealism and he has gone beyond the traditional understanding of both the schools to make his philosophy progressive and ever alive. However, it is interesting to see how Ratnakīrti shows the limitations and flows in Dharmakīrti’s arguments in favour of the existence of other minds. This is what is being followed in the next section.

2.1 Arguments of Dharmakīrti and the issue of Other Minds

The question of understanding ‘other’ is not merely a sociological question. It is basically a philosophical question loaded with the metaphysical and epistemological bearings. Whether ‘other’ is as good as ‘my-self’ or totally ‘different from and independent’ of myself? If independent, then how do I understand other’s existence, other’s emotion, thoughts and actions? In sociology it said that if there is no ‘other’ there cannot be a society. But sociological understanding has also metaphysical and epistemological bearings. A pure internalist such as a Vijñānavādi, who recognises nothing other than his own consciousness, would say that since there is no ‘other’, there is no question of existence for other minds or knowing the thoughts, feelings and actions of ‘other’. A consistent Vijñānavādi position denies any possibility of sociology of knowledge and obviously leads to solipsism. But those who admit the existence of other minds independent of my own mind are realists.

It is usually believed that our knowledge of the minds of other persons is covered by darkness (*paracitta-andhakāravat*). What is going on the mind of other person is not directly accessible to us. But the concept of ‘other’ in philosophy is important, because understanding ‘other-ness’ influences all our relational behaviours in society. It is also important to infer the states of mind of other from the study of his/her behaviour. Modern philosophical study of Behaviourism has affinity with the ancient Indian philosophical investigation about mind. But the problem of other mind is not limited to sociology and psychology; it is extended as well to ontology and epistemology. Among the Indian philosophers, the Buddhist philosophers use the word ‘*citta*’ in a broader sense and it covers what we ordinarily mean by words like mind, consciousness, will etc. Consciousness itself is called *karma*, action. All our physical actions are caused by preceding consciousness. Mind precedes everything. Now an obvious question arises: whether in addition to my own mind, does other mind exist? If it does exist, then what are the possible grounds for its existence? This question is important to both the realist Sautrāntika and the idealist Vijñānavādi philosophers. The former is an externalist while the latter is an internalist. According to the former, the

object of cognition can exist independent of the knowing mind or knowledge. According to the latter, the object of cognition is knower-dependent or knowledge-dependent. Naturally an idealist Vijñānavādi philosopher ordinarily finds it difficult to answer the above question in the positive. If the Vijñānavāda philosopher admits that there exists 'other minds' in addition to one's own mind, then it will contradict the established thesis of the school that 'mind is the only reality'. Nothing external to mind is existent, in addition to one's own mind/ consciousness; nothing external is admissible to him. Therefore, a consistent Vijñānavādi philosopher cannot admit the existence of 'other mind'. But question persists: Is not a futile and meaningless action to uphold one's own view to other, if there is no other mind?

Dharmakīrti and Ratnakīrti differ from each other in consideration of the aforesaid question. Being faithful to the principle of logical consistency with the fundamental tenet of Vijñānavādin Ratnakīrti denies the independent existence of other minds. For him, to admit the existence of other mind is as good as the acceptance of the external reality of the world. And this contradicts the basic tenets of Vijñānavāda. Dharmakīrti, on the other hand, argues that even from the standpoint of Vijñānavāda it is possible to accept the reality of other minds and inference based on analogy establishes it. In *Santānāntarasiddhi* Vijñānavādi Dharmakīrti refutes the realistic position of Sautrāntika and then gives arguments in favour of the existence of other minds. It is, for him, an admitted fact that before doing any action, say for example our bodily movements and speech acts, we need the necessary intention to act. So our mental determination actually causes our bodily actions. The intention of Rāma is not being seen in Shyāma, because the mind of Rāma is different from that of Shyāma. In our own case of speaking or bodily movements etc. our intentional mind is the cause of our actions. Similarly, in case of other persons their intentional mind is the cause of their bodily actions and speech acts. We see the bodily actions of other persons and by analogical inference on the basis of similarity with our own case we become sure about the existence of other minds. Without this, our practical life in the phenomenal world, which is conditionally true (*samvṛtisatya*), would have been impossible. The cognition of the existence of our mind as the cause of our bodily actions is intuitively evident (*sva-samvedya*) whereas the cognition of the existence of other minds is evident to us through inference, though it is intuitively evident (*sva-samvedya*) to the others themselves. We do not doubt that as we feel to engage in volitional activities due to our wish that arises in our mind, similar is the case with regard to other persons when they engage themselves in any bodily actions which are effects of wishful minds of other. This is the simple analogical argument with which Dharmakīrti tries to establish the existence of other minds.

