

**The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's
Dependent Arising
and a Critique of Essentialist Causal
Theories**

Tenzin Sangmo

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Declaration

The material contained in this thesis is original except where due acknowledgement is given. This material has not been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma

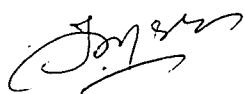


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Abstract

Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika philosophers claim that any causal theory that is bound up in the notion of essence (*svabhāva* / *rang bzhin*) cannot offer us any plausible causal explanation of how things come to be what they were in the past, what they are now and what they will become in the future. This is because any notion of essence, they assert, fundamentally contradicts the interdependent nature of the causal process. As an alternative the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika proposes the doctrine of *pratītyasamudpadā* (“dependent co-arising”) as its central causal theory. The doctrine of dependent co-arising enables the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika to reject a causal metaphysics of essence (*svabhāva*) and adopt the view based on the inherent emptiness (*sūnyatā*) of the essence of causality.

The objective of my dissertation is, therefore, to investigate *how* the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika [non-essentialist] philosophy applies its twin concepts: emptiness (*sūnyatā*) and dependent arising (*pratītyasamudpadā*) in the case of causality. To do this, first I demonstrate the incompatible nature of causality and essence (*svabhāva*) from the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika’s point of view, demonstrate the grounds for rejecting the notion of essence by means of providing a detailed critique of the four traditional Indian essentialist causal theories. I, then offer a detailed discussion of the Prāsaṅgika’s arguments in support of the doctrine of dependent arising as a plausible account of a causal explanation, and I achieve this by way of identifying emptiness with dependent arising.

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Introductory Remark

Three hundred years after the passing away of the historical Śākyamuni Buddha, around 380 B.C. the monks of Vaiśālī allegedly violated monastic code of conduct by adopting ten new practices (Tāranātha, 1990: 367-73). Consequently, a dispute arose between the conservatives and liberals over the matters related to the ten practices. This was the cause for the second of the three councils to take place. The venerable Yaśas (P. *Yasa-kākāṇḍakaputta*) mobilised a congregation of seven hundred monks, and presided over the second council (Tāranātha, 1990: 68).¹ The position of the conservative prevailed in the council and the elders agreed to reject the ten practices. Vaiśālī monks did not accept the conservative ruling. They favoured more flexibility in the monastic rules. This controversy resulted in the split of the early Buddhist order into two schools, the Sthaviravādins and the Mahāsaṅghikas. The former agreed with the conservative ruling while the latter rejected it. The initial split led to further divisions eventually as many as eighteen schools of thought with varying doctrinal interpretations took shape. Of all, the four schools: Mahāsaṅghika, Theravāda, Sarvāstivādin, and Sammatīya emerged as the most powerful of their times. The dominance of these four schools was soon replaced by the four other schools: Mādhyamika, Yogācārya, Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika (Sarvāstivādin) took ascendancy. The former two schools belong to Mahāyāna tradition and the latter two schools represent Hīnayāna / Śrāvakayāna tradition. Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika (Sarvāstivādin) are Buddhist Abhidharmika realists as they categorise all the objects of knowledge within five basic categories: the material forms (Stk. *rūpa*),

¹ Both Bu ston and Tāranātha's accounts of the Second Council agree on most aspects, the former asserts that the council was organised at the Kusumapurī-vihāra under the patronage of King Nanda (Tibetan *bga' byed*), a Licchavi by birth, while Bu ston asserts that its patron was Aśoka. There is however an interesting possibility. If the Tibetan term dGa' byed is the transliteration of Piyadasī, an epithet of Aśoka, and if dGa' byed is misconstrued as different person, then the discrepancy between the two accounts is resolved.

primary minds (Skt. *citta*), secondary minds (Skt. *caitta*), compositional mental factors (Skt. *citta-caitta-viprayukta-saṃskāra*), and the non-contingent, or unconditioned phenomenon (Skt. *asaṃskṛta*) such as *nibbāna* (space is also included under this category). Abhidharmikas are also “essentialists” / “foundationalists” in their ontology and epistemology, for they define ultimate truth either as indivisible phenomenon both physically and conceptually or as one that is causally efficient (Tib. *don byed nus pa*), while conventional is defined either as a divisible phenomenon, both physically and conceptually or as one that is causally inefficient (Tib. *don byed mi nus pa*). The Abhidharmikas, in particular, Sarvāstivādins are pan-realists as they assert that the realities of the *dharma*s or entities of past and future exist in the same way as present *dharma*s. Moreover they propose an ontology and epistemology based on the theory of *svabhāva*, “essence” / “own-nature” which posits *dharma*s as possessing *svalakṣaṇa* “self-defining characteristics” of their own.

Madhyamaka and Yogācāra are the two main surviving schools that belong to Mahāyāna tradition. Historically, this tradition broke off from the Mahāsaṅghika lineage by the second century after the Buddha. The various earlier developments, along with various doctrinal issues, culminated the rise of the Mahāyāna movement between 150 BCE and 100 CE. While Madhyamaka and Yogācāra (also known as Cittamātra) have their philosophical differences associated with a particular set of *sūtras* (texts attributed to the Buddha) and *śāstras* (commentaries on the *sūtras*), both have the bodhisattvahood and Buddhahood as their complementary soteriological goal. Yogācāra is an idealist philosophy – it denies the reality of external objects but asserts the reality of mind only. Whereas Madhyamaka (its adherent is called Mādhyamika) is founded by Nāgārjuna a south Indian monk. The *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, the *Śūnyatāsaptati*, the *Vigrahvyāvartanī*, and the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* are the most influential of Nāgārjuna’s

philosophical works. The School was made famous in the fifth century by the works of Buddhapālita and Bhāvaviveka, both commentators on Nāgārjuna's texts. Based on Bhāvaviveka's interpretation of Nāgārjuna's philosophy, a new Madhyamaka School, the Svātantrika-Madhyamaka, emerged (500 AD). In the sixth century, Candrakīrti disputed Bhāvaviveka's claims, vindicated Buddhapālita's reading of Nāgārjuna's philosophy and founded a rival school, the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka. Candrakīrti's ideas are expressed in his works – especially his *magnum opus*, the *Madhyamakāvatāra*; its autocommentary, the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*; and the *Prasannapadā*, his commentary on the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* of Nāgārjuna. Almost two centuries later, Śāntarakṣita and his student Kamalaśīla synthesised Madhyamaka and Yogācāra ideas to form another Madhyamaka School, the Yogacārā-Madhyamaka.

Mādhyamika is a Śūnyavādin, one who propounds the doctrine of emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*). Mādhyamika argues that every phenomenon is empty (Skt. *śūnya*) of essence. Mādhyamika is an anti-realist or anti-essentialist in that respect and claims that notion of essence is utterly incompatible with the doctrine of *śūnyatā* “emptiness” / *pratītyasamudpāda* “dependently co-arising.” Metaphysics, ethics and epistemology bound up by notion of *svabhāva* is, Mādhyamika claims, an utterly untenable position, hence it must be rejected in favour of *pratītyasamudpāda* / *śūnyatā*. Alternatively the Mādhyamika, in particular Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika proposes *empty metaphysics*, *empty epistemology* and *empty ethics* as identical to the doctrine of *pratītyasamudpāda* / *śūnyatā* and further claims this doctrine alone can offer plausible philosophical account of how things really are. Given the limited scope of the project, leaving aside the ethical and the epistemological concerns including the broader metaphysical considerations that arise from the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika claims, the primary focus of my dissertation will be to investigate *how* the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika applies its twin doctrine of *śūnyatā* /

pratītyasamutpadā to the problems concerning causality. This analysis is significant for a couple of reasons. First, causality occupies a central position in Madhyamaka metaphysics yet to my knowledge, no detailed study has so far been undertaken in modern Madhyamaka studies and my work fills this critical need. Second, it is my personal interest to find out the implications of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's huge claim that the notion of *svabhāva* undermines any plausible causal account, and that only *śūnya* metaphysics, *pratītyasamutpāda*, can offer a plausible causal explanation.

In order to achieve these two objectives: First I will demonstrate the incompatible relationship of causality and essence, and argue the grounds for rejecting essence in the interest of developing a plausible account of causality. This analysis will reveal the complementary relationship between causation and the emptiness of essence, and allows me to defend the Prāsaṅgika's claim that causal process must be empty of any essential power whatsoever and show why the notion of essential causal power necessarily undermines the notion of causal process. Second I will demonstrate the grounds for the Prāsaṅgika's claim that dependent arising is a plausible account of causality. This demonstration is critical for number of reasons. It will reveal the identity of the emptiness of essence and dependent arising, which is central to the causal explanation of the Prāsaṅgika. Here I will argue that for the Prāsaṅgika's claim that to reject essence is precisely to posit dependent arising, likewise, to posit things as dependently arisen is to deny that they are produced from any causal essence. The fact that the Prāsaṅgika rejects causal accounts tied together with essence does not suggest, I argue, that it lacks its own causal explanation. The Prāsaṅgika's rejection of the essentialist account of causation, I argue, is identical to the advancing of dependent arising as its causal thesis.

I will adopt the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's method of presentation. In the first three chapters I will present the Prāsaṅgika critique of the causal theories proposed by

orthodox (Sāṃkhya), and heterodox (Cārvāka /Lokāyata, Jaina, Buddhist Abhidharmikas) schools of Indian thought. In Chapter 1, I analyse the Sāṃkhya's causal account which conforms, according to Buddhist tenet literature, "theory of arising from self," consider Sāṃkhya's arguments advanced to defend this causal claim followed by the Prāsaṅgika's critique of the arguments. Chapter 2 looks at the "theory of arising from another." Although this causal theory is popular amongst all orthodox schools (Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, Vedānta) of thought and Buddhist schools (Abhidharmikas [Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika], Yogācāra, Svatantrika Mādhyamika included), my project will specifically focus on the arguments advanced by the Abhidharmikas to support this causal account, followed by the Prāsaṅgika's critique of these arguments. Chapter 3 analyses the causal theories of heterodox schools of Jaina and Cārvāka (Lokāyata). Part 1 will look at Jaina's "theory of arising from both self and another," consider the schools key arguments in favour of this causal theory. This will be followed by a brief Prāsaṅgika critique of the Jaina arguments. Part 2 of the chapter looks at Cārvāka's (Lokāyata's) "theory of arising from without cause", consider the arguments put forward in favour of the causal theory followed by the Prāsaṅgika's critique of the arguments.

Once the refutation of the essentialist account of causality is achieved in the first three chapters, then in the remaining two chapters I intend to explore the Prāsaṅgika's own account of causality, its case for dependent arising as the alternative plausible causal account. Therefore Chapter 4 will form the conceptual framework for positing dependent arising as the causal thesis for Prāsaṅgika philosophers. It discusses some of the major arguments as to why dependent arising and essence are seen as incompatible by the Prāsaṅgikas, arguing that the former must follow from the rejection of the latter. Finally Chapter 5 provides a detailed discussion of the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka's own

account of dependent arising by way of exploring the two central arguments – the subjective and the objective arguments – the school employs to demonstrate the uniqueness of the causal thesis of dependent arising and emptiness.

Chapter 1

Theory of Arising from Self

1. Introduction

Of the four problematic causal theories briefly mentioned in the Introduction, the first chapter examines the first alternative, namely, the theory of self-causation. Etymologically, the Sanskrit term *svataḥ* (Tib. *bdag*) refers to “from self” while *utpāda* (Tib. *skyes*) means “to bring forth,” “to produce,” “to give rise to.” Therefore the compound Sanskrit term *svataḥ utpāda* (Tib. *bdag skyes*) literally comes to mean “self-caused,” “self-produced.” The causal theory formulated on the basis of this view is therefore, variously known as the theory of “self-causation,” (Garfield, 1995: 105, Kalupahana, 1991: 106), “spontaneous production,” (Huntington and Wangchen, 1989: 158), and “self-production.” (Huntington and Wangchen, 1989: 168). This theory is also characterised as the *satkāryavāda* (Organ, 1975: 201; Sharma, 1960: 151; Vācaspati Misra, 9. 77 [cited in Srivastava, 2004: 99]) wherein *sat* denotes “real” (Organ, 1975: 201) or “existence,” *kārya* “effect” (Sharma, 1960: 151), and *vāda* the “theory” or the “proposition” of that theory – literally, the “effect is real” theory or the “effect exists” theory which implies that the effect is real in its causal stage or the effect exists in its cause. This etymology follows because at the heart of this causal theory is the claim which states that the effect is pre-existent in the cause prior to its production. Putting it differently, it is claimed, the effect exists in its causal stage, therefore, the cause and the effect would exist simultaneously.

The advocates of this causal theory are the Sāṃkhya (Radhakrishnan, 1998b et al.) and the Vedānta School (King, 1999: 217, Sharma, 1960: 256). The Sāṃkhya school is however recognised, amongst both the traditional ancient as well as the modern scholars, as its chief proponent. Between the Sāṃkhya and the Vedānta schools, the main issue of contention is the ideology of the First Cause. The former proposes the supremacy of the unconscious primordial material *Prakṛti*, (one of the ultimate realities composed of three constituents) which is said to drive the evolution and the dissolution of the psycho-physical world, whereas in the case of later, the primacy of the conscious primordial *Brahman* (the ultimate reality associated with its potency *Māyā*) is seen as responsible for the creation, preservation and destruction of the world. Another distinction between the two schools concerns the nature of causality. For the Sāṃkhya both the cause and the effect are real (Padhi, 2005: 195) whereas for the Vedānta only the cause is real; the effect is merely the appearance of the cause. Here it is evident that the translation of the term *sat* as “real,” seen above, is problematic. It contradicts the Vedāntins notion that the effect is illusory and unreal, mere appearance of the cause. What is real cannot be just an appearance. However, it still makes sense for the scholars to categorize these two schools under the umbrella of the same causal theory. Both the schools insist that the entire cosmological world, as the effect, emerges from one cause (self) and that the effect is pre-existent in its cause. The effect, according to the Sāṃkhya and Vedānta, is not produced from either dual or multiple causal conditions nor is the effect causeless, rather it is produced from itself. Therefore it is characterised as ‘self-causation.’

The aim of this chapter however is concerned with the theory of self-causation as championed by the Sāṃkhya school. Because Sāṃkhya is the main exponent of this causal theory, I intend to examine its philosophical arguments and their implications in

detail. (Given this as the primary objective of the chapter, a detailed discussion on the Vedānta's position on this theory is deliberately set aside). A clear presentation of the theory of self-causation calls for a brief cosmological account regarding the background of the Sāṃkhya system, hence a brief account of the primacy of *prakṛti* in terms of its participation in the process of origination, the evolution of the world according to the Sāṃkhya. This will be followed by a closer examination of the five arguments advanced by the Sāṃkhya School in defence of their causal theory. The final section of the chapter will assess the weaknesses in the Sāṃkhya's arguments by way of presenting a refutation of each of the five arguments along with the Mādhyamika's general critique of the doctrine of self-causation.

2. Metaphysics in Sāṃkhya Thought

The Sāṃkhya system, founded by Kapila (ca. 100 B.C.-A.D.200) is considered as the oldest of the six orthodox schools (Sāṃkhya-Yoga, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, and Mīmāṃsā-Vedānta) of the Hindu tradition. All the major Hindu systems are generally said to have either originated from or have been influenced by the ancient Upaniṣadic teachings (800-600 B.C.). Modern commentators such as Radhakrishnan (1998a: 250), Mahadevan (1974: 202), have put forward the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, *Praśna Upaniṣad* and *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* as evidence of the Sāṃkhya tradition's connection to the *Upaniṣadic* teachings. However, Varma traces the root of the Sāṃkhya to the Vedas, and argues that there are clearly revealed distinctions between the Upaniṣad and the Sāṃkhya traditions: "The Upaniṣads include idealism; the Sāṃkhya teaches realism. The Upaniṣads advocate monism; the Sāṃkhya teaches

dualism. The Upaniṣads accept theism; the Sāṃkhya is atheistical.”(2003: 316) Emphasising the Vedic origin, Varma asserts the Sāṃkhya ideas contained in the *Kaṭha* and *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣads* indicates “the attempt of Upaniṣadic writers to bring the Sāṃkhya ideas into harmony with the Upaniṣadic monism.”(2003: 306) Such attempts, according to Varma, only demonstrate rather an appropriation of the Vedic Sāṃkhya ideas to justify the Upaniṣadic monistic doctrine.

Besides the problematic issue of the Sāṃkhya’s origin, different interpretations arose concerning the philosophical doctrines of the Sāṃkhya school. For example Padhi writes: “The earliest Sāṃkhya system, on the basis of Upaniṣadic suggestion, accepted ‘theistic monism’; later on the system was transformed to that of a combination of ‘atheistic realism’ and ‘spiritual pluralism.’ Both the earlier and the later stages of Sāṃkhya are however marked by realism.” (2005: 193). According to Varma thinkers like Dasgupta, Deussen, Dahlmann, Keith, and Barua, all accept the Sāṃkhya philosophy as theistic, monistic and idealistic, and they all claim the school originated from the Upaniṣadic tradition. (2003: 306) Varma himself however interprets the system as dualistic, naturalistic and *guṇavāda* (constituted by the three guṇas), and claims the school owes its origin to the Vedas. Philosophers like Richard King (1999: 62-63), and Radhakrishnan (1998a: 250), on the other hand, grant both the Vedic and the Upaniṣadic influence over the earliest thought of the Sāṃkhya school. The proponents of the Sāṃkhya system also hold different views. On the account of the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* composed by Īśvarakṛṣṇa (ca. 350-450 C.E.), one of the foremost exponents of the Sāṃkhya tradition, the Sāṃkhya system is treated as atheistic, on the other hand, on the account of the Pātañjala-Sāṃkhya, it is conceived as theistic.

However, Īśvarakṛṣṇa is credited to have summarized and simplified the old system of Sāṃkhya thought. (Larson and Battarcharya, 1987:108). He composed the

Sāṃkhya Kārikā, one of the seminal texts of the tradition upon which most of the later texts are based. Through his contributions, the philosophical account of the Sāṃkhya school is standardised, made clear, more solid, and systematic. So in my discussion I will be taking the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* as definitive representative of Sāṃkhya philosophy. From the era of the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, the system has generally leaned towards a non-theistic dualism which is markedly different from the rest of Hindu philosophical thinking. While it proposes the two modes of reality, namely the *Prakṛti* or (*pradhāna*) (“Nature” or “Primordial Materiality”) and the *Puruṣa* (“Spirit”, “Pure Consciousness”), it denies the existence of God. For instance, the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* says, “No creator outside of the system - the gods are in fact transmigrating beings enmeshed in the higher echelons of the prakṛtic realm.”(*Kārikā*, 53: King, 1999: 168) Along the same line, Radhakrishnan, in his book *Indian Philosophy*, argues “the world for Sāṃkhya is not the act of a creator God, who summoned up in a single fiat of his will a world entirely distinct from himself,” and insists that it “is the product of the interaction between the infinite number of spirits and the ever active *prakṛti*...” (1998a: 248).

3. Theory of Evolution

The majorities of Hindu schools are theistic, and vigorously defend God as an eternal reality, the creator of the world. But as mentioned earlier, the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* doesn’t maintain God as the creator. So the question remains: what creates the world for the Sāṃkhya? The Sāṃkhya provides the following response: it argues that the *prakṛti* and the *puruṣa* co-jointly produce the world. The process of evolution of the world, it claims, does not occur without the presence of these two modes of reality. However, of the two realities, the *prakṛti* is said to be the principle cause of the psycho-physical world. This is because through the Sāṃkhya’s causal metaphysics – the pre-existence of

the effect in its cause – implies that the existence of the world as an effect is already pre-existent in the *prakṛti* which is its cause. And the existence of the *prakṛti*, Sāṃkhya argues, is extremely subtle and imperceptible, and therefore it is inferred only from its effects i.e., the world.

The Sāṃkhya philosophy has two major challenges in order to establish their causal metaphysics. First, it has to establish the existence of the *prakṛti*, and then, the *prakṛti* as the primary cause of the world. The latter is dependent upon the establishment of the former. This must follow because without providing the arguments for the existence of the *prakṛti* its claim for the *prakṛti* as primary cause would make no sense. So to prove the existence of the *prakṛti* the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* (15-16) puts forward the following arguments:

- That all the manifest things – all the products of the world – are limited, dependent, conditioned and finite whereas no limited thing can serve itself as the ultimate cause, hence it has to be non-finite;
- That all the manifest things possess certain common and homogeneous characteristics which are capable of producing pleasure, pain and indifference. Moreover, the Sāṃkhya does not believe that the differences in things are not entirely distinct from one another. It follows that they must have originated from a single ultimate source composed of three *guṇas*;
- That all the manifest things, being themselves the effects, lack causal efficiency, thus presuppose the existence of *prakṛti*, the active causal principle (*śakti*);
- That all the manifest things are effects, the effects are different from the cause because in the process of evolution, the effects are the manifests and the cause is the unmanifest. The effects, therefore, point to the cause wherein all the effects are potentially contained; and

- That all the manifest things have a unity in terms of being defined in ordinary space and time thus suggesting the one non-spatial, and non-temporal cause.

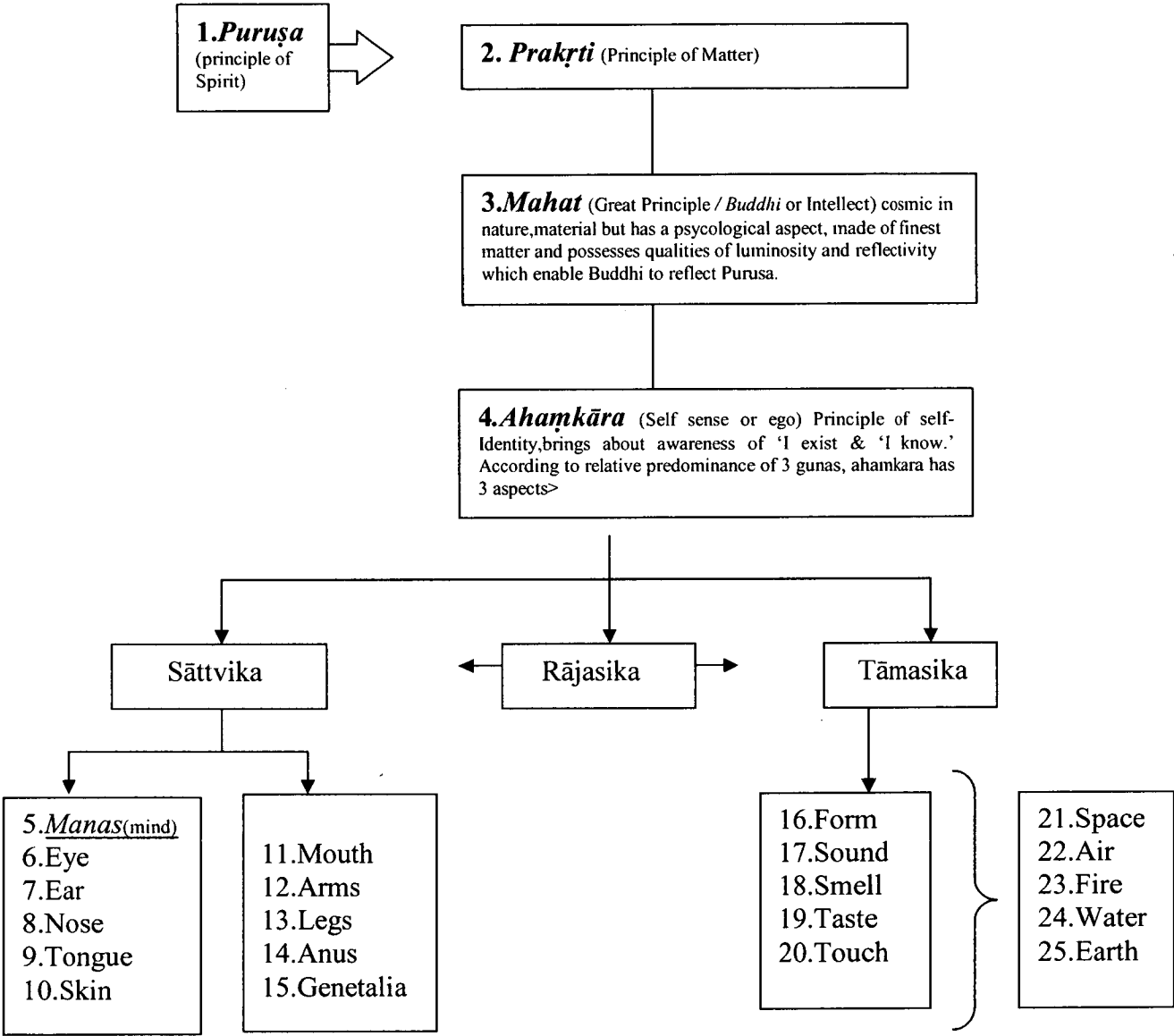
From these five arguments, according to the Sāṃkhya, the existence of the primordial *prakṛti* is inferred. Though the *prakṛti* is the primal cause of the cosmos, the Sāṃkhya argues, it does not by itself complete the function of creating the universe. The *prakṛti* depends upon the pure consciousness, *puruṣa* to initiate the process of evolution. In King's words: "The world is a multiplicity that has evolved from this primordial matter, but the motivating force behind the creation of the universe derives not from *prakṛti* itself but from *puruṣa*." (1999: 64) The Sāṃkhya defines the *prakṛti* as constituted by the three *guṇas* (tripartite constituents): *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva*, meaning, "real" or "existent" is, characterised epistemologically as intelligence, illuminative and clarity, and psychologically, as happiness and contentment. *Rajas*, meaning, "foulness" is characterised epistemologically as restless activity, and psychologically as agony, and pain. *Tamas*, meaning, "darkness" is characterised epistemologically as ignorance and psychologically as indifference or apathy. (Mahalingam, 2001: 162). Although the three constituents are characterised very differently, the tradition claims, they nevertheless work together to produce an effect, the world, just as the wick, wax and flame of a lamp cojointly produce the illumination.

