

On the Sarvāstivāda's Definition of Simultaneous Causation

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As its name indicates, the Sarvāstivāda school argues that everything exists (*sarvam asti*). They contend that cognition is possible only because past, future and present dharmas exist. The arising and perishing of dharmas which exist through the three periods of time can be grasped within a certain relationship between cause (*hetu*), condition (*pratyaya*) and effect (*phala*). Among these relationships of causality, the cause wherein dharmas arise simultaneously in a relationship of mutual causality, is called simultaneous causation (*sahabhūhetu*) / the effect of human effort (*puruṣa-kāraphala*).

The aim of my paper is to reconsider the definition of simultaneous causation and clarify the proofs given for the simultaneous existence of *caitta* dharmas. To this end, I will first review earlier studies on the topic. Then I will reconsider the context in which the idea of the simultaneous existence of dharmas is discussed, the circumstances in which they were systematized and how as a result it came to be defined as simultaneous causation. Furthermore, based on the section dealing with proofs for the simultaneous existence of dharmas in the **Nyāyānusāriṇī*, I will reconsider the debate with Sthavira concerning whether contact (*sparśa*) exists or not.

At the very least, it is possible to say that the section on *hetu-pratyaya* in the *Vijñānakāya* presupposes the idea that the mind is the aggregate of multiple dharmas. This was stipulated as simultaneous causation in the section dealing with causality in the *Jñānaprasthāna*.

Among the Sarvāstivāda texts from the **Mahāvibhāṣā* to the **Nyāyānusāriṇī*, simultaneous causation is defined as “becoming an effect mutually” or “resulting in the same effect,” indicating that there was some confusion

concerning this matter. I have reconsidered this point in my paper. The **Nyāyānusāriṇī* attempted to reconcile the theory of the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. Basing itself on the definition of simultaneous causation as “becoming an effect mutually” found in the **Samyuktābhidharmahṛdaya*, the **Nyāyānusāriṇī* tried to show that it did not contradict the explanation that it “results in the same effect” found in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. Sthiramati understood the intention behind the narrative of the **Nyāyānusāriṇī*. Therefore, in his *Tattvārthā Abhidharmakośaṭīkā*, he provided a commentary in line with its intention.

Having confirmed the above points, I consider the discussion concerning the proofs for the existence of contact taken up in the section on *caitta* dharmas in the **Nyāyānusāriṇī*. Sthavira only accepts feeling (*vedanā*), conception (*saṃjñā*) and volition (*cetanā*). Among the *mahābhūmika* dharmas, they do not accept contact. Instead of accepting contact as a dharma, they consider it to be the contact of consciousness (*viññāna*). Hence, they hold that the eye (*caḥṣus*) and form (*rūpa*) arise in the first instant, the contact of the consciousness arises in the second instant and feeling arises in the third instant. But Saṅghabhadra criticizes Sthavira, saying that the eye, form and consciousness arises in the first instant, and that *caitta* dharmas such as contact arise in the second instant. Through a systematic presentation of Saṅghabhadra’s criticism of Sthavira position, I considered in detail, using the *Tattvārthā Abhidharmakośaṭīkā* as a guide, on what basis he came to the conclusion that *caitta* dharmas such as contact exist simultaneously.