2.2 Dharmakīrti and Refutation of the realistic position of Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika philosophers

According to traditionally popular view of Vijñānavāda, as propounded by its chief exponent Vasubandhu, there is no necessity of admitting other minds; admittance of the reality of one's own mind is sufficient to explain the status of the world as representations of one's own mind. Dharmakīrti has shown that this view is inadequate to explain the issue. But the opponents here argue that once the existence of 'other' were admitted, then the next one and then the next one must be admitted and in this way it would lead to infinite regress. If you once admit the view of non-dual consciousness (*advaya-vijñāna*) that the external object does not exist or only mind exists, then by no argument you can establish the existence of other minds. But in spite of being a faithful follower of Vijñānavāda Dharmakīrti in *Santānāntarasiddhi* has put forward a new philosophical thesis with independent arguments to establish the existence of other minds and his new interpretation, we think, has saved Vijñānavāda from falling into solipsism. However, it must be borne in mind that the subtlety in his analysis and arguments makes his thesis difficult to understand by commoners.

Let us explain it with an example. Devadatta and Yajñadatta, say A and B, are two different persons having different minds. How does Yajñadatta know Devadatta's existence? Usually such a question does not arise in Yajñadatta's mind. In practical life we are intuitively aware of other person's existence either seeing him or listening to him. But if we try to explain this simple fact of existence in the light of epistemology, immediately it would turn into a complicated philosophical problem. The question persists: how does Yajñadatta in the light of Buddhist epistemology cognise the existence of Devadatta? When Yajñadatta 'goes' or 'speaks', in fact, such actions are causally preceded by his (Yajñadatta's) wishful mind and accordingly such physical actions as representations take place. Then perceiving such bodily actions in Devadatta Yajñadatta remembers in his own mind the universal concomitance relation between his bodily actions as the effect and his wishful mind as the cause, that is, the principle 'where there is a physical action, it is preceded causally by wishful mind and it happens in case of the relation between one's own physical actions and one's own mind'. On the basis of this relation of invariable concomitance Yajñadatta infers the existence of Devadatta's mind.

It is to be noted here that in both Sautrāntika and Vijñānavāda philosophies '*pramāṇa-prameya*-relation' is accepted from the *vyāvahārika* consideration. With the application of *sahopalambha-niyama* Dharmakīrti claims that the object of perception and perception as cognition are identical. However, Sautrāntika philosopher cannot accept it. For him, '*pramāṇa-prameya*-relation' is valid not only from the *vyāvahārika*

consideration only, but it is also true from the trans-empirical (*pāramārtika*) standpoint. When we say, ‘something exists’ it means ‘it exists’ both in empirical and trans-empirical levels. Here Dharmakīrti differs from the Sautrāntika understanding and says that in spite being different in empirical level, from trans-empirical level ‘*pramāṇa*’ and ‘*prameya*’ are identical.

It may be noticed here that Dharmakīrti begins the central discussion about other mind with an inference. But the Sautrāntika philosophers think that the inference given by Dharmakīrti is defective. According to them, in the cognition of Yajñadatta, who infers (*anumānā*), there are representations of wishful mind of Devadatta and this is inferred from the cognition of the bodily movements of Devadatta. Here the principle or law of mutual (*adhipatitva*) is applied. The bodily movements of Devadatta are the effects of his wishful mind and so here from the cognition of effect as *prabans* (*kāryaliṅga*) inference is made for the cause. In other words, the wishful mind of Devadatta is the cause of his bodily movements and the cognition of Devadatta’s bodily movements (*kāyavijñapti*) is the *adhipatipratyaya* in Yajñadatta’s cognition where the representations of bodily movements of Devadatta do appear. Similarly, what is appeared as representation in Yajñadatta’s cognition about the bodily movements of Devadatta is invariably related to the wishful mind of Devadatta. Yajñadatta infers the existence of Devadatta’s wishful mind basing on that invariable relation.¹³ So for Dharmakīrti, in *antarjñeyavāda* also with the afore-said inferential method we can have the cognition of the existence of other minds. There is no doubt that from the ontological standpoint of Vijñānavāda, it is relative to the person who applies it and the entire process of ‘*pramāṇa-prameya-vyavasthā*’ (use of the method consists of instruments of knowing and known) is justified from the empirical consideration (*sāmvvyāvahārika*). Dharmakīrti has presented the issue as a philosophical debate between the Sautrāntika and Vijñānavādi and this has become a universal philosophical problem for consideration.

