Considering the true nature of things, the force is a particular stage (of consciousness) and is only nominally (samamrtisat); and as such it is not to be specified as either different from or identical with the consciousness. Considering the worldly talk one can say as he likes. It is sometimes quite different from the consciousness or sometimes identical with it. E.g., people talk both ways of things which are empirically true. They having in view the idea of difference talk, for example, "the fragrance of the sandal" (sandalagandha) etc. The idea of identity is also sometimes expressed in this talk: Pricker is rupa (visible), etc.

Any way, in both cases, the object-condition (alambana) has been elucidated as existing internally and to this effect the author says in conclusion: Thus the interior object is endowed with two characteristics (image and causality), and therefore it is logically deduced [that this consciousness alone is transferred into the (external) object (visaya).

KUE-CHI'S COMMENT ON 'ALAMBANA

The following are the remarks on Alambana made by Kue-chi while commenting on Vasubandhu’s Viśisṭātika. In view of the fact that those comments are quite useful to understand and appreciate the respective positions of the realists whose opinions Dignaga has taken great pains to combat in composing his treatise, Alambanaparitsa. There are such three groups of the realists whose theories are set forth by way of Śūraṇavakṣa in this treatise. Now we are at a loss to specify who are they and which group of the realists uphold which type of system. The two Trikas that are now available in translations (one in Tibetan and the other in Chinese) are not much of help to us in this respect. However, Kue-chi, the renowned Chinese commentator, though not writing a regular comment
on the treatise has shed invaluable light on the problems that we are confronting in this context. This is the reason which prompted me to reproduce his observations relevant to the problems. With regard to the first proposition, viz. the proposition of the atoms-object-view, Kue-chi says:

1. “This master (i.e. old Sarvastivadin) considers that many dharmas (atoms included) in the base of visible, rāpa, etc. become the object of visual perception. Why is this so? Their indivisible atoms (paramāṇu) each substantially existing (dravyasat), constitute jointly one āyu or molecule. This āyu is prajñāptisat, phenomenally real and therefore not at all substantially existing.”

2. “Five-fold consciousness relies on (ālambate) the substantially existing dharma as its object and hence it does not really rely on āyu. Thus the compound of atoms are things which are only conventionally real (prajñāptirūpa). Therefore, while the bases of the visible, etc. (rāpa-sattvānādi), become objects of visual perception (sakt-sv-vijñāna), etc. each of the indivisible atoms (paramāṇu) which are substantially real, serve their object (ekavāt). Visual consciousness, etc. do not rely on (ālambate) the thing which is phenomenally real (prajñāptisat) because what is substantially existing (dravyasat) can (alone) produce consciousness”.

The above extract shows that Dignaga in the first proposition refers to the standpoint of the old Sarvastivāda-vaihāsikas.

In regard to the second and the third propositions, Kue-chi makes the following observations:

“The master of the Sutra-sect says: the indivisible atoms (paramāṇu) that are substantially existing are not the object of the five-fold consciousness because no indivisible atoms
are manifested there (five-fold consciousness). These seven indivisible (atoms) constitute jointly one anurūga, gross atom.

This gross body of atoms (cakṣuṣa-anuḥ) though phenomenally true (prajñapti) is the object of five-fold consciousness, because there this (gross) form is reflected. No single substance atom can be manifested as ulambana, object-cause. Therefore, necessarily, the compound (of atoms, anu) constitute jointly one gross phenomenal (form), then only the five-fold consciousness takes it as object. Therefore the Sāstra

(1-Vinśatiṣa) says: Multitude of indivisible atoms substantially existing constitute the objects in their combined form.

This, the master of Nyāya (Nest-Sarvastivadins) considers to be contradictory to his tenets (San-pakṣa-niruddha); he maintains that five-fold consciousness of the eye, etc. does not rely on (ulambate) conventionally real thing. This distinguishes him from the Sūtra-sect (Sautrantikas). If we follow the old (school) (i.e. old Sarvastivadins), then there will be such logical fallacy (as has been pointed out) by Dīnna (1-Dignāga) of no ulambana, object-cause, because no form of indivisible atoms is reflected in the five-fold consciousness. And further (the Nest-Sarvastivadin) says: the material elements, etc. (raghūdayo dharmāḥ) have each of them many a form (ākāra). Out of these only one part (bāga) becomes the object of perception. Therefore, indivisible atoms, being in co-operation with one another (prasāra-sāpeka) assume each an integrated form (Sancitakara). This form exists in substance and produces the consciousness which resembles that form and hence becomes the object-cause (ulambana-prajñapti) of the five-fold consciousness. A great number of atoms, for example, become integrated to form a mountain, etc. and by mutual assistance each of atoms assumes the dimension of the mountain, etc. (parvatīda-prawāsa-lakṣaṇa). While visual consciousness etc. rely on (ulambate), the mountain, etc. the number of atoms existing substantially and being in co-operation with one another

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become (one) mountain so that five-fold consciousness could be brought into play. Hence they constitute alambana, object-cause. In such a case there will be no fallacy involving absence of alambana, because what exists substantially is accepted as alambana. Therefore, the sāstra (Vīmasūtikā) says that substantially existing number of atoms all get integrated. This is explained in detail in the Alāmbanaparikṣā of Dīnā and the vijnaptimātrata - siddhi-Sastra, Čautān. I.

