Nāgārjuna's Tetralemma in Yamauchi Tokuryū's Philosophy

Romaric Jannel

Yamauchi Tokuryū 山内得立 (1890–1982), who was a disciple of Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎 (1870–1945) and a reader of the works of Suzuki Daisetsu 鈴木大拙 (1870–1966), is an important but sadly neglected philosopher. This essay aims to present what constitutes the core of his philosophical project as presented in *Rogosu to renma* ロゴスとレンマ (hereafter, *Logos and Lemma*; 1974). During his lifetime, Yamauchi was, in Japan, a well-known specialist of the history of philosophy. His work deals with ancient Greek philosophy, European medieval philosophy, German idealism, phenomenology, and existentialism. He also tried to challenge Western philosophy, in a critical way, through a dialogue with Eastern philosophy.

The preface of *Logos and Lemma* refers to the idea presented in the opening line of Rudyard Kipling's poem "The Ballad of East and West," which reads "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."[1] This statement, found in the opening section of Yamauchi's main essay, has often been criticized by Japanese intellectuals. Before him, Suzuki Daisetsu had already mentioned the translation of Kipling's poem in an article published in the *Mainichi shinbun* 毎日新聞 newspaper on December 22, 1958 entitled "Tōyō bunka no kontei ni aru mono" 東洋文化の根柢にあるもの (That Which Lies at the Foundation of Eastern Culture).[2] We can only wonder whether Yamauchi read Suzuki's article and was influenced by it. Whether he did or not, it is

[1] The poem is translated into Japanese as "Higashi wa higashi, nishi wa nishi" 東は東、西は西 (East is East, West is West). It dates from 1889 and was often mentioned to criticize Kipling's racism. However, the rest of the poem seems to be a little different. Kipling sings: "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, / Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment seat; / But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth, / When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!" Eliot 1941, p. 111.

[2] Suzuki (1963) 2014, p. 15.

certain that Yamauchi wanted to go beyond such a perspective; his aim was to establish an overcoming of both Western and Eastern philosophies.

However, this goal may not appear to be so innovative. The philosophers of the Kyoto school are known for using Eastern concepts to challenge Western philosophy. But Yamauchi does not limit himself to including Eastern concepts, and his method is based on detailed studies of both Western and Eastern philosophies in which he closely examines difficult primary sources as well as their commentaries. While his work includes dialogues with thinkers such as Kant and Vasubandhu (fl. ca. 4th or 5th c.), his favorite interlocutors are, without doubt, Aristotle and Nāgārjuna (fl. ca. 2nd–3rd c.). His goal is to create a "global system of thought" (*sekai teki na shisō taikei* 世界的な思想体系)[3] through a meticulous and critical examination of both Aristotle's and Nāgārjuna's thinking concerning logic. Yamauchi explains his purpose as follows:

> The development of *logos* culminated with Hegel, but to say that there is no logic outside of *logos* constitutes an excess of authority—even the arrogance—of Western thought. In the East, there is also a logic. It is the logic of the *lemma*. By presenting it and explaining what is, by contrast with the West, the characteristic of Eastern thought, in a certain sense we want to strongly establish a system of thought for the whole world. The logic of the *lemma* is not just an *Idealtypus* of Eastern culture; it supports one of the wings of a global system of thought, and I even think that the act of distinguishing each of these [wings], while simultaneously embracing both of them, could constitute the achievement of a global system of thought. This book is nothing else than such an attempt.[4]

Yamauchi's most original philosophical gesture is presented in his book *Logos and Lemma*. Its purpose is to elaborate a new logic that could encompass and overcome both Aristotelian logic and Nāgārjuna's views. From a metaphysical point of view, this book aims to solve the problem of causality by using the Buddhist concept of dependent co-arising (*pratītya-samutpāda*).[5] Causality is a central issue in metaphysics, and that is why Yamauchi dedicates an entire book to presenting his ideas and their implications. To address this issue, he reinterprets Nāgārjuna's tetralemma in order to give birth to what he considers a "global system of thought" and a new logic. And it is from this reinterpretation of the tetralemma that he analyzes the question of causality and attempts to see the relation between cause and effect through the concept of dependent co-arising.

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[3] Yamauchi 1974, p. 67.

[4] Yamauchi 1974, p. 67.