2.3 Traikālika Jagat Cittamātra, Vijñaptimātra (The World of three times—past, present and future— is nothing but consciousness or mental)

According to Vijñānavādi philosophers, this *traidhātukajagat* (the phenomenal / changing world) consists of three *dhātu*-s. Whatever exists is only mind-dependent. Here by the use of the word ‘only’ the reality of anything external to mind is denied. But there is no external object, then why do we have the cognition of the external object? The externalist thinks that the existence of external object as known is true not only from the empirical consideration but it is also true from the trans-empirical

¹³ “natulyatvāt. pro’ piparajñānapūrvau tau kadāpinapaśyati. Atah tenāpitanna jñāyate” – SS, aphorisms, 45-5.

consideration. The denial of the existence of known as external object leads to nihilism in philosophy.

For Dharmakīrti, we can use both perception and inference to establish the existence of other mind only from empirical viewpoint (*sāmvṛttikadr̥ṣṭi*). This common-sense use of empirical viewpoint cannot be applied justifiably to ontological status of what is ultimately real. In spite of using the *pramāṇa-prameya-vyavasthā* in empirical level like the realists, Dharmakīrti uses ‘sahopalambha-niyama’ in ontology and establishes *viññaptimātratā*.

2.4 Summary of Dharmakīrti’s arguments for the existence of other minds and Some Remarks

A close reading of the text *Santānāntarasiddhi* by Dharmakīrti and its commentary by Vinītadeva at once convince us the fact that it is an exceptional kind of text where the author argues for the existence of other minds on the basis of analogical inference from the standpoint of Viññānavāda. Here the inference is made on the basis of prabans which is an effect (*kāryaliṅga*). In *Pramāṇavārttika* Dharmakīrti from Sautrāntika view point criticised the Cārvāka critique of inference and argued that the existence of other minds can be cognised by inference.¹⁴

The following questions may arise here: It is admitted that we cannot directly perceive other minds. We can only perceive our physical activities as directed by our minds. As our perception cannot give us the cognition of other minds, the cause-effect relation that we apply in case of knowing our own minds cannot be applied in case of other minds. In this context some other factors must be considered: (a) my own mind cannot be the cause of the physical actions such as ‘going’ and ‘speech’ of other persons, because, as a matter of fact, I do not perceive such ‘cause-effect-relation’. (b) I can perceive the activities that arise depending on my wishful mind in my own body although I cannot perceive in other bodies as caused by their wishful mind. (3) Now, if the bodily activities of the other persons are caused by my own mind, then I would have perceived the activities in other bodies as I do in my own case. With my bodily movements my mind is internally connected. But the bodily actions of other persons are not internally connected to my own mind. So if we admit the fact that ‘other persons’ bodily actions are internally related as effect to ‘other persons’ wishful minds, then only such issue could be philosophically explained. Our own actions such as movements or speaking etc. arise in our body whereas actions of other persons arise as things disconnected to our own body. In principle Dharmakīrti here agrees with the

¹⁴ Astyeyaviduṣāṁ vādavahyatvāsṛityavarnyate. Dvairūpaṁ sahasaṁvṛttiniyamāttaccasidhyati (*pramāṇavārttika* 2.398); siddhancaparacaitanyapratipatṭeh pramāṇa-dvayam. Vyāvahāradaupravṛtṭeścasiddhāsatadbhāvābhāvaniścayāḥ (ibid 3.68).