In the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*-10, the *prakṛti* is differentiated into two changing phases: unmanifest and manifest materiality. The unmanifest materiality refers to the *prakṛti*'s homogeneous phase – the stage before the evolutionary process takes place wherein three *guṇas* (constituents), namely: *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* of *prakṛti* dwell in the state of their equilibrium (*sāmyāvastha*). In fact, "The state of rest is said to be the natural condition of *prakṛti*." (*Yoga Bhāṣya*. ii 18, cited in Radhakrishnan. 1998a: 266) When

the *guṇas* are in their balance order, the *Sāṃkhya* argues, there is no interaction among them, and therefore evolution does not take place. The second phase is the *prakṛti*'s heterogeneous phase, wherein the *puruṣa* comes in contact with *prakṛti*. When this happens, the tradition explains, the former throws its reflection on to the latter. This then disturbs the state of *prakṛti*'s equilibrium which causes the interaction among the *guṇas* of the *prakṛti*. This in turn leads the evolutionary process to occur.

According to *Sāṃkhya*'s account, in the beginning of the evolution of the world, the *sattva* constituent of the *prakṛti* receives a reflection from the *puruṣa*, which enables the *sattva* to dominate the other two *guṇas*, and brings an end to the state of equilibrium of the three *guṇas*. Once the unitive balance of the three constituents of the *prakṛti* dissolves, the *prakṛti* is said to produce its first evolute, *mahat* or *buddhi* ("the great" or "intellect/reason") which is characterised as cosmic and material but endowed with a psychical aspect. From *mahat* emerges the second evolutes, *ahaṃkāra* ("the principle of self" or "ego") possessing all three aspects: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. (Outlined in the diagram below) According to the predominance of the *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* they are respectively called *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*. Out of the *sāttvika ahaṃkāra*, evolve the eleven organs – five cognitive sense-organs (*jñānendriyas*), five motor organs (*karmendriyas*), and mind (*manas*). The *rājasika ahaṃkāra* does not produce anything in specifically but energizes the other two in producing their evolutes. The *tāmasika ahaṃkāra* gives rise to the five subtle elements (*tanmātras*). These five subtle elements dominated by *tamas* constituent generate five gross elements (*bhūtādi*).

Fig 1. The Sāṃkhya Evolutionary Theory Comprising 25 Categories of Phenomena



In total there are 25 categories partaking the whole framework of the *Sāṃkhya* universe and its tripartite evolutionary process. However, not all these categories serve, the tradition explains, the same purposes. Hence four main divisions are made:

- *Puruṣa* is that which is neither effect nor cause;

- *Prakṛti* is that which is not effect but cause;
- *Mahat*, *ahaṁkāra*, and five subtle elements are those which are both effect and cause; and
- *Manas*, the five sense organs, the five motor organs, and five gross elements are those which are only effect.

Here *puruṣa* is categorised as neither effect nor cause. Earlier however, it is argued the *puruṣa* does participate in the evolutionary process along with the *prakṛti*. The Sāṁkhya tradition does not see the two positions as contradictory. With the help of an analogy to explain the relation between the two ultimate realities, the system proposes the role of *puruṣa* as that of a magnet and the *prakṛti* as iron where the magnet attracts the iron. In the similar manner, the *puruṣa* is said to move the *prakṛti* by their proximity. (Srivastava, 2004: 92) This example illustrates, according to the Sāṁkhya, that the *puruṣa* does not explicitly participate as a causal factor, however, its significance in initiating the process of evolution, as discussed earlier, cannot be denied either. Whatever is the case with the *puruṣa*, in the Sāṁkhya philosophy, the evolutionary theory is meaningless without a rationale and an appropriate establishment of the metaphysics of causation. The metaphysics of causality, on the other hand, makes no sense whatsoever with the exclusion of the *prakṛti*. This follows because the existence of the *prakṛti*, the Sāṁkhya argues, is implicit in the causal metaphysics, and that causal metaphysics is, in turn, implicit in the *prakṛti*. This is to say that the understanding of two central philosophical themes of the Sāṁkhya are mutually dependent.

So having explored, although briefly, the significance of the *prakṛti* in the evolutionary process, we now draw our attention explicitly to Sāṁkhya's causal theory. First we will have a closer look at the arguments advanced by the Sāṁkhya to defend

the theory of self-causation derived from the independent material basis (*prakṛti*). We then critically examine the problems associated with the Sāṃkhya's arguments.

4. Sāṃkhya's Causal Arguments

Causality undoubtedly occupies the key position in the Sāṃkhya's metaphysics. The causal theory known as *satkāryavāda*, carries the meaning: "the pre-existence of the effect in its cause before the creation of the effect". As the meaning of the term implies, the creation of effect in the Sāṃkhya's account, does not mean the creation of something entirely new, rather it implies a manifestation of the unmanifest effect, the transformation of the potentiality into the actuality. This is to claim that the effect underlies the causal materiality of the *prakṛti* before gaining the actual status of the effect. The Sāṃkhya *Kārikā* 9 advances five arguments to defend this conception of causality. The argument reads: the effect exists before the operation of cause, because:

- 1) something cannot arise from nothing;
- 2) any effect requires a material basis (*upādāna*);
- 3) anything cannot just arise from just everything;
- 4) something can only produce what it is capable of producing; and
- 5) the very nature or essence of the cause is non-different from the effect. (Cited in Larson, 1987: 153)

The majority of modern commentators on the Sāṃkhya's causation including Radhakrishnan (1998: 202); Koller (2002: 55-57); Shaw (2005: 3-8); Srivastava (2004: 99-100) have drawn the five arguments from the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* of Īśvarakṛṣṇa. All the commentators seemed to have no problem in assuming the authority of Īśvarakṛṣṇa

as one of the foremost exponents of the Sāṃkhya succeeding Kapila, Āsuri² and Pañcaśikha.³ (ca. 100 B.C.E-200 C.E.)

For a detailed analysis of each of these five arguments, we turn to them one by one. The first argument of Sāṃkhya states that *the effect exists before the operation of cause because something cannot arise from nothing.* (Sāṃkhya Kārikā, 9) Putting it differently the effect must exist prior to the operation of cause because “The nonexistent cannot be the object of any activity.” (Radhakrishnan, 1998a: 256) This argument is premised on the assumption that for something to be a cause, it must pre-exist. Such that an entity that is not existent prior to its effect cannot produce its effect. To be able to produce is to pre-exist in its causal stage. For instance, the horns on a rabbit and hairs on a turtle are not subjected to causal conditions. As such they cannot produce any effect, since the causal potential in them is nonexistent. They are nonexistent and unreal. On those grounds, the Sāṃkhya insists if the effect is non-existent in its cause then nothing can bring it into existence out of its cause. If the effect does not exist during the causal stage, there would be no cause at all since the cause is contained within the effect simultaneously. Likewise, if there are effects there must be causes too. From this it follows what is nonexistent in the cause cannot be brought into existence as an effect. “Blue,” says Vācaspati Miśra “cannot be changed into yellow even by a thousand artists.” (Sāṃkhya-Tattva-Kaumadī, 9.70; cited in Srivastava, 2004: 99)

The second argument says: *The effect exists before the operation of cause because any effect requires a material basis (upādāna).* Putting the argument in Radhakrishnan’s words, “The product is not different from the material of which it is

² A Brahmin householder (*grhastha*) who later became the foremost disciple of Kapila, the founder of the Sāṃkhya tradition. (Larson and Battarcharya, 1987: 108)

³ A revered teacher for both the Sāṃkhya and Yoga tradition and considered as the key figure who later consolidated, “expanded” or “widely” disseminated the tradition. (Sāṃkhya Kārikā 70) (Cited in Larson and Battarcharya, 1987: 113-114)

composed.”(1998a: 257) This argument highlights the definite relationship between the effect and its material cause (*upādāna kāraṇa*), implying that *prakṛti*, the prime material cause, is not different from the evolutes. They all rest in *prakṛti* prior to their manifestation and latter dissolve into the *prakṛti* itself. In Sharma’s word, “The effect is only a manifestation of its material cause, because it is invariably connected with it.” (1960: 152) It is like that of milk and yoghurt. Though yoghurt has distinct form as compared to milk, none can claim that they are totally different as there is a definite causal link between the two – milk must pre-exist for the yogurt to come into existence.

And the third argument emphasises the specific relation between the effect and the cause. Shaw points out from this argument that an effect cannot be said to be an unrelated entity. Each effect must follow from certain specific conditions, these conditions are pre-existent, otherwise anything could arise from anything. *The effect exists before the operation of cause because anything cannot just arise from just everything.* Clarifying the argument, Radhakrishnan says, “It (effect) exists before it comes into being in the shape of the material. If this is not admitted, then anything can come out of anything.” (1998a: 257). For exponents of the Sāṃkhya school, the fact that it is impossible for all things coming from all things proves the existence of the effect before the operation of cause.

The fourth argument states: *The effect exists before the operation of cause because something can only produce what it is capable of producing.* In Radhakrishnan’s words this implies: “Causal efficiency belongs to that which has the necessary potency.” (1998a: 257) The argument emphasizes the causal potentiality (*śakti*) of the specific cause to manifest the specific effect. If it is not related in that manner then anything can come out of anything. Metaphorically this argument can be illustrated as follows: oil must pre-exist in the sesame seed, without which the sesame

seed would not be able to produce the oil. If however, it is the case that effect is not pre-existent in the cause then there would not be any justification for the sesame seed producing oil. The pebbles and sesame seed would equally produce oil.

The fifth argument states: *The effect exists before the operation of cause because the very nature or essence of the cause is non-different from the effect.* (Sāṃkhya Kārikā, 9). In other words the effect is of the same nature as the cause (Radhakrishnan, 1998a: 257) such that the relation between the cause and the effect must not be distinct. Barley plants derived from the seeds of barley are non different in their nature because the causal relation between them cannot subsist if they are essentially different from one another. Another example called upon to justify this argument is a piece of gold that can be made into earrings, bracelets, necklace so forth. While each of them are transformed into different shapes and designs, they all retain their original essence of the gold and that the gold is not changed into something totally new. (Koller, 2002: 57) In short, there is no effect which is non-identical to its cause or the causal relationship cannot be possible in two distinct natures. Therefore, on account of this relationship, the effect pre-exists in its cause.

5. Critique of the Sāṃkhya's Causal Arguments

The Sāṃkhya's causal arguments are no doubt very crucial for the school's justification of the existence of *prakṛti*. Through the application of these causal arguments the Sāṃkhya claims the existence of *prakṛti* and its participation in the process of the evolution. (Radhakrishnan, 1998a: 256) It is the force of *prakṛti* which, according to the Sāṃkhya school, drives the production of things. These arguments however are not received favourably by other sections of Indian thought. Among the critics of the arguments are Śaṅkara's Vedānta (Sharma, 1960: 252-57), Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika (Shaw,

2005: 3-8), and the Buddhist Mādhyamika. Given the limited scope of the project, my analysis will focus on the Mādhyamika critique of the Sāṃkhya's arguments. Mādhyamika philosophers such as Nāgārjuna (100B.C.-100C.E.), Buddhapālita (ca. 470-560), Bhāvavevika (ca. 500-570) and Chandrakīrti (ca. 570-650) unanimously refute the Sāṃkhya's causal account as absolutely untenable. The Mādhyamika critique of the Sāṃkhya's causal account consists of two parts: The first part individually examines the validity of the arguments advanced by the Sāṃkhya, and refute them by pointing to the effect that the conclusion does not follow from any of the five arguments, and the second part collectively refutes the Sāṃkhya's arguments without specifying the weaknesses in each individual argument. Let us turn to the first:

Sāṃkhya's first causal argument states: *The effect exists before the operation of cause because something cannot arise from nothing (Sāṃkhya Kārikā, 9)*. From the Mādhyamika point of view this argument does not work, it does not establish a causal relationship between what is to be proven and the proof presented. While this argument attempts to prove something must exist for it to bring forth the effect, it fails to show the pre-existence of the effect in the cause. The conclusion that is arrived at is totally irrelevant to the justifying reason provided. That is, while it is true that something cannot arise from nothing, therefore, the cause is required for the effect to eventuate, the Sāṃkhya's conclusion (the existence of the effect before the causal operation) does not follow from this premise. It is absurd for the Sāṃkhya to claim that if something must arise from something that this should necessarily imply the pre-existence of the effect. This has to follow because in proposing the pre-existence of effect in the cause, the Sāṃkhya would have to rule out the need for the causal productivity, conversely, in proposing the need for causal productivity, the Sāṃkhya would have to rule out the pre-existence of effect in the cause. If the effect already exists, then it is pointless for it to

arise from the cause. This would follow because the cause is so-called for it functions to bring forth the effect, and the effect is so-called for it is that which emerges from the cause. Hence, the effect and the cause cannot be simultaneous.

The second argument of Sāṃkhya reads: *The effect exists before the operation of cause because any effect requires a material basis (upādāna)*. What this argument means in Radhakrishnan words, is: “The product is not different from the material of which it is composed.”(1998a: 257) The Mādhyamika challenges the Sāṃkhya’s claim of having an invariable relation between the material cause and the product. For this argument to work, the Sāṃkhya would need to establish the causal correlation between the *prakṛti* – the ultimate material cause of the world – and the world/evolute itself which is the effect of the *prakṛti* wherein the former is, according to the Sāṃkhya tradition, characterised as uncaused (*ahetumat*), permanent (*nitya*), nonspatial (*vyāpin*), pervasive, immobile (*asakriya*), singular (*eka*), unsupported (*anāśrita*), nonmergent (*aliṅga*), partless (*anavayava*), independent (*aparatantra*) (See *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, 9) and the latter is characterised as caused (*hetumat*), impermanent (*anitya*), spatial (*avyāpin*), non-pervasive, mobile (*sakriya*), multiple (*aneka*), supported (*āśrita*), mergent (*liṅga*), being made of parts (*sāvayava*), dependent (*paratantra*). In order to establish the causal connection between the two opposite entities – *prakṛti*, the material cause and the world, the Sāṃkhya would be required to establish the existence of *prakṛti* and its causal efficacy. If the Sāṃkhya fails to establish the existence of *prakṛti* itself, establishing any causal connection (let alone invariable connection) – between the so-called material cause of the world and the world which is its effect – would be impossible. On the Mādhyamika’s account, the Sāṃkhya fails on both fronts: given the effects and the cause are mutually exclusive (as characterised above), the two are contradictory, thus cannot have any causal connection whatsoever. Therefore, either the

Sāṃkhya's account of causation is to be rejected as untenable, or its theory of *prakṛti* as the first cause (the theory that motivates their account of causation) is to be rejected.

The effect exists before the operation of cause because anything cannot just arise from just everything is the third causal argument of the Sāṃkhya. I agree with the Sāṃkhya in ruling out the possibility of things coming into existence from everything including the causally unrelated entities - two distinct phenomena will have no causal sequence, like darkness cannot be the cause of the light, otherwise pitch darkness would generate brightness. Likewise, pebbles cannot be the cause of oil. That said, on the Mādhyamika's reading, the argument suffers from the same problem as the others. While the premise itself is acceptable in isolation, what is not acceptable is the conclusion drawn from the premise. It only reveals the necessary relation between the cause and the effect but again does not prove the pre-existence of the effect in its cause. Therefore, the argument does not work.

The effect exists before the operation of cause because something can only produce what it is capable of producing. The fourth argument of Sāṃkhya also makes no sense because it suffers from the same fallacy as the other arguments. While the Sāṃkhya's premise makes sense as it explicitly postulates the specific causal capability required to produce the effect, the proof offered does not prove the thesis. First, even the non-exponents of the self-causation theory would never argue that potato seed for instance, will bring forth an unrelated entity like an apple. It is common knowledge that potatoes can only be obtained from the potato seed. However, the potato seed's capability of producing the potato as an effect does not prove the pre-existence of the effect in its cause. It proves, on the contrary, the potato seed's potency to produce potato effect that is yet to exist because the causal capability implies the potency to produce that which does not exist at that time. Second, since the Sāṃkhya proposes the

simultaneous existence of the cause and the effect, the cause's 'capability of producing what it is capable of' makes no sense either. Because the causal potency, on the Sāṃkhya's account is redundant, as the effect already exists. Further, it does not function to produce any effect, let alone producing a particular effect. From the beginning, the cause is not assigned to any activity in the Sāṃkhya tradition as the effect is believed to be already pre-existent. Surely, there is no need of causal potency to produce in such case. This also means the cause and the effect are independent from each other, hence the claim of requiring the specific cause for producing the specific effect falls apart.

The fifth argument states: *The effect exists before the operation of cause because the very nature or essence of the cause is non-different from the effect.* This argument again is invalid and untenable. Like arguments discussed earlier, the proof used fails to prove the thesis. The thesis to be proven is the pre-existence of the effect in the cause, the proof used is the necessity of the identical relationship between the cause and the effect. In other words, the fact that the cause is non-different from the effect does not imply that the effect exists prior to its cause. The Sāṃkhya's claim for the existence of the effect in its cause prior to its production actually undermines the existence of the cause itself and its function. The fire is the effect which is produced from the fuel. If we take the Sāṃkhya's claim seriously, then fire would exist in the fuel. This would follow on three counts. First, given the effect is the pre-existent in the cause, the fire has to exist in the fuel because fire is the effect of the fuel. Second, given the non-different relation – the identity of the cause and the effect – it would follow that the fire and the fuel would be identical because the former is the effect of the latter. Third, given the identical relation between the cause and the effect, and given the effect is pre-existent in its cause, it would follow that the fire and the fuel would be simultaneous – this would

mean where and whenever there is fuel, there the fire exists. From this, it would follow that according to the Sāṃkhya system, the fire would have destroyed its cause *viz.*, fuel into the ashes before the fire is generated as the effect.

6. Collective Refutation

The chief exponents of the Mādhyamika philosophy Nāgārjuna, Buddhapālita and Chandrakīrti refute the Sāṃkhya's doctrine of self-causation as follows: That the reproduction of the effect from the cause becomes pointless if the effect pre-exists in its cause since the effect would have already achieved its status. This must follow because production means attaining one's own status which is yet to be achieved. And when one's own status has already been achieved, there is no sense in producing it all over again. Hence, the repeated production of the effect is redundant. For this the Sāṃkhya might respond asserting that the production, in their view, only refers to the explicit manifestation of the effect from the unmanifest effect that exist in the cause, and therefore the production is not redundant.

The Sāṃkhya's reply however does not rebut the Mādhyamika's refutation because it commits the fallacy of the infinite regress. This follows because the Sāṃkhya's so-called manifest effect, given the pre-existence of the effect in its cause, which implies the simultaneous existence of the cause and the effect, would have in itself contained a cause with an unmanifest effect which needs further arising. Once the so-called unmanifest effect becomes a fully manifest effect, again, the latter, in spite of the fact it being fully manifest effect would require further manifestation because in it is again contained a cause that would produce further effect. Stating it differently, on the Sāṃkhya's causal account, for every cause there has to be an effect and for every effect there has to be a cause. It follows therefore, there would be an uninterrupted endless

production from the cause containing in itself an unmanifest effect to a manifest state which always contain a cause. If the Sāṃkhya refuse to accept the further production from the cause which simultaneously exist in the effect then they would have to relinquish their central thesis – namely, the production of the manifest effect from the unmanifest effect which pre-exists in the cause.

For the argument sake, grant that the Sāṃkhya's account of the production of unmanifest effect into manifest effect is a sound proposition. But the question still arises with respect to the relationship between the unmanifest cause and the manifest effect. The Mādhyamika asks: Are the two distinct from each other or identical? If the Sāṃkhya respond "yes" to the first, and claims for an identical relation between the cause and the manifest effect, then the aforesaid absurd consequences of senseless production and infinite regress would ensue. Furthermore, upholding such a notion is also problematic on the ground that "there would be no difference between the seed as generative cause and the sprout as effect, in terms of their shape, colour, flavour, efficacy or ripening." (Chandrakṛīti, 1989: 158). If the Sāṃkhya responds "yes" to the second alternative, and claim that the relation between the cause and the manifest effect is distinct – then they would have to abandon their primary thesis – the theory of self-causation. If the Sāṃkhya accept this conclusion, then, on the Sāṃkhya's causal account, the *prakṛti* and its evolutes would become entirely distinct entities, and the two would have no causal connection whatsoever. This would entail that the evolutes – worldly phenomenon – have no cause. This means that the Sāṃkhya would have to reject one of its central theses – the *prakṛti* is the primordial material cause of the evolutes. Therefore, the Sāṃkhya would have to relinquish their own causal account viz., the self-causation theory because such theory would not be logically sustainable.

7. Conclusion

So what can we say about the theory of self-causation and the Sāṃkhya's arguments defending their theory? As we have seen from the discussion presented above the Sāṃkhya's theory of self-causation is premised upon two related theses – the existence of the cause prior to the effect, and the existence of the *prakṛti* which is inferred from the former thesis. The two are not self-evident theses, the plausibility of each needs to be argued and defended logically. If the Sāṃkhya proponents fail to provide a coherent argument for either of the two thesis, it would mean that the theory of self-causation is unsustainable. So the question is, does the Sāṃkhya succeed in providing the adequate argument in the defence of the two theses? The answer, in my view, is a categorical “no.” All the five arguments presented to justify self-causation suffer from the circularity problem. Each argument employs a premise – the existence of the *prakṛti* – which in turn needs to be proven. Since the existence of the *prakṛti* remains to be proven, what remains to be proven surely cannot prove the existence of the effect in the cause. If the existence of the *prakṛti* itself is not established, surely the *prakṛti* cannot be used as the means, as the Sāṃkhya does, to justify the existence of the primordial materiality of *prakṛti*. Like the *prakṛti* the effect is yet to be proven. What itself requires proof cannot proof the existence of the *prakṛti*. The Sāṃkhya's causal arguments are plagued by this problem throughout. Consequently, as shown earlier, the Sāṃkhya's causal thesis – the existence of the effect prior to the production of the cause – does not follow from the premises provided.

Having addressed the problems in the first of the four essentialist causal theories, in the next chapter I will turn my attention to the second essentialist causal theory – arising from another – and its critique of the Prāsaṅgika.

Chapter 2

Theory of Arising from Another

1. Introduction

Chapter two examines the second alternative theory of causation, namely arising from another. The term “another” or “other” (*parata*) refers to the production of effect from cause other than itself, specifically, arising of effect from other *essentially* existent cause. Etymologically, the Sanskrit term *parata* (Tib. *gzhan*) refers to “other” while *utpāda* (Tib. *skyes*) means “to bring forth,” “to produce,” “to give rise to.” Therefore the compound Sanskrit term *parata utpāda* (Tib. *gzhan skyes*) literally comes to mean “causation from the other.” The causal theory formulated based on this view is therefore, variously known as the theory of “arising from another,” (Samten and Garfield, 2006: 67) “external causation,” (Kalupahana, 1991: 107) “production from another,” (Huntington and Wangchen, 1989: 158). The term “another” or “other” (*parata*) in this context refers to the production of effect from cause other than itself, or arising of effect from other essentially existent cause.

In this chapter I will examine the arguments for and against the theory of arising from another. I will first look at the exponents of the theory, discuss the assumptions and the arguments corroborating the theory; and then examine the theory critically by way of presenting the Mādhyamika critique of the theory.