[5] The concept of dependent co-arising is discussed by Yamauchi in the fifth chapter of *Logos and Lemma* entitled "Engi no kōzō" 縁起の構造 (hereafter, "The Structure of Dependent Co-Arising"). Yamauchi 1974, pp. 139–73.

Since Yamauchi is not a well-known philosopher, I begin this essay with a brief presentation of his life and work, and then analyze the concept of tetralemma in Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*. I will then explain Yamauchi's reinterpretation of this concept, and finally, will illustrate the way he addresses the problem of causality in *Logos and Lemma* based on his own version of the tetralemma and the Buddhist notion of dependent co-arising.

Yamauchi's Life and Work[6]

Nakagawa Tokuryū 中川得立 was born on June 12, 1890, at the temple Zenkyōji 善教寺 in Tenma 天満 Village, Nara Prefecture.[7] In 1911, he entered the department of philosophy at Kyoto Imperial University and received a bachelor's degree in 1914. In 1918, he got married to Yamauchi Masako 山内政子,[8] changed his own surname to Yamauchi, and earned the right to inherit the fortune of his wife's father, Yamauchi Zenzaburō 山内善三郎, a rich businessman of the Nagasaki region. In July 1920, Yamauchi left Japan at his own expense to go to France, the United Kingdom, and Germany. He probably spent little time in France and the United Kingdom since we know that he attended the lectures of Husserl and Heidegger at the University of Freiburg.[9] In October 1921, he was offered a position as assistant professor at Tōkyō Shōka 東京商科 University (present-day Hitotsubashi University). He did not physically take up this position and continued his stay in Germany. However, this appointment seems to have put an end to his period of self-financing which began when he left for Europe. He returned to Japan in October 1923 and became a lecturer (1924), and then a professor (1925), at Tōkyō Shōka University.

In 1930, he was awarded a PhD for his dissertation "Ninshiki no sonzairon-teki kiso" 認識の存在論的基礎 (The Ontological Ground of Knowledge) at Kyoto Imperial University under the supervision of Nishida Kitarō. In 1931, he was offered a professorship

[6] The documentation and information concerning Yamauchi's life are, on some points, not entirely clear. Some of the information in this section was first presented in Jannel 2020b. I have here updated and adjusted this in some detail using historical and administrative records, most of which were obtained from Yamauchi's descendants. I would like to thank them for their help and kindness.

[7] This village is currently a part of Yamatotakada 大和高田 City.

[8] Yamauchi's first wife, Yamauchi Masako, passed away in 1919. He married a second time in 1926 to Gamō Ei 蒲生エイ who passed away in 1931. He then married again, to Takeba Mieko 竹葉美枝子, in 1932.

[9] Some Japanese historical documents, as well as the chronology of Yamauchi's life presented in Yamauchi (1993) 2002 (p. 314), indicate that Yamauchi might have left Europe for the United States in May 1921 to pursue research in the natural sciences and philosophy. Nevertheless, I was not able to find any proof of his entry into the U.S. Furthermore, during this period, in his correspondence with Yamauchi, Nishida sent letters to him in Freiburg, which strongly suggests that Yamauchi was living there. Yamauchi's descendants have confirmed the accuracy of this deduction.

at this university, holding various positions before being appointed in 1946 to the First Chair of Philosophy and the History of Philosophy (*Tetsugaku tetsugakushi daiichi kōza* 哲学哲学史第一講座). Before him, the position had been held by Nishida Kitarō, Tanabe Hajime 田邊元 (1885–1962), and Kōyama Iwao 高山岩男 (1905–1993). He was offered this position after Kōyama was forced to resign on account of his support for Japanese policies during World War II. Yamauchi, who kept his distance from politics, held this prestigious post from 1946 to 1953, when he became professor emeritus at the University of Kyoto. In the same year, he was offered the position of director of the Kyoto University of Education. In 1959, he became a special professor at Ryukoku University, a well-known institution affiliated with the Nishi Honganji 西本願寺 denomination of True Pure Land Buddhism. He taught there until 1980 and died on September 19, 1982, at the age of ninety-two.