Sautrāntikas that other person's bodily actions are caused by the wishful mind of that person. Now we are left with the option of admitting the bodily actions of other persons as caused by the wishful minds of those persons. This shows that by application of analogical inference we can cognise the existence of other minds.

However, according to Dharmakīrti, in inference of the existence of other mind what is meant by 'other mind' is not the individual mind of a particular person, rather it means 'mind universal'. In other words, "the inference of other minds is concerned only with the universal. Although it cannot reveal other minds themselves, it is valid because our behaviours based on it do not fail us."¹⁵ Because through inference no particular form of anything, which is called *Salakṣaṇa* in Sanskrit, is known. *Salakṣaṇa* is perceptible whereas *Sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is inferable. Had it been not so then there would not have been any difference between perception and inference. Not only this, our claim to know past things for future things by inference would have been irrelevant. That is why there is difference between perception and inference. The object known by inference does not have unique feature (*Salakṣaṇa*). That is why the object known by inference does not have direct *artha-kriyā-kāritya*, volitional success or efficiency. Inference is a *pramāṇa*, because we do act at on the strength of inference and that action has volitional success or causal efficiency reference. The correspondence is considered as the ground of validity and this is meant by saying, '*avisamvāditvampramātvam*'. In other words, being the non-discordant (*aviasamvādi*) with the real object is the defining feature of right cognition. And a real object is something which has a specific form with a definite causal efficacy. Inference that we use for establishing the existence of other minds is an inference based on similarity or analogical inference.

In Buddhist tradition it is usually assumed that Yogins and the Buddha are capable of directly knowing the other minds. But, according to Dharmakīrti, Yogins cannot know other minds directly as such but through resemblance to other minds as they appear in their consciousness. Because they are not above of the distinction between what is cognised and by what it is cognised (*grāhya-grāhaka-bheda*). For Dharmakīrti, they are yet to attain 'bodhi' and so they are still in the realm of discrimination between what is cognised and by what it is cognised (*grāhya-grāhaka-bheda*). Only with 'bodhi', the enlightenment one can rise above the said division. Then question arises: Where lies the validity of the cognition of other minds by the Yogins? The answer is: their cognitions are considered as right, because their behaviours depending on such knowledge never lead them to failure. Finally, Dharmakīrti considers another pertinent question: Does Buddha know the other minds? The answer

¹⁵ See, Masahiro Inami, "The problem of Other Minds in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 29:467, 2001.

given by Dharmakīrti seems to avoid any straight answer tactfully. We cannot entertain any doubt about Buddha's knowledge of other minds, because Buddha is Omniscient and Buddha's enlightenment is beyond the reachability of reason and words.

What has been said thus far may be summarised here. The changes and actions that arise in our body are caused by our wishful minds and on the basis of our observation we establish a causal relation between our minds and actions. There is no contrary instance. This is the proof of the existence of our own minds. Now on the basis of similarity we infer the existence of other minds from the actions, which appear in others' bodies and which are not caused by our mind. Bodies of others and that of ours are different and so when know other minds we know minds in general and not a particular mind having unique features. We cannot question its rightness, because others' behaviours caused by it do not lead to failure. It has '*aviasmṃvāditva*', non-discordant (*aviasmṃvādi*) with the real object or simply right correspondence.

3 Ratnakīrti's Refutation of the Arguments for the existence of other minds.

According to Ratnakīrti, an eleventh century AD Vijñānavādi philosopher, it is in no way right to say that the existence of other minds can be established from Vijñānavādi standpoint. The so-called objects external to our consciousness are mere appearances. What is represented does not have any real existence.

3.1 Consideration of Possible Objections

Ratnakīrti starts his refutation of other minds with a linguistic tone of expressing in insignificant manner while referring to the opponent's view. It ignores all proper etiquette. He says, 'some people argue' that there are other minds, because our inference can give us the cognition of those minds. Other persons' bodily activities like movements or speaking etc. have been assumed as effects of the wishful minds of those people. But several questions may arise at this point. What is this wishful mind? Is it perceptible by the person who infers (*anumātā*)? Does it mean mind in general, which does not require to be qualified by the perceptibility or imperceptibility? In other words, whether it is perceptible in general is to be explained first.¹⁶

