

*prasaṅga in Fang Bian Xin Lun¹

0. Introduction

This paper aims to localize Fang Bian Xin Lun as a Buddhist treatise advocating logic in the early development of Indian epistemology. The debate concerning the philosophical standpoint of this treatise, which arises from the ambiguity especially of the fourth chapter, 相應品 *Xiang Ying Pin*, began with Y. Kajiyama's refutation against the interpretation proposed by H. Ui. Despite many interests and studies triggered, the most authoritative prevailing conclusion for the issues regarding Fang Bian Xin Lun, however, circumscribed with the fact that only Chinese translation has been bequeathed and that neither Sanskrit manuscript nor Tibetan translation has been found or confirmed to be existent, has not yet reached.

In the researches done so far², the discussions revolve around three main points: 1) the authorship, 2) the epistemological attitude toward logic championed mainly by the Nyāya School, and 3) the interpretation regarding Xiang Ying Pin. Since the above three have been mostly dealt by Kajiyama, who argues that Fang Bian Xin Lun impugns the logic tradition and should be attributed to Nāgārjuna, I attempt to examine and dispute against Kajiyama's interpretation (Kajiyama, 1984; 2008) by proposing that the treatise should be viewed as one of the vanguard of the logic tradition followed by the Buddhist epistemologists like Dignāga, thus cannot be composed by Nāgārjuna, and that it is reasonable to reconstruct 相應 Xiang Ying as prasaṅga, with a totally different meaning from *reductio ad absurdum* though.

1. Invalidity of Kajiyama's Argumentation

The following passage best represents Kajiyama's premier viewpoints, where all his arguments originate from:

きわめて明瞭なことは、彼 (= Nagarjuna) が、『ニヤーヤ・スートラ』が詭弁として、つまり曲解・負処・誤難として断罪したその論法を好んで用いている、ということである。それは『ニヤーヤ・スートラ』の立

¹ I would like to thank Prof. Brendan Gillon for his insightful suggestions and corrections given in the lectures hosted by Prof. Lin Chenkuo at National Chengchi University. Prof. Gillon also generously provided the participants his personal notes and translation draft of the second, the third, and the fourth chapter of Fang Bian Xin Lun, which I resort to when translating the excerpts stated in this paper.

² The first overall study on Fang Bian Xin Lun is Ui Hakuju's 〈方便心論の註釋的研究〉 first published in 1925, where Ui argues that the treatise is 1) composed by someone from Hīnayāna School, 2) advocating logic, and 3) translated into Chinese by the translator who is responsible for the ambiguity of Xiang Ying Pin for he did not fully and correctly understand it. Following Ui's survey, Giuseppe Tucci shared the similar viewpoint and re-translated the Chinese text into Sanskrit published in *Pre-Dinnaga Buddhist Texts on Logic from Chinese Sources* in 1976. As an objection against Ui and Tucci, Kajiyama Yuichi published few articles including *On the Authorship of the Upāyahṛdaya* first presented on the Second International Dharmakīrti Conference in 1989. Based on the studies done by the forerunners, scholars such as Ichimura Shohei, Kimura Toshihiko, and Ishitobi Michiko also propose possible solutions concerning the issues of Fang Bian Xin Lun from different perspectives. In addition to the Sanskrit and the Japanese translations respectively done by Tucci and Ishitobi, and a sample translation of Gillon in *An Early Buddhist Text on logic: Fang Bian Xin Lun*, no version in other languages is available so far.

場から見れば詭弁であるとしても、ナーガールジュナのにとっては正当な論理であった。

このような、『ニヤーヤ・スートラ』が詭弁として排斥した論法を正当なものとして主張した書物が、ナーガールジュナの著書の他にもう一つあった。それは『方便心論』である。(Kajiyama, 2008)

This conviction must be established on the presupposition that the three sophistries, namely equivocation, rejoinder, and ways of defeat, are regarded as valid means of reasoning in Fang Bian Xin Lun; as a matter of fact, however, the attitudes held by Nāgārjuna and Fang Bian Xin Lun respectively toward *pramāṇavāda*, the core of the logic tradition, are completely incompatible with each other, not even to mention that Kajiyama's understanding on the position of sophistries in both Fang Bian Xin Lun and the *Nyāyasūtra* is rather arbitrary and misleading.