Yamauchi wrote numerous books during his lifetime. The first, *Ninshiki no taishō* 認識の対象 (The Object of Knowledge, 1916), is a translation of *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis: Ein Beitrag der philosophischen Transcendenz* (1892) by the neo-Kantian Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936).[10] Yamauchi's works reflect his expertise in the history of philosophy and deal mainly with Kantian theories of knowledge, phenomenology, and existentialism. Some representative works include an introduction to phenomenology titled *Genshōgaku josetsu* 現象学叙説 (An Explanation of Phenomenology, 1929), *Sonzairon shi* 存在論史 (A History of Ontology, 1932), and a work concerning existentialism titled *Jitsuzon no tetsugaku* 実存の哲学 (The Philosophy of Existence, 1948). However, his major work in the history of philosophy is probably his detailed study of ancient Greek philosophy, which consists of a series of five books published between 1944 and 1960, titled *Girishia no tetsugaku* ギリシアの哲学 (Greek Philosophy).

Yamauchi's work is principally about Western philosophy and its history. After World War II, he progressively changed the nature of his philosophical contributions to elaborate his own philosophy. This new strand of his thought may be seen in works such as *Seiyō bunka no san genri* 西洋文化の三原理 (The Three Principles of Western Culture, 1946) and *Seisei, sōzō, keisei: Mittsu no ringo* 生成・創造・形成：三つの林檎 (The Three Apples: Production, Creation, Formation; 1950). This shift becomes particularly significant from a philosophical point of view in three volumes published respectively in 1967, 1974, and posthumously in 1993: *Imi no keijijōgaku* 意味の形而上学 (Metaphysics of Meaning), *Logos and Lemma*, and *Zuimen no tetsugaku* 随眠の哲学 (hereafter, *The Philosophy of Latency*).[11] Yamauchi's interest in Buddhist thought

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[10] Yamauchi's translation is based on the second edition published in 1904.

[11] The word "*zuimen*," translated as "latency" in this article, is the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit word "*anuśaya*," which is used in Buddhism to express the latent tendencies of the mind. Yamauchi compares it to the Greek idea of "*hypokeimenon*" and to the Heideggerian notion of "*der Satz*

became particularly noticeable in his writings during the postwar period, and became a major focus in *Logos and Lemma* and *The Philosophy of Latency*. Indeed, in these two volumes Yamauchi argues that Buddhist thought can be useful to philosophers in order to get answers to classical problems concerning causality (in *Logos and Lemma*) and the "ground of being" (*sonzai no konkyo* 存在の根拠; in *The Philosophy of Latency*).

Even if Yamauchi sometimes expresses his thought more clearly in *The Philosophy of Latency*, the earlier *Logos and Lemma* represents his major endeavor in terms of comparative philosophy given the scale and depth of its philosophical analysis. It is in this volume, which deals primarily with the concept of the tetralemma, that he questions both Aristotle's and Nāgārjuna's views.

The Tetralemma in Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā

The tetralemma is an important rhetorical tool used by Nāgārjuna in his *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*. Even if this concept was not created by him, it is undeniable that his work established the tetralemma as one of the most important Buddhist methods of argumentation. The *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* contains many examples of tetralemmas.[12] Verse 18.8, for instance, reads as follows:

> Everything is real, not real,
> Both real and not real,
> Neither real nor not real.
> This is the Buddhas' progressive teaching (*anuśāsana*).[13]

These verses are typical of the tetralemma, which means "four propositions" in ancient Greek. The second proposition is the contrary of the first one, the third one is the combination of the first two, and the fourth one is their invalidation.[14] In other words, we can describe it as A, Ā, both A and Ā, and neither A nor Ā. The tetralemma was not used only by classical Indian philosophers. Indeed, Aristotle explicitly rejected this

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vom Grund." In his *Vocabulaire du bouddhisme japonais*, Girard defines *anuśaya* as "Latence. Résidus psychiques inconscients" (Girard 2008, vol. 2, p. 1655).

[12] See, for some examples, verses 18.8, 22.11, 25.17, 25.18, 25.22, 25.23, 27.13, and 27.20.

[13] The Sanskrit is "*sarvaṃ tathyaṃ na vā tathyaṃ tathyaṃ cātathyameva ca / naivātathyaṃ naivatathyametad buddhānuśāsanam*," and the Chinese is 一切実非実亦実亦非実非実非非実是名諸仏法 (both the Sanskrit and Chinese are found in Saigusa 1984, vol. 2, pp. 494–96). Guy Bugault translates the Sanskrit into French as: "Tout est bien comme il semble, rien comme il semble. À la fois comme il semble et non comme il semble. Ni l'un ni l'autre. Tel est l'enseignement progressif (*anuśāsana*) des Buddha" (Nāgārjuna 2002, pp. 233–34). Jay L. Garfield translates the Tibetan version of this passage into English as: "Everything is real and is not real, Both real and not real, Neither real nor not real. This is Lord Buddha's teaching" (Nāgārjuna 1995, pp. 49 and 250). For English translations of the Sanskrit verses, see Nagarjuna 1995 and 2013.