2. Exponents of the Theory

The Buddhist essentialists unanimously reject the theory of self causation as an untenable causal thesis. They also reject the theory of arising from both self and another (Chapter 3) since this alternative is not sustainable unless the first two accounts – the theory of arising from self and the theory of arising from another – are upheld as plausible alternatives of causation. The theory of arising without cause (to be discussed in Chapter 4) is also rejected on both philosophical and empirical grounds. Therefore the only viable causal account is, so they claim, the theory arising from another. Unlike the Sāṃkhya's theory of arising from self, the theory of arising from another appeals to the Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophers alike. Excluding Sāṃkhya, Jaina and Cārvāka, the other orthodox schools of Vedic thought particularly Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, and Mīmāṃsā-Vedānta are advocates of this causal theory (Huntington and Wangchen, 1989: 228). And amongst the Indian Buddhist schools, the essentialists – Sautāntikas, Vaibhāṣikas, and Yogācāras – and the Svātantrika Mādhyamikas are said to be the exponents of this causal theory. (Gorampa, 2002: 255) Although there is a major difference between the way in which the Svātantrika Mādhyamika advances the theory and the way in which the other Buddhist schools present theirs', the key difference is this: For the Buddhist essentialists, arising from another is the ultimate way in which things come to be, whereas for the Svātantrika Mādhyamika things' arising from another is *only* on the conventional level. Hence the latter is not considered as an essentialist (Gorampa, 2002: 255, Ibid, 2001: 98; Tsongkhapa, 2006: 68).

But what is “essence”? The Sanskrit term *svabhāva* (Tib. *rang bzhin*) variously translates into English as “essence” (Garfield, 1995: 220) “intrinsic being” or “intrinsic nature” (Huntington, 1989: 48), “inherent existence” (Hopkins, 392, 438), and

ordinarily means real or ultimate nature or ultimate being of things or persons. Hence for the essentialists *svabhāva* is the most important quality that makes things what they really are and it is *svabhāva* that makes things causally effective. Without *svabhāva*, the essentialist claim, things would be causally inefficient, thus functionally deficient. So *svabhāva* accounts for causality of things for the essentialists. (I will offer more discussion on *svabhāva* in Chapter 4)

3. Causal Arguments Supporting the Theory

I will start with considering the arguments advanced in defence of the theory. The Buddhist essentialists traditionally justify this causal thesis of arising from another by way of appealing to some specific scriptural citations and advancing the following arguments:

- First, according to the Abhidharmikas things do arise from another because they arise from the inherently existing four conditions namely, (1) “efficient conditions” (Samten and Garfield, 2006: 72) or “primary condition” (Kalupahana, 1991: 106) (Skt. *hetu pratyaya*, Tib. *rgu rken*); (2) “objective condition” (Samten and Garfield, 2006: 72) or “objectively supporting condition” (Kalupahana, 1991: 106) (Skt. *ālambana pratyaya*, Tib. *dmigs rken*); (3) “immediate condition” (Samten and Garfield, 2006: 72) or “immediately contiguous condition” (Kalupahana, 1991: 106) (Skt. *samanantara pratyaya*, Tib. *de ma thak rkyen*); and (4) “dominant condition” (Samten and Garfield, 2006: 72, Kalupahana, 1991: 106) (Skt. *ādhipatyaya*, Tib. *bdag rken*). The four conditions are *other* than things that they produce since each of these four conditions are said to have their own *svabhāva* (Tib. *rang bzhin*) “own nature,” or “own essence” “inherent existence” in that they are declared by the Buddha himself as existing inherently. Since the *sūtras* are the authoritative words of the Buddha himself in that

they are regarded as the seminal texts for all the Buddhist schools, and given that things arise from the four conditions that are “other” than the things themselves, the Abhidharmikas insists the theory of arising from another is plausible. (Candrakīrti, 2003: 56, Rendawa, 1997: 112)

- Second, the arising from another is plausible on the ground that things arise from the four elements that are *other* than things themselves. Like the four conditions the four great elements are called elements (*dhātu*) in that they bear their own intrinsic natures (*attano sabhāvaṃ dhārenti*), having essences of their own. These four elements – earth, water, fire and air – support all the coexisting material phenomena for their existence. The earth element has the characteristic of “hardness” and it functions as a “foundation for the co-existing material phenomena and manifestation as receiving. Its approximate cause is the other three great essentials.” (Bodhi, 2000: 238, Dorjee, 1996: 9-10⁴) The water element or fluidity is characterized as “trickling or oozing, its function is to intensify the coexisting material states, and it is manifested as the holding together or cohesion of material phenomena. Its approximate cause is the other three great essentials.” (Bodhi, 2000: 238, Dorjee, 1996: 11⁵) The fire element has the characteristic of “heat and its function is to mature or ripen other material phenomena, and it is manifested as a continuous supply of softness. Its approximate cause is the

4 སའི་ཁམས་ནི་ཁྱད་ཚུལ་བཞི་ལྟར་ཡིན་ཏེ། སྤྱི་བའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཅན་ཡིན་པ་དང་། སྤྱི་བོ་ལམ་བྱེད་ལས་རང་དང་ལྟན་ཅིག་པའི་གཟུགས་ཀྱི་ཚུལ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་
 རྟེན་བྱེད་པ་དང་། དེ་དག་འཛིན་པ་རྣམས་འབྱོར་གྱི་ཤེས་པ་ལ་སྦྱང་བ་དང་། རང་ལས་གཞན་པའི་འབྱུང་བ་ལྟག་མ་གསུམ་གྱི་ཀྱན་རྒྱ་ཉི་བར་གནས་པའི་རྒྱ་ཡིན་
 པ་དང་བཞིའོ།

5 རྒྱུ་མཚན་ཉིད་ནི་རབ་རྒྱ་ཟག་པའམ་འཇག་པ་སྟེ་བྱར་དུ་འབབ་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཅན་ཡིན་ཞིང་། གཞུང་གཞན་དུ་ནི་གཤེར་བའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཅན་དུ་གསུངས་
 མོ། དེ་ཡང་བྱེ་མ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ཚུལ་གཞན་དང་འཕྲད་པ་ན་དེ་ཉིད་གཤེར་བར་བྱེད་པ་སྟེ་རང་ཉིད་རྒྱན་ཞིང་གཞན་གཤེར་བ་བྱེད་པའོ། འདི་དང་ལྟན་ཅིག་
 པའི་འབྱུང་བ་གཞན་གསུམ་ནི་འདིའི་ཉི་རྒྱ་ཡིན་ནོ།

other three great essentials.” (Bodhi, 2000: 238, Dorjee, 1996: 12⁶) The air element has the characteristic of “distension, its function is to cause motion in the other material phenomena, and it is manifested as conveyance to other places. Its approximate cause is the other three great essentials.” (Bodhi, 2000: 238, Dorjee, 1996: 14⁷) So these four elements, for the Abhidharmikas, serve as the causal foundation for the formation of the shape and the color of the material world. It is obvious that the existence of the material phenomena is entirely dependent on these elements. The Abhidharmikas hold that each element conditions the remaining elements and their secondary derivatives. While the true identity of each element is not conditioned or caused by any other phenomena since each element intrinsically possesses its own identity. They insist that the identities of other phenomena such as table, chairs etc are entirely dependent upon the elements. Thus arising from another still makes sense. (Dorjee, 1996: 5)

- Third, the Abhidharmikas, in particular, Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas argue that things do arise from another because they are produced either by the indivisible atom or the infinitesimal consciousness both of which are other than things themselves. (Vasubandhu, 1997: 523) The Abhidharmikas assert the intrinsic existence of the indivisible matter and consciousness for the reason that the infinitesimal unit of matter and the infinitesimal mind are, according to them, the “ultimate truths that can bear analysis.” (Hopkins, 1996: 338) Whereas the seed for example is a conventional truth because it has contained in it the indivisible material unit as its foundation. Given the intrinsic existence (*svabhāva* / *rang bzhin*) of the indivisible material, and given that it

⁶ མེད་རང་བཞིན་ནི་ཚ་བ་དང་རང་དང་ལྷན་ཅིག་སྒྲིལ་པའི་ཚུལ་གཞན་སྒྲིལ་པར་བྱེད་པ་དང་མཉམ་པ་དང་སྟེ་པོར་བྱེད་པ་ནི་དེའི་བྱེད་ལས་ཏེ་སྟོང་པོ་ཡིན་ནོ།།

⁷ རྒྱུ་གི་ཁམས་ནི་རྣམ་པར་མཐོན་པའམ་བརྟན་པར་བྱེད་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཡིན་ལ། རྒྱུ་བའམ་ཉེ་བར་གཡོ་བ་དང་། བྱེད་པ་རྒྱུ་བ་སོགས་ནི་དེའི་སྟོང་པོ་སྟེ་བྱེད་ལས་སོ། གཞུགས་ཅན་གྱི་ཚུལ་རྣམས་ལྟལ་གཞན་དུ་འབྲེན་པར་བྱེད་པ་ནི་དེའི་ཉེར་གནས་ཡིན་ཏེ། རྣལ་འབྱོར་གྱི་ཤེས་པ་ལ་དེ་ལྟར་སྣང་བའི་ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་གྱི་ཕྱིར་རོ།། དེའི་ཉེ་རྒྱུ་ནི་དེ་དང་ལྷན་ཅིག་པའི་འབྱུང་བ་ལྷག་མ་གསུམ་སོ།།

serves as the foundation for the arising of other phenomena, so the Abhidharmikas argue, the arising from another is logically justified. Similarly, given the intrinsic existence of the indivisible consciousness, and given that it is the foundational structure of the mind, it follows, on this view, the momentary life of consciousnesses is caused by something other than itself, namely, the indivisible and inherently existent unit of consciousness.

- Fourth, among the Abhidharmikas, Vaibhāṣika argues for the arising from another on the ground of the simultaneous existence of the cause and effect. (Lchangska, 1989: 66, Hopkins, 1996: 339) This view can best be understood by appealing to this example – the way in which the eyes see objects. According to this view, it is the visual organ itself that sees the object immediately without any image. So this view rejects the classical Buddhist position in which visual consciousness is viewed as the one that apprehends the objects. If it is the visual consciousness that sees object, the Vaibhāṣikas argue, there would be no reason why we could not see the objects sitting behind walls. Because the visual consciousness is maintained as formless and immaterial, unlike the visual faculty which is material in its nature, there is no reason why the visual consciousness sees through walls to the object sitting behind. Therefore, according to the exponent of this view, it is the eye faculty itself, and not visual consciousness, that sees things. Since *seeing* as the effect is other than the *eye* itself which causes the act of seeing, according to this view, the cause and the effect are different, thus the effect arises from the cause other than itself. And moreover because both the eye and the act of seeing can exist at the same time, they are simultaneous.

- Fifth, according to the Svātantrika Mādhyamika things do arise from another on the conventional level⁸ because cause and effect are not identical conventionally, therefore they must be distinct. Since it is a conventionally distinct cause that gives rise to a conventionally distinct effect, the school concludes, things must arise from another. Therefore the arising from another do exist, even though merely conventionally. However the Svātantrika Mādhyamika rejects the four problematic causal accounts on the ultimate level. The school argues, take a sprout for an example, it does not *ultimately* arise either from self or another, or both or neither. The school's rejection of all four alternative causations only ultimately seems to suggest the school's inadvertent approval, at least conventionally, of all the four causations. This also leads some⁹ to suggest, on the conventional level, the Svātantrika Mādhyamika advocates the arising from self, both and causeless for the reason that the school only reject these causal accounts ultimately. But this is a unreasonable proposition, for the Svātantrika Mādhyamika explicitly rejects the arising from self, both, and causelessly.

- The sixth argument comes from Abhidharmika's which appeals to commonsense realism or the view of ordinary beings in terms the way in which they see the relationship between parents and children. According to the advocates of the theory, the parents see themselves (the producer) as other than their children (the produced), so do children see themselves distinct from their parents. (Garfield, 1995: 106). These perceptions clearly show that cause and effect are indeed accepted conventionally as different, therefore the arising from another is established.

⁸ All the Abhidharmika's arguments presented above are advanced with intention to justify the arising from another as the *ultimate* way how things really are, although it should be noted that they do not explicitly use this type of language. the Svātantrika Mādhyamika, on the other hand does make explicit distinction between the arising from another ultimately and conventionally, and that it only endorses the arising from another conventionally.

⁹ Prof. Tashi Tsering for example, during a personal interview - (Jan 2007) suggested that the Svātantrika Mādhyamikas use of the qualifying word "ultimate" to reject the four alternative causations raises some philosophical problems with the school. One is that the school might be forced to accept, on the conventional level, all the four causal theories, not just the arising from another.

These are some of the major arguments advanced by the Buddhist exponents of the theory of arising from another. These arguments however are not received favourably by the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika school. So from hereon, I will discuss the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika’s rejection of these arguments

4. Critique of the Causal Arguments

The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika provides detail objections against the notion of inherent production of phenomena, even at the conventional level. I will first consider the Prāsaṅgika's general critique of this causal theory and then return to more specific critique of the arguments advanced in support of the theory of arising from another. Generally speaking, according to the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika school, the theory of arising from another is underpinned by a commitment to the essentialist view of causation. Nāgārjuna says:

“The difference of cause and effect is never tenable.”¹⁰ (MMK: 20: 18cd)
“If they were different then the cause and non-cause would be alike.”¹¹
(MMK: 20: 19cd)

In these two lines Nāgārjuna rejects the tenability of the cause and the effect being essentially different on the ground that this would imply the inherent difference of the cause and its effect. This makes sense given that no causal relation would exist between what is essentially existent cause and essentially existent effect since they would be independent from each other. If however someone insists that what is essentially existent cause and essentially existent effect are still causally related, this would be

¹⁰ རྒྱ་དང་འབྲས་ལུག་ཞན་ཉིད་དུ། རྣམ་ཡང་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ། ཉམ་ ༡༨ ག ༥ །
¹¹ རྒྱ་དང་འབྲས་ལུག་ཞན་ཉིད་ན། རྒྱ་དང་རྒྱ་མིན་མཚུངས་པར་འགྱུར། ཉམ་ ༡༩ ག ༥ །

tantamount to claiming that a cause and a non-cause are identical since the relation between what is essentially existent cause and essentially existent effect would be identical to the relation between cause and noncause. Furthermore, the arising of the effect from the cause would not be possible since the causal efficacy necessary to produce the effect would not exist. Following Nāgārjuna's philosophical lead closely Candrakīrti offers a systematic critique of the theory mostly by means of using *reductio ad absurdum* in his *Madhyamakāvatāra*: First he says, if an entity arises in dependence on (what is essentially) another, then *pitch darkness would arise from a flame*. (Candrakīrti, 1999: 90) Here the term "arises in dependence on another" – indicates the production of an inherent sprout from an inherent seed – it implies the production of an independently existent effect from an independently existent cause. For the Buddhist essentialists, since an inherently existent rice seed produces an inherently existent rice sprout, there is no reason why, on this view, that light cannot give rise to pitch darkness. The essentially existent rice seed giving rise to essentially existent rice sprout is no different from the essentially existent light giving rise to pitch darkness. If the former conclusion is acceptable for the Buddhist essentialist, so should the latter since both theses are premised upon inherent production, and therefore, inherently existent cause and effect.

Candrakīrti's second *reductio* follows from the previous one: If things arise from another, then, according to the theory of arising from other: *anything could arise from anything*, because it is not simply the cause which is different from its effect – all non-causes as well are different from the effect. (Candrakīrti, 1999: 91) This *reductio* follows because, like the production of the rice sprout from the rice seed, the barley seed not only should give rise to its effect i.e., barley sprout, but also would produce

rice sprout since the barley seed is not only different from its sprout but all the non causes such as the rice sprout as well are different from the barley seed.

Both Candrakīrti's *reductios* refute the theory of arising from another proposed by the essentialist but the difference between the two *reductio* is this. The former explicitly projects the absurdity of production of the effect from inconsistent causal conditions implying that things must arise from appropriate conditions. The later *reductio* demonstrates the absurdity of production of the effect without achieving all the necessary conditions implying that the production of things depend upon the appropriation of all necessary and sufficient conditions.

The proponents of the theory of arising from another insist that Candrakīrti's charges are not founded. Fallacies of absurd consequences such as light giving rise to pitch darkness, and anything coming out of anything are, according to them, not committed by advocating the theory of arising from another. They offer the following rebuttal arguments: (MA 1999: 92)

- cause is only capable of producing its *specific* effect, so the error of anything giving rise to anything (or everything) does not ensue;
- there exists a *homogeneous continuity* between the cause and its effect as in the case of a barely seed and its sprout (in contrast with a barley seed and sun flower), so the problem of the cause giving rise to the effect which has a distinct continuum does not arise just as barley seed does not give rise to sun flower;
- there exists a *sequential causal relationship* between the last event of cause and the first event of effect, which means there is a causal relationship that exists between the second moment of cause and the first moment of effect. This relationship is not possible in unrelated things. This therefore prevents things coming out of unrelated entity.

From the Mādhyamika point of view, the essentialist attempt to rebut the Mādhyamika charges against their causal accounts still do not work. Given the fact that the essentialist are committed to the *essentialist* account of *difference*, the *difference* at issue between the rice seed and the rice sprout would be identical to the difference between the barley seed and the rice sprout. The barley seed would not produce the rice sprout because: (1) it does not have the capability to produce rice; (2) they lack the same causal continuum; and (3) they lack causal similarity. In the same way, given that the rice sprout, on the essentialist account, is inherently different from the rice seed, it would thus follow, the rice seed would not be able to produce the rice sprout – there would be no causal relation between the rice seed and the rice sprout whatsoever. (Candrakīrti, 1999: 93) Huntington and Wangchen explains: “The flower seeds are by definition different from the rice sprout simply because they do not possess its characteristic qualities; and if the grain of rice is designated as ‘other’ than the rice sprout, then it must be so designated for the same reason.” (1989: 229)

So the essentialist rebuttals do not undermine the Mādhyamika refutation of their causal account, instead the rebuttals undermine their own essentialist causal account that they are attempting to establish. Three arguments presented to rebut the charges fail to establish the essential causal relation between cause and effect, therefore failing to advance the theory of arising from another. Instead these same arguments demonstrate the opposite – the inter-relatedness of cause and effect, thus emptiness of essential causal power. So the essentialist’s rebuttals unwittingly advance the Mādhyamika’s position by undermining its own position.

The Prasaṅgika Mādhyamika points out another problem with the theory of arising from another / other. The theory is based on the claim that cause is *other* than its effect. From the Prasaṅgika Mādhyamika standpoint, this causal thesis is not justified. It

is in fact a contradictory causal thesis. If seed and sprout are *other*, then seed and its sprout must be perceived as existing simultaneously as two distinct entities. But this indeed does not make sense – when the seed is perceived, the sprout is not perceived as other. When the sprout is perceived, the seed is not perceived as other. In other words, the sprout is not *other* with reference to seed since the sprout does not exist simultaneously with the seed, thus there is no otherness. Even if the seed and its sprout, hypothetically speaking, are perceived as existing simultaneously there would be no causal relation between the two since the seed would be other than its sprout like that of chalk and cheese.

In a nutshell: when there is arising from the cause and its effect, there is no *otherness* between them. When there is *otherness* between the cause and its effect, there is no production of the effect. If there is no otherness between the cause and the effect, they cannot be simultaneous either given that the former and the latter are causally inter-related. Since the cause and its effect are not simultaneous the claim that the seed and its effect are *other*, *different* or *another* makes no sense. So if the *another* in the theory of arising from another is not defensible surely it is not possible to establish the *arising* in the arising from another.

5. Refuting the Causal Simultaneity

The essentialist still insists that arising from another is feasible on the ground that the seed and the sprout are simultaneous. The essentialist in fact makes this point by appealing to the *Śālistamba Sūtra* (the *sūtra* on a stalk of rice) where the analogy of

scale is used to explain the objective or external dependent origination¹² (Skt. *bāhyah pratītyasamutpāda*, Tib. *phyi'i rten 'brel*). The *Sūtra* reads:

How is it (to be seen) as 'not annihilation'? Not from the previous cessation of the seed does the sprout issue forth, nor indeed without the cessation of the seed. But still the seed ceases, and at just that time the sprout arises, *like the beam of a scale rocking to and fro*. Therefore annihilation is not (the case).¹³ (Reat, 1998:41)

It is true that in the *sūtra* the analogy of the two ends of the scale are used to explain the causal relation between the seed and the sprout. While analysing the causal relation between the seed and the sprout, Nāgārjuna maintains that it is neither through the cessation of the seed nor without the termination of the seed is it possible to give rise to the sprout. This is for the reason that there would be no causal nexus or power to bring forth the sprout in either case. However, Nāgārjuna maintains when the seed ceases at the same time the sprout also emerges like that of descending and ascending of the scale. (2004: 172) Nāgārjuna also gives this gloss on the *Śālistambasūtra*:

Neither does the sprout posited like seed.
Nor does it arise without cause.
Cessation [of the seed] and arising [of the sprout] are simultaneous
Like the ascending and descending process of the two ends of the scale.
(21)(Nāgārjuna, 2004: 81)¹⁴

¹² Dependent Origination is categorised into the internal/subjective dependent origination and the external/objective dependent origination. Subjective dependent origination explains the causal process of the wheel of life and the objective dependent origination offers the causal account of the external phenomena.

¹³ ཇི་ལྟར་ཆད་པར་མ་ཡིན་ཞེན། མྱོན་འགགས་པའི་ས་བོན་ལས་སྐྱུ་གུ་སྐྱེ་བ་མ་ཡིན། མ་འགགས་པ་ལས་ཀྱང་མ་ཡིན་གྱི། ས་བོན་ཡང་འགགས་ལ་དེ་ཉིད་གྱི་
ཆོ་སྒང་མདའི་མཐོ་དམན་བཞིན་དུ་སྐྱུ་གུ་སྐྱེ་བ་ས་དེའི་ཕྱིར་ཆད་པར་མ་ཡིན་ནོ།

¹⁴ སྐྱུ་གུ་ས་བོན་ལྟར་མི་འདོད། རྒྱ་མེད་སྐྱུ་གུ་སྐྱེ་བ་འང་མེད། འགག་དང་སྐྱེ་བ་མགོ་མཉམ་སྟེ། སྒང་མདའི་མགོ་མཇུག་མཐོ་དམན་བཞིན། །

On this point, the Tibetan Prasaṅgika Mādhyamikas such as Red mda' ba (1995: 116), Tsongkhapa (2004: 206-207) and Karmapa Mi bskyod rdo rjes (n.d.: 270) closely follow Candrakīrti's position and maintain that the analogy "neither suggest the arising from another nor does it suggest the arising by virtue of self-defining characteristics (*svālakṣaṇa* / *rang mtshan*). The analogy instead illustrates the *simultaneously interdependent arising*, verified by non-analytical (cognition) and is taken to be illusion-like".(1999: 98)¹⁵ The meaning imbedded in the phrase *simultaneously interdependent arising* (Tib. *cig car du brten nas 'byung ba*) has a special significance in understanding the issue at stake here. On this point, while most of the commentators are silent, Tsongkhapa provides us a useful insight to understand Candrakīrti's phrase. According to Tsongkhapa, the term *simultaneously interdependent arising* must refer to the "two co-existing processes" – ceasing of the seed and arising of the sprout.(2004: 207)¹⁶ He offers the following arguments in his commentary to Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* (2004: 207):

- The ascending and descending ends of the scale as depicted in the *sūtra* does indeed illustrate that Nāgārjuna is definitely showing that arising is simultaneously interdependent. But the *simultaneous* at issue here must not be interpreted as the one between the seed and its sprout, rather *simultaneous* should be understood between the process of the ceasing of the seed and the process of the arising of its sprout.

- That the simultaneity of two processes is justified on the Prasaṅgika Mādhyamika account. For it rejects the essentialist account of the two processes established by virtue of the self-defining characteristics (*svālakṣaṇa* / *rang mtshan*).

¹⁵ དེ་གཞན་ལས་སྐྱེ་བར་བསྐྱེན་པའི་ཕྱིར་མ་ཡིན་ཞིང་། རང་གི་མཚན་ཉིད་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་བ་བསྐྱེན་པའི་ཕྱིར་ཡང་མ་ཡིན་ནོ། འོ་ན་ཅི་ཞེ་ན། ཅིག་ཅར་དུ་བརྟེན་ནས་
འབྱུང་བ་མ་བརྟེན་ནས་པར་གྱུ་བ་བ་སྐྱེ་མ་ལྟ་བུ་ཡོད་སྟེ་གསལ་བར་བྱ་བའི་ཕྱིར་ཏེ།

¹⁶ ཅིག་ཅར་དུ་བརྟེན་ནས་འབྱུང་བ་ཞེས་པ་ནི། བྱ་བ་གཉིས་ཅིག་ཅར་དུ་ཡོད་པ་ལ་བྱ་དགོས་ཏེ། མདོ་དེར་.....བྱ་བ་གཉིས་གཅིག་པ་བཀག་པ་ནི། རང་
མཚན་གྱིས་གྱུ་བ་པའི་བྱ་བ་གཉིས་ཡིན་གྱི། བྱ་བ་གཉིས་སྐྱེར་དུས་མཉམ་པ་ཡོད་པ་བཀག་པ་མིན་ནོ།

Moreover, so long as one maintains the arising, one also needs to accept the simultaneous co-existence of the cessation of the seed and the arising of its sprout. This position is tenable on the Mādhyamika account since it is committed to *mere* arising from mutually interdependent factors that utterly rejects arising by virtue of inherent causal power such through *svālakṣaṇa*.