Vigrahavyāvartanī and Anti-foundationalism

In *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (henceforth VV), one of the most representative compositions of Nāgārjuna, it is the *pramāṇavāda*, the epistemological scheme with the four valid means of all knowledge as its basis, that he harshly criticizes. For the Nyāya School, the four *pramāṇa*, i.e. perception, inference, analogy, and testimony, are the only valid methods for us to gain true knowledge about things in the world and the world itself; *pramāṇ*, along with the permanent “inherent nature” (*svabhāva*), the ontological assumption with which all things exist substantially, are the cornerstones of the Naiyayika epistemology. Nāgārjuna, however, argues that there is nothing that is not merely a compound of causes and effects and thus constantly changing. Everything is devoid of substantial existence, i.e. *svabhāva*. (VV, VVvṛ, 22) With the attack against *svabhāva*, the referential relation between words and entities collapses consequently, which leads to the downfall of the ontological status and the validity of the so-called propositions, *kārya* and *kāraṇa*, and means of knowledge and objects of knowledge.

Furthermore, Nāgārjuna adopts the example of fire and that of father and son to question whether the valid means of knowledge are self-established or established dependent on other methods. (VV 33-39, 49-50) If *pramāṇas* are self-established, which means that those methods as objects of knowledge do not require any means to be proved as valid, it contradicts the tenet of the Nyāya School; if *pramāṇas* are established with the help of other means of knowledge, it will then end up in the theoretical infinite regress, which the Naiyāyikas do not want to get trapped into. Since the origin and the plausibility of *pramāṇas* cannot be validated, Nāgārjuna then refuses to accept *pramāṇavāda* as legitimate epistemological position. (VV 40-48) As the matter of fact, his withstanding any forms of foundationalism and is thus “positionless” (Garfield, 2002), for they obstruct the way of attaining ultimate liberation and controvert the Buddhist soteriology, is seen in all of Nāgārjuna's compositions. (Lin, 2006)

Unlike the sharp objections against *pramāṇavāda* in VV, however, the attitude toward the four methods of valid knowledge is in the relating passages in Fang Bian Xin Lun undoubtedly positive. In the first chapter, *Ming Zao Lun Pin* (明造論品), four kinds of knowledge as base of establishing knowledge:

凡欲立義，當依四種知見。何等為四？一者現見，二者比知，三以喻知，四隨經書。

Whenever one intends to establish knowledge, one should follow four kinds of knowledge. What are the four? The first is [gain through] direct perception, the second is [gain through] inference, the third is to know with examples, [and] the fourth is to follow [the teachings] of the sacred scriptures.

In the later section of the same chapter, four valid means of knowledge corresponding to the four kinds of knowledge are indicated:

問曰：『何名知因？』答曰：『知因有四。一現見，二比知，三喻知，四隨經書。此四知中現見為上。』問曰：『何因緣故現見上耶？』答曰：『後三種知由現見故，名之為上。如見火有煙，後時見煙便知有火，是故現見為勝。[...]如是四事名之為因，能通達者名為知因。』

[One] asks: "What is called the valid means of knowledge? (*hetūpalabdhi)" [The author] answers: "There are four [things called] the valid means of knowledge: one is direct perception, another is inference, the third is [to know with] examples, and the fourth is the adherence to the sacred scriptures. Among the four direct perception is the chief [one]." [One] asks: "For what reason is direct perception the chief?" [The author] answers: "It is because the other three means are [established] by direct perception that it is named the chief. For instance, having perceived fire accompanied with smoke, one then knows that there is fire while one sees smoke some other time.³ Therefore direct perception is primary. [...] Things as such are named means [of knowledge], and [those that can be applied to all knowledge] are valid means of knowledge."

For those who possess even a little of Indian logic or *pramāṇavāda*, the homogeneity shared by Zhi Yin (知因, *hetūpalabdhi) and *pramāṇa* can be easily recognized through the brief introductory passage stated above. Despite the different terminology indicating the four valid means of knowledge, the contents and the spirit remain the same. That the author of Fang Bian Xin Lun considers these means of knowledge the foundation of establishing knowledge, in other words, that a proposition or a fact must through (at least one of) the four means of knowledge to be proved as true, corresponds to the crucial doctrine of the Nyāya School.

