

What does Dharmakirti mean by '*pratiti*' in '*pratiti-nirakrta*'?

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This paper proposes to discuss a term occurring in the *Nyayabindu* of Dharmakirti, namely, *pratiti*, which seems to have been used to give more than one, but interconnected, meanings. "*Pratiti*" occurs several times in the *Nyayabindu*. In the very first chapter Dharmakirti refers to "*artha-pratiti*", and when used in conjunction with *arthat* it seems to mean: comprehension of meaning. The Sinhala translator of *Nyayabindu*, Venerable Pandit Karagampitigoda Sumanasara Thera translates it as "*arthaavabodhaya*". But this is not the only use of "*pratiti*" in the *Nyayabindu*.

In discussing *sadhanabhāsa* (fallacies of conclusion), Dharmakirti refers to a defect called *pratiti-nirakrta* and gives the example *acandraḥ saśi*: "that which has a rabbit is not moon" (*Sasi* is not *Chandra*). Dharmakirti's commentators are not in agreement on how to understand this fallacy, in particular, the use of the term "*pratiti*". Dharmottara, a leading commentator of Dharmakirti understands "*pratiti*" as mental construction. He claims that a mental construction can be given any name and one cannot deny any one of these names when all such names refer to one identical mental construction. Vinitadeva, another commentator of Dharmakirti, understands "*pratiti*" as a belief popularly accepted as true. In other words, it is so well