

Inference can be defined as a cognition of an object through its mark. This definition, Dharmottara says, is a definition not of the essence of an inference, but of its origin. The cognition of the concealed fire is revealed by its mark. The mark produces the cognition of the object which it is the mark of. The origin of the cognition lies in its mark.

Another definition takes inference from the objective side. Inference is the cognition of an inferred, i.e, invisible, concealed object. All objects can be divided into 'present' and 'absent'. The present are cognized by perception, the absent by inference.

A third definition lays stress upon the inseparable connection which unites the mark with the inferred object and defines inference as a consequence or an application of an inseparable connection between two facts by a person who has previously noticed that connection.

Thus, the cognition of the concealed fire is a consequence of that inseparable causal tie, which unites smoke with its cause, the fire, and which has been cognized in experience.

A further definition takes it as the most characteristic feature the fact that inference cognizes the general, whereas the object of sense perception is always the particular.

Inference is a cognition of an object through its mark. The hidden object has a mark and this mark is the characteristic/ the mark of a point of reality. The cognition of a point of reality, as possessing the double mark, is inference . In an inferential judgement we cognize the object, say, X (e.g., hill) through its double symbol , say, A and B.

When element A is cognized, the cognition of the other,B ( such as,fire ) necessarily follows. A and B, smoke and fire, are related as 'reason' and 'consequence' on X which is the substratum of A and B. The substratum is called Paksa/ minor term

The two interrelated elements A and B will represent the whole inferential judgement. This judgement will consist of two conceptions, related as 'reason' (hetu/ linga/probandum/ middle term/mark ) and 'consequence' ( sadhya/probandum/major term/ inferred quality ) , the one being the necessary ground for predicating the other.

The judgement is a judgement of concomitance/ vyapti/ sahadharya/ avinabhava. Dharmottara says the object cognized in an inference is either a complex idea of the substratum together with its inferred property, or when the invariable concomitance between the 'reason' ( hetu : smoke) and the inferred object/property ( sadhya: fire ) is considered, then the inferred fact appears as this attribute taken in its concomitance with the 'reason'.