

Nāgārjuna's Dialectic and Indian Logic (2),

Esp. in reference to Logical Dispute cited as

Topic 2 in the *Ta-chuang-yen-lun-ching*

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The second topic of the *Ta-chuang-yen-lun-ching* [「大莊嚴論經」 Taisho: Vol.4 (No.201) p.258c-261a] translated by Kumārajīva, or known as *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* in Sanskrit ascribed to Kumāralāta by H. Lüder, is consisted of a doctrinal dispute on causality between a new Buddhist convert, Kauśika by name, and his old Brahmanical colleagues. According to the story, Kauśika happened to read the *Sūtra of the Twelve-Membered Causality* (「十二因緣經」) and drawn to the practice of concentration. Going through the twelve causal linkages (*aṅga*) serially by way of phenomenization (*anuloma*) as well as by way of dephenomenization (*pratiloma*), he acquired an insight into the causality of dependent origination (*Pratītyasamutpāda*). Thus, he became a Buddhist upon his own conversion but was inevitably faced with his former colleagues' challenge. He was obliged to respond to a challenge made from the point of view of the Vaiśeṣika pluralist theory of causality and from that of the Sāṃkhya monist theory of causality.

What is unique about the polemic cited in this story is that the method of argument undertaken against the Vaiśeṣika and Sāṃkhya theories of causality represents a miniature form of the Nāgārjunian treatise. In addition, the argument reveals the relationship between Indian logic and Buddhist dialectic more clearly, because of its brevity and conciseness. The purpose of this paper is to lay out some important points of identity between the method of argument applied in this polemic and Nāgārjuna's dialectic and clarify the relationship between Buddhist dialectic and Indian logic.

In the classification of the philosophical schools in Classical India, the Vaiśeṣika was linked with the Naiyāyika school of logic, because

the former provided the metaphysical basis while the latter the logical superstructure. Kauśika declares to his Brahmanical colleagues that the Buddha's teaching of "twelve-membered Causality" is alone the true insight of causality, and that the rest of all other theories are false. The essential points of Kauśika's argument against the Vaiśeṣika goes briefly as follows:

The Vaiśeṣikas are confused about cause and effect, because they do not understand the Buddhist *dharma* theory [i.e., *Skandhas*, *Āyatanas*, and *Dhātus*]. They brag about their inductive method [i.e., rendered by Kumārajīva as 'method of approximation' (瓶因果淺近之法)], but it can only deal with the causality of things and not with that of human senses and intellect inherent in human body (*ibid.*, p. 259b: 26-29). The material cause of a jar may be known by observing its prior presence and its break-down into pieces of clay later, just as this cloth here is made of those threads, vertical and horizontal, interwoven line after line. If, however, a jar is here alone [without broken pieces], how can you determine its material cause as pieces of clay? Again, since broken pieces of clay do not function as a jar, by merely observing their presence from the point of view of a jar's function, how can you decide if these pieces might be the material cause of a jar? (*ibid.*, p. 259c: 1-9).

Indian logic is known to be double featured, inductive as well as deductive. In order to demonstrate a causal relation between a rising smoke over the yonder hill and an outbreak of fire there, it is required to give an example from the similar class of things (*sapakṣa*), say, a kitchen, where both smoke and fire are generally co-present, and also an opposite example from the dissimilar class of things (*vipakṣa*), like a water tank, where neither fire nor smoke is observed. Induction demands validation of a given thesis in reference to *Sapakṣa* and *Vipakṣa* according to the rules of *Anvaya* and *Vyatireka* respectively, while deduction is simply an application of a given universal to a given object of inference. In short, the efficacy of a logical demonstration depends on how effectively a given example convinces the listeners regarding the certainty of co-presence of cause and effect in a given object in question.

Unlike the case of smoke and fire, however, a jar and its broken pieces of clay cannot be co-present despite their causal relationship. If

an unbroken jar is present, there can't be pieces of clay, and if it is broken into pieces of clay, there can no longer be a jar. This inherent incompatibility is precisely identical with that incompatibility between *light* and *darkness* which Nāgārjuna applied in his *Vigrahavyāvartanī* in order to refute the Naiyāyika and demonstrated the absurdity of their causal contact (*Kārikā* 37-39).

The similarity of argument here with that of Nāgārjuna becomes more convincing when we read the fifteenth verse of the tenth chapter of his *Madhyamaka-śāstra*: "By means of an example of fire and fuel, all possible relationship between self and five *Skandhas* have been repudiated without a remainder, including causal examples of a jar and a cloth." In the chapter in question, neither a jar nor a cloth is actually treated in that chapter, but both are especially taken up in Kauśika's polemic, the similarity of dialectic is beyond mere coincidence.