- For the Mādhyamika school, the ceasing of the seed and the arising of the sprout are temporally simultaneous and co-extensive. This however is not the case with the essentialist. For the latter, simultaneous existence of the two processes would necessarily mean the simultaneous existence of the seed and its sprout for the reason that the essentialist is committed to the essential existence of both the seed and its sprout. (I will return to this point later)

- The process of arising of the sprout as an action and the sprout itself as an agent are mutually interdependent. But this mutual interdependence between the process of arising of the sprout and the sprout itself is also not an *intrinsic* one. Thus this mutual relation between the two does not need to withstand the test of ultimate analysis. Moreover, if the mutual interdependence between the process of arising of the sprout and the sprout itself is an intrinsic, in that case no change whatsoever will be possible. The process of arising would always infinitely be dependent on the sprout, so would the sprout be infinitely dependent on the arising. This dependence would go on forever thus making the arising of sprout impossible. In contrast, for mere arising of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika school, although the arising and the sprout are mutually interdependent they do not need to be mutually dependent forever, for the reason that this mutual dependence is not intrinsically established. Thus it is possible for the process of arising to come to an end thus giving rise to a fully mature sprout.

6. Refuting the Application of the Scale-Analogy

According to the Mādhyamika school, the simultaneity of the two processes of the scale does not demonstrate simultaneity of the seed and its sprout as the essentialist wants to interpret it. It is quite obvious that the ascent and descent of the two ends of the scale is apprehended simultaneously but this does not apply to the seed and its sprout. The seed which is in the process of cessation is about to cease but not just yet ceased, thus it exist only in the *present*. The sprout which is in the process of arising is about to arise but not just yet arisen, thus it will exist only in the *future*. Whereas the two ends of the scale both exist in the *present*. (Candrakīrti, 1999: 97) Therefore the example of the scale does not show the simultaneous existence of the seed and its sprout.

Furthermore for the essentialist, the Mādhyamika school argues, the analogy would also fail to show the simultaneity of the two processes. This is on two counts: First, since the sprout only exists in the future, it does not exist yet. This would mean that, for the essentialist, there is no basis for the process of arising to occur in the present. So it makes no sense to claim that the two processes or two actions are simultaneous given that the action of arising of the sprout would not exist simultaneously with the action of ceasing of the seed. Hence, the simultaneity of the two processes and the two ends of the scale are not analogous. Second, since on the essentialist account all phenomena including the two processes exist essentially, the processes of ceasing of the seed and the arising of the sprout either have to (1) exist intrinsically identical to their agents – seed and sprout – or (2) independent of the two agents. If it is (1) then it follows the two processes and the two agents would have to exist simultaneously. And this has been rejected on the ground that there won't be any

causal relation whatsoever between the processes and the agents. If it is (2) then the absurd consequence of action without agent would ensue. In other words, there would be a process of arising and ceasing without the existence of the seed and its sprout.

It is thus evident that, on the essentialist account, even the simultaneity of the two processes leads to absurd consequences. For the Prasaṅgika Mādhyamika however, Tsongkhapa argues, there is no such problem – the proposal of the simultaneity of the two processes would not lead to the absurd consequences. There are two primary related reasons for this: First that the Prasaṅgika rejects the inherent existence of the seed and its sprout and the two processes. Second that it is committed to mutual interdependence of the seed and its sprout and the two processes. So because the two ends of scale exist in the *present*, and because the processes of descending and the ascending of the scale are dependent upon them, two processes can be said to occur simultaneously. In this sense the example of the scale is applied to demonstrate the co-presence of the two processes - the process of arising of the sprout and the process of ceasing of the seed. However, the example does not demonstrate the simultaneous existence of the seed and its sprout on the ground that the seed and its sprout are not co-present like that of the two ends of the scale.

- But why does the Prasaṅgika Mādhyamika not commit the same error as the essentialist? According to Tsongkhapa though the seed itself and two processes – the ceasing of the seed and the arising of the sprout – are temporally simultaneous since they occur at the same time, but the existence of sprout is not simultaneous to them. Since the sprout is in the process of becoming, but not yet *is*. Tsongkhapa argues that for the Prasaṅgika, this is not a problem – the problem of the action without the agent would not occur. Stating the point differently, although the sprout does not exist in the present, the arising of the sprout in the present is still tenable. The fact that the sprout

does not exist in the present does not necessarily mean that there is no arising process of the sprout in the present. The process of the arising of the sprout is itself the becoming of the sprout in the future and the becoming of the sprout in the present makes the future existence of the sprout possible. This is because of their mutual interdependence that lacks any intrinsic existence whatsoever.

Tsongkhapa offers another argument why on the Prasaṅgika account the arising of the sprout in the present is still tenable although the sprout itself does not exist in the present. Tsongkhapa explains although it is the case that the seed ceases to exist during the sprout, it is not the case that sprout also ceases to exist as a result. This is because, as a general principle, when the object to which something depends ceases, the dependent also ceases given the seed is the object to which the sprout depends and the sprout is the dependent. (2004: 208)¹⁷ This makes sense. Let me illustrate this point with an example. When we switch off a heater, the warmth in the room does not disappear immediately. Although the efficient cause is not there nevertheless the effect i.e., the warmth still lingers. This is because of the interdependence between the switching on the heater as the cause and the heat it generated as effect including the environment of the whole room such as the closure of the doors and windows as well.¹⁸ Similarly, during the process of arising of the sprout, the sprout does not exist, but the seed and its process of ceasing and other favourable conditions (four elements, fertility of the soil, capability in the seed to produce the sprout, etc) helping in the cessation of the seed and production of the sprout do exist. Hence Tsongkhapa argues: “As long as one accepts arising, one also needs to accept the simultaneous existence of the cessation of the cause and the

¹⁷ ལྷུག་གླེབ་པ་ལ་ཐོགས་པའི་བྱ་བའི་དུས་སུ་ལྷུག་མེད་ཀྱང་བྱ་བ་ཡོད་པ་མི་འགལ་བ་ནི། དཔེར་ན་སྒྱིར་འབྲེལ་ཡུལ་ཞེས་ན་འབྲེལ་པོ་ལྷོག་པ་དང་། ས་བོན་འབྲེལ་ཡུལ་དང་ལྷུག་འབྲེལ་པོ་ཡིན་པ་དང་། ལྷུག་འཁྲུག་སྒྱུ་མི་ལྷོག་པ་མི་འགལ་བ་བཞིན་ནོ།

¹⁸ In my personal interview with Prof. Yeshe Thapkey, he illustrates the context with the example of the fire and smoke. Even when the wood has run out and the fire ceases to exist we can still find the existence of smoke in the air afterward. This he says is possible because of the interdependence of the smoke and fire.

eventual emergence of the effect;” and “that this would not be irrational for those who accept mere arising or conventional arising.”(Samten and Garfield, 2006: 75)

In his magnum opus, *Ocean of Reasoning*, Tsongkhapa writes: “the arising of things which are *simultaneous* – the arising of the effect depends on the activities of arising and ceasing occurring at the same time – and *dependently arisen* can be taken to exist so long as it is not analysed.” (2006: 77) The phrase “*dependently arisen* can be taken to exist so long as it is not analysed” implies that the mutual dependence and simultaneity of the two processes is tenable only in the conventional sense and strictly not in the ultimate sense. If it is the latter then the mutual dependence and simultaneity of the two processes would be an intrinsic and ultimate, such that it would have to withstand the test of logical scrutiny. If this is the case then the dependence and simultaneity would be also intrinsic such that it would make the emergence of the sprout from the seed impossible, given that the two would be always inseparable.

In brief, Tsongkhapa interprets the analogy of the scale in the *sūtra* as applicable only in context of the simultaneity of the two processes which are inherently empty of any essence and that they being mutually interdependent. In my view Tsongkhapa’s explanation of the implication of the analogy makes good sense and it does fill the explanatory gap which Candrakīrti and Nāgārjuna did not explicitly address in their commentaries on the application of the analogy. Tsongkhapa’s explanation also sheds light on the reason why the commitment to the essentialist interpretation of the implication of the scale-analogy would necessarily entail an absurd consequence.

7. Prāsaṅgika's Critique of the Specific Arguments

Having presented the Prāsaṅgika's general critique of the theory of arising from another, we can now briefly consider the Prāsaṅgika's specific critiques of the essentialist arguments (section 1) advanced in the support of the arising from another. This is important for it will clarify the Prāsaṅgika's specific critiques of each of the arguments proposed in favour of the arising from another. From the Prāsaṅgika's point of view none of the arguments advanced by the Abhidharmikas for the purpose of demonstrating the arising from another *ultimately* and the Svātantrika Mādhyamika arguments to justify the arising from another *conventionally* works. According to the Prāsaṅgika the Abhidharmika's first argument is premised upon the assumption that the four conditions are essentially real having inherent *svabhāvas* of their own, that these four conditions are responsible for producing the effects and that this view is supported by the Buddha himself. If this premise is correct then causal conditions that lead to the arising of things and things themselves as effects should exist independently of each other implying that the existence of the effects should be perceivable as other than the conditions which produced them. If this is true than visual consciousness as an effect has to be perceived as *other* than the conditions such as visual faculty and the object, an appropriate distance, proper light etc. If this is the case the existence of visual consciousness would not be dependent upon the above conditions. But that would make no sense since the existence of visual consciousness is clearly dependent upon its conditions given that without its conditions the visual consciousness does not exist. If the Abhidharmikas maintain the visual consciousness as causally produced, dependently arisen at least insofar as each condition comes into existence due to other factors. Then

it would make no logical sense to argue that things arise from conditions other than themselves.

The second argument of the Abhidharmikas also commits a similar fallacy. On the one hand it tries to establish the *otherness* of the five elements and the things as their effects, on the other hand, it attempts to establish the causal link between the things produced by the five elements and the producer, the five elements themselves. From the Prāsaṅgika point of view these two tasks are mutually exclusive. If the former is to be achieved the latter must be abandoned given that the otherness must be founded on the distinct nature of the elements and things they produce. If the latter is to be achieved the former must be relinquished given that a causal relation must be founded on the mutually compatible relation between the elements and the things they produce. Both follow because being causally related and being intrinsically other are not compatible. Moreover if the characteristics of the five elements are intrinsic to themselves, and that they are other than the things they each produce, as the Abhidharmikas maintain, then the elements cannot be considered as the causal conditions of other material things. As is evident the material objects do possess similar characteristics as that of the elements: they are either liquid or solid or gas. If the elements are distinctly other than the things they each produce, there should be no reason that the characteristics of the elements are passed on to things that they supposedly produce.

The Abhidharmikas third argument to prove the existence of the arising from another is no better than the previous two. According to the philosophy of the Prāsaṅgika it is mutually contradictory to argue that there is intrinsically existent indivisible atoms and infinitesimal units of consciousness on the one hand and on the other hand to assert that these two indivisible entities are responsible for the arising of the matter and the mind. If atoms and infinitesimal consciousness are indivisible and

intrinsically existent, the Prāsaṅgika contends, they both are causally impotent. Neither the atoms nor the infinitesimal consciousness would be able to accomodate changes and transformations necessary for the production of the matter and the mind given their intrinsic identities. If the Abhidharmika concedes that atoms and the infinitesimal consciousness do undergo changes and transformations, either they would have to accept that such changes are intrinsic to the nature of atoms and infinitesimal consciousness or such change occur due to the force of other influences. If it is the former again then atoms and consciousness would not be the cause of other things since such causation necessarily involves relinquishing the former identities to acquire other identities of things. If it is the latter, then atoms and consciousness would no longer be indivisible and intrinsically existents for at least certain part of atoms or consciousness would undergo change due to the influence of the other surrounding them. Hence the Abhidharmika's view that the indivisible and intrinsically existent atoms and consciousness are the causal agents of the world makes little sense.

The fourth argument proposing the simultaneity of cause and effect is an interesting one. However, as I have shown in the earlier part of this chapter, for the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika, even this argument from the Abhidharmika does not work. This argument can also be refuted on the ground that if cause and effect were to be simultaneous, then the effect would be existent during the time of the cause. If the effect already exists during the causal stage, it is pointless for it to arise all over again, therefore it makes no sense for the effect to be causally produced. (Hopkins, 1996: 647)

The fifth argument, unlike the previous Abhidharmika arguments, is from the Svātantrika Mādhyamikas, at least according to the readings of Tsongkhapa and the like. The Svātantrikas claim that things arise from another *conventionally* but reject the idea that things arise from another *ultimately*. This view also does not recieve any

sympathy from the Prāsaṅgikas. According to the latter the only way things could exist is conventionally and there is no other way of being. And if things' conventional existence is determined by being arisen from another – in that they are other than the causes that produce them – that would be their ultimate being, not just simply conventionally. In other words, if things did arise conventionally due to the force of the other, then that must be how things come into existence ultimately. This must follow for the Prāsaṅgikas because things cannot have two modes of arisings: conventional and the ultimate. All the Mādhyamikas, including the Svātantrikas would deny that things have ultimate arising because to accept things as arising ultimately is identical to accept things arising inherently and independently.

The Abhidharmika's sixth and the final argument which appeals to commonsense realism or the view of ordinary beings is also rejected by the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas. In Candrakīrti's words: "It is known that in everyday life people say, 'By sowing the seed, I gave rise to this son,' and '[by sowing the seed] they think, I have planted the tree.' Therefore arising from another is not even accepted in everyday life." (MA 6.32) What this means, according to the Prāsaṅgika, although parents might see themselves as causes of their children and children perceive themselves as produced by their parents and both parents and children might see themselves as distinct. But that does not necessarily explain the causal relation that is involved in the process. For the Prāsaṅgika parents are not the cause of children but their reproductive cells, the presence of a sentient aspect and other appropriate conditions are the causal conditions. Looking at causation in this way, children cannot be separated from the genes they inherited from their parents. So it is simply a delusion to think the cause and the effect as independent from each other.

8. Conclusion

I have explicitly demonstrated in this chapter that the theory of arising from another is totally untenable from the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika perspective. Although the advocates of the theory of arising from another are mostly Buddhists, especially Abhidharmikas who appeal to commonsense realism, the arguments advanced in order to support the view fails the tests of logical scrutiny and also fundamentally fails to explain the relationship between the cause and the effect. The majority of problems catalogued in the chapter against the causal theory of arising from another hinges on the metaphysics of causality given that the Abhidharmikas arguments have in them the causal power of the other as the main thrust. They insist that things or entities come into existence due to the causal power of entities other than themselves. Even the Svātantrika Mādhyamikas, despite their denial of the ultimate arising from another, insist that things conventionally arise from another. The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika however, as I have demonstrated here, rejects this theory on both conventional and ultimate level. One central concern for the Prāsaṅgika is that so-called arising from another radically undermines the theory of dependent arising in that it deprives the interconnectedness of the causal process. This relation is, according to the Prāsaṅgika, at the heart of the causal explanation.

In the next chapter I will turn my attention towards the third (theory of arising from both self and another) and the fourth alternative causal theories (theory of arising from causelessly) and examine the Prāsaṅgika critiques of the causal accounts. This examination, along with the examinations in Chapter 1 and 2, should provide us with good conceptual framework for the delineation of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's own causal thesis which will be the topic of discussion in Chapter 4 and 5.

Chapter 3

Theory of Arising from Both and Causelessly

1. Introduction

In this Chapter I will discuss the problems associated with the third and the fourth alternative causal theories. I have several reasons for accommodating these causal theories within the fold of one chapter. First, the theory of arising from both and the theory of arising from causelessly are causal theories developed and advanced respectively by Jaina and Cārvāka / Lokāyata. Both of these schools belong to the heterodox and non-vedic Indian schools of thought. Both reject the Vedic conception of the creation of the world by God. Second, philosophical discussions and materials pertaining to causation are quite limited in both traditions. Hence my discussion on theory of arising from both and causelessly is going to be brief.

According to Madhyamaka texts, the exponents of the third alternative causal theory which claims arising from both self and another (Tib. *gnyis skyes*) is part of the Jaina tradition. (Candrakīrti, 1999: 201) Essentially this theory explains the causal process by appealing to the combined causal characteristics of both self and another. Jainism argues that Sāṃkhya's justification of the theory of arising from the self where things are said to arise from a single potent cause and the Buddhist reificationists justification for the idea that things arise from causes other than themselves are both problematic and thus unacceptable. Therefore, Jainism proposes a causal view which combines the two causal theories together, thus arguing that things arise from both self and another. Consider for example a vase. Jainism argues that the existence of a vase is combination of two types of causes: one which is identical to the pot itself – the clay

from which the pot is made – and the others that are different from the pot or other than the pot itself – including the artistic hands of the potter, heat, water, air etc. The former equals arising from the self and the latter amounts to arising from another. The Prāsaṅgika reject this account as problematic on similar metaphysical grounds. They argue that Jaina’s causal theory is untenable on the similar grounds as the two causal theories – the theory of arising from self and the theory of arising from another – taken separately to justify the causal process are untenable as I have shown in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. The first part of Chapter 3 will consider Jaina’s causal arguments which will be followed by the Prāsaṅgika critique of Jaina’s causal theory.

The second part of this chapter will consider the Indian Materialist Cārvāka / Lokāyata’s causal account, the fourth causal alternative – causation without cause. This will be followed by the Prāsaṅgika critique of the Cārvāka’s causal account. Cārvāka / Lokāyata argue that as long as things are maintained as arising from oneself, another and both, the position is bound to fail in its logical consistency. So Cārvāka reject three other causal theses as problematic. Instead, they propose the causal thesis which claims that things are born without specific causal explanations such that neither are they born from themselves nor from others nor from both. Cārvāka challenge the causal theorists saying that things come into existence without specific reasons or explanations. Peacock feathers are rich and colourful, and give aesthetic joy. And some bushes are simply pointed. Nobody is responsible for producing them thus there is no causal explanation needed. Peacocks and pointy bushes are what they are naturally by accident.¹⁹ (Cited in Gorampa, 2002: 263) The Prāsaṅgika also reject this uncaused causal theory as I will show later in its critique of the Cārvāka’s causal account.

¹⁹ ཉི་ཤར་རྩེ་བོ་ཐུར་དུ་འབབ་པ་དང་། ལྷན་རྒྱུ་ཆོར་མ་གཟེངས་རིང་རྣམས་དང་། མ་བྱུང་མཛོག་དབྱིབས་ལ་སོགས་ཆོས་རྣམས་ཀྱང་། ལུས་ཀྱང་མ་བྱས་རང་གི་ངང་གིས་བྱུང་།

2. Theory of Arising from Both

2.1. Jaina Metaphysics / Causality

The Jaina metaphysics is steeped in the doctrine known as *Anekāntavāda* – many sided or non-one-sided position. This doctrine is partly a result of Jainism's ethical response to the rise of various conflicting metaphysical thoughts in India where standpoints of one school clashed with other schools, where one view is asserted as the only right-view, other's are condemned and rejected. The doctrine of *Anekāntavāda* partly reflects Jainism's perspective of the nature of reality. Jainism views reality as always multi-dimensional possessing infinite characteristics of which many often appear to be contradictory and beyond the perceptual range of ordinary beings. Each individual thinks differently about the same reality. While each perception is partially correct it is also a skewed way of seeing things. Viewed from a broader spectrum, one view contradicts another's perspectives resulting in debates and conflicts over the truth claims. Not realising one's view of reality is skewed and limited each proclaims authority as far as the access to reality goes. This ugly human predicament, according to Jaina thinkers, can be resolved by adopting the theory of *Anekāntavāda* with its twin concepts approaches to reality – *Nayavāda* and *Syādvāda* – which stresses the coexistence of diverse groups with conflicting view points. It argues

- that the universe is constituted by conflicting pairs like ignorance and wisdom, pleasure and pain, life and death. Life is made up of conflicting characters and people holding conflicting views and interests. Jainism seeks to resolve such clashes by reinforcing the coexistence of conflicting ideas.

- that things are both visible and invisible. Human beings accept what is visible and ignore what is invisible. As long as we fail to understand that things are constituted by both these characters we “cannot reach truth and justice.” (Bhaskar 1999: 50)
- That there is nothing that is absolutely similar or dissimilar, friend or enemy, good or bad. In every entity is a hidden infinite possibility.

Jainism explains the position of *Anekāntavāda* by means of illustrating it through examples of an elephant and the six blind men. Each man approaches, understands and describes the elephant by touching certain parts. The man who touches the trunk explains that the elephant is like a ‘python’; the man who touches the leg describes it as a ‘pillar’. Thus all six give six different descriptions of the elephant from their experience. Jainism proposes that all six descriptions are correct insofar as each accords with their experience of the elephant. However, insofar as none of them can grasp the concept of the elephant as a whole, all six men are wrong. Categorical metaphysical claims about the reality suffer from exactly the same problems. Hence the most plausible position is to make no categorical statements about reality, but to embrace various perspectives as qualities of reality.

Jainism is deeply suspicious of metaphysics which claims a one-dimensional view of reality. As Lal *et al.*, explain, such a position leads to many unpalatable consequences: “....one school refused to entertain the point of view of the other side holding it as false and considering only its own point of view as the gospel – absolute – truth. This” they say: “led to intolerance. Such dogmatist and intolerant approach is considered ‘*ekānt*’ or one-sided philosophical approach in Jaina view and such one-sidedness is considered as equivalent to falsehood or false knowledge and false

perception – *Mithya Gyan* and *Mithya Darshan*.²⁰ This approach is traditionally traced back to the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, one of the earliest Jaina canons where it is said, “One who praises one’s own view-point and discards other’s view as a false-one and thus, distorts the truth will remain confined to the cycle of the birth and death.” (Cited in Jain, 1999: 37) Combining this metaphysical approach with Jaina ethics which stresses that the speech should be “unassaulting as well as true” we have Mahāvīra thus warning his disciples against employing “unwarranted categorical assertions or negations and instruct[ing] them to make only conditional statements (*Vibhajjavāya Vāgarejja*)” (Jain, 1999: 37) Therefore it is quite obvious that the theory of *Anekāntavāda* seeks to synthesis and reconcile contradictory doctrines of various Brahmanical and non-brahmanical schools of thought, in particular metaphysical standpoints of the Upaniṣadic and the Buddhist thinkers. In his *Studies in Jaina Philosophy*, Nathmal Tatia puts this argument more succinctly. The Upaniṣadic thinkers posit the eternal and immutable reality enduring behind plurality of worldly phenomena. Buddhism, on the other hand, posits momentary, constantly changing and essenceless (*niḥsvabhāva*) nature of all phenomena. And seeing his role as a synthesiser, Mahāvīra combined both views together – hence “Mahāvīra adhered to the common experience, found no contradiction between permanence and change.” (1951: 18)

Mahāvīra’s arguments can be advanced in the following way: First, according to Sagarmal Jain, “For him [Mahāvīra] being and becoming – both are the aspects of the same reality. He defined reality as origination, decay and permanence.” (1999: 20) Lal quotes the famous proposition of the Jaina Text - *Tattvārtha Sūtra* (5.29) “*utpad vyaya dhrauvya yuktam sat*”, meaning, reality is characterised by origination, destruction as well as permanence. The implication suggests, as Lal argues, that reality is:

²⁰ <http://www.jainworld.com/jainbooks/firststep-2/anekantavad.htm>

... not ‘permanent’ but also permanent, it is not only in a flux but also in a flux. Accordingly an object of knowledge must have three inseparable aspects. (i) a permanent substance - the inherent qualities (ii) destruction or abandonment of old shape and (iii) origination or acquisition of a new shape.²¹

Permanence of the reality of the phenomena is explained through an example of a gold ring. When the gold ring is destroyed, the actual gold ring is destroyed but not the gold, as there is “the continuing gold content”, which according to Jainism is permanent. Thus the same gold is made into other jewelry such as earrings and so forth.

Second, reality for Mahāvīra is characterised by a simultaneous operation of origination and destruction as well as permanence which is synthesised version of what is traditionally the extreme of eternalism (*śāśvatavāda*) and the extreme of nihilism (*ucchedavāda*). In *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, the dialogue between Gautama, a disciple of Mahāvīra, and the master himself clearly shows that for Mahāvīra the two extremes – eternalism and nihilism – are both acceptable. The dialogue reads:

Are the souls, O Lord, eternal or non-eternal? The souls, O Gautama, are eternal in some respect and non-eternal in some respect. With what end in view, O Lord, is it so said that the souls are eternal in some respect and non-eternal in some respect? They are eternal, O Gautama, from the view-point of substance, and non-eternal from the view-point of modes. And with end in view it is said, O Gautama, that the souls are eternal in some respect and non-eternal in some respect. (vii. 2. 273)²²

²¹ <http://www.jainworld.com/jainbooks/firststep-2/anekantavad.htm>

²² When the Buddha was asked a similar question, he challenged the presupposition entailed in the question. The question assumes the existence of soul which is, according to the Buddha, nonexistent. Hence the quality of the soul being eternal or noneternal makes no sense to the Buddha. It is like asking the colour of a sky flower which is totally nonexistent.