[14] Bugault 1990.

type of reasoning in his *Metaphysics* (1008a–b), which indicates that the tetralemma was already known by the Greeks at that time.

The acceptance and use of the tetralemma in order to question reality is a unique feature of classical Indian thought. Furthermore, what seems to be a distinguishing characteristic of Nāgārjuna's tetralemma is presented in the last sentence of verse 18.8, where he writes: "This is the Buddhas' progressive teaching." The word for "progressive teaching" in Sanskrit is *anuśāsana*. Guy Bugault, a French specialist and translator of Nāgārjuna, explains that *anuśāsana* refers to a way of teaching that is gradual and adjusted to the reader's understanding.[15]

Thus, the tetralemma does not seem to be a simple enumeration of every possible way to predicate something. Rather, it appears to be a processual structure used to achieve a specific goal. But what can the purpose of Nāgārjuna's tetralemma be? This aim demonstrates that the tetralemma is processual by default. The use of the tetralemma in Nāgārjuna's thought is closely related to the general purpose of his *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*, which is to emphasize the notion of dependent co-arising (*pratītya-samutpāda*),[16] that is, the reverse side of emptiness (*śūnyatā*). Towards this end, the tetralemma represents a tool to demonstrate that things are empty in themselves.

In verse 18.8, Nāgārjuna first explains that everything (in our world) is real, which constitutes an intuitive assumption. But for classical Mādhyamika philosophers, everything is empty in itself. This is why Nāgārjuna in his second step questions this first assumption and says that we can consider all things as not real. He thus illustrates two different propositions containing two contradictory assumptions about the nature of all things. Third, for Nāgārjuna, everything can be both real and not real. Nevertheless, such an idea appears to be nonsense: how can a biaffirmation, which represents a contradictory judgment, be relevant? He probably also thinks that contradictory judgments are irrelevant; that is why he concludes that everything in the world (every phenomenon) is neither real nor not real. This assumption forms another contradictory position: a binegation that aims to express the emptiness of all our judgments. Besides,

[15] Nāgārjuna 2002, pp. 233–34. See also Ruegg 2010, p. 44.

[16] The Sanskrit word *pratītya-samutpāda* was translated in various ways into Chinese over the course of the long history of Buddhism. The two main translations were *yinyuan* 因縁 (Jp. *innen*) and *yuanqi* 縁起 (Jp. *engi*). The term *yinyuan* appeared early in the history of the translation of Buddhist texts in Chinese. It was used, for example, in the translations of An Shigao 安世高 (Jp. Anseikō; fl. ca. 148–180). Nearly two centuries later, the translation of *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* by Kumārajīva (Jp. Kumarajū 鳩摩羅什; 344–413 or 350–409) still used the term *yinyuan* to translate the Sanskrit *pratītya-samutpāda*. The term *yuanqi* (*engi*) seems to have become predominant thanks to the translations, commentaries, and syntheses by the Buddhist monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (Jp. Genjō; 602–664). Yamauchi mainly discusses the concept of *pratītya-samutpāda* in the fifth chapter of *Logos and Lemma* (Yamauchi 1974, pp. 139–73).

we can legitimately assume that Nāgārjuna's structure of the tetralemma—affirmation, negation, both affirmation and negation, neither affirmation nor negation—is a process used by Mādhyamika philosophers, and probably relevant in the minds of many Mahayana thinkers, to question reality.

As a result, the progressive nature of this tetralemma appears as a consequence of Nāgārjuna's general assumption about what is real, or true, and how our judgments may be questionable. In the *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*, the tetralemma is frequently used to show that we cannot assert something with absolute certainty, and that things are not necessarily what they seem to be. He refers to the tetralemma in order to deconstruct our views on the emptiness of things (22.11), as well as on the Buddha's existence before his awakening (25.18) and after it (25.17).

Thus, we can say that the tetralemma is not simply used in the *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* for things that could be experienced in everyday life, but also for what constitutes the core ideas and experiences of the Buddhist quest. The development of the tetralemma helps Buddhist practitioners to progressively point out the emptiness of all things.

