CHAPTER II

DHARMAKIRTI- HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Dharmakirti (DK) is regarded as the most prominent figure among the Buddhist Logicians. Scholars are of different opinion about the period of DK.

Dr S.C. Vidhyabha, records that DK as a contemporary of Tibetan King ‘Sron-tsan-gam-po’ who lived during the period of 627-698 A.D. He also states that DK was the pupil of Dharmapala who lived in 635 A.D. and he quotes from the travelogue of the Chinese Traveller named I-tsing, who came to India during the period of 671-695 A.D. Itsing records that “Dharmakirti made further improvement in Logic after Di’niga”. He also recorded that DK flourished in recent years. These statements also clears that Di’niga might be the predecessor of DK. Another Chinese Traveller Hsuan-tsang who visited India during the same mentions the name of Dharmapala, who was the Chancellor of the Nîlandî University, when he visited India. But he did not mention DK.
It might be the reason that DK was too young at that time. Tīrṇītha, a famous Tibetan Scholar recorded him as a contemporary and rival of Kumārila. Evaluating all these evidences Dr. S. C. Vidyābhūṣāṇa rightly placed DK around 650 A.D. L.M. Joshi’s Studies in Buddhistic Culture of India also indicate that DK flourished in the first half of the seventh century A.D.

He was born in the South Kingdom of Ćedamani, which is now known as Trimalaya. He was the son of Parivrjaka Kṣrunanda, the Tertha of Brāhma, a caste. DK attained great skill in Vedas, Vedgīśis, Art of healing, Fine arts, Grammar and all the Terthika theories. Thus he became the master of all the Terthika theories in his childhood. He was accepted as a very famous scholar among his fellow scholars. Once he happened to hear learned speech of a Buddhist monk and he was attracted with that speech. He realized that the Teachings of Buddha is faultless and so he started to learn it. He began to wear the donned dress of the Buddhist Upāsaka. When the Orthodox Brahmins came to know the changed
attitude of DK they declared him as an outcaste. Then he went to Magadha, for gaining more knowledge about the Buddhist Teachings. During those days the Magadha was a great centre of learning and excellence because of the ancient Universities namely Nalanda and Takācilā were situated. At Nalanda he received priesthood from Ācārya Dharmapīla. He became a great scholar of Tripīkaka. DK learned all the five hundred śūtras and dhāraṇīs by heart. His teacher Dharmapīla was a direct disciple of Vasubandhu who also a prominent teacher of Vijnānavāda School. From Dharmapīla DK gained a full-fledged knowledge about logic. He studied under the teacher Īśvarasena. His immediate pupil was Devendrabuddhi.

Ṭirīṇitha recorded Kumarila as a contemporary and the maternal uncle of DK. The story is as follows; DK has an intense desire to learn the secret doctrines of the Tertha’s from the MemāEsaka named Kumārila. He was a scholar of all the systems and a celebrated MemāEsaka without a rival. Being an outcaste from the Tertha caste DK couldn’t approach Kumārila to fulfill his desire. So DK disguised himself, went to Kumarila’s house and there
he worked as a slave. He succeeded in satisfying Kumarila by working in rice field and doing the household works. Kumarila taught him the Terthika doctrines and the techniques of debate, but some of the secret teachings were not taught anybody, except his son and wife. DK learned these by pleasing the son and the wife with his efficient services to them. He got scholarship in all Terthika doctrines under the teachership of Kumarila. He realized that there was nothing more for him to learn about the techniques of refuting others, he offered a grand feast to the Brāhmīns with his scholarship and returned to Magadha.

On the way to Magadha he reached in the palace of a King named Drumaripu and he put up a notice on the palace gate that ‘Does anybody want a debate’? He proved his excellence in the Tertha doctrines while debating with the followers of Tertha system. Once he challenged the Brāhma, Kaśagupta or Kaśidagupta, the follower of Kaśida and five hundred experts. He engaged in debate with him. The debate lasted for three months. Finally DK defeated them and converted them all into Buddhism. He selected fifty wealthy Brāhmīns among them to establish a centre for the doctrine of Buddhism. The above narrated incident
enraged Kumṇṛila. He appeared before DK, surrounded with five hundred Brāhmīns. Kumṇṛila appealed and proposed the King that whoever was defeated should be killed. But DK put forwarded the condition that, if he himself was defeated in the debate he was ready to accept any punishment, even it may be death. He added that if he would be the winner, he should not kill Kumṇṛila. Instead of that, Kumṇṛila and followers shall be converted into Buddhism. Thus debate started. Kumṇṛila raised five-hundred arguments to establish the doctrine of Tirthikas. DK refuted each of these with a hundred arguments. Kumṇṛila and followers were defeated by DK. They realized that the law of Buddha was correct. They followed DK and received the ordination of Buddhism. From this we can assume that many of his rivals accepted the teacher ship of DK and became the followers of Buddhism. But this story has not much historical evidence.