The Sāṃkhya philosophy, as linked with the Yoga school of practice in Classical India, theorized human cognition and consciousness in terms of spontaneous transformation of the single universal medium (*pradhāna*) triggered by its linkage with an individual spirit (*puruṣa*). The medium automatically changes itself into the subjective and the objective worlds of human experience. Sensation created by a sense faculty in correspondence to its object is to be unified by the ego principle (*ahaṅkāra*) and relayed to the faculty of intellect (*buddhi*) for cognition. Kauśika refutes this Sāṃkhya theory of causality and their logic of deduction approximately as follows:

The Sāṃkhyas claim that the five-membered syllogism [i.e., proposition, reason, exemplification, application, and conclusion] explains everything. But they cannot provide an adequate example for validating their theory like "dewlap" which can determine the class of all cattle at once, because their metaphysical theory is logically self-contradictory. They postulated the primary principle (*pradhāna*) as unborn like a permanent principle, and as omnipresent everywhere, and yet, they say, it transcends every phenomenon simultaneously. Since "omnipresent" and "not omnipresent" are two contradictory features, the theory becomes meaningless by itself. If there is anything like that at all, it must be nothing but impermanent as an instantaneous thing. (*ibid.*, p. 259c: 22-29 -260a: 1-7)

Though the absence of a logical example appears to be a minor offence, it is the major logical deficiency in Indian logic, because it not only disqualifies the logicity of a given thesis but also its syllogistic demonstration. From Kauśika's point of view, logic is supposed to deal with the world of empirical facts (i.e., 三界 or 五趣). According to the Sāṃkhya, however, the primary principle (*pradhāna* or *prakṛti*), by definition, transcends all phenomena as *noumenon* and yet simultaneously resides as immanent in all spheres of human experience. Thus, their causal theory of identity between cause and effect (*satkārya-vāda*) faces serious problem, precisely because there is no adequate example to exemplify transcendent *noumenon* in the original state (*pradhāna*) and multifarious variation of its evolved state in phenomena in terms of co-presence. It was Nāgārjuna's primary method to explore whatever self-contradictory concept that is inherent in a given subject of examination and thereby demonstrate why it becomes impossible from the empirical point of view.

Although Kauśika's logical refutation ends after the foregoing two, his subsequent polemic reveals further points of similarity with Nāgārjuna's method. It was customary throughout ancient and medieval India that Brahmanical tradition invariably criticized Buddhism on account of the two basic doctrines, (1) that there is neither beginning nor ending with the succession of life and death (生死無有本際) and (2) that there is no self-identifying essence in a person as well as in all things (又復說一切法中悉無有我). In explaining these two, Kauśika applies the metaphor of "seed and sprout" (*ibid.*, p. 260b: 1-5), which Nāgārjuna also used in his *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (*kārikā* 1's note).

Perhaps, the most significant similarity between Kauśika's polemic and the dialectic of Nāgārjuna ought to be sought in the way the latter placed the 26th and 27th chapters as conclusion of his *Madhyamakāśāstra*. In the 26th chapter, he does not apply his dialectic to any of the serial linkages of the twelve members, but simply presents them in due sequence for both phenomenalization (*anuloma*) and dephenomenalization (*pratiloma*). Kauśika too concludes his polemic by simply reciting the

twelve members in both ways (*ibid.*, p. 260b: 19-25).

Finally, after reciting the twelve chains of causation, Kauśika invokes a warning precisely like Nāgārjuna did in the 27th chapter, shunning the wrong view that the body really exists as belonging to one's self (*sat-kāya-dṛṣṭi*, 有身見). Insofar as one is attached to the existence of self, one is under the spell of primordial desire and is totally involved in the process of life and death. It is therefore primary to the path of emancipation to eradicate the notion of "real existence of self. (*ibid.*, p. 260b; 27-29-c: 1-4)

From the foregoing points of identity between Kauśika's method of argument and that of Nāgārjuna, the following may be concluded: (1) the author of the *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā* may have been nearly contemporaneous to Nāgārjuna, well acquainted with the latter's writings and understood the essentials of the doctrinal implication. (2) Just as the core process of Indian logic is the principle of *dṛṣṭānta*, the Nāgārjunian dialectic also structurally has the same principle in its core. In the logical context, cause and effect ought to be co-present in the class of *sapakṣa*, whereas in the dialectical context, cause and effect are forced to mutually contradict and exclude each other from their co-presence, on account of which a given causal relation is repudiated. The dialectical negation of a given relationship suggests an important rule that the necessary change from the logical to the dialectical context seems to take place when a given example is viewed in reference to its instantaneous space and time. (3) Since logic deals with the world of common sense phenomena, Buddhist dialectic must be deemed to deal with the world of instantaneous succession of the five *Skandhas*. Nāgārjuna's dialectic has all its goal as the method of entering the world of five *Skandhas* and has its justification within its instantaneous succession.

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