Although the advocacy of *śūnyatā* (emptiness) can indeed be found in a considerable number of passages in Fang Bian Xin Lun, with respect to the positive attitude of accepting an epistemological foundation, the conflict, however, between the two sides, i.e. Nāgārjuna / VV and Fang Bian Xin Lun, is unavoidable. In academia, scholars have been tagging Nāgārjuna with numerous discordant labels, and interpreting his main thesis "all dharmas

³ Although it is not arranged in complete and formal five- / three-membered syllogism, this example for explaining inference is exactly the one that becomes standard example that appears in almost all of the logic literature of Buddhist epistemology:

[Proposition] There is fire on the top of the mountain (遠山有火)

[Reason] because of being smoke-possessing (有煙故)

[Example] Whatever is smoke-possessing is on fire, like stove (凡有煙知有火，如灶)

are empty” quite differently; but still, Nāgārjuna’s zero tolerance for pramāṇavāda bound up with svabhāva predominates his philosophical arguments in all compositions attributed to him, which shows clearly that Nāgārjuna prioritizes issues concerning ontology before those of epistemology. In this regard, Fang Bian Xin Lun, a treatise embracing the valid means of knowledge identical with those of the Nyāya School, can therefore never be composed by Nāgārjuna.

Sophistries in Nyāyasūtra and in Fang Bian Xin Lun

From the excerpt stated at the beginning of this section, it is clear that Kajiyama considers equivocation (chala), riposte (jāti), and ways of defeat (nigrahasthāna) to be rejected as unsound, inadmissible reasoning. This is undoubtedly true, if we take *only* late Nyāya School or the Buddhist epistemology inherited by Dignāga into consideration; from the perspective of Nyāyasūtra itself, however, thing could be different; moreover, the standpoint of Nyāyasūtra and, I would argue, that of Fang Bian Xin Lun, do not differ much from each other. The interpretation apropos to jāti/ Xiang Ying is one of the main purposes of this paper and will be dealt with later in an independent segment; for now I will only focus on ways of defeat and equivocation respectively.

Ways of defeat should be uncontroversial, for in both Nyāyasūtra and Fang Bian Xin Lun they are defined as situations when one loses the debate.⁴ Different from Nyāyasūtra, where 24 ways of defeat are listed with appellations given individually, the author of Fang Bian Xin Lun narrates briefly the possible states of affairs, which result in failure, and concludes with the ending “fall[ing] into defeat.”

欲令人知立無執義必墮負處故說。復次應問不問、應答不答、三說法要不令他解、自三說法而不別知，皆名負處。又其他論彼義短闕而不覺知，餘人語曰：「此義錯謬汝不知乎？」即墮負處。又他正義而為生過，亦墮負處。又有說者：「眾人悉解而獨不悟」亦墮負處。問亦如是。如此負處，是議論之大棘刺為深過患，應當覺知速宜遠離。

In order to make others know that one falls into defeat when one establishes [his argument] without adhering to it, I therefore say [these words again]. Furthermore, not to question when one should, not to answer when one should, that one after repeating the crucial points three times can not make others understood, that one repeats the points three times to one’s self rather than to others are all classified as ways of defeat. Also, when one, debating with others whose argument is deficient, is not aware of [that inadequacy], one falls into defeat after someone else told [one] that “this argument is deficient, did you not realize it?” Or, when one, despite that the argument of the opponent is valid, criticizes it for being flawed, one also falls into defeat. Or when someone says “everyone has understood [the argument] and you alone do not grasp [it], one falls into defeat too. It is the same for questioning. Ways of defeat as such are the great thorn, the difficult problem

⁴ Kajiyama seems to notice that both Ways of defeat (nigrahasthāna) and equivocation (chala) are regarded as illegitimate in Fang Bian Xin Lun (“『方便心論』は負處と曲解とは論法中の大過であつて捨離すべきものとしているけれども、『ニヤーヤ・スートラ』の誤難に当る二〇種の相応を真実の論であると主張している。” 2008), but other than this very sentence, he still claims that ways of defeat and equivocation are used by Nāgārjuna to refute and confuse his opponent and proposes self-contradictory arguments that Nāgārjuna takes the same viewpoint with Fang Bian Xin Lun.

in debate, [and] one should beware of and get away from them for one's own good.