During his victorious journey through the Vindhya Mountains he was invited by a neighboring King named Utphullapuṇāpa, the son of King Puṇāpa, to his palace. The King built monasteries for DK. He lived there and composed the treatise on Pramāṇa. Since he was a great
admirer of DK, the King ordered to inscribe on his royal gate that “If
Dharmakirti, the sun among disputants, will set and his doctrines
sleep or die, the false doctrine of Terthikas then arise”. The majority of
the Terthas fled with fear and others confessed that they were not equal
to fight.  

L.M. Joshi records that a Bu-ston Nepalese biographer, who
belongs to the fourteenth century, recorded that even his contemporary
heretical scholars were convinced of the subtlety and excellence of DK'S
intellectual powers and treatise. Because of jealously and envy they
“fastened the
treatise in the tail of a dog” and let the animal run through the streets
and with a view to destroy evidence of the levels of his works. DK spent
his last days in a Vihara at Kali'ga in making compositions of great
works, teaching Buddhism, engaging public discussions, debates and
active propaganda of Buddhism. He died in his monastery of Kali'ga
surrounded by his pupils. At the time of his cremation it was said that
there fell a heavy rain of flowers fell there and for seven days the whole
country was filled with fragrance and music. It is said that neither his
predecessors nor his contemporaries able to challenge his reputation as a logician. DK frequently criticizes other schools and also being criticized by the others too. Even though DK was a severe critique, his greatness was admitted even by his opponents. It is said that Vicaspati Mičra criticized DK in the work namely Nyāya vyrtika tītparyya śeka giving answers to DK’s criticisms. Jayantabhaśa was another frequent critique of him. But he too admits DK’s excellence in Nyāyamājari.

**Works**

There are seven works attributed to DK. Th. Stcherbatsky states that these seven logical works are considered as the fundamental treatise of Buddhist Logic in Tibet even today. So these works became popularly known as “Celebrated seven treatise” which have become the fundamental works for the study of logic by Buddhists in Tibet and so popular than the works of Diṅga. The seven texts are Pramj,avṛtika, Pramj,avini: caya, Nyāyabindu, Saśbandha parekśi, Vidyāya, Sant;pantarasiddhi and Hetubindu.

**Pramj,avṛtika**: Among the seven celebrated treatise Pramj,avṛtika gained great attention and it is considered as the body of the system. This text is called the masterpiece of DK. It is not only a commentary on
Diṅga’s *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, it is an original explanation of the elements of logic and critical philosophy also. A story about the composition of this work is very famous as follows.

Dharmakirti in his younger days studied many dialectic *Sūtras*, but he was not satisfied with this mere knowledge. One day he happened to went through the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* of Diṅga. DK was attracted to the writing style of the author while dealing with the logical problems. This led himself towards Iśvarasena, the direct disciple of Diṅga who was in his too old age. Listening *Pramāṇasamuccaya* for the first time from Iśvarasena, DK became as proficient as Isvarasena. At the second time he became equal to Diṅga, and at the third time he found some errors committed by Diṅga in that work. He point out these mistakes to Iśvarasena. Iśvarasena realised that he himself could not fully understand the real implications of Diṅga. Iśvarasena appreciated DK for his ability to understand Diṅga’s logical problems better than him. This appreciation helped DK to increase his confidence in adding something to Diṅga’s work *Pramāṇasamuccaya*. When he
mentioned these to Iñvarasena, he gave permission to condemn all the mistakes of work and to prepare a critical commentary on it. Thus he began to compose Pramj;avrtika as the commentary of Pramj;asamuccaya, which were considered as the major contributions of systematic logic.