We can summarize Nāgārjuna's tetralemma as follows: it is a processual group of four propositions consciously ordered as A, Ā, both A and Ā, and neither A nor Ā that is designed to reveal the emptiness which is, for the Mādhyamika thinkers, inherent to all the things that we can experience or that appear to us in our world.

Yamauchi's Interpretation of Nāgārjuna's Tetralemma

The first interesting characteristic of Yamauchi's interpretation of Nāgārjuna's thought is that, to him, the tetralemma should read "A, Ā, neither A nor Ā, both A and Ā" rather than "A, Ā, both A and Ā, neither A nor Ā." The difference between them is the inversion of the last two lemmas in order to present, according to Yamauchi, the binegation as the third position and the biaffirmation as the fourth.[17]

Yamauchi argues that Nāgārjuna's conceptual orientation itself necessitates giving central status to binegation in the structure of the tetralemma. He argues that the dedicatory verses of the *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* represent an emphasis on binegation as evidenced in its famous eight negations. This is why Yamauchi decides to use it as the third lemma; in this way, he gives to the binegation a central position in the structure of the tetralemma. He writes:

> The dedicatory verses of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* put the emphasis on the fact that every being is "neither born nor destroyed, neither permanent nor ceases, neither unity nor diversity, neither arrived

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[17] Yamauchi 1974, p. 70.

nor departed." This famous and audacious argumentation is a clear expression of the logic of binegation; What else can this be if not an insistence upon the third lemma?[18]

Suzuki Daisetsu refers to this structure of the tetralemma in an article published in the journal *Kokoro* 心 in April 1962 titled "Tōyō shisō no funisei" 東洋思想の不二性 (The Indivisibility of Eastern Thought),[19] and it is possible that Yamauchi may have borrowed his understanding of this structure from Suzuki. In any case, since Nāgārjuna clearly chose to use the binegation as the fourth lemma, we must question why Yamauchi argued to change the order of the tetralemma. As he was not a Buddhist scholar, he did so as a philosopher. Yamauchi may be seen as the first philosopher to think, from a speculative point of view, about the philosophical consequences of such an inversion. But how can such a simple change prove to have such philosophical importance?

First of all, this change comes within the scope of Yamauchi's philosophical project to create a "global system of thought" by means of a new logic.[20] For him, Western philosophy is structured around three logical principles: the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, and the law of the excluded middle. And these principles—which were already explained and used, though not created, by Aristotle—not only represent the structure of Western philosophy, they also, according to Yamauchi, demarcate its internal limitation.[21] Thus, if he were to overcome what we know as philosophy, he was convinced that he would also have to overcome Aristotelian logic, which comprises these three principles. He claims that Kant overcame the law of identity through his synthetic judgment, and that Hegel accomplished a "reversal" (*gyakuten* 逆転) of the law of non-contradiction with his dialectics.[22] However, Yamauchi could not find any evidence of the overcoming of the law of the excluded middle in the entire history of Western philosophy. This is why he focused his research on Eastern philosophy. From such a perspective, he identified the tetralemma as the logical structure of Eastern Buddhist philosophy, and saw it as something that is able to overcome the three principles of Aristotelian logic.[23]

[18] Yamauchi 1974, p. 72.

[19] Suzuki (1963) 2014, p. 188.

[20] Yamauchi 1974, p. 67.

[21] These three principles are discussed by Yamauchi in the first chapter of *Logos and Lemma* titled "Mittsu no ronri" 三つの論理 (The Three Logics). Yamauchi 1974, pp. 1–15. For more information about the way Yamauchi discusses Aristotlian logic, see Jannel 2020a.

[22] Yamauchi 1974, p. 66.

[23] Yamauchi's reflections concerning the tetralemma are expressed in both *Logos and Lemma* and *The Philosophy of Latency*. He devotes the third chapter of *Logos and Lemma*, titled "Tetralemma" (pp. 68–105), to this theme.