"In the old Vijñaptimātrata (treatise) the tenets of the ping-shih-shih (Vaisesika) and the old Sa-po-to. (Sarvastivadin) only are stated. The Sanghāta and Sañceti are said to be one, viz. parimānya-saṃudayo-rūpa, a matter constituted of indivisible atoms. This is hardly intelligible and the statement is difficult to explain." (v.4b.1-L.1-f.5a,1,6)

On another occasion Kae-chi makes the following comment: "The Sutra-sect and others (hold) that the indivisible atom (paramanu) being in the nature of one single substance (ekadraya-rūpa) becomes the object of non-sensuous consciousness (mano-vijñāna) alone. The Sarvastivadin (Sa-po-to), etc. also hold that each of the ten bases (ārami) includes this single atom which becomes perceptible by the consciousness relevant to it. Thus one indivisible substance-atom (dviyu-paramanu) has been accepted by you (Sarvastivadin, etc). But I (Vijñanavadin) do not accept that it is so; because there is no logic in your argument. Therefore it is stated (by the Vijñanavadin) that indivisible atoms be in their combination form (Sanghāta, he-ho) or integration form (Saneitse-ho-chi) artha, would, in all cases, be contradictory to pratimā (i.e. perceptual experience). So the Alāmbanaparikṣā criticises the masters of the Sutra-sect in this way: The compound (Sanghāta) of rūpa, etc. because it is experienced in the visual consciousness and because it is revealed to the consciousness in the gross, behaves as: alambana object, it nevertheless, is not a causal factor (pratayayāra), because it is not a real substance (adraya-rupa). For example, (a man of)
disturbed eyesight sees a double moon. That being a non-substantial image it cannot constitute the cause of that consciousness. Then the treatise establishes the syllogism (pramāṇa) that the compound of atom (ha-hv-saṅghaṭa), though it is alamkara is not a prayoga (cause) because it does not exist in substance. It is like the second moon.

The treatise of the Viśṇupātra-Siddhi criticises that theory thus: compounds (Sungkha-la-kṣaṇya) isolated from the indivisible atoms cannot exist in substance. With the removal of the parts of a compound, one by one, the consciousness of that gross form invariably disappears. Hence the compound as such ceases to exist in substance and can no longer, be stated to be the cause of five-fold consciousness in the same manner as the second moon. (The idea of indivisible atoms) is even more inconceivable. If indivisible atoms exist in substance, it would follow that compounds exist conventionally. (If) what constitute the whole do not exist in substance, the constituted whole cannot be established.

The Ālayamaparikṣa criticises the masters of Nyāya (Neo-Sarvāstivādins) thus: Just as solidity, etc. (Kathinātaka-Lakṣaṇa) though existing in substance, may be reckoned as cause (pratyayāttha) they cannot be alamkara, the objects (of consciousness), because that form does not exist in visual consciousness, etc. The same will be logically the case with the integrated form (Sancita - ha-chksing) of the indivisible atoms of rūpa, etc. because that form (Sancitakara) is regarded as no other than the form of indivisible atoms. Then the treatise establishes this syllogism: The integrated form (Sancitakara) of indivisible atoms though it is the cause (prayoga) of the consciousness of eye, etc. cannot be its object (alamkara), because it is reckoned to be atomic form itself in the same way as solidity, fluidity, etc. (Kāthiya-sneḥādi). But we experience (grī)
the consciousness of the eye, etc. taking as their objects the integrated form of atoms. Furthermore we have distinct cognitions of the pot, bowl, etc. These cognitions would become vague and indistinct; for, no distinction (in cognition) is admissible on the basis of distraction in their respective forms. (The cognition of distinct forms is untenable because the distinct forms are non-entities/adraya). The indivisible atoms [too] cannot have distinct form of their own. Why is this so? Because the indivisible atoms are of equal dimension (parameśvalya). The distinction in forms exists only in phenomena, (prajña). Where it is broken up into indivisible atoms the cognition (of distinct form) disappears invariably.

The Vijñaptimātra-Siddhi-Stīra moreover states: The comprehension of that (integrated form) is not possible, because while in the process of unification (Samcitavasā) the atoms are essentially the same as at the time when they were simple and non-unified. The individual atoms of the pot, bowl, etc. being equal (in their dimension) consciousness relying on these things (tathāksanaṃ pratītya, i.e. the atoms of pot, bowl, etc.) would be identical. Every indivisible atom at the stage of being unified would each forsake its atomic dimension (Pārimātrītāh). So cognition of the object in its gross form cannot be derived from the object in its subtle form; because cognition of one object cannot be based on another. [If you do not accept this axiom] a single consciousness would be capable of comprehending (ābhāsika) the entire world of objects.” (Vol. III, f. 7b, r.3-f.3b, 1.7).

The foregoing two excerpts would definitely prove that the opinions that were cited by Dignaga as the second and the third propositions are those of the Sastrantika (i.e. Sāra-scei) and the Neo-Sarvastivadin (i.e. Nyaya-master).
respectively. It is well-known that both these schools are staunch advocates of the atomic theory of matter. The fundamental difference between them is that while the Sarvasiddhāntika regarded the indivisible atom as the direct object of our experience the Sautrantika assigned such position to the compound of atoms, the indivisible atom being cognisable (according to him) by non-sensuous consciousness (mano-vijnana) (v. Vcl. iii.f.20a 1,7, 20b, 1,1). For the Mahāyānist even the indivisible atoms are conventionally real and included in the Dharmāvatī (12th. of 12 bases of dharmas, elements of existence). The Mahāyānist further maintains that only great things can disintegrate into small particles (called atoms); but the converse is not true i.e. small particles cannot combine to constitute great things (Ibid. f. 20b, 11.1-3).