If it is admitted as perceptible by the person who infers, it amounts to establish its non-existence. In the process of inference we do not perceive other persons intention or wishful mind. On the other hand, if it is admitted as perceptible then we need no inference to establish its existence. Again, if we admit mind in general as the cause of representation of the bodily actions like movements and speech, then further questions

¹⁶“atredamālocyate.tadicchacittamvyāvahārādyābhāsasyakāraṇatayā
vyavasthāpyamānumāturdarśanayogyamathadṛṣyādṛṣaviśeṣaṇānapekṣmicchāmātram” — *SD*, para
3, p. 145

will arise: How is this causal relation established? We are able to know our mind that causes our bodily actions and for this reason there is no difficulty in calling our own mind as a cause of our bodily actions. But from this by no means it follows that the mind in general is the cause of the appearance of all such actions. Even if there is fire in a remote place, that cannot be claimed to be known certainly by perception. We usually always perceive the causal relation in general between fire and smoke in village kitchen (*mahānasa*). We also speak of the fire of digestion (*jaṭharāgni*). Nobody denies that the fire of digestion is substantially different (*svabhāva-viprakṛṣṭa*) from the fire that causes smoke. There is nothing common between the two. So taking fire in general we cannot say both the cases of fire is characterised by the same general fire. Now about the wishful minds of other persons we can say that if they were really existent as something common between us and other persons, they should have been perceptible. But, in fact, this does not happen. From this it follows that we cannot cognise the mind in general as the cause of the represented bodily actions in other persons.

3.1.1 Inference for the existence of other minds is vitiated by defects

Ratnakīrti here considered a possible objection. In case of self-consciousness (*sva-samvedana*) intention or mind in general as a sufficient causal condition is perceptible to us. Similar is the case with regard to other persons, because their intentions or minds as a sufficient condition for their bodily actions like movement and speaking etc. are perceptible to themselves.¹⁷ Here Ratnakīrti argues that this claim may be true with regard to the person, who infers, but this is not applicable in general, that is, nothing on the basis of other persons' experience becomes perceptible to us. Had anything been perceptible to us on the basis of other persons' own consciousness, then a goblin (*piśāca*) would be perceptually known. It is usually believed by some people that a Yogi person is able to perceive such thing called goblin.¹⁸ Since the minds of other persons are not directly known or perceptible to us, the claim in favour of the mind-universal, which is present in all, cannot be perceptible to us. Though our intention or mind as the cause of our bodily actions and speaking is perceptible to us, this same principle is not applicable for establishing the existence of other mind.¹⁹

¹⁷ “atheccā cittamātram svasamvedanamātrāpekṣayā nasvabhāvaviprakṣtam. Na hyagnirapyekoyenaivendriyavijñānenatenavānyo'pidṛśyaḥ. Tatrayathā cakṣurvijñānamātrāpekṣayā

agnimātramdrīyamitivyavasthāpyatetathātrāpivasamvedanamātrāpekṣayā icchācittamātram svaparasantānasadhāraṇamapidṛśyameveti”—*SD*, para 7, p.146

¹⁸ It only reflects the fact that there was a strong belief among common people that by their super-normal power some Yogi persons could see such thing as goblin. The citing of this example by Ratnakīrti is only an expression of the uncritical belief of the common people of those days. This type of assertion cannot stand to critical examination of philosophers.

¹⁹ *SD*, para 8, p. 146

However, if we carefully go through *Santanānāntarasiddhi* of Dharmakīrti, it would become clear that he gave utmost importance to existence of mind-universal. It may be noted here that Mokṣākaragupta also says in his *Tarkabhāṣā* that other minds are perceptible to other persons' self-consciousness. According to him, we can establish a necessary relation between the universal mind and the universal actions. So there is no difficulty, according to Mokṣākaragupta, to say that we can know the existence of other minds through inference.²⁰