The ways of defeat mentioned in the excerpt above coincide with those listed in Nyāyasūtra such as ananubhāṣaṇa (silence), avijñātārtha (unintelligible), ajñāna (ignorance), paryyanuyojoyopekṣaṇa (overlooking the censurable), niranuyojyānuyoga (censuring the non-censurable). (NS, 5.2) Even more can be named in the following passages in the second chapter of Fang Bian Xin Lun. According to this passage alone, we can not only agree that both Nyāyasūtra and Fang Bian Xin Lun hold the same attitude toward ways of defeat (nigrahasthāna), but also that they have to be viewed under the context of actual debating to be meaningful, which also suggests that the criteria adopted in dialectic discussions in Nyāyasūtra and Fang Bian Xin Lun are, at least in determining illegitimate arguments, identical.⁵

Contrary to ways of defeat, equivocation (chala) is valued positively. In Nyāyasūtra, equivocation is “the opposition offered to a proposition by the assumption of an alternative meaning” (NS, 1.2.10) and divided with regard to the semantics in question into three kinds: understanding an ambiguous term in a different sense favored by the proponent, understanding a word by enlarging its range of referents, and interpreting a word used as a metaphor literally. (NS, 1.2.11-14) According to the definition and other passages regarding equivocation in Nyāyasūtra (NS, 1.2.2, 4.2.50), it is certain that chala is not considered as illegitimate or inadmissible method in reasoning; rather, as one of the sixteen categories, equivocation is used greatly in debates, where both debaters aim at nothing but victory.

Although these victory-directed debates (jalpa) serve more like a defense against sophists rather than a way of attaining truth and are not much favored by the Naiyāyikas, it is actually impossible not to get involved in or even to start any. When situating in a debate as a competition, adopting “tricky devices” like equivocation, which could make the opponent forced into predicament or even fallen into failure, could sometimes be more efficient than asserting a sound reason. Moreover, equivocation is also employed unintentionally even by gifted philosophers, not to trick the opponent, but simply to voice the argument. (Matilal, reprinted 2008)

Fang Bian Xin Lun, on the other hand, objects equivocation quite aggressively. This is made clear in the excerpt which Kajiyama, having misinterpreted it, believes to be the evidence that equivocation being favored by Nāgārjuna is also accepted in the treatise (which is in fact not true):

問曰：『何名似因？』答曰：『凡似因者，是論法中之大過也，應當覺知而速捨離。如此似因我當宣說。似因隨相有無量義，略則唯八：一隨其言橫為生過、二就同異而為生過[...]復次隨言生過，凡有二種。一如前說，二於同異而為生過[...] 問曰：「何故名生？」答曰：「有故名生。如泥有瓶性故得

⁵ Although there is no complete five-/ three-membered syllogism proposed from the perspective of the author of Fang Bian Xin Lun, which could much help us to glimpse the criteria of determining a valid argumentation, it is stated in the second chapter that “when a statement is invalid, a reason proposed is correct, or a example given does not agree with [the reason and the property to be inferred], this argumentation deserves rebuke.” (若語顛倒、立因不正、引喻不同。此則可難), from which we may suggest that either the correctness of the reason or the compatibility of the example is the way to examine whether an argument is valid or not. In this regard, the criteria adopted in Fang Bian Xin Lun and in later Buddhist logic literature differ not much from each other.

生瓶。」難曰：「若泥有瓶性，泥即是瓶，不應假於陶師輪繩和合而有。若泥是有故生瓶者，水亦是有應當生瓶；若水是有不生瓶者，泥云何得獨生瓶耶？」是名同異尋言生過。』

[One] asks: “What is called fallacious reason?” [The author] answers: “Every fallacious reason is a great error in debate. Everyone should beware of and forsake [them] promptly. In this regard I should state and explain fallacious reasons. Fallacious reasons with respect to [different] characteristics have innumerable causes; in brief, there are eight [types]: the first is to raise criticism arbitrarily against the argumentation of the opponent, the second is to raise criticism through similar and dissimilar [meanings of words] [...] Furthermore, there are two kinds of censuring through words: one is explained previously, the other is to raise criticism upon similar and dissimilar [meanings of words]. [For example, when one] asks: ‘For what reason [things are] said to arise?’⁶ [someone] answers: ‘[They] possess [quality], therefore they are said to arise. For instance, because mud possesses pot-ness pots can arise [from mud].’ [This is then] objected: ‘If mud possesses pot-ness, it should simply be a pot, and [the pot] need not depend on [other causes such as] artificer, [pottery] wheel, and rope engaging [in the process] to be existent. If [you mean that] mud is *existent* and therefore gives rise to pots, water is also existent and should produce pots; if water being existent does not give rise to pots, what makes mud alone [capable of] producing pots?’ [This kind of equivocation] is called censuring through similar and dissimilar [meanings of words].”