For Mahāvīra accepting both extreme resolves the metaphysical puzzle as to whether or not the universe is finite or infinite. He explains it with reference to four different angles: i) time ii) space iii) substance and iv) angle of form of objects. Jaina's synthesis of metaphysics of Upaniṣadic and Buddhist thoughts takes us right into to the heart of its conception of the causal thesis which seeks to synthesise the two seemingly contradictory causal theories - the arising from self and the arising from another. While the arising from self and the arising from another, if taken separately as fulfilling causal explanations is problematic (for being one-sided) yet the merger which brings together the arising from self and another as performing one act of producing resolves this problem. Hence in terms of a causal view, Jainism champions the arising from both – causation as result of both the arising from self and the arising from another. This means Jaina philosophy is committed to causal theory which asserts the arising from both multiple and singular cause. This does not mean that Jainism adopts the evolution theory of the Sāṃkhya tradition, which proposes *Prakṛti* as the creator of the psycho-physical world. Nor does it mean that it adopts a Buddhist view of causation. What this means is that Jainism allows its causal explanation to accommodate both the metaphysics of Sāṃkhya philosophy and of some elements of Buddhism. As Jain Bhaskar points out, “the Sāṃkhya philosophy upholds the view that substance and its quality are absolutely identical The Buddhist philosophy represents the view of difference.... According to Jaina philosophy, the conception of identity-cum-difference is the solution to the problem.” (1999: 54)

Take the case of a clay pot. The clay is the substantial cause of a pot and all other conditions including the potter's labour, water and manufacturing wheel are the instrumental causes. The substantial cause – clay-matter – is, according to Jainism, a permanent entity since we can still find the matter of clay in the pot which is the effect.

However there are aspects of the causal process that are contingent, thus they change. Hence, according to this account the production is where “some old qualities have been lost, some new ones brought in, and there is some part in it which is permanent.” (Dasgupta, 1951: 174)

This example usefully illustrates the Jaina principle of *Anekāntavāda* being applied in the domain of causality. We can see this on several grounds. First, that the production is a combination of *one* – substantial cause – and *many* – instrumental conditions – since it is a collaborative effect of one substantial cause and multiple instrumental causes. All effects are essentially brought to bear from the combination of one and many causes as Radhakrishna explains: “Jaina claims that the potter has the idea (*bhāva*) and the pot exists in his consciousness, and there arises the actual pot with the material clay.” (1999: 323) Without the interplay of these two types of causes, there cannot be any causal process. “This is the rationale behind the Jaina claim that, every phenomenon excluding the souls or *jivas*, is made up of matter *pudgala* as the substantial cause. And *pudgala*,” as Jacobi describes as, “of one kind and is able to develop into every thing.” (1948: 72)

Second, causality is a synthesis between what is metaphysically *permanent* – unchanging substance – on the one hand and what is metaphysically *impermanent* – constantly changing conditions – on the other. This is evident, Jaina claims, given that the substantial cause persists through time and can be seen as part of the effect. Hence clay essentially remains, even when it is turned into a pot. Whereas the instrumental causes such as heat while it helps to create the pot, it does not persist through time, does not become the pot. When the mud is turned into a pot it loses heat and becomes cold instead. Likewise, all other instrumental causes are *impermanent* since none of them retains their identity in the effectual state. Hence Ramjee Singh for example argues,

“Jaina describes the phenomena having the reality of identity-in-difference which both a permanent and changing entity manifests through constant change of appearance and disappearance.” (Singh, n.d. 67) Further he argues, “that reality when looked at as the underlying permanent substance may be described as permanent but when viewed from the point of view of the modes (*prayaya*) which appear and disappear, it may be described as non-permanent and changing.” (Singh, n.d. 67)

Third, causality is a network between *identical* causes on the one hand and *distinct* causes on the other. In other words, it means that cause and effect are identical in one respect nevertheless distinct in another sense. The substantial cause, i.e., the clay, and the effect, i.e., the pot are identical given that the clay retains its identity even during its effectual stage. This is true, on this account, for the clay pot is after all a clay pot. That clay pot cannot have any other identity than being constituted by the clay. On the other hand the instrumental causes and the effect are distinct. The instrumental causes, say water, and the effect, clay pot, are certainly not perceived as the same. The clay pot which is the effect is perceived in every sense to be different from water. Water is liquid while pot is solid and the like.

Fourth, causality is a link between what is causally *eternal* and what is causally *non-eternal*. The substantial cause is eternal since it does not cease to be whatever it is. The substantial cause i.e., the clay is eternally present in the clay pot. However the clay pot is not just a production from the clay it is due to other instrumental conditions. And these conditions are non-eternal with respect to the effect of the clay pot. This is because the instrumental causes are nonexistent in the effect, hence they are annihilated in the effectual state. In Prabha Vijaya's words, we read: “Truth tells us that every substance is characterized by the number of attributes and modifications. Its modifications are always changing, but its attributes which make it the particular

individual substance, remain throughout all these changes.” (1948: 44) He further articulates the point: “Buddhism believes that everything is transient; this is perfectly true so far as the ever-present modifications of substances are concerned, but these modifications must depend upon some thing in which they are going on. That something remains one throughout its modifications.” (1948: 44)

Finally the Jaina claims phenomenon is produced both from the association of conditions and the non-association of conditions. This holds true, on the Jaina account, since all phenomena are products of atoms, but atoms themselves are not produced from the association of conditions. As Gaṇi explains: “There cannot be a general rule that each and every object should be produced from *sāmagri* [association]. For objects composed of two or more atoms could be produced from the *sāmagri* of those atoms, but a *paramāṇu* [atom] by itself, does never occupy space, and hence could never be produced from any *sāmagri*.” (Gaṇi, 1950: 247)²³

So these are some of the key arguments advanced by the Jaina to support the theory of arising from both self and another. Jaina thinkers are convinced that only by way of combining the two opposing causal theories would the causal problems faced by the Sāṃkhya, Abhidharmika and Cārvaka be addressed. However, the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika have very different view of the Jaina causal theory to which I will turn next.

2.2. Theory of Arising from Both Critiqued

Let us now turn to the Prāsaṅgika’s reaction against the Jaina casual theory. For the Prasaṅgika Mādhyamika, the Jaina theory of causality is also philosophically unsustainable because it presupposes the metaphysical claims that all phenomena are

²³ *Sarvam sāmagrimayam naikānto 'yam yato 'nurapradeśḥ |*
Atha so 'pi sa-prad èśo yatrāvasthā sa paramā ṇuḥ |

constituted by two contradictory characteristics: permanence / change, eternalism / nihilism, identity / difference, singular / plural, self-caused / other-caused. Candrakīrti's concluding remark of the Prāsaṅgika critique of the Jaina causality in his *Madhyamakāvatāra* therefore reads as follows: "Arising from both is also patently unreasonable, because the faults already explained also accrue to this thesis. [Since arising from self and arising from another have been disproved], and this [third alternative] is untenable both from perspective of the worldly and ultimate truth." (MA 6: 98)²⁴ This causal account is untenable for Candrakīrti since it suffers from the same logical problems as of the theory of arising from self and the theory of arising from another. This is so, since Jaina causality is a synthesis of the two problematic causal accounts into one fold and as such problems are quite inevitable.

The first argument which attempts to show that the effect arises from the collaborative network between one substantial cause and the plurality of many instrumental conditions does not work. For this Jainism needs to show us that the substantial cause and the instrumental causes must be causally efficacious, able to function by interacting with each other like the seed (substantial cause) and instrumental causes such as water, heat, minerals etc. When the seed is planted in the soil, the seed undergoes changes to produce the sprout and eventually ceases to exist during its fruition. The substantial cause must be causally efficient during the causal state but eventually relinquishes its identity to produce the effect. However, this is not the case in Jaina's account. Nāgārjuna points out that the so-called instrumental cause would lack any causal efficiency, it would fail to function as a cause. This is because it cannot be accepted as a cause as it cannot accommodate change that is necessary for the

²⁴ གཉིས་ལས་སྐྱེ་བའང་རིགས་པའི་ངོ་བོ་མ་ཡིན་གང་གི་ཕྱིར། བཤད་ཟིན་ཉེས་པ་དེ་དག་ཐོག་ཏུ་འབབ་པ་ཡིན་ཕྱིར་རོ། འདི་ནི་འཇིག་རྟེན་ལས་མིན་དེ་ཉིད་ཏུ་ཡང་འདོད་མིན་ཏེ། གང་ཕྱིར་རེ་རེ་ལས་ནི་སྐྱེ་བ་འགྲུབ་པ་ཡོད་མ་ཡིན།

production of the effect to occur, and it cannot relinquish its identity once the effect is produced as it is conceived by Jaina as permanent and eternal. But that which utterly lacks the causal efficiency or “that which cannot perform causal function,” Nāgārjuna argues, “cannot be even considered as cause.” (*MMK* 1.4)²⁵ He further argues that “Conditions are so-called for the production depends upon them. That which does not produce is not even considered as condition.” (*MMK* 1.5)²⁶ This leaves only the instrumental causes, thus undermining Jaina’s assertion that production is cooperation between the substantial and the instrumental cause given that the former lacks any causal efficiency.

The second argument does not work either. Jaina claims that the substantial cause in question is permanent whereas the instrumental causes are impermanent and the effect is produced as a result of a causal relation existing between these two types of causes. From the Prāsaṅgika perspective, this is entirely self-contradictory. A permanent substantial cause lacks any causal efficiency. It cannot be a cause, for it does not undergo any change whereas the real production of the effect does indeed need its cause to transform depending on the exposure to the conditions. Impermanent conditions will have no impact on the substantial cause, on this account, hence they too would lack any causal efficiency. Thus neither the substantial nor the instrumental causes nor the combination of the two will have any causal efficiency. Jainism concedes that the substantial and the instrumental causes taken separately do lack any causal efficiency, but claims that the combination of what is permanent and impermanent is causally effective. However, it is quite obvious that there is simply no causal network between the two types of causes. Illustrating the Prāsaṅgika points with the clay pot example,

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བྱ་བ་རྒྱུན་དང་ལྷན་མ་ཡིན། རྒྱུན་དང་མི་ལྷན་བྱ་བ་མེད། བྱ་བ་མི་ལྷན་རྒྱུན་མ་ཡིན། བྱ་བ་ལྷན་ན་འོན་ཏེ་ན།

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འདི་དག་ལ་བརྟེན་སྦྱེ་བས་ན། དེ་ཕྱིར་འདི་དག་རྒྱུན་ཅེས་གྲག་ རི་མིན་མི་སྦྱེ་དེ་མིན་དུ། འདི་དག་རྒྱུན་མིན་རི་ལྟར་མིན།

Jainism claims that the substantial cause of the clay pot is permanent whereas the instrumental causes like water etc., are impermanent. If this claim is to be taken seriously than the clay pot is produced by collaboration between partly permanent and partly impermanent causes. If the substantial cause is permanent, then clay must not be subjected to the modifications, it must not undergo change when subjected to different conditions such as heat or water or even the potter's artistic hands. The fact that the clay can be modified and turned into any shape or color, virtually into any design is because it is entirely causally conditioned and that there is nothing in the clay that is permanent.

The third Jaina argument tries to prove causality from synthesising *identity* and *difference*. It claims that in so far as the relationship of the substantial cause with its effect is concerned, they are identical. Whereas in so far as the relationship of the instrumental cause with its effect is concerned they are different. From the Prāsaṅgika perspective this makes no sense. Nāgārjuna criticises this view as follows. “Identity of cause and effect is never tenable.” (MMK 20.19ab)²⁷ “If cause and effect were identical, produced and producer would be identical.” (MMK 20.20ab)²⁸ If this is accepted, then the substantial cause and the effect would exist simultaneously. If this is accepted the so-called substantial cause would be redundant given that the existence of the effect already. Moreover, Jainas would be forced to accept the produced, such as a daughter and a sprout, are identical to their respective producers such as the father and the seed. It is also not reasonable to accept the instrumental cause and the effect as different. “The difference of cause and effect is never tenable.” (MMK 20.19cd)²⁹ “If cause and effect

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རྒྱ་དང་འབྲས་སྤྱུ་གཅིག་ཉིད་སྟེ། རྣམ་ཡང་འབྲས་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།

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རྒྱ་དང་འབྲས་སྤྱུ་གཅིག་ཉིད་ན། བསྐྱེད་བྱ་སྐྱེད་བྱེད་གཅིག་སྟེ་འགྱུར།

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རྒྱ་དང་འབྲས་སྤྱུ་གཞན་ཉིད་སྟེ། རྣམ་ཡང་འབྲས་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།

were different, cause and noncause would be alike.”(MMK 20.20cd)³⁰ If the instrumental causes and the effect are entirely distinct, there would be no causal connection between them. If this is accepted, the claim that the instrumental causes of the clay pot such as water, heat etc and the clay pot as their effect would be baseless for there would be no causal link between the effect and the causes. In that case the so-called instrumental causes would not be the cause after all. It would be just like any other unrelated noncausal phenomenon. If Jainism insists the instrumental causes and the effect are different yet they nevertheless function as causes, in that case, the Prāsaṅgika points out, Jainism would be forced to accept both light and darkness as the conditions for clear seeing. There would be no special causal connection between light and clear sight since they are different like darkness.³¹

The Jaina’s fourth argument tries to demonstrate the production of the effect from two of the collaborative efforts of the two types of causes – one that is *eternal* in the effect and the other that is *annihilated* during the effect. For the Prāsaṅgika this argument is also self-defeating. If the substantial cause is eternally present in the effect, the causal activity would be redundant for the effect and the cause would simultaneously exist. In that case the substantial cause would have no function to perform. But as Nāgārjuna points out: “That which is an agent does not perform an existing action. Nor does that which is not an agent perform some nonexistent action.” (MMK 8.1)³² If the causal activity of the substantial cause still requires to produce the effect, then the substantial cause cannot be eternally present in the effect. Further it is objected that whatever is eternal is by definition noncausal, for eternity implies

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ཐུ་དང་འབྲས་ལུ་གཞན་ཉིད་ན། ཐུ་དང་ཐུ་མེན་མཚུངས་པར་འགྱུར།

³¹This account is open to the same objections the Prāsaṅgika raised against the identity / difference arguments discussed in Chapter 1 and 2.

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བྱེད་པོ་ཡིན་པར་གྱུར་པ་དེ། ལས་སུ་གྱུར་པ་མི་བྱེད་དོ། བྱེད་པོ་མ་ཡིན་གྱུར་པ་ཡང་། ལས་སུ་མ་གྱུར་མི་བྱེད་དོ།

permanence. And whatever is permanent is causally impotent as it cannot accommodate changes which is crucial for the causal process to take place. The Prāsaṅgika also objects to the Jaina claim that the instrumental causes are annihilated during the effect and points out if that is the case, for Jaina the effect too would be annihilated. If the parental reproductive cells are annihilated, the reproduced being also gets annihilated.

Therefore Jainism's causality is always explained by the Prāsaṅgika as a synthesis between the arising from *self* and the arising from *another* where the identity of the substantial cause and the identity of the effect are one and same (while the identity of the instrumental cause and the effect are always distinct). That being the case the production of the clay pot from the clay which is not other than the clay-pot is the arising of the clay pot from itself, hence the clay pot is partly self caused. The objections against this view are discussed in detail in Chapter 1. All the fallacies of the Sāṃkhya's causal account can also be applied to Jaina's account insofar as it claims the identity of the substantial cause and the effect. Jaina however claims that the relationship between the instrumental causes and the clay pot is one of essentially another. The causes such as heat, water etc., and the effect in question are distinct yet causally efficient. In spite of their inherent otherness, the instrumental causes produce the clay pot. Hence in this respect, the clay pot is partly caused by another – something other than itself. This according to the Prāsaṅgika amounts to claiming that the clay pot is partly produced from another cause. This is also rejected by the Prāsaṅgika. Recall the detailed critique discussed in Chapter 2 can again be applied here in this context.

It is therefore clear that Jaina's causal account makes little sense to the Prāsaṅgika. Although it is somewhat innovative on Jaina's part to synthesis contradictory causal theories – the theory of arising from self and the theory of arising from another – and try to explain causal process it does not succeed, at least according

to the Prāsaṅgika's reading of its account. It suffers from all sorts philosophical and logical inconsistencies as demonstrated above.

3.1. Cārvāka's Causal Theory

Now I will turn to the theory of causeless causation. The exponent of this theory is the heterodox school of Indian Materialist / Cārvāka in Indian Philosophy and it is significant as the only school that denies the validity of karma and rebirth. (Tatia, 1951: 220) The school is also known as Lokāyata, for the reason "it holds that only this world (*loka*) exists and there is no beyond." (Radhakrishnan and Moore, 1957: 227) According to Cārvāka philosophy, sensual pleasure is the only end of human beings. Cārvāka does not accept the afterlife as a separate state of being but only as earthly suffering. Liberation is the dissolution of the body as death is the end of all. Cārvāka denies the validity of most knowledge which derives from the senses. Inference has no value and the scriptures are false. What cannot be seen does not exist. There are no other worlds as they cannot be perceived.

The lack of original text of the school poses a major problem for any serious research undertaken on Cārvāka causality. The *Tattvopaplavasīmha* of Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa (600 C.E.) which was discovered only in the third decade of the twentieth century, is accepted as the only extant and authentic text of the Cārvāka. (Mittal, 1974: 23) This text however, does not fill the gap of the understanding the whole tradition. It is marked by textual incoherence and logical inconsistency. Still those ideas are appropriated and cited in the early works of other traditions. In fact the doctrines currently attributed to Cārvāka school are largely traced from the secondary sources, particularly the works of its opponents and critics. According to Mittal, the author of *Indian Materialist*, the

following texts are the secondary sources of Cārvāka philosophy: *Sarvamatasamgraha*, *Tattvasamgraha* of Śāntarakṣita, Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra*, *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* of Mādhavācārya, *Ṣaḍdarśana Samuccaya* of Haribhadra Suri, *Sarvasiddhāntasārasamgraha* attributed to Śaṅkarācārya, *Sarvadarśanakaumudi* of Mādhava Sarasvati, *Rāmāyana*, *Mahābhārata*, *Padamapurāṇa*, *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, *Manusmṛti*, *Kauṭīliya-Arthaśāstra*, *Bārhaspatya-Arthaśāstra*, Vātsyāna's *Kāmasūtra*, *Brahma sūtra Bhāskara Bhāṣya*. (Mittal, 1974: 24-25)

In terms of philosophical orientation Jayatilleke (2004: 71-72) noted that modern scholars have classified the school of Cārvāka or Indian materialism into three categories:

- those who upheld the validity of perception alone and denied inference and other forms of knowledge,
- those who upheld the validity and priority of perception, but admitted inference only in a limited sense, denying other forms of knowledge,
- those who denied all means of knowledge including perception.

Information about the first school is traced to the works of *Mādhava Ācārya's* (1400 C.E.) *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* where it is said that “this school holds that perception is the *only* source of knowledge’ (*pratyakṣaikapramāṇavāditayā*).” (Cited in Jayatilleke, 2004: 72) The second school is attributed to the works of Punrandara in Kamalasīla's *Tattvasamgrahapañjika*): “Purandara says that it is well known that even the Materialists accept inference although they object to people (*kaiścit*) employing inference beyond the limits of sense-perception (*lit. beyond the path of this world.*)”³³ The same view is attributed to Lokāyata by S. N. Dasgupta: “Purandara – admits the

³³ Purandaras *tvāha, lokaprasiddham anumānam Cārvākairapīṣyata evayattu kaiscillaukikam mārgamatikramya anumānamucyate tanniṣidhyate.*

usefulness of inference in determining the nature of all worldly things where perceptual experience is available, but inference cannot be employed for establishing any dogma regarding the transcendental world, of life after death, or the law of karma which cannot be available to ordinary perceptual experience.” (1952: 539) Cārvāka’s second school claims the existence of the four elements: earth, water, fire and air. It argues that everything is composed of these four elements including the consciousness. Cārvāka denies the reality of all abstract concepts such as vice and virtue, or causation. It claims that it is in the ‘nature’ (*svabhāva*) of things themselves to undergo transformation by themselves (*svataḥ*). This school therefore adopts a view which states things come into being due to their essential nature without specific and definite causal explanation. Cārvāka affirms the doctrine of causeless nature of thing by admitting to the validity of perception and inference. It is quite clear from this point that the Cārvāka tradition, or at least one school, admits the “perception and empirical inference but discards metaphysical inference on the grounds that what was in principle unperceivable is unknowable.” (Jayatilleke, 2004: 77) The third school – denial of all means of knowledge – is attributed to the Lokāyāta in the works of Jayarāṣi’s *Tattvopaplavasimha*. According to Jaytilleke “He [Jayarāṣi] seems to deny the real existence of both this world as well as the next, in denying the reality of all *tattvas* and his work as its name implies is intended to ‘upset all principles’ (*tattvaupaplava-*) epistemological as well as ontological, and he claims to have done so at the end of his work (*tadevaṃ upapluteṣu tattveṣu*).” (2004: 82)

Interestingly however, a Tibetan commentator, Jamyang Shepai Dorje, claims that one out of three schools of Cārvāka accepts the existence of Gods, former and future

lives. (1992: 93)³⁴ Although he does not mention the original source of this claim it does seem to contradict the traditional views attributed to Cārvāka school. Even the term Lokāyāta would not apply to this school if the claim is right, after all the school would be concerned about the after life. This claim also contradicts the Cārvāka denial of inference. Since the proof for after life must be based on the inferential reasonings.

3.2. Critique of Cārvāka’s Causal Theory

The Cārvāka epistemology has an enormous impact on their metaphysics of the world, in particular the causality of this and the next world. From the Prāsaṅgika perspective, the first school of Cārvāka, because it recognises perception as the only valid means of knowledge, and categorically denies the validity of inference, makes causal explanation impossible. This follows because the causal process is not directly perceivable, since the relation between the cause and the effect is not accessible direct perception. Without relying upon inference, the relationship between the cause and the effect, the existence of causal process is not feasible. However this lack of causal explanation is not a problem for the first school. In fact the denial of the validity of inference is precisely to deny the existence of anything that is occult, not directly accessible to the senses, including causality and ultimately to deny the existence of afterlife as the karmic consequence of this life. In fact it can be argued that a primary drive for the Cārvākas to deny inference is to deny the existence of the future life. If inference is accepted as a valid means of knowledge, according to the first Cārvāka school, one cannot escape the dilemma of accepting the existence of entities that are metaphysically occult or hidden. Then there will be no valid ground for rejecting the afterlife since one would be forced

³⁴ དེས་ན་སྤྱི་བ་ལྟ་བུ་གྱི་དང་ལྟ་སྟགས་འདོད་པ་དང་མི་འདོད་པ་གཉིས་མི་འདོད་པ་ལ་ཡང་སེམས་སྟགས་འབྱུང་བཞི་ལས་སྤྱི་བ་པས་དེ་དེའི་རྒྱར་འདོད་པ་དང་། སེམས་སྟགས་འབྱུང་བཞི་ལས་སྤྱི་བ་ཀྱང་དེ་དེའི་རྒྱར་མི་འདོད་པ་འི་ལྟགས་གསུམ་ཡོད།

to use inference to explain the causal connection between this life and next life. And Cārvāka is not prepared to take this risk.

The third Cārvāka school is, according to the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika, absolutely nihilistic. No epistemological or metaphysical account whatsoever, including causality is tenable for a view which rejects the validity of all means of knowledge, including perception. Rejecting the existence of all means of knowledge is to deny the possibility of ever knowing anything about the world, let alone providing any account of causality. Hence Jayatilleke describes Jayarāśi's school as "the nihilist school of pragmatic materialists." (2004:91)

Generally the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas have critiqued Cārvāka as causal nihilist, for instance, Nāgārjuna in his first verse of *Mūlamādhyamakakārika* categorises Cārvāka under a causal nihilist.³⁵ In the texts it is always presupposed that Cārvāka's primary thesis entails the denial of causation, or causal explanation. Hence the Mādhyamika has always attacked Cārvākas from the point of view of causation. Therefore Nāgārjuna, in his *Mūlamādhyamakakārika* and Candrakīrti in *Mādhyamakāvatāra* concisely put the objections in the form of following reductions:

- If production is due to the absence of a cause, then it follows that anything could be produced anywhere at anytime, hundreds of thousands of seeds planted by farmers for the purpose of growing crops would result in no harvest whatsoever. (MA 6. 99)

- If the world is absent of any causes [for its existence], then like the colour or scent of a lotus growing in mid air, surely it would not be perceived as existent. The world is however perceived in all its rich variety, and thus it must be conceded that the world is produced from causes. (MA 6.100)

³⁵ *Na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyām nāpy ahetutaḥ, utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kvacana kecana.* (Kalupahana, 1991: 105)

- It would be contradictory for the Cārvāka to deny the existence of the afterlife since the afterlife is posited through the inference which it rejects and that perception is accepted as the only means of knowledge. This reductio makes sense because through perception it is not possible to conceive the non-existence of afterlife. Hence it would be even inconsistent for them to reject the afterlife.

