

THE BUDDHIST NYAYA CONTROVERSY ON CONDITONS OF VALID REASON

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All systems of Indian philosophy except the Charvaka School of thought unanimously maintain that *anumana* is an independent and irreducible method of valid cognition. While *pratyaksam* is a cognition, which does not depend on any previous cognition, *anumana* is dependent on the previous knowledge of a mark (*linga*), which is invariably related to something, that which is not perceived but inferred on the basis of the perception of a mark. The word *anumana* literally means such knowledge as follows from some other knowledge.

The object of *anumana* is some fact, which follows from some other fact; this is because of a universal relation between the two. With regard to something of our experience we want to know by means of *anumana* that which may not be perceived but is indicated by what is perceived. *Anumana* is a *pramana* is, therefore the source of our knowing through the medium of a sign or mark that a thing has a certain character. It leads to the knowledge of a thing as possessing a character, like fire, because of its having another character, smoke, which we apprehended and which we know to be always connected with it. So in *anumana* we arrive at the knowledge of an object through the medium of two acts of knowledge. We are all familiar with the notion of *anumana* and we are using it as a major source of our knowledge in our daily life. Our attitude in experience seems to us to be mainly repetitive, where as in *anumana* we appear to exercise an originative activity either in the discovery of truth or in probable conjecture. It is thus originative activity of ours, as opposed to experience, which is one of the main characteristics of *anumana*. Secondly, we do not think that our method of discovery, in the process of inferring, is entirely independent and unassisted from without, we think rather that our activity consists in deriving the truth discovered from something already known and ultimately from experience. This brings us to

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another main feature of *anumana* that, the knowledge it gets is derived from other knowledge. Hence, this kind of knowledge is in some way dependent. From the subjective side, inferred knowledge comes to be looked upon as indirect and not immediate knowledge but mediated, while on the objective side, the inferred facts are sometimes looked upon as dependent for their existence on those from which they are inferred.

The Buddhists in general accept that *anumana* consist in knowing something which is not perceived but is known on the basis of something that is perceived which is invariably connected with the thing that is inferred. This invariable relation between *hetu* and *sadhya* is known as *vyapti*, which is regarded as the logical condition of an *anumana* by many classical Indian thinkers. This invariable relation between two things is either due to the law of causality or the principal essential identity (*tqdupatti* and *tadatmya*) according to the Buddhists. Inference as a major epistemic tool rest on certain conditions to be fulfilled. The constituents of inference must not be less than three propositions and more than three terms namely *paksa*, *sadhya* and *hetu* or minor, major and middle terms. There is first the knowledge of what is called the *hetu* or mark in relation to the *paksa* or the subject of *anumana*. This is generally a perceptual judgment relating the *hetu* or middle term with the *paksa* or minor term of *anumana* (*lingadarsana*), as when I see that the hill is smoky, and infers that it is fiery. It is a proposition in which the *hetu* is predicated of the *paksa* and thus corresponds to the minor premise of Aristotelian syllogism. Secondly, *anumana* requires the knowledge of *vyapti* or a universal relation between the *hetu* and *sadhya* or the middle and major terms. This knowledge of the *hetu* or middle term as always related to the *sadhya* or major term is the result of our previous experience of their relation to each other. So it is a memory judgment in which we think of the *hetu* as invariably connected with the *sadhya* (*vyaptismarana*), for e.g. 'all smoky objects are fiery'. Thirdly we have the inferential knowledge (*anumiti*) as resulting from the previous knowledge of the *hetu* and that of its universal relation (*vyapti*) with the *sadhya*. It is a proposition, which relates the *paksa* or minor term with the *sadhya* or major term, e.g., 'the hill is fiery'. Thus we have three terms namely *paksa*, *sadhya* and *hetu*.

Paksa:

The *paksa* is the subject of *anumana*. Every *anumana* proceeds with regard to some individual or class of individuals about which we want to prove

something. Hence, the *paksa* is that individual or class about which we want to establish something or predicate an attribute which is suspected but not definitely known to present in it. That which possesses the inferable character is called *paksa* or minor term of *anumana*. For e.g., the mountain where we want to establish that it is fiery. Dharmakirti calls this *paksa* as *anumeya dharmi, sadhya dharmavat*¹. *Paksa* is a *dharmi* due to its being characterized by *sadhya*. Thus understood, *paksa* is a reference point. If a *hetu* is related to *sadhya* and that is related *paksa* then on that basis, *sadhya* could be related to *paksa*. Further *paksa* determines the range within which *sadhya* could be discovered provided it is discoverable or at least considered as coherently conceivable. Dharmakirti describes *paksa* to be *jijnasitavisesodharmi*². For instance in the example of *anumana* of fire on mountain, mountain is regarded as *paksa*, for it is there the person is curious to establish the existence of *sadhya* namely fire.