Here, two debaters proceed a discussion concerning how and why things (or phenomena) arise. Being confronted with the question, the first debater answers that a thing is able to produce another thing for it possesses the quality—something, for example, makes a pot to be a pot—of what is produced, which suggests the causation that the effect exists simultaneously within its cause. The second debater then objects by arguing that the cause and the effect, i.e. the mud and the pot which is about to be produced from it, cannot be possessed by the same thing at the same time; in other words, being as mud and being as a pot cannot be simultaneously true for the same object, otherwise when I see a heap of mud, I would also see pots, which is counterintuitive.

Subsequently, the second debater, having shuffled the meaning of 有 from “to possess” into “to exist,” proposes a dilemma: whether water, being existent just like mud, produces pots or not. If the answer is no, the reason why mud is the only cause of birth of pots should be stated; if the water does produce pots, this might lead to the consequence that all existent things can be the cause of pots. Without concluding, the author of Fang Bian Xin Lun then titles this passage “censuring through similar and dissimilar [meanings of words]” (同異尋言

⁶ In this excerpt, “生,” like the possible original Sanskrit verb *jan*, means both “raise” and “arise.” Kajiyama suggests that “生過” should be considered a technical term similar to Xiang Ying (rejoinder), and that the objector pretending not knowing the meaning of 生過 raises an equivocating objection. This interpretation, however, twists unnaturally the syntactic function of words; therefore I suggest that we should read this passage as two parts: first is the definition of “the false reasons,” then is the one of the examples given for clearer explanations. See also Ishitobi (2006: fn. 1, pp. 117-118).

生過), for the second debater takes advantage of the ambiguity of the word 有⁷ meaning both having and existing and refutes the first debater by asserting the deficiency of both.

Indeed, just as what Kajiyama suggests, this kind of equivocation is much favored by and “buried inside the essential philosophical argument” of Nāgārjuna⁸, he seems to, however, fail in recognizing that this debate concerning the origin of things appears in fact as an example of a kind of equivocation, which in Fang Bian Xin Lun is categorized under “fallacious reasons (*hetvābhāsa),” a way of debating that one should abandon and get away from. Kajiyama misinterprets the attitude the author of Fang Bian Xin Lun holds toward this passage and falsely juxtaposes it with other passages in Nāgārjuna’s compositions to claim the similarity regarding ways of reasoning shared within those passages, which necessitates invalidity of Kajiyama’s argumentation.

2. jati, *prasaṅga, and reductio ad absurdum in Fang Bian Xin Lun⁹

The interpretation of the twenty Xiang Ying seems to play a decisive role in localizing Fang Bian Xin Lun in Indian epistemology. After arguing against Kajiyama that Fang Bian Xin Lun cannot be composed by Nāgārjuna because of the conflicting ontological standpoints they represent, and that the treatise should not be considered as anti-logic, for it shares the same view concerning “sophistries” like equivocation and ways of defeat with Nyāyasūtra, I would like to provide my interpretation of Xiang Ying Pin and maintain that same as jāti, Xiang Ying, which I suggest to be *prasaṅga, is a legitimate, indispensable method in debate and has nothing to do with reductio ad absurdum, which in fact appears as “執相” in Fang Bian Xin Lun.

To begin with, we need to find out what jati, i.e. rejoinder, really is. In Nyāyasūtra, jāti is defined as “an objection by means of similarity and dissimilarity.” (Prets, 2001) If we examine the twenty-four jāti-s in the list, it is clear that jāti functions as an objection or a challenge against the analogic relation between example stated by the opponent and the proposition he urges to establish; and this method, like equivocation, is recognized—at least in jalpa-debate—as “valid means of dialectical refutation” (Prets, 2001) in Nyāyasūtra (NS, 1.2.2).

