

Translation (p. 76, lines 1-5)

Ratnakīrti: That which you say is illegitimate—specifically, the meaning of that about a single self-nature existing at an earlier and at a later time. If an entity existing at a later time has a producing self-nature that itself exists at an earlier time (too), or if it has a non-producing self-nature at an earlier time that exists at a later time (too), then (in either case) production or non-production would be what was experienced. And that being so, it is shown indeed that, given that it is supposed (by you as well as by us) that the two self-natures would be unities (i.e., single entities, one and the same at the two times), it would be adduced that the thing is either a producer or a non-producer.

Comments

Ratnakīrti never assumes, in any of the statements in his own voice, that enduring things exist. Here, as elsewhere, he employs a hypothetical syllogism, an indirect argument, to reject the existence of an enduring thing. He has argued that if an enduring thing existed, bad consequences would follow. He now makes clear that the idea of any enduring entity would be the result of a projection of unity upon what are really two distinct entities. Given that an entity at a certain time *t* produces, if we imagine it as identical to another entity existing at another time *t'*, then we are forced to imagine that the entity at *t'* also produces. The opponent fails to appreciate the hypothetical nature of the argument as well as its adamant conclusion that nothing can by nature both produce and not produce.

Translation (p. 76, lines 6-9)

Objection: Only the effect depends upon the whole collection of auxiliary causes. In contrast, the cause (*hetu*) that produces is not in this way dependent. Aside from auxiliary causes, there are two kinds of capacity: innate (*nija*) and acquired (*āgantuka*). Your assumption that it is not possible that a non-momentary thing (or anything) have a sequence of effects due to auxiliary causes arriving sequentially makes possible your conclusion that beings are at every moment becoming another and (then yet) another.

Comments

The opponent objects that Ratnakīrti's conclusion that things are momentary depends on the assumption that a sequential appearance of auxiliary causes could not be responsible for a series of effects being produced by a single, enduring cause. This assumption is wrong, the opponent asserts, because there are two kinds of capacity. Innate capacity is not given to a thing by an auxiliary cause; acquired capacity is obtained through an auxiliary. The effect depends upon a whole collection of causal factors, and that whole collection has innate capacity. The individual factors do not, however, have innate capacity; they acquire their capacity from other causal factors that arrive on the scene. Consequently, a single enduring cause can, over a period of time, acquire a series of capacities from conjunction with a series of different auxiliary causes, and become a factor in the production of a series of different effects. To count as a "cause" (*hetu*, a non-technical term used by everyone), something need not be in itself sufficient to bring about the effect, although to be an "effect" does presuppose that an entire collection of causal factors has occurred producing it. Of course, the "whole collection" is, from Ratnakīrti's perspective, a non-entity: only particulars exist and have causal power. Our Buddhist proceeds now to target the opponent's mistake in conceiving of the *sāmagrī*, the "whole collection of factors together sufficient," as something real, with causal capacity over and above that of the individual factors that make it up.

Translation (p. 76, lines 9-16)

Ratnakīrti: We reply. Let it be supposed, first of all, that there are two kinds of capacity, the innate and the acquired. Nevertheless, the individual thing-in-itself, the self-characterized (*svalakṣaṇa*), which necessarily is to be understood as being causally efficient (i.e., as having capacity), well, is it efficient at the earlier time or at the later time—these are the options? We do not comprehend the response that you suppose undermines our argument, (namely) "What is meant by this?" (The force of the dilemma is clear.)

Objection: Only the effect depends upon auxiliaries. (What is called a cause is not dependent in this way.)

Ratnakīrti: This embellishment is also useless. For, it would be acceptable if the effect could be self-dependent (*svatantra*) in its own coming to be. Only if such were so would the idea that it is the whole collection of auxiliaries that is capable be fruitless. For, sometimes the effect would come to be indeed self-dependently. And when this was the case, the (so-called) causes would in every way be non-capable. The clear understanding (however) is that there is no self-dependent effect.

Comments

Ratnakīrti implies that the distinction between innate and acquired capacity makes no difference to his argument. Something that exists, the individual thing in itself, has the property of capacity necessarily. It has, therefore, innate capacity, and does not acquire capacity from outside. This is the right conception according to arguments presented elsewhere. But whatever elaboration of the idea of what it is to exist an opponent might propose, the fundamental

dilemma still faces the advocate of endurance: if things endure, they produce either always or never.