Sadhya:

The *Sadhya* is the object of *anumana*. It is that which we want to know or prove by means of *anumana*. The *sadhya* is that character of the *paksa* which is not perceived by us but indicated by *hetu* present in it. In short it is the inferable character of *paksa*. The *hetu* is found at least twice in the course of *anumana*. First it is found in relation to the *paksa*, then in relation to *sadhya*. It is through a universal relation between *hetu* and *sadhya*, that the *paksa* which is related to the *hetu*, becomes connected with *sadhya*. *Sadhya* represents the quality of the subject, which is cognized through the *anumana*. According to Dharmottara³ the object cognized through the *anumana* may be 1) either the substratum, whose quality it is intended to be cognized or 2) the substratum together with the quality or 3) that quality alone when its relation to the logical reason, from which it is deduced is considered abstractly. For e.g., 'wherever there is smoke, there also is fire'. For Dinnaga, all inferential relation is based upon a substance to quality relation, it is constructed by our understanding but it does not represent ultimate reality. The fact that *sadhya* is not given cognitively prior to inferential cognition is not a matter of description but a pre-condition of inferential situation. It is not given not because it cannot be given but rather because its being given the very need of inferential cognition terminates, and the whole inferential exercise itself becomes redundant. Although it is not given, it must, at the same time not be simply incapable of being given. For if it is incapable of being given even as a possible object of coherent cognition, it will be impossible to infer it as a result of

inferential cognition. Thus, the possibility of *sadhya* being inferred must never be dismissed in advance for that will mark an impossibility of inferential cognition. However, the very nature of *sadhya* is that it must always be indirect, as it is related to *hetu* on one hand through *vyapti* and could be possibly connected to *paksa* as a *dharma* of it on the other. *Hetu* is the mark of *sadhya* and *sadhya* is that which is indicated by it.

Dharmakirti mentions that *sadhya* is *jijnasitadharmata* of *paksa* made available. That is why *paksa* is to be understood as *jijnasitavisesodharmata*. From what has been said above it is clear that *hetu* is related to *paksa* on one hand and to *sadhya* on the other. So too *sadhya* is related to *hetu* on one hand and the *paksa* as its property on the other. It is this sort of alignment speaks of the structure or constitution of *anumana* the very framework of indirect cognition. For instance in the example of inference of fire on a mountain, fire is the *sadhya* which is established on the mountain (*paksa*) through the perception of smoke (*hetu*) on the mountain because of the invariable relation between smoke (*hetu*) and fire (*sadhya*).

Hetu:

The words *linga*, *hetu* and *sadhana* are used as synonyms and mean mark or a sign. In the classical example of inference of fire on the mountain on the basis of perception of smoke on it, 'smoke' is the mark or sign. It is the perception of this sign which leads to the inference of fire. So it is really the ground (*hetu*) of *anumana*. In other words, it causes *anumana*. *Hetu* is a mark in the sense that inference is made possible only through *hetu*. It is a pre-condition of *anumana*. *Hetu* is a characteristic feature of *paksa* and hence related to *paksa* through *paksadharmata*. On the other hand it is related to *sadhya* through *paksadharmata*. On the other hand it is related to *sadhya* through *vyapti* a *niyama* called *avinabhava*. Thus *hetu* is related to both *paksa* and *sadhya*. It plays a significant role in the format of *anumana* and as a consequence it is regarded as an essential constituent of *anumana*. As stated earlier *anumana* is a mode of establishing *sadhya* on the basis of *hetu*. Hence it is also called *sadhana*. *Hetu* is the mark of *sadhya*, and remains a proper indicator of legitimate *sadhya* provided there is a certain relation between *hetu* and *sadhya*. *Hetu* is also known as *vyapya* and *sadhya* as *vyapaka*. *Vyapya* depends upon *vyapaka*.