With respect to jāti in the early development of Indian logic, Ernst Prets already provides a series of profound survey (2001, 2003). He points out that jāti or other corresponding concept in early logic literature, namely in Carakasamhitā, Nyāyasūtra, *Tarkaśāstra, as well as in Fang Bian Xin Lun, does not entail negative meanings like invalid, incorrect, or

⁷ The original Sanskrit could possibly be *asti* (as). “Asti” is probably one of the most notoriously ambiguous words in Buddhist literature, and has made huge differences in exegeses of both ancient and contemporary commentators. One of the most famous examples is the 29th verse in Nāgārjuna’s Vighavyāvartanī. More interestingly, the word *asti* and its Chinese translation “有” mean both “to have” and “to exist,” based on which the equivocation in the excerpt is formed. Kajiyama and Ishitobi understand “有” as “to have” throughout the passage, which makes perfect sense of the objection and makes readers wondering why it is called equivocation and considered as a false reason.

⁸ “この一般化の曲解はナーガールジュナの哲学の本質的な議論に内在している。” (Kajiyama, 2008: p.316)

⁹ I am not going to say anything further about Kajiyama’s viewpoints on Xiang Ying and reductio ad absurdum, for he simply confuses them together with equivocation (chala), which has been discussed in previous sections of this paper. (Kajiyama, 1984: pp. 21-24)

illegitimate; rather, it should be understood as “a proof-like statement which argues against the original argumentation by a reversal of the basic instrument of proof,” and the function of which is “pointing out of flaws in the argumentation of the opponent.” Prets further advances that it is *jāti*-s—rejoinders—that keeps the debate of six steps (*ṣaṭpakṣī*) proceed and allows the audience to judge who wins the debate, which suggests that rejoinders, being valid and legitimate, plays an indispensable role in debate. (Prets, 2003)

I agree with Prets, and following his interpretation, further argue that in dialectical argumentation, in addition to the proof proposed by the first debater, *sādhavādin*, which consists of five-/ three-membered syllogism, all objections stated in the other five out of six steps of a debate should be understood as rejoinders (*jāti*), i.e. Xiang Ying (**prasaṅga*) in Fang Bian Xin Lun. In the examples of the six-step debate provided in early Indian logic literature, a series of refutations and questioning follows right after the complete argumentation of the *sādhavādin*, and those debates are also documented simply as they actually were, namely, as dialogue, which, I believe, is the most representative characteristic of rejoinders.

This dialogic characteristic is spotlighted through the complete appellation “Wen Da Xiang Ying (問答相應),” communal connection, for every debate must be carried out by “reciprocal exchanges of questions and answers (Gillon, personal contact),” which is in fact a kind of communication connecting both debaters as a process one must pass through in order to attain victory or truth. This is clearly stated in Xiang Ying Pin:

此論要者，諸論之本，由此論故廣生問答、增長智慧。

The core of this [kind of] reasoning is the base of all debate, for it is because of this reasoning that communication is extensively generated and that [one would] become wiser.

A corresponding viewpoint can be found in Vātsyāyana’s exegesis on *jāti*:

prayukte hi hetau yaḥ prasaṅgo jāyate sa jātiḥ (NBh 401,8–402,5; Prets, fn27, 2001)

When a reason recited [by a debater], the connection which is generated is [called] a rejoinder.

Vātsyāyana then points out that this connection (*prasaṅga*)¹⁰, same as stated in Fang Bian Xin Lun, is an objection (*upālabha*) against the previous statement through a similar or dissimilar example. In other words, by questioning and refuting against each other, both debaters are brought into a connection—or a relation of proponent and opponent—which makes the debate proceed. By the same token, the twenty Xiang Ying recorded in Fang Bian Xin Lun is as a matter of fact the *prasaṅga*, the communication, and at the same time the connection (**prasaṅga*) constructed in the dialectic intercourse through the debaters (and the audience) involved.

The **prasaṅga*, however, as I have stated at the beginning of this paper, should not be equated with the *prasaṅga* meaning *reductio ad absurdum*. In fact, *reductio ad absurdum* is

¹⁰ Prets translates *prasaṅga* as “the directly following consequence”; but considering the nature of Xiang Ying, I think it would be more appropriate to translate it as “connection.”

introduced in the first chapter of Fang Bian Xin Lun under the category “Zhi (執),” adherence [to the opponent]¹¹:

問曰：『已說喻相，執相云何？』答曰：『隨其所執，廣引因緣，立義堅固，名為執相。』問曰：『執法有幾？』答曰：『有四：一一切同、二一切異、三初同後異、四初異後同。』問曰：『汝今應當說此四相。』[...]『初同後異者，如說者曰：「現法皆有。神非現見亦復是有。」問者或言：「現見之法可名為有。神若非現何得有耶？若言比知而有神者，要先現見後乃可比，神非現法云何得比？若復以喻明神有者，有相似法然後得喻，神類何等而為喻乎？若隨經書證有神者，是事不可。經書意亦難解，或時言有或時言無，云何取信？」是名初同後異。』