Dr S.C. Vidyābhūta, a states that the Sanskrit original of Pramj;avrtika appears to be lost, but a Tibetan translation exists. But Rīhul Samkṣṭyaṇa discovered this work from Tibet, with Manoratanandin’s commentary named ‘Pramj;a-avrtika-vṛtti’ and it published from Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, in 1989. Thus he made a significant service not only to Buddhist philosophy but also to the Indian philosophy. This work is consists of four chapters as follows. Inference for one’s own self (Svārtthānumāna), Establishment of the validity of knowledge (Pramj;asiddhi), Perception (Pratyakṣa), Inference for the sake of others (Pārīthavikya or Pārīthānumāna). Rīhul Samkṣṭyaṇa mentions that this
arranging order of this work is not systematically done. The order of the chapter division should be arranged in another way, such as Establishment of validity of knowledge, Perception, Inference for one's own self and Inference for the sake of others.  

DK wrote a commentary on the first chapter of *Pramāṇavārttika* named ‘Pramāṇa-vaśīṭti’. Dr. S.C. Vidyabhāṣa remarks that the original Sanskrit work is not seemed by him. Only Tibetan translation available is named as ‘Tshad-ma-rnam-hgrel-gyi-hgrel-wa’. In the concluding lines of the text he described himself as “A great teacher and dialectician, whose fame filled all quarter of the earth and who was, as it were, a lion, pressing down the head of elephant-like debaters.” Karakagmin also made a sub commentary to ‘Pramāṇa-vaśīṭti’. Devendrabuddhi and Sakyabuddhi made each commentary to the second to fourth chapters of this text. It is also known in the same title ‘Pramāṇa-vaśīṭti’. It is a continuation of DK’s commentary. Another commentary is done by Prajñākaragupta, on the
second to fourth chapters is known ‘Pramaj,a vijñita bhaÅya’. Another Scholars named Yamari, Jayanta and Ravigupta wrote each commentaries on the second to fourth chapters of the Pramaj,a-vijñita is known in the same name ‘Pramaj,a-vijñita-bhaÅya-teka’

Pramaj,a vinijñcaya: This is another important work based on Pramaj,a (right knowledge). Dr S.C.VidyabhâÇ,a states that the original Sanskrit work is seemed to be lost. The Tibetan translation of this work is available named ‘Tshad-ma-rman-par-nes-pa’, which signifies ‘The Determination of Pramaj,a or the Sources of Knowledge.’ This was written by a Kashmirian scholar named Parihita Bhadra and a Tibetan Interpreter named ‘Blo-ladan-ses-rab’. This work is an abridgement to the Pramaj,a-vijñita. This work is divided into three chapters as follows. The system of perception (pratyakÇa vyavastha), Inference for one’s own self (svijñetunumäna), Inference for the sake of others (Parjñetunumäna) respectively. In the concluding lines of this text DK is described as a sage of unrivalled fame who was born in Southern India.

Pramaj,a vinijñcaya is considered as a work with mature and comprehensive expression of Buddhist
Epistemology and Logic. Its literary status as an independent treatise is also significant. This text is published recently.

_Nyiyabindu_\textsuperscript{19} - It is an excellent work on Buddhist Logic. The title signifies ‘A drop of logic’. The original Sanskrit work is discovered among the palmleaves preserved in Santinatha Jaina temple at Cambay and Tibetan version also exists. The work is called ‘Rigs-Pahi-thigs-pa’. This text is also divided into three chapters as follows Perception (praty\textit{vak\textregistered}), Inference for one’s own self (S\textit{v}r\textit{th}\textit{a}na), Inference for the sake of others (\textit{P}ar\textit{th}\textit{a}na).

The first chapter of this text starts with mentioning that ‘right knowledge’ is the cause of human activity and the means for attaining fulfillment. The right knowledge is of two kinds viz, Perception and Inference. Perception is described as it is free from pre conception (kal\textit{panj}) and devoid of error (abhr\textit{inta}). Here ‘preconception’ means experiences of false images which appear as real as if they were capable of being addressed and touched. According to DK perception can be divided into four; such as perception produced by sense organs (ind\textit{riya praty\textit{vak\textregistered}}),
mental perception (mānasā pratyakṣa), self consciousness (atmāsāvedanā) and perception attained by yogins (yogī pratyakṣa).

