Bhāviveka on the Proof of *niḥsvabhāvatā**

TAMURA Masaki

0 Bhāviveka formulates an argument to prove the absence of *svabhāva* (essential nature) in the factors that make up existence. With reference to form (*rūpa*) which is at the conventional level supposed to be grasped by the visual organ, for example, he formulates the following argument:

[Thesis:] Form is not to be grasped by the visual organ (*cakṣurindriyagrāhya*) in ultimate reality (*paramārthataḥ*); [Reason:] because it is an aggregate (*saṃghāta*) [of eight elements: earth, water, fire, wind, form, odor, taste, and touch (*aṣṭadravya*)¹]; [Example:] like sound. (MHK III 40)

The pervasion (*vyāpti*) between the reason and what is to be proved is this: “Whatever is an aggregate of the eight elements is what is not to be grasped by the visual organ in ultimate reality,” which may be paraphrased as “Whatever has the property of being an aggregate of the eight elements does not in ultimate reality have the essential nature of being to be grasped by the visual organ.” To be sure, both form and sound are equally an aggregate of the eight elements. But it is empirically observed that while sound is not something to be grasped by the visual organ, form is something to be grasped by the visual organ. The aim of this paper is thus to examine the logic Bhāviveka applies in the argument.

1 The *Tarkajvālā* (TJ) explains the argument as follows:

When both form and sound are equally an aggregate of the eight elements, there is no reason to differentiate (*gtan tshigs kyi khyad par*, **viśeṣaheṭu*) between form and sound, so that one cannot say that while form is something to be grasped by the visual organ, sound is not. (TJ D65b1-2, P69b1-2)

According to TJ, if two things have a certain property in common, they cannot be differentiated from each other, from which it follows that if any other property is not attributed to one thing, it is not attributed to the other, either.

2 Tsong kha pa calls the logic Bhāviveka applies in the argument ‘reasoning from similarity of reason’ (*rgyu mtshan mthungs pa’i mgo snyoms*), pointing out that Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva also use this logic.²⁾ In addition, rMa bya Byang chub brtson ’gros makes a specific mention of the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (MMK) XX 20cd.³⁾

2.1 In MMK XX 20cd Nāgārjuna says the following:

If an effect (*phala*) and its cause (*hetu*) were different from each other (*prthaktve*), the cause would be the same (*tulya*) as what is not the cause for the effect (*ahetu*).

On this statement of Nāgārjuna’s Bhāviveka and Candrakīrti comment as follows:

(Bhāviveka) In the view [that an effect and its cause are different from each other], too, [an undesirable consequence results]. On condition that an effect and its cause are different from each other, [thesis:] the cause would be the same as what is not the cause for the effect; [reason:] because it is different from the effect; [example:] like a thing other than the cause. Thus the present view is not accepted, either. (PPr D202a4-6, P252b7-8)

(Candrakīrti) If, according to your view, a cause and its effect were considered to be different from each other, then the effect would arise as independent of its cause, since the effect is independent of anything else (*paratra nirapekṣatvāt*). However, this is not the case. Therefore, it is not possible that a cause and its effect are different from each other. (Pras 404.5-7)

Consider the situation where fire brings about smoke. Fire is different from smoke. Water is also different from smoke. Fire and water are alike in that they are different from smoke, so that they cannot be differentiated from each other in such a way that it can be said that fire is the cause of smoke, while water is not. This is how Bhāviveka interprets Nāgārjuna’s statement in question. Candrakīrti, who defines being different from a thing as being independent of the thing, follows in the same line of thought.

2.2 It is highly important to note that a similar logic is found in the **Upāyahṛdaya* (方便心論, UH). UH classifies twenty kinds of 相應 (**prasaṅga*)⁴⁾ into 同 (‘similar case’) and 異 (‘dissimilar case’). In discussing 異, UH states:

One who wishes to find fault with a dissimilar case [should say the following]: “You argue that while a pot is impermanent because it is apprehended by the sense organ in the way that its form is grasped by the sense organ, the self (*ātman*) is permanent because it is not apprehended by the sense organ. However, both the pot and the self are existent things. If the property existence or being-ness of the pot is the same as that of the self, you have to say that just as the pot is impermanent, so also is the self. If you say that the property existence or being-ness of the pot is different

(96) Bhāviveka on the Proof of *niḥsvabhāvatā* (M. TAMURA)

from that of the self, you can say that while the self is permanent, the pot is impermanent. The property existence or being-ness, however, remains constant, so that the self should be impermanent.” (UH T32.27c22-25)

A proponent argues that unlike a pot the self is permanent because it is not apprehended by the sense organ. An opponent raises an objection. If the property existence of the pot is the same as that of the self, one cannot say that the former is impermanent, while the latter is permanent. One cannot distinguish between two things that have the same property existence.

3 How should we understand the logic in question? In order to answer this question, it is useful to consider Āryadeva’s *Catuhśataka* XIV 10 and Candrakīrti’s comments on it.

(Āryadeva) The property of being a material element (*rūpatva*) that is possessed by any material elements (*rūpa*) does not differ from material element to material element (*avilakṣaṇa*). How could it be said that a certain material element exists as a pot, while another material element exists as a cloth?

