It is said that the Vedānta Paribhāṣā of Dharmarājādhvīndra may be regarded as an authentic treatise concentrated specially on the Pramāṇa part of epistemology. Though this treatise is really a compilation of the Avaita Vedānta, theories on the said part of epistemology, it shines with some originalities. It occupies an important position in the philosophical literature of India in general and the Advaita Philosophical literature in particular. It is a standard treatise on the Advaita Philosophy and the different means of knowledge.

This treatise is a stepping-stone of the higher authoritative texts of the Advaita school of the Vedānta. It deals with the six means of valid knowledge, viz., Perception, Inference, Verbal testimony, Comparison, Presumption and Negation. The discussion on various Pramāṇas proves that the author is well-versed in the Advaita epistemology and he has mainly followed Vivaraṇa
school in preparing his Vedānta Paribhāṣā. The work deals with the means of valid knowledge (pramāṇas), object of knowledge (prameyas), subject matter (viṣaya) and the fruit (prayojana). Epistemology deals with the function of the characteristics of pramāṇa, pramiti, prameya and pramāṭṛ. These four cover the nature of things. In the process the reality from the standpoint of the Advaita is also enunciated. The same is the case with the Vedānta Paribhāṣā. It has great contribution on elaboration of the function of these issues.

Dharmarājādhyāṅdindra has shown a great originality in the interpretation of the Vedānta Paribhāṣā. From the entire survey of this work, one is obliged to note that the author, is a versatile scholar of the entire Darśana literature. It may be the first time that an erudite scholar of such mental calibre has attempted to systematise the basic tenets of Advaita Vedānta which formerly lay scattered in a number of works, like the Upaniṣadas, the Brahma-Sūtras, Śaṅkara’s Sūtrabhāṣya, the Vārtika of Sūtrabhāṣya of Śaṅkara, the Pañcapādikā Vivaraṇa, the Citsukhī etc. The author abundantly quotes from all these works at relevant places and all through his work we find that he has mastered the science of the Advaita Vedānta to a considerably high degree.
Very often Dharmarāja’s plan of work is to defend the Advaitin’s point of view on any topic from a possible attack from others, especially the Naiyāyikas. Through out the work we find tirades made by him against the Naiyāyika and in some places against the Mīmāṃsaka also. He attacks the Mīmāṃsaka on the question of Šabda (Veda) - Nityatva and refutes it tooth and nail. This displays his knowledge of Mīmāṃsā, while commenting upon expectancy; while discussing the relative importance of śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana, he accepts them primary and secondary causes; he also speaks of the six pramāṇas which reveal subsidiariness (Angatva) and shows how all of them are in applicable in the present context. Of course, on the Pramāṇa side the author mostly accepts the Bhaṭṭa argument. It is custom with the Advaitin that according to the oft quoted maxim ‘Pramāṇe Bhaṭṭanayah’.

The entire Pratyakṣa pariccheda appears to be product of the author own ingenuity where he speaks of ‘jñānagata pratyakṣatva proyojaka’ and ‘viṣayagatpratyaksatva prayojaka’ lucidly, the justification of the different epithets included in the definition of pratyakṣa etc. Much against the Naiyāyika stand point, Dharmarāja argues on the basis of the Vivaraṇa how Šabda can give immediate knowledge. Dharmarāja advocates non-difference
(abheda) between ‘viṣayacaitanya’ and ‘pramāṇacaitanya’ for the production of immediate knowledge but not simple contact. He does not accept the view that production from a sense organ contributes to ‘pratyakṣatva’. He also contradicts the view of the Naiyāyika that inferential knowledge is entirely of an inferential nature. The subject part of it is immediate and the other part is mediate and thus he contradicts the Naiyāyika’s view.

The author makes a clear distinction of Jīva, Īśvara, Jīvasākṣīn and Īśvarasākṣīn with the help of the technical words upādhi and viśeṣaṇa while speaking of delusion (bhrānti) he rejects the jñānalaksanaprattyasatti advocated by the Naiyāyika. Dharmarāja clearly distinguishes between pramāṇa and vivarta and shows how the hallucinational silver can be considered both as a parimāṇa as well as a vivarta from two different points of view. Dharmarāja raises a number of doubts in the theory of illusion and solves them from the Advaitic standpoint. As a follower of the Vivarāṇa school, our author refutes the Naiyāyika view that mind is a sense organ and discusses the subject from Vedic and Smṛti evidence.