DK divides ‘Inference’ into two as Inference for oneself (Svārthānumāna) and Inference for the sake of others (Parārthānumāna). Here inference for oneself represents the nature of knowledge (jñātmaka), Inference for others represents the nature of verbal knowledge (abhātmaka). Inference for oneself is defined as the knowledge of an inferable is derived through the reason. The reason should be with it’s three characteristics viz., pakāṣa sattva, sapakāṣa sattva and vipakāṣa sattva. Inference for the sake of others is defined as the declaration of the formed reason through words. It is of two kinds viz., positive or homogeneous (sādharmyavat), negative or heterogenous (vaidharmyavat). An instance as follows; sound is non eternal, because it is a product; no non eternal things are products, like ether (ākāra), is a negative type. On this work more than five commentaries of various scholars are available. They are Nyāyabinduṭṭeka of Vinitadeva, Nyāyabinduṭṭeka of Dharmottara, Nyāyabindupiṇḍraṭha of Jinamitra and
Nyūyabindupdvapakaṃsaṃkālpaṭa of Kamalaśāla. This text got very much popularity as a primer to Buddhist logic. H. Nakamura records that another commentary of Santabhadra is also available. But its title is unknown. Another commentary of an unknown scholar is also available and it is published by Swami Dwarikadas in 1994.

SaṬībandha parekāṭa - This is another important logical treatise. As the name indicates the text deals with the ‘problem of relation’ or ‘SaṬībandha’ which is based on inference. Dr S.C.Vidyābhūṭa records that the Sanskrit original of this work is seemed to be lost; but the Tibetan translation exists and it is called ‘Hbrel-wa-brtag-pa’ signifying “Examination of Connection”. This Tibetan translation is prepared by an Indian Teacher named Jñāna-garbha and the Tibetan interpreter ‘Vande-nam-mkhas’.

The content of this work is a brief study of subsidiary to inference which is based on relations such as effect and cause. It has two commentaries. One by Vinitadeva namely Sambandaparekāṭaṭa and the other is a commentary written by Sankarananda.
Vidanyya. This logical treatise is another everlasting contribution of DK to logic. This is also known as Tarkanyya. Dr S.C.Vidyabhâa, a recorded that Sanskrit original was not seen by him, and only Tibetan translation could seen by him named ‘Rtsod-pahi-rigs-pa’ signifying the “Method of Discussion”. The Tibetan translation was prepared by an Indian Sage Jūna-bhadrâ and Tibetan interpreter-monk Dge-wahi-blo-gros. But this work is recovered and published with the commentary namely Vipaçitṛtha of Santarakṣita by Rjhul Samkâtyâana in 1936. The text Vidanyya starts with the saying of the Great master DK, that it is an effort to eradicate the misconceptions among the persons who engaged in debate with limited knowledge in verbal communication. The central theme of Vidanyya is the discussion on the rules and regulations of a good debate and how a debater tries to acquire knowledge through practice. Vidanyya can be divided into two parts based on its contents. The first part deals with the definition and the classification of the Nighâhastânîs in Buddhist philosophy, the second part is the refutation of the views of Nâyîvikas namely Nyîyamatakha, danam. Two commentaries of this work are available.
They are the Vidyāyaśeka of Vinitadeva, and Vidyāyavipaścitṛtha of Śantarakaśita.

Santarātrasiddhi - This is another philosophical treatise written DK. It is also called ‘Tantrātrasiddhi.

Dr. S.C. Vidyānbhāṣā records that the Sanskrit original of this work was not available to him. But there exist a Tibetan version named ‘Rgyud-gshan-grub-pa’ signifying ‘Proof of Continuity of Succession’. This was prepared by the Indian Sage Visuddha Simha and Tibetan official interpreter ‘Dpal-rtsegs’. Th. Stcherbatsky translated this work into Russian and H. Kitagawa published this work with an English translation recently. This is a monograph about the problem of the existence of the mind of other beings. The existence of the mental attitude of others can be inferred through intelligence or the power of consciousness.

Hetubindu - This is another important work written by DK. This work will be discussed in the next chapter in a detailed manner.
NOTES

1. HIL, pp 305-306.

2. Ibid. p. 306.

3. Ibid. p. 308.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. p. 304.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.


10. HIL p. 305.

11. Ibid and also in HBl. p. 237.

12. Ibid.


15. VD. p. 1037


17. HIL, p. 308.

18. Ibid.


20. HIL p. 319.
21. Ibid.

22. Ibid. p. 318.

23. Ibid. p. 319.

24. Ibid. p. 318.