Whereas Nāgārjuna's tetralemma is designed as a simple rhetorical tool to help Buddhists reach *nirvāṇa*, Yamauchi intends to create a new "logical system" for his "global system of thought." This is the first and most obvious reason why Yamauchi decides to change the order of the lemmas in the tetralemma. According to him, the tetralemma in Nāgārjuna's verses presents the four human modes of thinking and speaking; however, it is not yet logical at this stage. With the inversion of the last two lemmas, he changes it into a "logical system."[24]

But what is a "logical system"? Does Yamauchi's tetralemma truly represent such a thing? André Lalande defines a "system" as follows:

> A set of logically united scientific or philosophical ideas, insofar as they are considered consistent, rather than true. "A system is nothing else than the layout of the different parts of an art or of a science in an order in which these parts mutually support each other, and in which the last ones can be explained by the first ones." Condillac, *Traité des systèmes*, vol. 1.[25]

The different parts that constitute the structure of a system must support each other; a system represents a consistent and unified entity. Such a definition shows that a system should be exhaustive and self-restricted. If this is not the case, it cannot be called "system."

Nāgārjuna's tetralemma aims to reveal the lack of selfhood of things and, ultimately, the emptiness of our representations. Even if the four lemmas that compose it are considered complete, the tetralemma cannot be seen as a system; rather, it is a scheme that makes possible the revelation of something apart from it: emptiness. On the contrary, Yamauchi's tetralemma represents a system, in a philosophical and a scientific sense, due to its consistent and self-restricted layout. The four lemmas form a system that does not open to, or reveal, a fifth step.[26]

Yamauchi aims to overcome the three principles that are representative of Aristotle's logic. While his intention can be interpreted as a negation of Aristotelian logic, it is nevertheless not synonymous with an absolute rejection of it. The affirmative and the negative lemmas constitute the first level of Yamauchi's tetralemma. This is plainly compatible

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[24] Yamauchi (1993) 2002, p. 125.

[25] Lalande (1926) 2010, vol. 2, p. 1097.

[26] Nāgārjuna's tetralemma aims to reveal, in a fifth step, the emptiness of our representations, while Yamauchi tries to create an innovative logical system through a reinterpretation of the tetralemma. More recently, in his book *The Fifth Corner of Four: An Essay on Buddhist Metaphysics and the Catuṣkoṭi*, Graham Priest, who tries to understand the tetralemma through the prism of contemporary non-classical logic, proposed another interpretation of Nāgārjuna's tetralemma which he explains as follows: "The catuṣkoṭi has split into two: a four-valued semantic catuṣkoṭi, and a 5-valued ontological catuṣkoṭi—the fifth value in the ontological case being ineffability" (Priest 2018, p. 73). Even if we cannot say whether or not that this interpretation of Nāgārjuna's tetralemma is philologically accurate, it is an innovative philosophical way to understand the Indian Buddhist monk.

with the law of identity, the law of non-contradiction, and the law of the excluded middle. We can even consider that this first level deliberately encompasses these three principles. On the other hand, the binegation and the biaffirmation lemmas form the second level of Yamauchi's tetralemma and are not compatible with Aristotelian logic.

The relation between Yamauchi's tetralemma and Aristotle's logic is subtle but real. While his first two lemmas do not reject the three principles, his last two constitute their negation, allowing us to consider new forms of assertion; this aims to create an original and logical system. As a system, this tetralemma represents an encompassing overcoming of both Aristotle's logic and Nāgārjuna's tetralemma.

Indeed, it is through a modification of Nāgārjuna's tetralemma—the inversion of the last two lemmas—which encompasses the discursive capacities of each lemma (considered independently from one another) that Yamauchi tries to create a logical system in which Aristotelian logic can be both used and overcome. The Japanese philosopher implicitly recognizes the meaning and utility of both Aristotelian logic and Nāgārjuna's tetralemma, but seems to consider that while Aristotelian logic is not efficient in grasping some objects of knowledge, Nāgārjuna's tetralemma does not constitute a logical system and leads to an aporia.

The second original aspect of Yamauchi's reinterpretation lies in the bipartition of the four lemmas, and more precisely, the nature of the last two lemmas in contrast with the first two. Nāgārjuna is well-known for emphasizing the doctrine of the two truths (*satyadvaya*) which are, as presented in verse 24.8, "conventional truth" (*saṃvṛtisatya*) and "ultimate truth" (*satyaṃ ca paramārthataḥ*). Yamauchi considers the first two lemmas as characteristics of "conventional truth" and the last two as characteristics of "ultimate truth."[27]

Consequently, what sort of description of reality can we infer from the logical structure of Yamauchi's tetralemma? According to him, the affirmative lemma and the negative lemma characterize conventional truth. In doing this, human beings are used to asserting things strongly even if such assertions do not describe reality as it is. In order to describe some specific objects accurately, it is necessary to grasp them at an unconventional level of truth, that is to say, to understand them as they are at an ultimate level of truth. As a result, Yamauchi thinks that he has no other choice but to refer to that which logically refers to ultimate truth: the binegation and the biaffirmation. However, what does such a position mean philosophically?