The second school affirms, to a certain extent, the validity of both perceptual and inferential knowledge. From the Prāsaṅgika point of view, even this moderate Cārvāka school cannot offer us a plausible causal explanation. This school has to provide us a plausible explanation why only certain forms of inference are acceptable while other forms are not. The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika points out that the domain of inference is the object of knowledge that are unmanifestly hidden or occult, hence not accessible to direct perception; whereas the domain of perception is the object of knowledge that are more manifestly apparent that do not require inferential cognitive exercise to access them. Just as the scope of perception as a means of knowledge is determined by the scope of the manifest object of knowledge but not by the faculty of perception itself, likewise the scope of inference is dependent on the scope of the occult object of knowledge requiring inferential cognition rather than an ideologically imposed arbitrary demarcation. And because the second Cārvāka school employs arbitrary means to reject or accepts certain forms of inferential knowledge without offering us a sufficient explanation, it is fair to conclude that even this school does not have a coherent causal explanation. Moreover, its causal account hinges on the ultimate existence of four elements and their intrinsic functional capacity, unique to the elements themselves. This account is open to the same objections the Prāsaṅgika raised against the reificationism / essentialism discussed in Chapter 2. This follows because according to this school, these four essential elements are the causes of worldly phenomena in that the four elements

possess inherent causal power to produce the phenomenal world. And the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika has consistently rejected such a causal power in all the chapters.

4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to raise the problems associated with causal theories of the two heterodox schools of India, namely, Jainism's causal view which seeks to combine the arising from self and another, and Cārvāka's view of causeless causality. While Jainism insists that things arise from both self and another and the Prāsaṅgika critiques this view and charges it of committing the same errors as that of the causal theories of Sāṃkhya and the Abhidharmikas on the ground that this causal theory is a synthesis of two radically opposed and untenable causal theories. Cārvāka's causeless causality is also attacked by the Prāsaṅgika as totally nihilistic, in that it does not offer any causal explanation, hence it does not serve any purpose whatsoever.

This brings us to the closure of the Prāsaṅgika's critique of causality. We have witnessed that it rejects Sāṃkhya's causal theory which asserts the identity of cause and effect (theory of arising from self), it rejects the Abhidharmika's causal account which insists on the distinctness of cause and effect (theory of arising from another), it rejects Jainism's causal account which proposes a synthesised causality of identity and distinctness of cause and effect (theory of arising from both self and another) and finally it rejects Cārvāka's causal theory which insists on things are causeless. In the next two chapters, I will examine the theory of dependent arising as the Prāsaṅgika's own alternative account of causality. Chapter 4 will demonstrate the Prāsaṅgika arguments for the categorical rejections of causal theories inspired by the essentialist metaphysics and shows why essence is incompatible with the theory of dependent arising as a causal

thesis. Hence it will be argued that essence must be rejected on all counts to formulate a causal thesis of dependent arising. Chapter 5 will examine two central arguments of the Prāsaṅgika for dependent arising as the alternative causal thesis and will demonstrate the ways in which dependent arising provides, according to the Prāsaṅgika, plausible explanations for the causal processes involved in both the external and the mental worlds.

Chapter 4

Theory of Dependent Arising - I

1. Introduction

Does the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika have a causal thesis?

According to Mādhyamika philosophy, the essential production of an entity must necessarily be confined to four possible alternatives. The first (the arising from self), the third (the arising from both) and the fourth (the arising from neither, namely causeless) alternatives, as I have shown in previous chapters, are unanimously rejected by all the Buddhist schools of thought. However the Buddhist reificationist schools of Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika and Cittamātra proposes the second alternative (the arising from another). Of the two schools of Madhyamaka, scholars of Svātantrika Madhyamaka, while rejecting three other alternatives, posits the arising from another. It is important to note however that this school posits the arising from another only *conventionally* and that it rejects arising from another in an ultimate sense. The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas, on the other hand, reject all four causal accounts, both *ultimately* and *conventionally*. The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's total rejection of the four problematic causal accounts does *not* imply that the school is against *all* possible causal accounts. As I will show in the next chapter Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika does indeed advance its own causal account based on the theory of dependent arising. This understanding is crucial here. Misinterpreting the Prāsaṅgika's sweeping refutation of the four causal theories as implying a total denial of all possible causal theories led the Buddhist reificationists to a particular set of beliefs and alleged that the Prāsaṅgika are nihilistic about causality. The reificationists falsely proposed that Prāsaṅgika lacks any positive causal thesis and that it is totally

against such an account (Nāgārjuna, *MMK* 24.1-6). The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika rejects this allegation and claims (a) that it does have dependent arising as a legitimate causal thesis and (b) that this thesis is founded on the rejection of *svabhāva* (Tib. *rang bzhin*) ‘essence’, therefore affirming everything as empty (Skt. *śūnya*, Tib. *stong pa*). I will turn to thesis (a) and examine the arguments supporting the dependent arising thesis fully in Chapter 5. The purpose of this Chapter is to interrogate the Prāsaṅgika’s premises supporting thesis (b). So essentially this chapter will analyse the Prāsaṅgika’s conceptual grounds for proposing dependent arising as its causal explanation. A close examination of the four alternative causal theses followed by the Prāsaṅgika’s critiques I have presented in Chapter 1, 2, and 3 settle many questions concerning what the Prāsaṅgika’s causality is *not*, without giving an affirmative account of the what the Prāsaṅgika’s causality is. The purpose of my analyses in the previous chapters is to provide the Prāsaṅgika’s reaction towards the causal theses proposed in other Indian schools of thought. And as we have noticed the Prāsaṅgika’s reaction towards them is categorically negative, hence the method of refutation is thoroughly by means of a *reductio ad absurdum*. The purpose of Chapter 4 is to explain what is so far not made obvious – i.e., the conceptual relationship between the Prāsaṅgika’s refutation of causality underpinned by the *svabhāva* “essence” notion with the theory of dependent arising, (the affirmative causal account of the Prāsaṅgika school). To put the point across differently, the task of this chapter is to explain: What is the significance of the Prāsaṅgika’s rejection of *svabhāva*? How does this refutation assist the Prāsaṅgika to explain the causal process of dependent arising? I will argue that for the Prāsaṅgika, the rejection of *svabhāva* is absolutely critical to establish dependent arising as an alternative causal thesis.

2. Critique of Essence (*svabhāva* / *rang bzhin*)

We will begin with the question: what is the Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka’s conception of *svabhāva* and why does it contradict Prāsaṅgika’s metaphysics of dependent origination? As I have discussed briefly in beginning of Chapter 2, the Sanskrit term *svabhāva* (Tib. *rang bzhin*) has the sense of “essence” (Garfield, 1995: 220) “intrinsic being” or “intrinsic nature” (Huntington, 1989: 48), “inherent existence” (Hopkins, 392, 438). Following Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, a Sakyapa commentator Gorampa, characterises *svabhāva* as possessing three features: that which is not arisen from the conditions (*ngo bo rkyen gyis bskyed pa ma yin pa*) unlike the heat of water; that which is not posited in relation to other phenomena (*rnam ‘jug gzhan la ltos pa ma yin pa*) unlike the relativistic positing of long and short, former and latter; and that which is an unchanging (*gzhan du ‘gyur pa ma yin pa*) unlike the changing costumes of artists. (Gorampa, 2002: 324)³⁶ Garfield defines essence as “eternal, fixed and independent.” (1995: 111) He further adds, “For a phenomenon to have an essence is for it to have some permanent independent core. So, neither essences nor phenomena with essences can emerge from conditions.” (1995: 111)

In Tibetan philosophy, interpreters have adopted various expressions to capture the meanings associated with the term *svabhāva* – “ultimate existence” (*paramārtha, don dam par grub pa*), “established by virtue of its own reality (*tattva-siddhi, de kho na nyid du grub pa*), “established through the power of its own ultimate” (*samyak-siddhi, yang dag par grub pa*), “true existence” (*satya-sat, bden par yod pa*), “true establishment” (*satya-siddhi, bden par grub pa*), “establishment by virtue of own characteristics” (*svalakṣhaṇa-siddhi, rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*), “establishment

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རང་བཞིན་ལ་རྒྱུ་འཛེག་བཞིན་པོ་ཤྱོད་གྱིས་བསྐྱེད་པ་མ་ཡིན་པ་དང་། རིང་ཐུང་དང་སྤྱི་བཞིན་ནམ་འཛོག་གཞན་ལ་ལྟོས་པ་མ་
ཡིན་པ་དང་། གར་མཁན་ཆ་ལུགས་བཞིན་གཞན་དུ་འགྱུར་པ་མ་ཡིན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཆོས་གསུམ་ལྟན་དགོས་པ་ཡིན།།

by virtue of inherent existence” (*svabhāva-siddhi, rang bzhin gyis grub pa*), “establishment by virtue of its own power” (*svarūpa-siddhi, rang ngos nas grub pa*) et al. They argue that, for the Prāsaṅgika, all these terms are expressions referring to *svabhāva*. (Gorampa, 2001: 91) Making no metaphysical distinction whatsoever between their referents, the school rejects such existence both *ultimately* and *conventionally*. Gelugpa however claims that Svātantrika Mādhyamika accepts the last three as conventionally existent and ultimately nonexistent. (Hopkins, 1996: 39)

In order to fully understand Prāsaṅgika’s arguments justifying this rejection, it is critical for us to turn our attention to the problems of accepting *svabhāva* in the context of causality as they are explored in Prāsaṅgika philosophy. For this we turn to Nāgārjuna. In his magnum opus *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (*Fundamental Verses of Middle Way*) Nāgārjuna devotes an entire chapter to his critique of essential arising. And he provides the following grounds for the rejecting of causality founded on the assumption of the existence of *svabhāva*.

Essence arising from causes and conditions makes no sense.

Essence arisen from causes and conditions would be created (MMK 15.1)³⁷

This argument states that essence must be rejected because essence and arising from the conditions are mutually exclusive. Essence, as pointed out earlier presupposes causal independence, a kind of causal autonomy. Thus it has a strong sense of being causally “uncreated” (*ma bcos pa*), or unconditioned. Whereas it is true that conditions making the arising possible would be unnecessary if the arising is due to the power of essence, the fact that conditions are absolutely necessary for the arising to occur implies that the

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རང་བཞིན་རྒྱ་དང་རྒྱུན་ལས་ནི། འབྱུང་བར་རིགས་པ་མ་ཡིན་ནོ། རྒྱ་དང་རྒྱུན་ལས་བྱུང་བ་ཡི། རང་བཞིན་གྲས་པ་ཅན་དུ་འགྱུར།།

I used Samten and Garfield’s (2006: 315) translation.

arising is not due to the power of some causal essence. Commenting on Nāgārjuna's verse Tsongkhapa writes: "Since the two –being created and being uncreated – are mutually exclusive, if one is eliminated in one basis the other must be affirmed in that basis." (2006:315) Tsongkhapa further states, "what is created is characterised as constructed, whereas essence, which is nature, is characterised as unconstructed. Being created and being essence cannot co-exist on the same basis, like the heat of water..." (2006:315). Even in ordinary discourse, if something is constructed we describe it as artificial but not as its nature or essence. If a vicious person pretends to be compassionate, we call her a hypocrite on the grounds of her pretence of possessing compassionate virtue. However, if a genuinely compassionate person acts compassionately we don't call her a hypocrite. Commonsense understanding is that she embodies compassionate virtue. The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika uses a similar argument, although on a different level. While it is true that in ordinary discourse heat is understood as the essence or nature of fire, in the language of the Prāsaṅgika system heat is not the essence of fire. In fact heat does not have any essence. Fire is essentially empty of heat. Heat is causally produced since it is dependent on such things as burning fuel as its causes and conditions. If the heat of fire existed essentially, then it would be untenable for the fire to arise in dependence upon fuel as its condition. To sum up the points made in this argument Nāgārjuna states:

"How could it be appropriate to call that which is created 'essence?'"

Essence itself is not constructed and does not depend on another."

(*MMK* 15.2) (2006: 317)

Further:

If something exists essentially, then it could not become nonexistent.

Essence transforming into something other could never be tenable. (*MMK* 15.8)³⁸

In this argument, the Prāsaṅgika rejects causal essence through two interrelated premises: (a) untenability of essence to become nonexistent and (b) untenability of essence to transform into something other than itself. Both these premises are critical for any causal process to occur. Premise (a) makes sense on the ground that the essence of heat of fire cannot become nonexistent because its cessation is untenable. This follows because cessation depends on cessation of its conditions and essence must not depend on conditions. Premise (b) also makes sense because essence cannot become something other than itself since transforming into something else would require relinquishing its essence. However, the causal process is untenable without transforming the identity of cause. Thus, essence is unacceptable for the Prāsaṅgika school for the fact that it does not have any capability to produce its effect. But we do observe that fire transforms every moment and that it ceases to be hot when the fuel is used up because the heat of the fire is not essentially existent. Let us turn to Nāgārjuna's next argument:

To say “it exists” is to eternalism.

To say “it does not exist” is to adopt the view of nihilism.

Therefore a wise person

Does not subscribe to “it exists” or “it does not exist.” (*MMK* 15.10)³⁹

In this argument Nāgārjuna makes it clear that the Prāsaṅgika, referred to in this verse as “a wise person” who is committed to the middle way philosophy must reject essence

³⁸ གལ་ཏེ་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་ཡོད་ན། དེ་ནི་མེད་ཉིད་མི་འགྱུར་རོ། རང་བཞིན་གཞན་དུ་འགྱུར་བ་ནི། རྣམ་ཡང་འཐད་པར་མི་འགྱུར་རོ།

The translation of this verse is taken from Samten and Garfield (2006: 323).

³⁹ ཡོད་ཅེས་བྱ་བ་རྟག་པར་འདོན། མེད་ཅེས་བྱ་བ་ཆད་པར་ལྟ། དེ་ཕྱིར་ཡོད་དང་མེད་པ་ལ། མཁས་པས་གནས་པར་མི་བྱུངོ། I took Samten and Garfield's (2006: 324) translation of this verse.

on two further grounds: (a) reificationism and (b) nihilism. This is because essence, according to Nāgārjuna, leads to an absurdity of (a) metaphysical reificationism. Whatever exists by definition must exist essentially, hence there is no reason for it to cease to exist for ever, thus it must exist eternally. The same essence, according to Nāgārjuna, leads to (b) a metaphysical nihilism. Whatever is nonexistent must by definition nonexistent essentially, hence there is no reason for it to ever arise and become existent, thus eternally nihilistic.

3. Compatibility of Causality and Emptiness / Essencelessness

So, what we have seen thus far is the Prāsaṅgika's arguments rejecting the causal power of essence based on the thesis that causality and essence are incompatible. What this implies is that for the Prāsaṅgika, causality and emptiness of essence are compatible. But how do Prāsaṅgika proponents explain the relationship between causality and emptiness of essence? Addressing this question is critical for the Prāsaṅgika for two important reasons. Since the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika categorically rejects essence, it is possible to lend this rejection to (a) a thesis that holds the Prāsaṅgika school has no view whatsoever in terms of causality or (b) a thesis that holds the Prāsaṅgika school is committed to the view of the essence of the essencelessness – the view that holds *śūnyatā* as ultimately existent. But the Prāsaṅgika asks why should either of these conclusions follow?

Let us first understand the reasons why thesis (b) does not follow from the rejection of essence. The fact that Prāsaṅgika argues that causality is empty of any essence, it should not automatically follow from this thesis that this school accepts the emptiness thesis as some form underlying essence. This school uses two forms of justifications to avoid such a problematic consequence from occurring. First, the more

straightforward justification is the Prāsaṅgika's identification of emptiness of essence with dependent arising. Emptiness and dependent arising are argued as having identical implications. (I will return to this later).

The second justification comes from the type of negation that is involved in negating the essence. This argument comes from Tsongkhapa's *Ocean of Reasoning*. (2006: 55) In it he argues that the Prāsaṅgika's negation of arising by virtue of essence is a form of an external negation (Tib. *med dgag*) - which is a mere negation without entailing any affirmation. This is to argue that when the object of negation, namely the arising through essence, is eliminated no other phenomena is affirmed or projected as its consequence. Consequently the Prāsaṅgika's negation of the essential arising of phenomena, according to Tsongkhapa, does not force the school to accept the essencelessness or emptiness as an underlying reality or essence. On the other hand, if the kind of negation used here to negate essence is an internal negation (*ma yin dgag*) – a negation which does indeed affirm or project something as its consequence – emptiness of essence would itself indeed become an underlying essence. If that is the case the Prāsaṅgika would be denying one essence while accepting another form of essence. But this is not the case since it is commitment to empty metaphysics given that, on this account, emptiness would not be empty after all.

The doctrine of the emptiness of emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatāśūnyatā*, Tib. *stong pa nyid stong pa nyid*) provides us with the reason: “If there were even the slightest bit nonempty, emptiness itself would be the slightest bit existent. But when not there is not even the slightest nonempty thing, how could emptiness exist?” (MMK 13.7)⁴⁰ Commenting on this point Candrakīrti writes: “The absence of essence of all things is

⁴⁰ གཤམ་ཏེ་སྟོང་མིན་ཅུང་ཟད་ཡོད། སྟོང་པ་ཅུང་ཟད་ཡོད་པར་འགྱུར། མི་སྟོང་ཅུང་ཟད་ཡོད་མིན་ན། སྟོང་པ་ཡོད་པར་ག་ལ་འགྱུར།། The translation is taken from Samten and Garfield (2006: 297).

itself referred to by wise men as ‘emptiness’ and this emptiness also is posited to be empty of the essence of emptiness” (*MA* 6.185).⁴¹ Furthermore the very purpose of teaching the emptiness of emptiness is to overcome the grasping to the view of emptiness, hence Nāgārjuna reminds us: “The victorious ones have declared that emptiness relinquishes all views. Anyone who is possessed by the view of emptiness is incurable” (*MMK* 13.18).⁴² The very reason of teaching the emptiness of emptiness, which is comparable to medicine prescribed to cure illness, is to set us free from the grasping to emptiness, whereas grasping to emptiness as an underlying absolute reality is comparable to medicine turned into poison which is incurable.

In the *Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra* (*The Sūtra of Assembled Treasures*) the Buddha offers some explicit warnings with striking similes concerning the dangers associated with attachment to the view of emptiness.

Positive view is better than the view of emptiness:

‘If one thinks that he has realised emptiness and becomes attached to emptiness, then he regresses in the pursuit of the Buddha-dharma. Thus, Kāśyapa, it is better for one to take a view of the self as massive as Mount Sumeru than to take a view of emptiness and become arrogant. Why? Because all views can be eliminated by emptiness, but if one gives rise to the view of emptiness, there is no way to do away with it’ (*Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra* 20.395-6)

Emptiness-view cannot be eradicated:

‘Kāśyapa, if a physician gives his patient some medicine to purge an illness, but the medicine stays in the body instead of being discharged, what do you think? Will the patient get better? No... the patient’s

⁴¹ ཚོས་རྒྱལ་པོ་རང་བཞིན་མེད་པ་ཉིད། མཁས་པས་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ཅེས་བསྟན། སྟོང་ཉིད་དེ་ཡང་སྟོང་ཉིད་ཀྱི། རོ་བོས་སྟོང་པར་འདོད་པ་ཡིན།།

⁴² རྒྱལ་བ་རྒྱལ་པོས་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད། ལྷ་ཀླན་པོས་པར་འབྱུང་བར་གསུངས། གང་དག་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ལྟ་བ། དེ་དག་བསྐྱབ་ཏུ་མེད་པར་གསུངས།།

illness will become worse if the medicine is not discharged. In like manner, Kāśyapa, all views can be eliminated by emptiness, but the view of emptiness cannot be eradicated' (*Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra*, 20. 396).

Why scared of emptiness?

'Suppose a person is afraid of empty space and wails in grief and pounds his chest, saying, "I want to escape from empty space!" What do you think? Can one escape from empty space? Similarly, Kāśyapa, if a person is afraid of the doctrine of emptiness, I say he is crazy and has lost his mind. Why do I say so? Because he is always in emptiness, and yet is afraid of it.

Just as a painter paints a picture of demons and then faints at the sight of his own creation, so ordinary people fabricate forms, sounds, odors, tastes, and textures, and then wander in saṃsāra afflicting themselves with all kinds of suffering without knowing it.

Just as a magician produces an illusory being and then is devoured by it, so a monk who follows the path engenders the view that all dharmas are empty, still, and insubstantial; and then he, the viewer, is also voided by the view' (*Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra*, 20. 396)

Further:

Mañjuśrī said to [a deva], "Son of heaven, I will not discourse to those who like to listen, nor to those who accept what they have heard. Why? Because those who like to listen and those who accept a discourse are attached. To what are they attached? They are attached to a self, a personal identity, a sentient being, a life, and a person. Being attached, they accept what they have heard. It should be known that those who accept what they have heard abide in three bonds. What are the three? The view of a self, the view of a sentient being and the view of dharmas" (*The Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra* 2, pp. 48)

So it is clear that clinging to the view of emptiness is a sign of failed understanding of the meaning of emptiness. And to this extent the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika clearly issues the warning against clinging to the view of emptiness. This however does not imply that the Prāsaṅgika generally does not endorse any view to which I will turn my attention next.

Now I will turn to the arguments demonstrating why Prāsaṅgika does not endorse thesis (a) – which states that the Prāsaṅgika has no causal thesis whatsoever. It is a common notion that Prāsaṅgika philosophy only uses *reductio ad absurdum* to merely refute the causal views of other systems and does not have a causal thesis of its own. This conclusion is inspired by the statements such as these:

If I had any thesis then
I would have that fault.
I have no thesis therefore
I am only faultless. (Nāgārjuna, *Vigrahavyavārtanī*, 29)

Also:

If there is a substantial thesis,
attachment, hatred arise,
inexhaustible erroneous views arise.
From these arise disputes. (Nāgārjuna, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* 46)

Taking the meaning of these verses literally, a modern commentator T.R.V. Murti in his *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, draws this conclusion: “The Mādhyamika is a prāsaṅgika or vaitaṇḍika, a dialectician or free-lance debater. The Mādhyamika *disproves* the opponent’s thesis, and does *not* prove any thesis of his own.” (1980:131) A.B. Keith writes: “Nāgārjuna denies consistently that he has any thesis of his own, for to uphold one would be wholly erroneous... He confines himself to reducing every

positive asserting to absurdity.” (1979: 239) Louis de la Vallée Poussin in his article ‘Nihilism (Buddhist)’ come to this conclusion: “there is no doubt that the absolute truth (*paramārthasatya*) of the extreme Buddhist and of the extreme Vedāntist is an unqualified negation of the world of appearance, a negation of existence (*samsāra*).” (Cited in Lopez, 1987: 48) Many Tibetan scholars came to a similar conclusion. Garfield (2002) as one such scholar notes in his *Empty Words* Ngog blo ldan Shes rab. According to Ngog, Garfield argues, “Nāgārjuna means just what he says. The central teaching of Madhyamaka is that one should relinquish all views, and that if Madhyamaka becomes a philosophical view, one has fundamentally missed its point.” (2002: 48) These examples sufficiently demonstrate to us the tendency to attribute a no-position thesis, thus no causal thesis whatsoever to the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika.