[One] asks: “[As you] have already explained [the function] of examples (dṛṣ-ṭānta), what are the characteristics of adherence?” [The author] answers: “Following the established thesis of the opponent and extensively reciting other reasons to reinforce [one’s own] propositions to be established are called the characteristics of adherence.” [One] asks: “How many ways of adhering?” [The author] answers: “There are four [of them]. The first is [to make] everything [you assert] same [with your opponent]; the second is [to make] everything [you assert] different [from your opponent]; the third is [to make what you assert] first same with and then different from [your opponent]; the fourth is [to make what you assert] first different from and then same with [your opponent].” [One] asks: “You should explain these four aspects now.” [...] [The author] answers: “[In the case of making what one asserts] first same with and then different from [one’s opponent] it is like that the proposer says: ‘all perceivable things are existent. Although God is not directly perceivable, it also exists.’ The opponent might ask: ‘Things that are directly perceived can be said as existent; [however] if God is not perceivable, how could it be existent? If [you] say God is known to be existent through inference, it [still] needs to be perceived directly first in order to be inferred later. Since God is not a perceivable thing, how could it be [known] by inference? Moreover, if you want to prove that God exists through examples, [you have to find] similar things then you can get the example; but what is classified same as God and can be the example? If [you argue that] according to sacred scriptures it is proved that God exists, this is inefficient, for the teachings in the scriptures are similarly difficult to understand. [God is] sometimes said to be existent and sometimes not, how can they be trustworthy?’ [The above reasoning] is called [to make what you assert] first same with and then different from [your opponent].”

Adherence, being divided into four types, is a way of reasoning that a debater “follows the established thesis of the opponent and extensively recites other reasons” in order to prove the opposite. In the above excerpt, the argumentation can be divided into two parts: the first is to object that God exists based on the doctrine of perception; the second is to argue that the same statement cannot be established by the other three means of valid knowledge, i.e. inference, analogy, and testimony. The objector first follows the premise that all perceivable things are existent stated by the proponent, then concludes that God does not exist, which

¹¹ It is probably because that the author first mentions “隨所執 (Sui Suo Zhi)” as “ultimate meaning” that Tucci and Gillon understand this category as “siddhānta.” If following this interpretation, however, it will be incompatible with the excerpt I states here, which is obviously an detailed explanation of Sui Suo Zhi.

conflicts with the proponent's statement; the objector then proposes alternatives with the other three valid means of knowledge, one of which the proponent must adopt to save his statement that he urges to establish, for the four pramāṇas are the foundation of all knowledge. Either way, the objector, following the (given) premise of the proponent, shows the absurdity of the thesis to be established. In this regard, the adherence, 執 (Zhi), shares the similarity of essence as a method of reasoning with reductio ad absurdum.

3. Concluding Remarks

By pointing out the incompatibility of the standpoint of Fang Bian Xin Lun and Nāgārjuna's Vigrahavyāvartanī regarding pramāṇavāda, and that Fang Bian Xin Lun and Nyāyasūtra hold the same attitude toward the main elements in dialectic tradition, i.e. the valid means of knowledge (pramāṇa), ways of defeat (nigrahasthana), equivocation (chala), and rejoinder (jāti and *prasaṅga), I try to reject Kajiyama's viewpoints concerning the authorship and the philosophical position of this "notorious" treatise, and argue that Fang Bian Xin Lun belongs to the early Indian logic tradition. With respect to the authorship, however, I, except claiming that it cannot be Nāgārjuna, still have no answer, although I suspect that the composition might be derived from notes taken by a Mādhyamika in lectures of logic, or that it could be fragmentary, for the author should explain eight "profound principles of debate" (Gillon, 2008), but ends the first chapter all of a sudden with the eighth "equivocating objections" (Gillon, 2008) left unexplained. It might also be the case that Fang Bian Xin Lun is simply a draft and the author does explain equivocation as a part of the seventh principle "false reasons" while having the chapter unrevised and not yet made coherent and consistent.

Needless to say, there is still a great number of puzzles awaiting to be solved by learned scholars, which will definitely benefit the study of early Indian epistemology.

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