Sometimes there is an extensional equinumerosity of *hetu* and *sadhya*. But *hetu* is never more *vyapaka* than *sadhya*. Hence *hetu* is either less than or

equal to *sadhya* in extension and never more. *Hetu* is also known as *gamaka*. With the help of *gamaka* one can get the knowledge of *gamyā*, i.e., *sadhya*. But converse of it will not hold good. That is from *sadhya* one cannot know *hetu*. The relation between *hetu* and *sadhya* is thus known as *gamyā gamaka bhava*. In between these two, *gamaka* that is *hetu* is always given to us. And on the basis of *gamaka* we attempt to get an indirect knowledge about *gamyā*. That is why when one deals with *anumana* one deals primarily with *hetu*. We have to start with *hetu* in order to formulate an argument. Thus Dharmakīrti rightly recognized the centrality of *hetu* in his treatment of *anumana*.

The centrality of *hetu* cannot be mistaken for *hetu* is the only one which, essential and indispensable constituent of *anumana*. For this kind of status is also enjoyed by *pakṣa* and *sadhya* as well. What is meant by centrality of *hetu* is that the format of *anumana* could be satisfactorily made sense of only in so far as and in to the extent in which its consideration revolves around that of some aspect or the other of the nature and significance of *hetu* as a structural component of it. For instance in the example of inference of fire on a mountain, the perception of smoke is regarded as the *hetu*, for it is through the perception of *hetu* (in this context smoke) the person establishes *sadhya* namely fire in *pakṣa* that is mountain.

Conditions of *Hetu*:

The relation of *hetu* to the substratum of *anumana* on one side with Naiyāyikas on the other side with Buddhists is expressed in clearer terms in their epistemology. For Naiyāyikas the conditions of valid *hetu* are expressed in terms of *pañcarūpāhetu*, where as, in Buddhists it is expressed as *trairūpyāhetu*. The five characters of the *hetu* for Naiyāyikas are 1) *Pakṣadharmatā*. It means the middle term must be related to the minor term. 2) *Sapakṣasattva* or its presence in all positive instances in which the major term exists. The middle term must be distributively related to the major term. 3) *Vipakṣasattva* or its absence in all negative instances in which the major term is absent. 4) *Abadhītavasāyatva* or the uncontradictedness of its object. 5) *Asatpratīpakṣatva*, or the absence of counteracting reasons leading to a contradictory conclusion.

In contrast to this Buddhist circle accepted *trairūpyāhetu* as the sufficient conditions for *hetu*. The reasons for Buddhists accepting *trairūpyāhetu* are as follows⁴: Firstly, though the Naiyāyikas and Buddhists accept *pakṣadharmatā*, *sapakṣasattva*, and *vipakṣasattva* to be determinative of validity, the difference

between them concerning their nature and significance lies in how to interpret the term 'sattva' but Dharmakirti prefers to accept coherent conceivability framework. Whereas Naiyayikas advocate that 'sattva' needs to be interpreted in terms of actuality or factuality as they stick to their commitment of considering empiricity as a pre-condition of *anumana*. Secondly⁵, Buddhists particularly Dharmakirti articulates a uniform rationale interconnecting all the so-called five conditions of validity. The five conditions enumerated by the Nyayikas were held to be characteristic marks of a *sat-hetu*. But they are not so, especially because, as observed earlier, at least *asatpratipaksatva* and *abadhitavisayatva*. Thirdly⁶, the context of debate and social situation are not necessary conditions of the advent of *anumana* as Nyayikas hold, since it is dictated and necessitated neither by the requirements of the satisfaction of regulative conditions nor by the constitutive conditions of *anumana*. Fourthly⁷, the methodological considerations like maximal universalizability combined with economy of determinants of validity gets precedence at the hands of Buddhists. In the Nyaya treatment of validity, these considerations seen hardly to be taken serious. Lastly, Buddhists endeavors to formulate conditions of validity context freely, whereas in the Nyaya treatment of them contextuality and commitment to actual non-empty world seems to have gathered exclusive significance. Hence, on methodological grounds, *asatpratipaksatva*, and *abadhitavisayatva* which are accepted by Naiyayikas to be conditions determining validity, but for Buddhists the first three *paksadharmata*, *sapakasattva*, and *vipaksasattva* can fulfill the purpose.

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