Other Tibetan philosophers such as Tsongkhapa and Gorampa while they make no such allegations nevertheless respond to these statements differently. According to Tsongkhapa, the meaning of Nāgārjuna’s statements (proposing the no-view thesis) only means that the Prāsaṅgika does not hold the essentialist / foundationalist view of any sort. The statements must not be taken literally. Doing so undermines the Prāsaṅgika’s commitment to right view (*saṃyak drṣṭi* / *yang dag pa'i lta ba*) based on doctrines such as of emptiness, selflessness, dependent arising, compassion, loving-kindness. And nobody denies that. For Gorampa, on the other hand, these verses mean that the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika is positionless on the ultimate level. There is no contradiction ultimately (*don dam la ltos te ñes pa spong ba*).⁴³ (Gorampa, 2001: 103)

⁴³ རང་ལྟོགས་(དབུ་མ་ཐལ་འགྱུར་བ་) ལ་ཉེས་པ་སྤོང་བའི་རྣམ་བཞག་ལ་གཉིས་ཏེ། ༡ གྲུན་རྫོབ་ལ་ལྟོས་ཏེ་ཉེས་པ་སྤོང་བ་དང་། ༢ རྟོན་དམ་ལ་ཉེས་པ་སྤོང་བ། དེ་གཉིས་ལས། གཉིས་པ་དོན་དམ་ལ་ཉེས་པ་སྤོང་བ་ལ་དམ་བཅའ་མེད་པ་དང་། གཏན་ཆེགས་མེད་པ་གཉིས།

Ultimately the Prāsaṅgika does not have any thesis to advance. Hence all four lemmas⁴⁴ (Skt. *catuṣkoti*, Tib. *mu bzhi/mtha' bzhi*) need to be rejected. (2001: 104) Furthermore, Gorampa argues that the positionless concept can be understood in two ways. First is positionless after refuting the essentialist position. This is understood within the context of the debate between the Prāsaṅgika and the essentialist opponent who advances an essential position. Given that the Prāsaṅgika rejects all essentialist notions through *reductios* and given that it does not propose any position of its own, it would have no position to hold in the context of the debate. Second is positionless due to the refutation of the Svātantrika Mādhyamaka's position. The opponent Svātantrika Mādhyamika is, while rejecting the essentialist position, nonetheless committed to a non-essentialist position, i.e., essencelessness established via syllogistic argument.

In my view, Tsongkhapa and Gorampa are correct on their own terms. Tsongkhapa's position makes sense. It is quite obvious that the Prāsaṅgika does not have an essentialist position. But they do not just refute other philosophers and accuse them of being reificationist or idealists. The Prāsaṅgika advocates a middle position that is free from the extremes of nihilism and reification, essentialism and idealism. Gorampa is also correct in saying that the Prasaṅgika does not have any ultimate thesis because such a position is not established under the rational analysis of authoritative cognition.

So at the heart of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's unequivocal denial of essential causation is its commitment to empty metaphysics. Simply stated this school claims that empty causes produce empty effects like a reflection of a face in the mirror. Candrakīrti in his work, *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* argues that while a reflection of a face in the mirror is empty of a real face, a reflection of face in the mirror nevertheless arises due to

⁴⁴ Mādhyamikas use fourfold tetra lemma to deconstruct the phenomena and they are: 1) *x* is not existent, 2) *x* is not non existent, 3) *x* is both existent and nonexistent, 4) *x* is not neither.

the nexus between its causes and conditions. Not only is the reflection of a face empty of a real face, causes and conditions that produce such reflection are as a matter of fact themselves empty of face's *svabhāva* (MA 6.37, 38ab) (1999: 124)

4. Middle Path: Dependent Arising and Emptiness

So dependent arising, in the Mādhyamika's view, is the affirmation of things' lack of essential existence. All phenomena are dependent on their causes and conditions for their existence, endurance and cessation. They are also dependent on language and thought. For the essentialist however, the Prāsaṅgika's refutation of the essence would mean the denial of the very existence of things. Thus the essentialist charges the Prāsaṅgika as nihilistic, by insisting that if phenomena are empty, then for the Mādhyamikas, suffering, origin of suffering, cessation of suffering, path leading to cessation of suffering, the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha would not be acceptable. (Nāgārjuna, *MMK* 24:1)

In response to this charge the Prāsaṅgika's rebuttal is as follows: The problem of nihilism does not apply to the Prāsaṅgika chiefly because of the identity of emptiness and dependent arising championed by the school. Emptiness is not a denial of things, all it implies is that things are dependently arisen and that they lack any essential causal power. All phenomena from the form to the Buddha himself (*gzugs nas rnam mkhyen bar*) are empty of essence and thus arise in dependence upon various causes and conditions, there is nothing that is not dependently arisen. Thus the notion of dependent arising will make sense only when emptiness makes sense. Hence the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika reverse the charges by pointing out that if things are nonempty, the four noble truths, arising, cessation, etc would not be acceptable. This is on the ground that it is impossible for nonempty phenomenon to exist, since nondependently arisen

phenomena could not exist. “For those to whom emptiness makes sense, everything makes sense. For those to whom emptiness does not make sense, nothing makes sense.” (MMK 24: 14) (Nāgārjuna, 2006: 501) Emptiness makes sense only when the dependent arising makes sense similarly dependent arising will make sense only when emptiness does. This is because emptiness and dependent arising are identical as Garfield explains:

Nāgārjuna asserts that the dependently arisen is emptiness. Emptiness and the phenomenal world are not two distinct things, but rather two characterizations of the same thing. To say of something that it is dependently co-arisen is to say that it is empty. To say of something that is empty is another way of saying that it arises dependently. (2002: 36)

Because of the reasons discussed above, the Prāsaṅgika recognises dependent arising / emptiness as the middle way. The middle way that is free from the two extremes – the extreme of reificationism and the extreme of nihilism. By rejecting essence and by way of demonstrating that things are dependently arisen, and therefore empty, the Prāsaṅgika is able to steer clear of the clutches of both these extremes.

5. Other Proofs of Dependent Arising and Emptiness

Madhyamaka philosophy uses various proofs (Tib. *gtan tshigs*) to demonstrate that things are dependently arisen. Śrī Dīpaṃkara Jñāna (also known Atīśa 982-1054 C.E.) offers five proofs in his *Bodhipathapradīpa* (Tib. *Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma*, Eng. *A Lamp for the Path of Enlightenment*):

First, the “diamond-particle proof” (Skt. *vajraṇahetu*, Tib. *rdo rje gzegs ma'i gtan tshigs*) demonstrates the emptiness of essence by means of refuting the arising from the four extremes – arising from self, another, both and neither. Hence in Atīśa's

words this proof is stated as: “Things have no intrinsic nature because they do not arise from themselves, nor from another, nor from both nor are they yet without cause” (v.49) (2000: 232) Nāgārjuna in fact opens his magnum opus, *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* with this claim – “Neither from itself nor from another, nor from both, nor without cause, does anything anywhere, ever arise.” (*MMK* 1.1) Where as if things are unconditioned causally, according to this argument, they must arise from either one of these four alternatives. In other words, if things have essences one of these four must apply. However, as Chapter 1 has shown things do not arise from the self, as Chapter 2 has shown things do not arise from another (other than themselves), as Chapter 3 has shown things do not arise from both self and another, nor do they arise causelessly. Therefore, things do not arise from essence, it follows therefore things are dependently arisen.

Second, the proof that refutes the arising of existent and non-existent things (Skt. *sadasadutpādapratishedhahetu*, Tib. *yod med skye 'gog gi gtan tshigs*) states that “An existent’s arising is untenable. A nonexistent’s is like a flower in the sky. Nor do both [existent and nonexistent] arise together for both [said] fallacies apply.” (v.48) (Atīśa, 2000: 230) In this proof Atīśa shows that all phenomena lack essence, thus are dependently arisen by refuting the four metaphysical extremes. Whatever phenomena that exist cannot arise as it already exists and its rearing would be redundant; a phenomenon that does not exist will not arise since it is nonexistent like the sky flower. Just as the sky flower does not have causal power to arise itself, so is the case with a nonexistent phenomenon; nor can that which is both existent and nonexistent arise since the same logical fallacies shown to them individually would apply. Moreover, as Śāntideva argues in his *Bodhicāryāvatāra*, “What would be the purpose of causes for a thing that already exists? If however a thing does not exist what would be the need of causes again.” (6.145) This follows since even a hundred billion causes will not produce

any change in something which does not exist. (6.146) (Śāntideva, 1995: 130)
Similarly, if nonexistence is not gone away there can be no chance for the existing thing. (v.6.147) (Śāntideva, 1995: 130)

Third proof demonstrates the emptiness of essence by means of the four modes of being (Skt. *catuṣkoṭyutpādapratīṣedhahetu*, Tib. *mu bzhi skye 'gog gi gtan tshigs*). The argument states that things are empty of essence because their essence is neither found in existence / being nor in nonexistence / nonbeing nor both existence-nonexistence / being-nonbeing nor neither. The first two premises are already shown to be true in the second proof. Third premise is also true because if essence is refuted in thing's existence and nonexistence, it must be refuted in the case of the combination of both (existence-nonexistence) since the third alternative follows from the first two. The fourth premise also makes sense because for the Prāsaṅgika if things do have essence it must be found either in existence or nonexistence or both and that it cannot be otherwise – i.e., it cannot be the case of neither existence or nonexistence. What this argument points to is this. If things do have any essence, intrinsic existence, for the Prāsaṅgika it must be found at least from one of the four possible modes of being. Since essence is not found in any one of them, the conclusion is that things must be empty of essence, thus dependently arisen.

Fourth, the “dependent arising proof” (Skt. *pratītyasamutpādahetu*, Tib. *rten 'brel gyi gtan tshigs*) as I will demonstrate in Chapter 5, shows that things are produced from the collaboration of multiple causes and condition thereby ruling out any inherent existence of things. This is the proof employed in the majority of Madhyamaka texts and is said to be the most effective proof to combat reificationism, or essentialism, to prove things as metaphysically empty thus causally interdependent – hence the name

“the king of reasonings” (*rigs pa'i rgyal po*). (I will devote the whole Chapter 5 to showing why this is the case.)

Fifth, the “empty of being one and many proof / identity and plurality proof” (Skt. *ekānekaviyogahetu*, Tib. *gcig du bral gyi gtan tshigs*) proves all phenomena are empty of essence because they all lack the characteristics of being essentially one or essentially many – “Furthermore, if one analyses all things as identities or multiplicities, intrinsic existence is not perceived; hence it is certain that their inherent existence does not exist.” (v.50) (Atiśa, 2000: 233) According to this proof my laptop, for example, is dependently arisen because it utterly lacks essence. Conventionally the laptop appears to my conceptual cognition as a discrete and independent whole existing from its own right. This argument however tells me to have a much closer look at the ontological status of the laptop. It points out that on a closer and more critical inspection the laptop, while presenting itself as if its final objective ontological status is a real computer is purely constituted by many different parts of which none is “computer.” The laptop is neither (1) identical with parts nor (2) separate from the parts. If it is (1) there would be many laptops since they are many parts of my laptop. Conversely my laptop would have only a single part since I have only one computer. Both absurd consequences would follow if the laptop and its parts are essentially identical. If it is (2) the laptop and its parts would exist independently of each other. Thus there would be a whole laptop without its parts and parts of computer without its whole. If this is granted the existence of my laptop would not depend on its parts. I could literally throw away all the parts, and still I would have my computer intact. Absurdities such as these would follow if parts and whole are granted distinct ontological status. The laptop is (3) neither essentially dependent on its parts (4) nor are its part essentially dependent on the whole computer. Both premises (3) and (4) follow because their denial presupposes the

essentially distinct existence of the computer and its parts, which is already shown untenable and logically absurd. (5) It is also not the case that the computer possesses its parts; (6) nor is it the case that the parts possess the computer. Both premises follow on the ground that the computer and its parts are not spatially separable. Whereas if (5) and (6) are not true then it must be the case the computer and its parts are distinct since both their counter positives presuppose their distinctness. It is also not the case that a computer is (7) a mere collection of its parts (8) nor is it the case that the shape of its parts makes the computer. If premise (7) is false then I should be able to break my computer into pieces, pile the pieces together and I would still have a really functional computer. That would be absurd. If premise (8) is false then I would have many computers since my only computer has many parts and each part has different shapes. Conversely all the parts of my computer would have only one shape since there is only one computer. Therefore it is clear that the laptop is neither essentially one as it is constituted with many parts nor is it essentially many since there is only one computer. Hence the laptop is empty of essence and is merely dependently arisen.

According to the *Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika* if my computer has any essential existence its essence must withstand such logical analyses, and reveal its singular identity or multiple identities. The failure to stand up to the critical investigation means its existence is conceptually designated in dependence upon its parts, without any essence whatsoever. Candrakīrti, through the example of a chariot, summarises the thrust of this argument as follows: “One does not consider a carriage to be different from its own parts, nor to be identical, nor to be in possession of them, nor is it ‘in’ the parts, nor are they ‘in’ it, nor is it the mere composite [of its parts]; nor is it the shape [of those parts.]” (MA 6.151) (Candrakīrti, 1999: 269)

6. Conclusion

So, what is the implication of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's categorical refutation of all four alternatives of the reificationist causal theories? Does it imply that this school does not propose any positive causal thesis? There are at least three possible ways of answering these questions: First, it could be answered that the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika school does not positively propose any causal thesis because advancing any causal account must belong to view that asserts either the arising from self, or arising from another or arising from both or arising from neither (i.e., causeless). Since the Prāsaṅgika rejects all these four causal theses charging that these accounts presuppose the arising through the power of essence, it does not have any causal thesis. I have however shown that this view is not consistent with the Prāsaṅgika's position. It asserts that the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika denies any causal thesis on the account of its rejection of the four essentialist causal theses. I have shown in this chapter that this conclusion is false. That the Prāsaṅgika does have a causal thesis of dependent arising that explains the relationship between cause and effect but it does not entail essentialism. The Prāsaṅgika even employs five great proofs to establish the dependently arisen nature of things. So the crucial point is that Prāsaṅgika rejects the four alternatives understood as essentialist positions. By pointing out that all four positions presuppose essentialism, Prāsaṅgika makes space for another theory of causation that is not essentialist.

The second possible response would be to say that since everything is ultimately empty, causality must be also ultimately empty. Therefore the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika does not hold any position regarding causality. It denies the causal thesis for the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika on the ground of ultimate truth. I have also indicated in this chapter that this response is also problematic. This fails to provide an explanation of the

empirical / conventional nature of things, and fails to explain the causal connection between the sprout and the seed in the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's view. I have argued that the Prāsaṅgika philosophy is committed to stand by the claim that things are dependently arisen conventionally even though they might be ultimately empty and that the causal connection can be explained on the basis of the theory of dependent arising. I will save this explanation for the final chapter.

Chapter 5

Theory of Dependent Arising -II

1. Introduction

As we have witnessed in the previous chapters, the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika school, by citing the following first verse of the *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* of Nāgārjuna –

Neither from itself nor from another
Nor from both,
Nor without a cause
Does anything anywhere, ever arise (*MMK* 1.1)⁴⁵

refutes the four alternative modes of causation – the arising from self, the arising from another, the arising from both self and another, and the arising without cause – on the grounds of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's denial of essential arising. According to this school one is forced to accept one of the four alternative forms of arising as long as one is committed to the causal view that maintains the arising through the power of inherent existence, or essence. This follows for the Prāsaṅgika because, they argue: "It is absolutely certain that arising either has a cause or does not. If there is a cause, it is also absolutely certain that there are three alternatives: the cause and the effect have to have either the same essence or different essences or both." (Tsongkhapa, 2006: 49) This makes sense given it is not acceptable for the Prāsaṅgika to either accept the cause and effect as essentially identical, or essentially distinct or essentially both identical and distinct. This also follows because, as shown in previous chapters and will be demonstrated here in this chapter, the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika school categorically

⁴⁵ This is the introductory verse of his chapter on Examination of Conditions. Translation of the verse is used from Prof. Jay Garfield's *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*.

rejects essence on all counts, much less causal essence. Therefore, the refutation of the four causal theses is sufficient to refute causal accounts based on the conception of essence.

The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika on the other hand proposes dependent arising as the preferred and alternative causal account. For the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika dependent arising is more than just a causal account, it is the cornerstone of the Prāsaṅgika's metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and soteriology. Dependent arising is, as Nāgārjuna points out in his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*:

That which is dependently arisen
Is explained to be emptiness.
That, being a dependent designation,
Is itself the middle way. (24: 18)

It is the key to the perspective of the middle path – beyond the metaphysical extremes of nihilism and eternalism, the ethical extremes of relativism and fundamentalism, the epistemological extremes of realism and idealism. Dependent arising constitutes the objective content of enlightened wisdom. It provides the conceptual framework within which all Buddhist doctrines and disciplines – among others, the four noble truths, eightfold path, the two truths, no-self, emptiness, compassion, and loving kindness – are explained. It is central to the realization of the two truths – the way things really are ultimately and the way things exist conventionally.

The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika goes as far as equating the penetration into dependent arising with the unique discovery of the Buddha's enlightenment. So crucial is this principle to the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's doctrines that an insight into dependent arising is held to be sufficient to yield an understanding of the reality of all phenomena. In the words of the Buddha, "He who sees dependent arising sees the

Dhamma; he who sees the Dhamma sees dependent arising.” (Cited in Nāgārjuna, 2004: 376)

Dependent arising is the invariable natural law that governs the causal relation between the arising and ceasing of wholesome or unwholesome phenomena and the functional efficacy of causal conditions. The correct understanding of dependent arising, according to the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika, is an antidote against the roots of all ethical or causal problems – it eliminates delusions and reified views holding things to arise causelessly or from incompatible causes. It is central to the path to enlightenment since it is through an accurate understanding of the dependently arisen that the nature of cyclic existence comes to an end.

Furthermore, all Indian and Tibetan Mādhyamikas unanimously recognise dependent arising as “the king of all reasonings” (Skt. *yukti rāja*, Tib. *rigs pa'i rgyal po*) on the ground of its efficiency in refuting the problematic causal theses, advancing the Mādhyamika’s own causal account, and rebutting the charges against this account. And most importantly of all, it is a plausible alternative answer to the unsolved metaphysical question of causation. Appraising this theory Jayatilke, for example, writes, “It is with Buddhism that we, for the first time, meet with a clear cut theory of causation in the history of Indian thought.” (1963: 445). The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika’s theory of dependent arising undermines a strict determinist theory which holds that everything happens “due to what one did in the past,” a theistic form of determinism which holds that everything is “due to the creation of God,” and an indeterminism which holds that everything happens “without cause or reason.” Therefore dependent arising is, as Kalupahana explains, “the middle path presented by the Buddha between the extremes of eternalism and annihilationism, of strict determinism and chaotic indeterminism, of

absolute reality and nihilistic unreality, of permanent identity and absolute indifference.” (1991: 16)

The principle of dependent arising is, for Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika, applicable to any situation where an arising of phenomena takes place, be it physical or mental, spatial or temporal. But what does dependent arising mean? How does it explain the causal relations of the world? In Chapter 4 we have already considered a part of the Prāsaṅgika’s response to these questions by discussing the five great arguments / reasonings (Tib. *gtan tshigs chen po nga*) which sets the foundation to supporting the thesis of dependent arising. In this chapter however, I will first conduct an etymological analysis of the term and then introduce two more arguments – (1) the subjective and (2) the objective – to further explain and defend the principle of dependent arising as a plausible causal account for the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika.

I will begin with a brief etymological analysis of the term *pratītyasamutpāda*:

2. Etymological Analysis

The term *pratītyasamutpāda* is, as noted in Wilson’s *Analysis and Meaning: An Inquiry into the Meaning of Buddha’s View of “Pratītyasamutpāda”* (2003) has many English versions – ‘dependent Origination,’ ‘dependent arising,’ ‘dependent co-origination,’ ‘conditioned genesis,’ ‘conditioned production,’ ‘conditioned co-production’, ‘mutual causality’ and ‘interdependent transformation.’ All these English versions are variant translations of the original Sanskrit term *pratītya-samutpāda* (Tib. *rten cing ‘brdel bar ‘byung ba*). *Pratītya-samutpāda* is the combination of two words: *pratītya* and *samutpāda* and these two words are formed by a complex set of grammatical rules in Sanskrit. The formation of the word is not that significant to questions at issue here, so

to avoid the complications, I will not discuss all etymological details of the word. I will focus more upon the meaning behind the two combined words.

The prefix *prati* in the word '*pratītya*' (*prati* + *i* + *tya*), according to Candrakīrti means 'meeting' and the verbal root *i* has the meaning of 'going'. But with the continuative ending *tya* modified by the prefix *prati*, *pratītya* refers to 'meeting' and 'relying'. And in the term *samutpāda*, the root *pād* preceded by the *samut* 'to arise'; therefore *samutpāda* refers to 'arising.' Hence, in Hopkins' words, *pratītya-samutpāda* means "the arising of things in reliance on causes and conditions." (1996: 664-665; 2003: 852) Jayatilleke explains "*prati* as 'relying': *prati*+√*i*+(*t*)*ya* (gerund) meaning 'having come on account of.'" (2004: 445) And the term *samuppāda* "denotes the presence of a plurality of conditions and their occurrences together in bringing about the result. '*Samuppanna* means when arising, it arises together, i.e. co-ordinately, not singly nor without a cause.'" (Jayatilleke, 2004: 447)⁴⁶ Elsewhere Buddhagosa defines *paṭicca samuppāda* as "that according to which co-ordinate phenomena are produced mutually." (Macy, 1991: 34) Garfield defines the term as "the nexus between phenomena by virtue of which events depend on other events, composites depend upon their parts, and so on." (2002: 26) Also, *pratītya* means 'conditioned becoming' and *sam* in the word *samutpāda* means *sambandh* 'relation' and *utpāda* has the meaning of 'arising.' For this reason the Tibetan etymologists explain *rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba* where the first word *rten cing* refers to 'depending,' '*brel bar* means 'relation' and '*byung ba*' refers to 'arising.'

The etymological analysis therefore reveals, in spite of variant uses of language and descriptive terminology, the implication of *pratītya-samutpāda* is that all phenomena – internal and external – do not arise from any intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*),

⁴⁶ *Uppajjamāno ca saha samā ca uppajjati na ekekato na pi ahetuto ti samuppanno*

either of their own or of another, but arises from nexus between appropriate causes and conditions; and that there is a regularity in the arising of phenomena since they occur without any transitional disruption between the earlier causal moments and the later resultant moments. So to borrow Bodhi Bikkhu's words: "things are seen to arise, not from some intrinsic nature of their own, from necessity, chance or accident, but from their causal correlations with other things to which they are connected as part of the fixed order obtaining between phenomena." (1980: 5)

3. The Argument for Objective Dependent Arising

Traditionally dependent arising can be explained in two different ways: the objective (otherwise known as the 'external') dependent arising (Skt. *bāhya pratītyasamutpāda*, Tib. *phyi'i rten 'brel*) and the subjective (otherwise known as the 'internal') dependent arising (Skt. *adhyātmika pratītyasamutpāda*, Tib. *nang gi rten 'brel*). The objective dependent arising pertains to the chain of causal processes or relations that take place in the arising and cessation of the world of external objects or events; whereas the subjective dependent arising consists of the chains of causal processes or relations taking place in the arising and cessation of the subjective world – mind and mental states.

Now I will consider the argument of objective or external dependent arising. At the centre of this argument is the premise that all the external objects and events are causally and conditionally related and therefore they all are dependently arisen. The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika defines the objective dependent arising – the conditioned arising of external phenomena – based on the following causal formula of the Buddha found in the *Samyutta Nikāya*:

When this exists, that comes to be;

with the arising of this, that arises.

When this does not exist, that does not come to be;

with the cessation of this, that ceases. (Bodhi, 2000: 517)⁴⁷

The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika's causal thesis of objective dependent arising has this formula at its heart. Let us first understand this formula. The first line in the statement – *When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises* – signifies things' process of arising or becoming. Every thing owes, according to this formula, its origin in the existence of other things. Things arise and become what they are due to the collaboration of the existing causes and conditions (Skt. *hetu* / *pratyaya*, Tib. *rgyu* / *rkyen*). While causes and conditions collaboratively produce things, there is an important distinction to be made on the basis of how each contributes to the production process thus how each is related to the effect. The primary player in the process of production is cause, since it is that which transforms into the effect. In other words, the relationship between cause and effect is such that the continuum of cause becomes the effect whereas the way in which conditions relate to the effect is such that the continua do not become the effect, rather all cooperative or supporting conditions. And deficient of any one of the co-operative conditions would obstruct the production of the effect. Thus both causes and conditions are equally critical to the arising of effect, each of which has a different relation to the effect.

Let us first have a closer look at the causal relation followed by the conditional relation in objective dependent origination. In the *Śālistamba-sūtra*, Nāgārjuna explains the causal process with this example: "What, then, is the causal relation in objective conditioned arising? It is as when a sprout comes from a seed, from the sprout a leaf,

⁴⁷ *Imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imass, uppādā idaṃ uppajjati. Imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati.* (Jayatilleke, 2004 : 449)

from the leaf a shoot, from the shoot a stalk, from the stalk a bud, from the bud a flower, and from the flower a fruit.” (1998: 35)

This statement also reveals that the fundamental reality of all things is objective, not a subjective category conceptually imposed upon things, since all of them are objectively causally conditioned. The *Śalistamba-sūtra* illustrates the objective creativity of things as follows: “When there is a seed, the development of a sprout occurs, and so on until: when there is a flower, the development of a fruit occurs. It does not occur to the seed, ‘I cause the sprout to develop.’ Nor does it occur to the sprout, ‘I am developed by the seed’, and so on until: it does not occur to the flower, ‘I cause the fruit to develop.’ Nor does it occur to the fruit, ‘I am developed by the flower.’ (Nāgārjuna, 1998: 35) And therefore true knowledge of how things really are constitutes in knowing what exists as ‘existing’ what does not exist as ‘not existing.’