Cartesian philosophy is founded on the distinction between clear and distinct ideas when referring to true knowledge, and obscure and confused ideas which are not considered knowledge. For Descartes, to understand something is to have a clear and distinct idea of it. Yamauchi does not comment on this Cartesian position, but it is clear

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[27] Yamauchi 1974, p. 177.

that Yamauchi's views are far from those of Descartes. For Yamauchi, some things have to be grasped through the binegation or the biaffirmation, which give an unclear and indistinct idea of these objects; it is their very nature that dictates that they can only be grasped through a binegation or a biaffirmation. In other words, in order to know such things, one must consider them as they are: unclear and indistinct.[28]

Nevertheless, under the influence of Kantian and Neo-Kantian philosophies, Yamauchi tries to create a new "theory of knowledge" (*ninshikiron* 認識論).[29] Considering that he is, in his own way, a son of Kantian criticism, it would be a mistake to think that he rejects rationality. Even if he does not pretend to be Cartesian, his goal is surely to be rational, and that is why he tries to elaborate a new logic.

Yamauchi's Philosophical Aims

For Yamauchi, changing Nāgārjuna's tetralemma is not a rhetorical act. In *Logos and Lemma*, the metaphysical aim underlying the inversion of the last two lemmas concerns the question of causality.[30] The very existence of a necessary and sufficient link between cause and effect was criticized by Hume, who argued that such a link does not exist. In *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume explains that when we suppose the existence of a link between cause and effect, it is just the result of our "experience" and our "habits";[31] we cannot experience this link itself. We only see the cause and the effect, nothing else.

Of course, Yamauchi is aware both of Hume's criticism,[32] and of the fact that Nāgārjuna too criticizes the idea of a link between cause and effect.[33] The main philosophical problem discussed in *Logos and Lemma* is the question of the existence of such a link, and it is one of the reasons for the inversion of the last two lemmas. Like Nāgārjuna, Yamauchi considers that causes and effects are by

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[28] This account of the thought of Descartes is not directly relevant to the argument of this essay, but it is useful as a heuristic device to situate Yamauchi's philosophy in relation to the problem of rationality. For more information about clear and distinct ideas, see the third part of Descartes's *Méditations métaphysiques* (1641).

[29] Yamauchi is explicit on this point. See Yamauchi (1993) 2002, p. 153.

[30] Yamauchi uses what he considers a logical system (his own version of the tetralemma) to question the link between cause and effect and, more generally, causality. Nāgārjuna himself used a logical approach to analyze causality in the twentieth chapter of *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*. It is an old practice in Buddhist rhetoric to examine causality from a logical point of view. Such an approach is probably linked to the different meanings of the word "*hetu*" (which means "cause" [Jp. *in* 因]). Indeed, the term "*hetu*" can mean the "cause" of something present in the real world or a fundamental logical element of reasoning. To be more specific, if "*hetu-phala*" (Jp. *inga* 因果) literally means "cause-fruit," the word "*hetu*" in classical Indian logic refers to the element that allows one to demonstrate an assertion.

[31] Hume (1748) 2007, pp. 23, 32.

[32] For example, see Yamauchi 1974, pp. 75, 81.

[33] For instance, see Yamauchi 1974, p. 81.

themselves inconsistent.[34] In such an approach, there is neither a cause nor an effect—an assertion that is synonymous with Yamauchi's third lemma: the binegation.

However, the position of the binegation does not allow for an explanation of how things can appear, change, and disappear. Thus, there emerges the need for Yamauchi to consider both the cause and the effect, which corresponds to his fourth lemma: the biaffirmation. The idea of causality involves a temporal issue; indeed, a cause generates an effect. According to Yamauchi, the modern conception of causality does not allow one to think of a perfect simultaneity and co-response between a cause and an effect.[35]

To solve this issue, he considers that what we see as causality is in fact more complex and has to be considered through the concept of dependent co-arising (*pratītya-samutpāda*). It is not causality, but the Buddhist concept of dependent co-arising that gives us an accurate understanding of how things change.