Ratnakīrti shows further defects in the inference for the existence of other minds. For him, there are *vādhakayukti*, arguments against the above contention. In Dharmakīrti's treatment introducing the concept of mind-universal, no significant difference is made between one's own mind and the minds of other persons. Had there been the existence of other minds, then there must have been natural difference between the two. But such difference is not evident in the so-called argument. I am self-aware about the relation of causality that exists between my mind and my bodily actions. I myself need no other proof to know this relation. But in case of other I do not have such self-awareness. So the claim of knowing other mind is an extravagant claim. Ratnakīrti²¹ here refers to Jñānaśrīmitra's *Sākārasiddhiśāstra* in his favour. It is argued that if my own mind and the other minds both are existent things simultaneously, in spite of striking similarities, there must be some distinguishing marks between the two. In absence of such marks the difference between the two cannot be established. If two things are similar, then on the basis of this similarity we cannot say that when one exists, the other also necessarily does exist. We cannot also say that both are identical. Likewise, the difference between our own mind and other minds is established only on the basis of the cognition of the both. But as a matter of fact, we can have the cognition of our own minds only. When we perceive our own mind we cannot simultaneously perceive a thing which is non-existent like a rabbit's horn. Accordingly, we are not in a position to make a distinction between the two.

To explicate his contention Ratnakīrti has mentioned three difficulties. (1) Let us assume that our own minds and other minds are different. Then we are to admit that the external objects of the world have an independent existence. But a true Vijñānavādi (internalist/ idealist) cannot accept the existence anything external to mind. On this account a Vijñānavādi cannot admit the existence of other mind without contradicting the basic tenet of the school called *vijñaptimātratā*, 'consciousness is alone real'. (*SD*, 148, b7-10). Again, (2) If we once admit the difference between the two, that is to say,

²⁰ "svasaṃvedanaṃ hi tatravyāptigrāhakaṃ. svaparaśantānagatasamvedanamātrapekṣayā paracittāsyā hi dr̥ṣyatvāt." *Tarkabhāṣā*, ed. H. R. Ayengar, Mysore, 1952, p.44.

²¹ See, RNA 147, 17-18; Cf. JNA 570, 15-16.

the independent existence of our own minds and of things which are external to our minds, then we must admit that there exists a causal relation between the two. But if two things exist in different or distant times, then their contiguity and nearness cannot be established and for this reason their difference cannot be established. As a matter of fact, the causal relation between them, if any, can never be known. Dharmakīrti himself in *Pramāṇavārttika* (III.4.4) said that “*sāmvṛtyāstuyathā tathā*”, which means that the relation of causality holds good only in the level of phenomena (*sāmvṛti*). Now the position of Dharmakīrti in *Pramāṇavārttika* contradicts his own position in *Santānāntarasiddhi*.²² Moreover, the admittance of difference between the two will lead to contradict the doctrine of non-dual consciousness, *citrādvaitavāda*. The internalist Vijñānavādi’s stand is that he admits the non-duality of cognition and therefore, it is impossible for him to admit the distinction between his mind and the other mind, because this distinction is not perceptible. So to admit the difference is to be inconsistent with the theorists of *citrādvaitavāda*. In fact, there seems to be many such contradictions in the philosophical thinking of Dharmakīrti.²³

3.1.2 What is the proof for the non-existence of other minds?

An obvious question arises at this juncture: What might be the proof for the non-existence of other minds? Its non-existence cannot be established by perception, because perception yields the cognition of an object which is positive in nature. In other words, no negative fact can be known by perception. It is also not known by inference either, because inference is incapable of yielding the knowledge of imperceptible object which does not exist. So neither the existence nor the non-existence of the other minds can be established. This is a possible objection for further examination, according to Ratnakīrti.

Ratnakīrti here gives a rejoinder to such an apprehension or objection. This may be considered as a *sādhakayukti* in favour of non-existence and *vādhakayukti* against the claim for the existence of other minds. Our own minds are different from other minds. Suppose, there are two objects, A and B. When we perceive A, we do not perceive it in the form of B. A ‘blue’ object can never be cognised as a ‘red’ object. That is to say, their expressed characteristic features (*prakāśadharmatā*) are different. Be that as it may, one’s mind reveals only itself, not other minds which remain unrevealed. In that case, one’s own mind may not have the form different from that of

²² *SD*, para 17, p. 148

²³ We need to examine such issues like whether Dharmakīrti is a realist or idealist; whether he is a naive realist or a critical realist; whether he is an epistemological idealist or a metaphysical idealist; what might be the reason of taking different philosophical positions in different types? Was the cause of shifting philosophical or socio-political? It may be reserved for another paper.