This means the creative matrix which continually generates and regenerate the existence of things, according to this causal formula, occur within the range of things themselves and other associated supporting conditions, without resorting to some external supernatural creative force or agency. As Jim Wilson correctly explains it “this is not only a theory of how things come into existence” it also “points to things as the locus of creativity in existence; though, because this applies to all things, this locus has no specific location but, rather, constitutes an aspect of the nature of all existing things.”(2003: 7) And these existing things themselves act as a “transformer, receiving the beneficence of support from many other things, taking that energy, matter, form etc., and then transforming what it has received into potentialities for other things, allowing for the birth of other things.” (2003: 7)

Despite the critical role played by the cause (seed, sprout, leaf, and etc) in objective dependent arising, elemental factors or conditional factors are equally

significant for the production of the effect. The *Śalistamba-sūtra* recognises six elemental factors: earth, water, heat, wind, space and seasonal⁴⁸ factors. This implies that the cause is constituted by manifold conditions, each of which has a different relationship to the effect and is, therefore, a different type of condition. The earth element functions to support the seed, the water element moistens the seed, the heat element matures it, the wind element brings out the seed, the space element allows the functions by way of not posing any obstruction and the seasonal element functions to transform the seed. When all these necessary conditions come together, neither excessively nor deficiently, then there occurs a production of the effect.

Just as the cause work objectively, so do the conditions. It does not occur to any of these *conditions* that “I am” responsible for causing the sprout to germinate, nor does it occur to the *seed* that with the coming together of these six conditions “I” produce the sprout. Nevertheless, merely coming together of these conditions is not sufficient to producing the effect since the conditions must have balance, and a harmonious and appropriate combination in order to produce the effect. (Nāgārjuna, 2004: 382-84)

Therefore Nāgārjuna powerfully sums up the points as follows:

This sprout is not self-caused, not caused by another, not caused by both, not caused by God, not transformed by an absolute time, not derived from *prakṛti*, not founded upon a single principle, yet not arisen without cause. From the coming together of the earth, water, heat, wind, space and season factors, when the seed is ceasing the development of the sprout occurs. Thus is the conditional relation in objective conditioned arising to be seen. (1998: 38)⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Seasonal factor here refers to temporal factor (s) (*dus kyi kham*s).

⁴⁹ *Sa cāyam-aṅkuro na svayaṅkṛto na parakṛto nobhayakṛto neśvaranirmīto na kālāpariṇāmito na prakṛtisambhūto (na caikakāraṇādhipo) nāpyāhetusamutpannaḥ/ prthivyaptejovāyavākāśartudhātusamavāyāt, bīje nirudhyamāne 'ṅkurasyābhinirvṛttir-bhavati/ evaṃ bāhyasya pratītyasamutpādaya pratyayopanibandho draṣṭavyaḥ//*

The *Śālistamba-sūtra* also explains the objective dependent arising with the help of five principles (Nāgārjuna, 2004: 170, Ibid, 1998:40)

First, *the principle of non-permanence* (Tib. *rtag pa ma yin pa*) implies that whatever is dependently arisen phenomena, i.e., causally conditioned must *not* be permanent. What this means is that the law of cause-effect applies only to impermanent phenomena. This follows because while effect arises from cause, nevertheless cause is different from its effect and effect is different from its cause. Yet the effect (the sprout) is neither produced without the termination of its cause (the seed), nor with the termination of its cause, thus a permanent persistence of the cause is ruled out. But the fact that cause (the seed) ceases and effect (the sprout) emerges is because an impermanent cause is at work.

Second, *the principle of non-annihilation* (Tib. *chad par min pa*) means that cause is not annihilated in the process of production of its effect. This follows since that the cessation of cause (seed) prior to the production of effect does not bring forth the effect (sprout) nor does an effect emerge when the cause remains unceased. Nevertheless, when the cause ceases the sprout emerges, thus proving that the cause is not annihilated.

Third, *the principle of non-transmigration* (Tib. *'pho bar ma yin*) essentially explains that in the causal process the cause is itself not entirely transmigrated to form the effect. If it were, there should be no reason for the cause and its effect not to be identical.

Fourth, *the principle which states that 'a tiny seed develops into a manifold effect'* (Tib. *rgyu chung las 'dras bu chen po 'grub*) explains an enormous potentiality of the cause. As it is empirically evident sowing a tiny seed can bring forth a gigantic tree with thousands of fruits.

Finally, *the principle of causal contiguity* (Tib. 'dra ba'i rjes su 'dro ba) confirms a contiguous relationship between the cause and its effect such that only a very specific effect arises from a very specific cause – if an apple seed is planted, only apple fruits arise. Moreover the quality and quantity of apple yields depend upon the whether or not the apple seed is nurtured properly. This principle also confirms that when there is no causal contiguity, there is no production of the effect – when an apple seed is planted, bananas are not produced at all and vice versa.

Let me now turn to the second line in the statement:

When this does not exist, that does not come to be;
with the cessation of this, that ceases. (Bodhi, 2000: 517)

This explains the causal process in the cessation of phenomena. Just as things arise due to a nexus of necessary causes and conditions, so also, they decline, decay and eventually cease to exist due to a nexus of necessary causes and conditions. Again in the *Śālistamba-sūtra*, Nāgārjuna illustrates the point as follows: When there is seed, a sprout does not occur, when there is no sprout a leaf does not occur, when there is no leaf, a shoot does not occur, when there is no shoot, a stalk does not occur, when there is no stalk, a bud does not occur, when there is no bud, a flower does not occur, and when there is no flower, a fruit does not occur. (1998: 35) Therefore flower ceases when bud ceases, bud ceases when stalk ceases, stalk ceases when shoot ceases, shoot ceases when leave ceases, leave ceases sprout ceases and sprout ceases when seed ceases.

4. The Argument for Subjective Dependent Arising

Let us take the argument of subjective dependent arising second. Again the same formula is applied for this causal argument:

When this exists, that comes to be;
With the arising of this, that arises.
When this does not exist, that does not come to be;
With the cessation of this, that ceases. (Bodhi, 2000: 517)

This formula when applied to subjective dependent arising, explains the chain of causal processes operating in the mind (and mental states). To put it in a traditional context, the subjective dependent arising explains the causal law pertaining to the human conditions in the *saṃsāric* world since it explains the causal chain involved in the four noble truths: suffering, the process of origin of suffering, freedom from suffering and the path to freedom from suffering. The causal chain operating in the four noble truths can be understood with the twelve factors of dependent arising.

All twelve factors, as our analysis will reveal, are defined by the existence of the one causal chain formed by the nexus of interrelated transient processes, each producing the next event. Each link is conditioned by the preceding one, and itself conditions the succeeding one. There are two ways in which this causal chain can be analysed: (1) the forward procreativity process (Tib. *lug 'byung*) and (2) the backward reversal process (Tib. *lug ldog*). The former explains the way in which each link proactively participates in the production of the succeeding events, leading eventually to another spin of the wheel of *saṃsāra*. The latter explains the reversal process – the way in which each link in the causal process can be brought to an end by severing of the prior conditioning link, replacing ignorance with wisdom which puts an end to the suffering and rebirth process.

To understand the first process – what these causal links are, and how each link contributes to the causal chain proactively – we will need to turn to the Buddha’s formula once again:

When this exists, that comes to be;

With the arising of this, that arises.

This formula explains the way in which each link proactively participates in the causal process where each link becomes an effect due to the conditioning of the former links and each link in turn conditions the latter links that follow. The links in the causal chain are put together as follows:

- 1) With delusion (*avidyā / marig pa*) as condition,
- 2) volitional activity / karma-formations (*saṃskāra / ‘du byed*) arises; with the karma formation as condition,
- 3) consciousness (*viññāna / rnam shes*) arises; with consciousness as condition,
- 4) name-form (*nāma rūpa / ming gzugs*) arises; with name-form as condition,
- 5) senses (*ṣaḍāyatana / skyed byed*) arises, with sense as condition,
- 6) contact (*sparśa / reg pa*) arises; with contact as condition,
- 7) feeling (*vedanā / tshor ba*) arises; with feeling as condition,
- 8) craving (*trṣṇā / sred pa*) arises; with craving as condition,
- 9) appropriation / grasping (*upādāna / len pa*) arises; with appropriation as condition,
- 10) existence / becoming (*bhava / srid pa*) arises; with existence as condition,
- 11) birth (*jāti / skyes pa*) arises; and with birth as condition,
- (12) old age and death (*jarā-maraṇa/rga shis*) lamentation, suffering, displeasure and anxiety come to be.

So with the existence of the preceding links, succeeding links occur and the succeeding links in turn give rise to the following links and thus keep the saṃsāric cycle

alive. Ignorance (*avidyā / marig pa*) is the first link. The type of ignorance in question is a very specific one that satisfies three characteristics. First, ignorance does not simply mean an absence of knowledge in the general sense. For example an ignorance of $2 + 2 = 4$, while it is a form of ignorance, it is indeed not the type of ignorance in which the Mādhyamikas are interested. For it is causally irrelevant in the formation of karmic process conditioning the *saṃsāric* link given that the knowledge of solution to this simple equation will have no impact whatsoever in severing the causal *saṃsāric* suffering. Second, ignorance is not just other than wisdom. While craving, aversion etc are other than wisdom and although each is conditioned by ignorance, each of them are not ignorance. Third, the ignorance at issue is rather one that is a diametrical opposite of wisdom that sees reality of things as they really are – one that proactively reifies the reality of things thus acting as the root of all defilements. As Nāgārjuna explains it in his *Śūnyatāsaptati*: “To conceive things arisen through causes and conditions as real is what the teacher calls ‘ignorance.’ From that the twelve links arise.” (Nāgājuna, 1986: 114)

Ignorance fundamentally distorts the reality of phenomena and persons and erroneously grasps them as having inherently real self and unitary identities. Conditioned by ignorance are volitional activities (*saṃskāra / ‘du byed*) carried out through body, speech and mind under the influence of attachment, aversion and confusion towards the pleasant, unpleasant and neutral sensory experiences respectively. These volitional activities be they wholesome, unwholesome or ethically neutral are nevertheless directly rooted in ignorance and sustained by craving, desires, will, ill-will, animosity, anger, jealousy and so forth, thus karmically conditioning consciousness (*vijñāna / rnam shes*). With the relinking-consciousness as condition, the four name aggregates (*nāma / ming*) – sensation, perception), compounded phenomena

and consciousness – and the form aggregates (*rūpa / gzhugs*) – physical body – occur. And with the name-form aggregates as condition, the six sense-bases (*ṣaḍāyatana / skyed byed*) – the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body – and the introspective sense gradually develops during the embryonic stages. All these senses do not operated under the influence of any external agent or prime mover they each have their own respective objective domains (*gzung yul*) and subjective functions. When sense faculties collide with their respective sense objects, they give rise to six consciousnesses. With the collision of the eye faculty and visual object, the visual consciousness arises. The assemblage of these three namely sense faculty, sense object and consciousness conditions contact (*sparśa / reg pa*). Conditioned by contact between senses, objects and consciousnesses, the next link, feelings (*vedanā / tshor ba*) arises in the experiential domain which is either pleasant, or unpleasant or neutral. Feeling conditions craving (*tṛṣṇā / sred pa*) since the latter arises due to reaction against sensations – reaction to the pleasant experience generates attachment, unpleasant sensation generates aversion and neutral sensation generates confusion. As Tsongkhapa puts it, “The craver craves the pleasant in order not to be away from it, he craves being away from suffering, and he craves the nondiminution of the neutral.” (2006: 538) Craving conditions clinging (*upādāna / len pa*) since the latter is the appropriation of the former. Craving and clinging can be differentiated wherein the former “is like groping in the dark to steal an object” and the later “corresponds to the actual stealing of the object.” (Narada, 1988: 428) So clinging is intensified craving as well as confusion giving rise to the notion of this and that being ‘I’ and ‘mine’ and what follows is the false grasping of self and phenomena. Dependant on clinging, arises becoming or existence (*bhava / srid pa*).

Conditioned by becoming, birth arises (*jāti*). And birth is inevitably stalked by old age and death (*jarā-marāṇa/rga shis*).⁵⁰

Let me now turn to the second line in the statement:

When this does not exist, that does not come to be;

With the cessation of this, that ceases.

This explains the reversal process (Tib. *lug ldog*) of the entire twelve causal links which has its beginning with the cessation of ignorance. Ignorance is eliminated through the wisdom of emptiness that directly knows both subjective and objective domains of person and phenomena as empty utterly lacking an inherent existence and that they are products of causally interdependent factors. With the cessation of ignorance volitional activity / karma-formations also cease since conditioning factors of volitional formations such as craving, aversion and confusion born out from ignorance no longer hold sway over the cognitive states. Thus no physical, vocal, and mental action is performed under the influence of ignorance of neutral feelings, attachment to pleasant feelings, and aversion to unpleasant feelings. The cessation of karmic formation leads to the cessation of the consciousness driven by karmic seeds. This is because once all karmas including its latencies are burnt out through the force of wisdom, consciousness is no longer supported or fueled by reactive emotions or thoughts. With the cessation of consciousness name-form ceases. Name-form which constitutes an elementary structure of our physical and mental aggregates are all lifeless and would not flourish without the presence of their life enriching consciousness. Thus

⁵⁰ With these twelve conditions conditioning the succeeding links cover three phases of all sentient beings: The first two – delusion and volitional activities – occur in the former events. Delusion conditions the volitional activities producing karmic formations which trigger new life through conditioning the relinking consciousness. The next seven links – relinking consciousness, name-form, senses, contact, feeling, craving, and appropriation – occur in the current phase. The last three links – becoming, birth and old age-death – occur in the future phase.

ceases name-form leading to the cessation of the six sense faculties. This follows because sense faculties cannot attain their maturity and operate unless name-form is present. With the cessation of six senses their contacts with sensory objects also ceases. For contact to arise there has to be a transaction between the objective and a subjective domain, sensory contact does not arise merely from the presence of an object without its subjective domain. With the cessation of contact between the sensory objects and sense-faculties also ceases feeling. This follows because pleasant feelings do not arise unless there is a sensory contact with pleasant objects, unpleasant feelings do not arise unless there is a sensory contact with unpleasant objects. Likewise there is no indifferent feeling unless there is a sensory contact with the neither pleasant nor unpleasant objects. With the cessation of feeling also ceases craving. Psychological / cognitive reactions fueled by ignorance towards feelings – craving with the pleasant feeling, aversion with the unpleasant, and indifference with the neutral feelings – ceases with the cessation of feelings. The cessation of the craving leads to the cessation of appropriation / clinging / grasping. This follows because without craving with its underlying ignorance there will be no conditioning of the mind to the extent that various feelings and sensory objects are appropriated as 'Mine' *belonging* to 'Me' and the five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, consciousness) are appropriated or identified as 'I', 'Me' thus generating clinging or grasping to view of self and identity. With the cessation of appropriation / clinging / grasping also ceases existence / becoming. This is so because without being conditioned by the appropriation of the five aggregates as self there will be no existence / becoming with in various existential realms. The cessation of the becoming leads to the cessation of birth. With the cessation of birth also ceases old age, death, lamentation, suffering, displeasure and anxiety. Thus release is attained from the whole mass of suffering.

Despite the critical role each link plays in spinning the causal chain of the subjective dependent arising, it is crucial to note that the six elemental factors (*dhātus*) are equally significant in conditioning the production of this causal chain. In the *Śālistamba-sūtra* Nāgārjuna adds the contributions made to the chain of subjective dependent arising through six elemental factors - earth, water, heat, wind, space and consciousness factors.

The function of the earth element in the subjective dependent arising is to conglomerate the solid nature of the body to develop, the water element carries out cohesion-function of the body, the heat element functions to digest foods and drinks consumed by the body, the wind element allows inhalation and exhalation processes, the space element is responsible for the porous nature of organs and body and the consciousness factor causes to mature the name-form such that the physical and mental aggregates associated with the five sensory consciousnesses evolves along with the arising of defilements. So without these elemental conditions, even with each link playing its own causal role, the arising of the body does not occur. When all these causes and conditions come together, neither excessively nor deficiently, then there occurs the body. (Nāgārjuna, 2004: 388-89) This implies that each link is constituted by manifold conditions, each of which has a different causal role to play that nevertheless collaboratively conditions the subsequent links as effects. Moreover, merely coming together of these conditions is not sufficient to produce the effect since the conditions must have balance, harmonious and appropriate relationship in order to produce the effect. (Nāgārjuna, 2004: 389-90)

The causal chain of twelve links is expressed as subjective dependent arising principally to highlight mental – psychological, cognitive, and ethical – contents of causation. Subjective dependent arising, the Mādhyamika insists, must not imply that

this causal chain somehow operates on the basis of one's subjective whims. On the contrary, Mādhyamika argues, subjective dependent arising operates entirely objectively, and naturally. It does not occur to any of the *conditions* or *links* involved that "I am" this, "I am" that, "I am" responsible for causing the subsequent factors nor does it occur to the subsequent factors that with the coming together of these six conditions "I" am produced. Therefore Nāgārjuna sums up the points as follows:

All these six conditional factors are "not self, not being, not a soul, not a creature, not human, not a person, not female, not male, not neuter, not 'I' not 'mine' and not any other's." (1998: 49)

Although it is apparent that the former links become causes and the later links become effects, the Mādhyamika argues this causal process involved in the subjective dependent arising does not entail the fallacy of Sāṃkhya's causal theory as interpreters such as Whalen Lai charges it of. According to Lai, "It may then be said that there is a cause in the effect, and an effect in the cause. Strictly speaking, the *satkāryavāda* position (effects preexist in causes) usually is denied by Buddhism, although it does come into its fold." (Lai, 1977: 248) I argue that Lai's charges are groundless for several reasons. First dependent arising as a causal account is fundamentally at odds with the Sāṃkhya's view because while the former categorically rejects causal power of *prakṛti* (primordial material essence) the latter believes that it is the causal power that enables the production of effect. Second, while the Sāṃkhya argues that effect must preexist in the cause and that the role of cause is to bring an unmanifest effect into manifestation, the Mādhyamika, on the other hand, argues that effect must not exist in the cause – if it did the cause and effect would exist simultaneously. In which case the function of cause becomes redundant for the effect would already exist. Third, the fallacy of the preexistence of the effect in the cause would not occur on the Mādhyamika account

because the former links, ignorance for example, conditions volitional action as effect. In fact it is not just ignorance that does the conditioning, ignorance reinforced by underlying craving and appropriations are all responsible for conditioning volitional actions. Hence the later links do not exist either manifestly or unmanifestly during the former links. Only when the appropriate conditionings of former links come together as causal factors do the latter links follow as the effects.

The Mādhyamika maintain that there is neither a beginning nor an end to saṃsāra. There are several reasons for this claim: First the causal chain which perpetuates uncontrolled rebirth is circular, every stage is a cause when viewed from its effect, while it is also an effect of an antecedent cause. Second, none of these twelve links operate independently as each is conditioned by the other links. Although ignorance is tentatively recognized as the first of twelve links, it is indeed not the first cause. Ignorance itself is conditioned by various other epistemic, psychological, cognitive and ethical factors among which craving, aversion, and appropriation play dominant role in fuelling ignorance which actively reifies truths of person and phenomena as having discrete and inherent substance. Third, moreover dependent arising means production of dependently arisen phenomena from causal conditions that utterly lack any inherent existence and that inherent existence is necessary condition for sustaining the theory of the first cause. Thus the internal dependent arising not only explains the material causal processes but also explains our epistemic, psychological, cognitive, immoral / moral causal processes involved in mental life. And it is through this causal explanation, the Mādhyamika argues, can one avoid both the extremes – annihilationism and eternalism – hence preserve the middle path principle.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter we saw the Prāsaṅgika’s two primary arguments for the thesis of dependent arising – the subjective and the objective. The former explains the causal principle that underpins the arising of mental phenomena such as karmic volitional forces from ignorance, while the latter offers the causal explanation for the arising of the external phenomena such as the production of sprouts from their seeds. Central to both the arguments is the notion that everything – both the objective and the subjective worlds – is empty of any essence. Therefore, through the dual arguments the Prāsaṅgika establishes that things become what they are through the force of causal interdependence. Thus while *all* phenomena are empty of any essence whatsoever, according to this school, they do nonetheless have their ontological status brought about by the network of causes and conditions.

It is also argued that even the so-called subjective dependent arising is objective in the way it functions. Ignorance conditions objectively and interdependently without it relying upon any external subjective creative intervention of God – hence echoing the Buddha points when he says: “whether or not *Tathāgata* arises, the true nature or the reality of *dharma* will constantly exist.” (Nāgārjuna, 2004: 380)⁵¹ And this constant existence is marked by the process of arising and ceasing, is not projected by our conceptual thought but it is the reality of the *dharma*s themselves. From this analysis it is also clear that for the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika dependent arising is not an arbitrary and contingent law of the subjective relativism, yet dependent arising is invariable truth marked by the principle of conditionality. There is nothing that transcends these marks

⁵¹ སངས་རྒྱལ་བྱང་ཅུང་མ་བྱུང་ཅུང་། ཚེས་ཉིད་འདི་ནི་གནས་པ་ཡིན།

of dependent arising, hence nothing has ultimate truth other than it being dependently arisen.

Final Conclusion

So, does the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika succeed in proving the causal thesis that things are dependently arisen and that they are empty of any essential causation? In my view the Prāsaṅgika's case for its thesis is definitely well founded. In this thesis, I have presented the Prāsaṅgika's arguments following Nāgārjuna's approach. In Chapter 1, by means of refuting the Sāṃkhya's causal theory – the arising of things from the unconscious primordial material *Prakṛti* and by showing the logical absurdities by means of the Prāsaṅgika's critique of the theory, I have demonstrated that things cannot arise from themselves, thus the arising from self is rejected. By rejecting the self causation the Prāsaṅgika also rules out the possibility of the effect arising from the cause which is identical to its effect on the ground that the effect and the cause would be simultaneous. It also rules out the possibility of the effect arising from a unitary and immutable causal agent of *Prakṛti* (be it a personal God or impersonal God) as such agent would lack necessary causal efficiency. In Chapter 2, by means of refuting the causal theory of the arising from another and by showing the logical absurdities if it did arise, I have shown, for the Prāsaṅgika, things do not arise from the cause that is distinctly "other" than the effect it produces. The production of the effect cannot be from the cause that is inherently different from the effect, otherwise anything could arise as effect from everything or anything could causally produce everything to arise. In Chapter 3, by means of refuting the syncretised causal account of Jainism, I have demonstrated that for the Prāsaṅgika things do not arise from both – the combined activities of the arising from the self and the arising from another. In the same chapter, through refuting Cārvāka's noncausal view, I have also argued that, for the Prāsaṅgika, things cannot arise without causes and conditions. So Nāgārjuna's conclusion in his *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* –

Neither from itself nor from another
Nor from both,
Nor without cause
Does anything anywhere, ever arise" (*MMK* 1.1)

does logically follow from the Prāsaṅgika's refutation of the all four causal theories. Arriving at the conclusion that things do not arise from these four alternative causal theses does not however complete the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika philosophical project, for it still leaves unaccounted for the causation of things that are self-evident, everywhere around us. So in two latter chapters dependent arising is proposed as the alternative and arguably the only plausible causal explanation for the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika. In Chapter 4 I have considered the Prāsaṅgika's specific reasons / proofs for rejecting essence and argued for the compatible relationship between essencelessness / emptiness and causation. In so doing I have shown that the Prāsaṅgika, while it does not have the essentialist or metaphysical thesis, nonetheless does indeed have dependent arising as its causal thesis. In Chapter 5 I have discussed the Prāsaṅgika's two central arguments – the arguments from the objective and the subjective dependent arising. The objective dependent arising argument demonstrates all external phenomena as dependently arisen – they arise through the collaborative network of causes and conditions and they cease due to the cessation of the causes and conditions of their existence. The argument from the subjective dependent arising has shown that all internal phenomena – minds and mental factors – as dependently arisen. Their arising is conditioned by ignorance and so forth as causes and conditions, so is their cessation conditioned by the cessation of ignorance, volitional formation etc as causes and conditions. Since dependent arising is identical to emptiness, it rejects any ultimate causal power, hence it is not open to the charges leveled against the causal

reificationism of Sāṃkhya, Jainism, Buddhist Abhidharmikas and Svātantrika Mādhyamikas. Dependent arising nevertheless does offer a plausible causal explanation of how things or events really are produced causally on the conventional level, hence it is not open to the criticisms leveled against causal nihilism of Cārvāka school. Dependent arising is rightly therefore described as the middle-path. It is clear then, at least for the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamikas, the causal thesis that everything is dependently arisen is a sound causal proposition.

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