Dharmakīrti's interpretation of the causelessness of destruction

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In Indian Buddhism, it is a very traditional notion that there are no causes of destruction, by means of which momentariness of the produced is inferred. The precise origin of this notion is unknown, but already in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and so on we can find a highly developed form of the proof of momentariness based on this traditional notion.

As is generally known, Dharmakīrti, one of the most influential Buddhist philosophers in Indian philosophy, inherits this notion from his predecessors. To my thinking, it is characteristic of Dharmakīrti that he often makes use of the set phrase "being independent with regard to destruction (*vināśaṃ praty anapekṣā*)" instead of "the causelessness of the destruction (*vināśasyāhetutvam*)." In my opinion, this is not a mere paraphrase of this traditional notion by Dharmakīrti, but rather, in this short set phrase, his new interpretation of this traditional notion is reflected. In this paper, I would like to inquire into this issue.

The main function of the causelessness of destruction is to infer the momentariness of the produced indirectly. Those opponents, against whom this kind of inference is employed, insist on the view that things must disappear at some time, but last until causes of destruction (*vināśahetu*) such as hammer or fire come close to them. Therefore, the negation of such causes of destruction proves that a thing must disappear immediately after its origination since there are no causes of destruction, which could make it vanish later.

In Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, however, causes of destruction no longer mean external causes of destruction such as hammer etc. For him, they mean primarily 1) time (*kāla*) and 2) locus (*deśa*). His interpretation is the following: 1) If destruction occurs at a certain time (*kadācit*), for example, at the fifth minute after a thing's origination, such destruction would be dependent on this very time (*kālāpekṣa*). 2) If destruction occurs at a certain locus (*kvacit*), (for example, not to substance in general, but to the particular substance), destruction would be dependent on this very locus (*deśāpekṣa*). Therefore, one can conclude from the negation of such a dependence that destruction occurs all the time (*sarvakālam*) and everywhere (*sarvatra*). This argument serves to prove not only momentariness itself, but also the pervasion (*vyāpti*) in the form that all is momentary (*sarvam kṣaṇikam*). In my opinion, this argument is one of the highlights of Dharmakīrti's proof of momentariness.