other minds. There is no reference to any condition that qualifies its ‘perceptibility’. This non-perception of the difference between the two is due to the natural features of difference (*svabhāvānupalabdhi*). If the difference between one’s mind and other minds is not established, it indirectly establishes the non-existence of other minds. As rabbit’s horn does not exist or universal does not exist, so is the case of non-existence of other minds. ²⁴Ratnakīrti indirectly shows the non-existence of other minds by denying the difference of other minds with of our own minds and this indirectly constitute the proof for the denial of other minds by Ratnakīrti.²⁵

3.1.3 Other minds and the cognition of the Buddha Tathāgata

At last Ratnakīrti discusses the issue of other minds and the omniscience of Buddha Tathāgata. If there are other minds, then how does Buddha Tathāgata know it? Common people usually face various doubts about other minds. Since Buddha Tathāgata is omniscient, there is logically no room for arising any such doubt about the existence of other minds in his mind. Had there been other minds, then Buddha Tathāgata must have known it. Is there any proof by which Buddha Tathāgata knows it? Inference is futile in this respect and this has been said earlier. If it is argued that Buddha Tathāgata knows it through inference, then Buddha Tathāgata could not be called Omniscient. But each and every Buddhist Scripture admits the Omniscience of Buddha Tathāgata. Nor can it be said that Buddha Tathāgata knows it by perception. If it assumed simply for the sake of argumentation, then it must be admitted that there exists the relation of ‘cognized (object)-cognizer (subject), *grāhya-grāhaka-sambandha*. This amounts to no other option than to admit the reality of the externality of the world. But according to Vijñānavāda, only one’s own consciousness exists. For Ratnakīrti, we cannot logically admit other minds in addition to our own minds as perceptible.

3.1.4 There is no independent existence of other minds

Ratnakīrti says that there is no independent existence of other minds. And since there exists no other minds, there cannot be any issue of it being known by Buddha Tathāgata. In traditional Buddhist views Buddha Tathāgata is called omniscient, means Buddha Tathāgata knows everything through *Bodhi* (the enlightenment), and so the case of ‘other minds’ is included within the scope of universal quantifier expressed by the term ‘everything’. To such a traditional understanding of the existence of other

²⁴ *SD*, para 18, p. 148.

²⁵ Ratnakīrti wants to say that the *liṅga*, reason is not established (*asiddha*). If there is non-existence of difference between one’s own mind and other minds, then when one’s own mind is perceived, the other minds must have been perceived. But our perception does not yield existence of other minds. Therefore, other minds do not exist.

minds as included in Buddha Tathāgata’s omniscience, Ratnakīrti has not given any adverse comment against it in *Santānāntaradūṣaṇa*.²⁶ What seems to be the actual status of Ratnakīrti with regard to the existence of other minds is that he denies its existence from ultimate consideration which is consistent with Vijñānavāda ontology dominated epistemology. The distinction between the cognised object and the cogniser subject or between our own minds and other minds is not true from the ultimate consideration where reality is admitted as non-dual consciousness. The non-dual consciousness is beyond the reach of all arguments and proofs.

4. Concluding Remarks

We are almost at the end of our study. Obviously a question may arise: what is the conclusion of this study of other minds in the light of two texts: one establishes the existence of other minds and the other denies the existence of other minds in addition to one’s own mind, the former being the view of Dharmakīrti and the latter being the view of Ratnakīrti? Are these views not mutually exclusive?

4.1 . Are the views Dharmakīrti and Ratnakīrti about other minds mutually exclusive and contradictory?

Both Dharmakīrti and Ratnakīrti are faithful to Vijñānavāda Buddhist philosophers. Dharmakīrti is also a Sautrāntika philosopher. Here their positions seem to be exclusive and contradictory. We have seen that there is a transition of Dharmakīrti’s position from Sautrāntika philosophy to Vijñānavāda philosophy, which is very often apparently lacking consistency. But resorting to the distinction of empirical and ultimate levels of reality in the light of Vijñānavāda Dharmakīrti might have thought of an epistemology that leads to critical realism on the one hand avoiding the naive realism of Nyāya philosophy and on the other hand, interpreting Vijñānavāda philosophy in such a way that will not lead to solipsism. On the other hand Ratnakīrti seems to refute the arguments for the existence of other minds strictly as a logical consequence of Vijñānavāda philosophy. It seems that he has not denied the existence of other minds from empirical point of view but denies it from ultimate point of view. But one point we want to make clear here is that to arrive at any such conclusion requires more research on this subject. And a thorough consideration of the arguments given in Jñānaśrīmitra’s *Kṣaṇabhāṅgādhyāya* would be very relevant in this context. From ultimate standpoint Jñānaśrīmitra denies all differences between the relations of ‘*pramāṇa-prameya*’ (causal instruments of knowledge and object of knowledge),