In Anumāna Dharmarāja rejects the established theory of the Naiyāyika that the recollection of Vyāpti is the intermediary activity of the Anumāna. The author also rejects the Naiyāyika
division of the mark (hetu) into three and establishes his own point of view as the one of a form ‘anvaya’ only. He rejects the ‘kevalavyātirekin’ also. He applies his knowledge of Anumāna to establish the Unreality of the universe quoting Citsukha and vindicating his theory from possible attacks. He speaks of the three kinds of realities from the Advaita stand point.

In the chapter on Upamāna the author follows the Mīmāṃsa theory and criticises the Naiyāyika. There are quite a few different theories about precisely what kind of knowledge this resulting knowledge is.

In the Śabdakhaṇḍa the author gives his own definition of ākāṅkṣa. Dharmarāja criticises the theory of capacity for a word in the individual (vyaktiśakti) and accepts the theory of the Mīmāṃsaka ‘Jātiśakti’. As against the tradition of many other theorists, he maintains that implication is two-fold-pure (kevala) and ‘laksitalakṣaṇa’. In this context, the author has a special contribution in respect of implication while interpreting sentences like ‘soyam Devadattaḥ’, ‘Tattvamasi’. He suggests that there in no need to take recourse of lakṣaṇa. He agrees with the Mīmāṃsaka that implied sense (lakṣaṇa) may be present in a sentence also and not only in a word. As regards purport (tātparya)
Dharmarāja gives a definition of his own and rejects the Naiyāyika's view.

The author upholds the Bhaṭṭa Mīmāṁsaka view regarding Arthāpatti and Anupalabdhi. According to the Naiyāyikas, Arthāpatti may be reduced to an Anumāna (of the 'vyatireki' type). According to the Paribhāṣākāra, Arthāpatti does not overlap on the 'vyatirekyānumāna' for, the later has been rejected by the Advaitin. According to the Mīmāṁsaka, as stated earlier, the absence of the five pramāṇas is held to be Anupalabdhi. That is to say that by Anupalabdhi is meant non-cognition (the cognition may be of any type, Pratyakṣa etc.) in which case Abhāva should be viewed, as pramāṇa.

In the context of discussing the validity of knowledge (Pramāṇya), the Paribhāṣākāra rejects the Naiyāyika stand-point that merit (guṇa) is the cause of validity (Pramā) and fault (Doṣa) is the cause of invalidity (Apramā). The author includes absence of fault in the definition of Pramā. He advocates the theory of self validity of the Mīmāṁsaka and creates a possibility for a doubt also that may arise.

In the prameya part of the work, Dharmarāja discusses the essential and the secondary characteristics like subject-hood and
shows how Brahman is the cause of the universe. The author also argues skilfully how misery which is superimposed on Brahman is not a source of happiness. In his statement of creation of the Universe he rejects the Naiyāyika view: ‘Śabda is a Viśeṣaguṇa of ether alone’. He gives a clear description of creation in logical way. In point of destruction he does not accept the Naiyāyika view that the destruction of the Non-inherent cause is the cause of the destruction of the effect. Dharmarāja views that adṛṣṭanāsā is necessary to be accepted even by the Naiyāyika. His argument that sentences of the Holy Text have their import in Brahman is very interesting and illuminating.

The Paribhāṣākāra gives arguments for and against the views that ‘Jīva’ and ‘Parameśvara’ regarding their being either ‘Bimba’ or ‘Pratibimba’, while discussing the meaning of ‘Tat’. While discussing the word ‘Tvam’, he discusses Mukti and its utility in detail. The various views thereon are discussed, theory of one soul and multiplicity of souls etc., dream, waking state etc. have been defined. He also shows show Śabda can set aside Pratyakṣa in point of Validity. Dharmarāja accepts the beginningless nature of this world.

In the chapter on Prayojana the author makes clear how
Sravana etc. are necessary though liberation has always been there. He does not accept the Bhāmati view that Manana etc. are the direct causes. Dharmarāja agrees with the Vivaraṇa that Sravana is the direct causes, Karma leads to knowledge (jñāna) and knowledge leads to the final goal (mukti). The author discusses Sagunopāsanā and Nirguṇopāsanā forms of worship. He also discusses the ‘Oneness’ of Avidyā, Kramamukti (gradual liberation), liberation with the body.

As such, the Vedānta Paribhāṣā of Dharmarājādhvarīndra is a unique work on Advaita Vedānta which tries to explain all aspects of Advaita including technical terminology. It is proved that the Vedānta Paribhāṣā is an unparalleled treatise on Advaita Vedānta.