(Candrakīrti) As material elements [such as form and odor] exist in a pot, so also they exist in things such as a cloth. Even if they are differentiated by their bearer such as a pot, they do not deviate from their own characteristics (*svalakṣaṇa*). For, wherever they may be, their characteristics remain the same (*tulyalakṣaṇa*). In that case, why is it not accepted that just as one material element exists as a pot, so also another material element, which is connected with a thing such as a cloth, exists as a pot? Yet, the latter too must exist as a pot, since their characteristics are not different from one another (*lakṣaṇābheda*). As a matter of fact, there can be no reason for not accepting in this way that the material element connected with the cloth exists as a pot. Therefore, it follows that any entity is a pot; or, it does not follow that the pot is a pot. (CŚT 334.5-10)

Points made by Candrakīrti are as follows: First, the property of being a material element does not differ from material element to material element. Secondly, a material element does not deviate from this property, which is simply the material element’s own characteristic. This implies that the material element is not distinct from the property from an ontological point of view. Thirdly, the characteristic of the material element which resides in a pot is the same as that of the material element which resides in a cloth, so that one cannot distinguish between both material elements. Fourthly, since a material element and its bearer are not distinct from each other, it is proper to say that a certain material element exists as a pot, a bearer of the material element. Consequently, if one accepts that the material element of a pot is not different from that of a cloth, then one has to say that the mate-

rial element of the cloth exists as the pot. Fifthly, under the given assumption, one has to say that anything that possesses the material element which is the same as that of the pot is the pot or that the pot which possesses the material element which is the same as that of the cloth is not the pot but the cloth.

4 As shown above, Bhāviveka's argument to prove that an empirically real entity has no essential nature is based on a fundamental logic traditionally accepted by Mādhyamikas, such that one cannot distinguish between two things which have a certain property in common. What has to be noticed is that this logic is used in a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* argument. Recall the following argument put forward by Bhāviveka under MMK XX 20cd:

[Thesis:] A cause is the same as what is not the cause; [Reason:] because it is different from an effect; [Example:] like a thing other than the cause.

Assuming that a cause is different from an effect, the proposition that a cause is the same as what is not the cause follows. Since the proposition is unreasonable, however, the assumption must be false. If the modifier *paramārthataḥ* 'in ultimate reality' is put into the proposition, the argument may be reformulated as follows:

[Thesis:] A cause is the same as what is not the cause *in ultimate reality*; [Reason:] because it is different from an effect; [Example:] like a thing other than the cause.

Here we notice that this argument is quite similar to that of Bhāviveka. Consider again his argument:

[Thesis:] Form is not to be grasped by the visual organ *in ultimate reality*; [Reason:] because it is an aggregate of eight elements; [Example:] like sound.

The assumption in this argument is that form is an aggregate of eight elements. On the basis of this assumption, it is proved that form is not to be grasped by the visual organ in ultimate reality. If the modifier *paramārthataḥ* is removed from the proposition, the argument may be reformulated as follows:

[Thesis:] Form is not to be grasped by the visual organ; [Reason:] because it is an aggregate of the eight elements; [Example:] like sound.

Since Bhāviveka accepts that form is to be grasped by the visual organ at the conventional level, the proposition of this argument is unreasonable. Therefore the assumption that form is an aggregate of eight elements should be refuted. However, he accepts that form is an aggregate of eight elements at the conventional level. It is to resolve this contradiction that

(98)

Bhāviveka on the Proof of *niḥsvabhāvatā* (M. TAMURA)

he uses the modifier *paramārthataḥ* in the proposition.

Bhāviveka accepts that an empirically real entity has an essential nature (*svabhāva*) at the conventional level and denies the essential nature established at the conventional level from the point of view of the ultimate truth. This attitude toward an essential nature of a given factor is clearly reflected in his argument. Thus, the logic under consideration is originally what establishes a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* argument and hence Bhāviveka's argument in which the logic is applied cannot be established without introducing the theory of two truths (*satyadvaya*).

Notes

*My special thanks are due to Professor Brendan S. Gillon for correcting my English and giving useful suggestions. I also wish to thank to Mr. Shojiro Nomura for valuable comments.

1) As for the eight elements (*aṣṭadravya*), see AKBh 52.20-53.1 and M. Tamura, "Bhāviveka no Shidaishu setsu" [Bhāviveka's Theory of Four Material Elements (*mahābhūta*)], *Minami Ajia ko-tengaku* 3 (2008): 176-181.

2) See Drang nges 132b3-8. The logic is also found to be used in the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* and *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa*. See VV 130.9-15 and VP 135.7-18.

3) See Rigs tshogs rgyan rtsa ba 15a8. 4) What is referred by the term 相應 is the confutation of a proponent by an opponent in a debate. See Y. Kajiyama, "On the Authorship of the *Upāyahrdaya*," in *Studies in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition* (Wien: 1991).

Abbreviations

AKBh: *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* ed. P. Pradhan, 1967. CŚ: *Catuhśataka* ed. Karen Lang. CŚT: *Catuhśatakaṭīkā* ed. K. Suzuki. Drang nges: *Drang ba dang nges pa'i don rnam par phye ba'i bstan bcos Legs bshad snying po*, P6142, Nga. MHK: *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā* ed. Ch. Lindtner. MMK: *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* ed. J.W. de Jong. PPr: *Prajñāpradīpa*, D3853, P5253. Pras: *Prasannapadā* ed. Louis de la Vallée Poussin. Rigs tshogs rgyan rtsa ba: *dBu ma rigs pa'i tshogs kyi rgyan de kho na nyid snang ba'i rtsa ba*, in *bKa' gdams pa'i gsung 'bum 'phyogs sgrig thengs dang po* vol. 13. 2006. TJ: *Tarkajvālā*, D3856, P5256. VV: *Vigrahavyāvartanī* ed. E. H. Johnston and A. Kunst. VP: *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa* ed. Y. Kajiyama.

〈Key words〉 Bhāviveka, *niḥsvabhāvatā*, *paramārthataḥ*, *satyadvaya*, *svatantrānumāna*, *prasaṅga*

(Graduate Student, Hiroshima University)