²⁶ In Vinītadeva’s in his *Tīkā* on *Santānāntarasiddhi* at the end mentions four types of cognition of Buddha. These are in *ādarśajñāna*, *prātyāvekṣaṇajñāna*, *samatājñāna* and *kṛtyānuśthānājñāna*. Among these the first one is above empirical standpoint (*vyāvahārikadr̥ṣṭi*). In the sense of *paramātha* (the ultimate), it is *Bodhi*, the Enlightenment.

kārya-kāraṇa ('effect and cause), *sādhya-sādhana* (end and means). This difference is valid only in empirical level. By no argument or reason the ultimate truth is realised.²⁷ In the context of *Bodhi*, the Enlightenment, all these so-called reasoning and arguments are insignificant (*tuccha*)²⁸ If this is conceded, then for attaining enlightenment both the arguments in favour of establishing the existence of other minds and the arguments against the existence of other minds seem to be abandoned.

4.2 Solipsism and Vijñānavāda

We know that Vijñānavādi philosophers do not admit the reality of anything external to one's consciousness. The so-called other is only an appearance. Now the question arises: whether a pure and unmixed Vijñānavādi philosopher can accept the independent existence of other minds? If the answer is affirmative, then it will contradict Vijñānavādi's own thesis (*sva-vacana-vyāghāta*). On the other hand, if the answer is negative, then Vijñānavādi's theory will lead to solipsism. Solipsism is not a happy position in philosophy. A solipsist cannot meaningfully communicate with others. Even, a solipsist cannot meaningfully use the word 'I'. The words like 'I', you, he/she etc. in use presuppose a community of speakers. Without the recognition of this community of 'I' my use of the pronoun 'I' cannot be its proper use. What I mean by using the word 'I' is understood by you as 'you' and what I mean by using the word 'you' is understood by you as 'I' and vice versa. Any speaker, therefore, indirectly in practice admits the existence of the hearer. So, if we do not accept the existence of other minds, then we cannot meaningfully use our own mind in social communication. A solipsist cannot communicate with others, because he does not recognise 'other' as independently existent. Perhaps, Dharmakīrti was well aware of this fatal consequence of solipsism and to save Vijñānavāda from falling into this undesirable philosophical position had given arguments for establishing the existence of other minds and interpreted Vijñānavāda not in any oft-trodden track but in a new way. His analogical inference based on the similarity of causal relation between our own minds and our bodily action and the causal link of other persons' minds and their bodily actions proves our assumption. So, in our opinion, Dharmakīrti speaks of mind-universal. Dharmakīrti's interpretation retains the status of the functional reality of world as well

²⁷ *santānātarabhāvo 'yamnasiddhāścetphalāṅgavat. Santānātarasiddhiḥ kiṃ saṃvṛtāstuyathā tathā. Vāstukimātraniravandhena?-- Jñānaśrīmitranibandhāliḥ*, ed. Anantalal Thakur, 2nd ed. Patna, K. P. Jaishal Research Institute, 1987, p. 452.

²⁸ Truth is felt reality, ineffable to the so-called reasoning, either discursive or critical. It can neither be discussed nor be explained. This is another dimension of Buddha's silence over ten unspeakable (*avyākṛta*) questions.

as saves his philosophy of Vijñāna from the charge of solipsism. Ratnakīrti's criticism of mind-universal does not seem to touch the spirit of Dharmakīrti.²⁹

²⁹ Dharmakīrti's arguments for establishing the existence of other minds are applicable at the empirical level (*vyāhārika*). Admission of this does not contradict the realization 'bodhi' and 'mind-universal' which is non-dual. About the trans-empirical level nothing can be asserted.