For Yamauchi, what we usually call "cause" and "effect" are not independent things; they are linked to each other. An effect without a cause is impossible, but also there cannot be a cause without an effect. A cause needs an effect to be, and an effect needs a cause to be. Yamauchi calls this relation "co-awaiting" (*sōdai* 相待). His answer to the metaphysical problem of causality is based on the modification of Nāgārjuna's tetralemma. In his own tetralemma, the third lemma seems to be characteristic of the difficulty in understanding the cause and effect in themselves; through the binegation, he rejects the selfhood of both the cause and the effect. And finally, by admitting the mutually dependent existence of both of them through a co-awaiting relation in the fourth lemma, the biaffirmation seems to become another name for, or the logical form of, dependent co-arising.[36]

To describe the world, Yamauchi often refers to dependent co-arising and gives some concrete examples of this concept such as the relationship between a husband and wife: a husband cannot be without his wife and a wife cannot exist without her husband. Even if they can be independent as a man and a woman, they need each other to be a husband and a wife. Furthermore, if the husband dies, the spouse loses her status as "wife."[37]

Unsurprisingly, we can assume that Yamauchi borrows part of his explanation from Buddhist thinkers, notably Nāgārjuna. In this respect, he even refers to the example of

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[34] Yamauchi mainly discusses this issue in the fifth chapter of *Logos and Lemma* titled "The Structure of Dependent Co-Arising." Yamauchi 1974, pp. 139–73. For an overview of Nāgārjuna's thought, see in particular pp. 154–55.

[35] Yamauchi 1974, p. 143.

[36] This is my understanding of Yamauchi's thought based on the chapter "The Structure of Dependent Co-Arising." He also discusses the concept of "co-awaiting" in the chapter entitled "Relativity and Co-Awaiting" (Yamauchi 1974, pp. 106–38).

[37] Yamauchi frequently uses this example; Yamauchi 1974, pp. 170–71.

fire and fuel, which is the main theme of chapter ten of the *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*. In this chapter, Nāgārjuna discusses the relationship between fire and fuel. For him, their relation is not the consequence of a causal link, even if both appear to be dependent on each other.

Nevertheless, he explains that the very existence of a fire is not dependent on the existence of its fuel and, at the same time, not independent of it. Then, he also claims the same concerning the fuel: the existence of the fuel does not depend on the fire, and is at the same time, not independent of it (verse 10.12). Consequently, it appears that the relationship between fire and fuel can be defined as a binegation. Nāgārjuna's aim is to reject any causal link in this relationship. Such a conception is representative of Nāgārjuna's views concerning dependent co-arising.

In his chapter in *Logos and Lemma* relating to dependent co-arising, Yamauchi gives a detailed explanation of this concept and states that in order to define the relationship between fire and fuel, Nāgārjuna relies on the hermeneutical capabilities of the tetralemma. Yamauchi uses Nāgārjuna's explanation for his own purposes,[38] in particular, to clarify the meaning of the concept of co-awaiting. Things involved in a co-awaiting relationship do not possess each other. It does not mean that a fire possesses its fuel or that fuel possesses a fire; it means that a fire needs the presence of fuel to exist and that fuel needs a fire to exist as fuel. Fire and fuel cannot be independent of each other (binegation), and their existence is due to their mutual relationship (biaffirmation).[39]

Conclusion

Yamauchi's interpretation of Nāgārjuna's tetralemma has many particularities. The first is that Yamauchi's approach to Nāgārjuna's thought is philosophical. He does not aim to offer a new philological understanding of Nāgārjuna's work but tries to find out if his thought can be useful to question some fundamental philosophical issues.

In *Logos and Lemma*, Yamauchi tries to solve the classical problem of causality thanks to a logical tool, the tetralemma, and a metaphysical concept, dependent co-arising. Given the breadth and depth of his philosophical knowledge and reflection, Yamauchi is surely one of the most significant modern philosophers engaged in comparative philosophy. However, the most interesting aspects of his philosophy are, without doubt, his concern to find solutions to metaphysical problems and the way he uses Buddhist philosophy to nourish and more deeply pursue his own philosophical quest.

[38] The issue of fire and fuel is discussed in Yamauchi 1974, pp. 151–53.
[39] Yamauchi 1974, pp. 152–53.

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