

Svarajya Siddhīh of Gangadharendra Sarasvati —Attaining Self-dominion

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(Continued from the previous issue)

FROM YOUR STANDPOINT, who brings about the coming together of the different elements and molecules since you do not accept a sentient doer?

Objection: But, we do see that *pratitya-samutpada*, dependent origination—the characteristic of an effect being subservient—has two causes, *hetu-upanibandha*, causal relation and *pratyaya-upanibandha*, conditional relation. The *hetu-upanibandha* or the causal relation is the group of causes starting from the seed to the effect of the fruit. The giving rise of one effect to the other by the chain of an effect becoming the next cause leads to one cause depending upon the other cause and so on. The relation between such causes—that are a combination of other causes like the six elements: earth, water, fire, air, space, and season, leading from one effect to the next effect—is *pratyaya-upanibandha* or conditional relation: ‘When a sprout is born from a seed, which is a cause, on account of the combination of the six elements.’²

Further, *hetu-upanibandha* establishes the difference between a banyan-tree sprout from other sprouts like that of *kutaja*, *conessi*. And, *pratyaya-upanibandha* gives different qualities to a seed from the six elements: The seed gets its hardness from earth, moisture from water, maturity from fire, growth from air, non-obstruction

for growth from space, and changes from season. The seed does not think: ‘I produce the sprout.’ Nor does the sprout think: ‘I am produced by the seed.’ By the analysis of *anvaya-vyatireka*, co-presence and co-absence, the mutual dependence of the seed and sprout is established. This further implies that for an action to take place, we do not always need a sentient doer. It has also been said: ‘*Utpadadva tathagatanam anutpadadva sthitaivesham dharmanam dharmata*; whether or not the Tathagatas were to arise, this nature of things has remained.’³ So, there is no need for a sentient doer for the molecules and elements to come together as the nature of things would remain the same even without a doer.

Reply: No, that cannot be so. Is the conduciveness of the causal and conditional relations for the production of the sprout and the like, independent of the other or dependent? We cannot accept that such a process is independent because then there would be no cessation of such activity. And if we accept that the production of the sprout and the like is dependent on the other, then since no sentient doer is accepted, it would lead to infinite regress. Further, are the combinations following in order, the earlier combinations done in the same manner as the earlier combinations, or differently, or is there no order? If it is held that the combinations are done in a similar manner

then the production of the sprout from the seed, thereafter the production of the stem, and further, leaves, flowers, and so on, cannot be explained as they are all of different combinations. If it is held that the combinations are different from the earlier ones then it would lead to chaos as every moment at all times would be completely different from the previous moment and they would be discrete and separate. However, we see that once the seed comes into existence, it is capable of producing the sprout, stem, leaves, flowers, and the like. The seed produces the sprout, even it is with variations; the production happens always. Also, if it is held that the combinations are completely different from the previous ones, then the production of a particular sprout from a particular seed like the production of a banyan sprout from a banyan seed, a *kutaja*, conessi sprout from a *kutaja* seed, cannot be explained. And if it is held that the combinations do not follow any order then the bodies of human beings and other animals would change the next moment into that of gods, human beings, or elephants. That is, the body of a particular living being would change the very next moment and there would be utter chaos and there would be no hope in this universe. Therefore, for the sake of all activities to continue in a proper manner, a sentient doer conversant with different activities and their results is totally necessary for the universe to function properly.

Objection: The collection of *pancha-skandhas* or five aggregates produce flash of consciousness and experience and hence it could produce the combination of elements and molecules due to the influence of nescience and the like. Here nescience and other factors could be the agent and so there is no defect in this standpoint.

Reply: No, that argument cannot be accepted as who produces the collection of these *skandhas* or aggregates is not known. Since there is no other example here, so we have to conclude that it is

produced by a sentient being. But if such a sentient doer is accepted then there would be the defect of infinite regress. To remove this defect, if it is held that the collection of these aggregates takes place by the flash of consciousness, then there would be the impossible situation of the flash of consciousness creating itself, which would lead to the defect of interdependence. Hence, that too is untenable. Also, since you do not accept a permanent doer, this standpoint would lead to accepting a permanent doer and would go against your thought.

Further, is the entity experiencing the collection of the aggregates different from the aggregates, or is the same as the aggregates, or one among them? If it is held that the entity is different from the aggregates, then by accepting something other than the aggregates, the standpoint of your thought is defeated and it suffers the same defect as that of the argument of the Vaisheshikas. If it is held that it is the same as the aggregates, the different entities cannot act in unison since if many persons were in one body, it would lead to instability. If it is held that the entity is one of the aggregates, there would be no method to ascertain which of the aggregates would be experiencing and so that stand cannot be accepted.

Objection: It can be held that *alaya-vijnana* or storage-consciousness is both the Atman and the enjoyer as it is self-effulgent. It is also always the substratum of the Atman and the basis of all activities and is also the doer and hence could ascertain which aggregate is the entity.

(To be continued)

References

2. Shinkan Murakami, 'Vedāntic Interpretation and Criticism of the Buddhist Dependent Origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*)', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (German), 152/1 (2002), 269–94; 278 <<http://menadoc.bibliothek.uni-halle.de/dmg/periodical/structure/143889>> accessed 29 January 2016.
3. *Shalistamba Sutra*, 9.