It does not help to add that only an effect has to be dependent upon the whole causal collection to be rightly called an effect, whereas a cause can be something that does not depend upon production actually occurring. Production could, of course, come about only with the help of auxiliaries. If something could be a cause in that sense, something would have to be an effect without those auxiliaries, too, and that would be to say that an effect could arise self-dependently, without sufficient cause. Thus the opponent would create for himself wiggle room only if effects sometimes were self-caused. Self-causation is, however, absurd.

Translation (p. 76, lines 17-20)

Objection: This anomaly (*aparādha*) belongs only to the effect, which sometimes does not occur even when the cause is capable.

Ratnakīrti: That is wrong. For, the thesis that the effect is self-dependent, is commented on (and ridiculed in the following verse):

If there were no effect when there obtained its cause self-same in all situations, then the effect would be self-dependent.

If this were so, it would not be (that there is the causal law, to wit) that given this (i.e., the cause), the effect comes to be.

Comments

The opponent has admitted that production of the effect follows upon the whole collection of causal factors, *sāmagrī*. Proper use of the term “cause” is dependent on this conception of the whole collection, he now implies, but anomalous usages are not entirely illegitimate. Specifically, an exception, or “anomaly” (*aparādha*, “transgression”) holds with respect to actual effects, such as smoke, about which we say colloquially that fire is its cause even though, properly speaking, only fire in conjunction with wet fuel is the producer. Even though the chief cause, so to say, is present, the effect may not come to be because some auxiliary factor is absent (e.g., water). Although there is such irregularity of common usage, there is no problem, the opponent implies, in saying that such a chief cause is capable of producing the effect, because the idea trades on that of the whole collection of causal factors, *sāmagrī*, which does invariably produce.

Ratnakīrti sees the mistake here as the opponent’s holding both (a) the cause endures and (b) there need be no effect despite its presence. He insists that this is inconsistent. If, as (a) implies, the cause is the same in all situations, it cannot produce at one moment and yet not at another. If it did, then the effect would have nothing to do with the cause. This would imply, in turn, that the effect is self-caused—a thesis already rejected as absurd.

The deep problem with the opponent’s view is confusion about the notion of a cause. If the cause is the whole collection, *sāmagrī*, then there is no deviation. However, Ratnakīrti has already shown that the individual factors must also be considered producers of the effect in their own right. If the cause is some particular factor (even one we might want to call “the chief cause”), then, on the opponent’s view, it follows that the deviation is not just with respect to the effect but with respect to the cause as well. It does not always produce its effect. How then can it be said to have causal capacity? The opponent wants to suggest that it acquires the capacity from auxiliaries, but, in that case, it becomes a distinct entity since it acquires a capacity (a property) that it did not formerly have.

Translation (p. 76, lines 21-22)

Objection: It is wrong to say that an effect is (defined by the formula) something comes to exist given the existence (of its cause). Rather, it is (defined by the formula) that if it (i.e., the cause) does not exist, then it (the effect) does not come to be: negative correlation (*vyatireka*) is predominant (for the definitional project at hand).

Comments

The opponent disputes Ratnakīrti’s definition of causality, contending that the negative formulation he offers is superior to the positive one just given. Thus the aforementioned anomaly occurs because a cause is that which is necessary to an effect, something without which an effect could not be. Thus it is false that whenever there is a cause in this sense its effect occurs. Whenever the cause does not exist, the effect does not exist—this is the right rule. Clearly, the question is whether a cause, *kāraṇa*, should be considered a necessary or a sufficient condition. The defenders of endurance prefer necessary conditions because a necessary condition need not bring an effect about alone, by itself, as air is necessary but (thankfully) not sufficient for fire. The necessary but insufficient causal factor requires auxiliaries. The defenders of momentariness prefer sufficient conditions because only such things produce immediately. Although Ratnakīrti accepts that the concept of necessary conditions is important in some contexts, he will insist now, in the next passage, that for the purposes of the argument from causal efficiency—where we are concerned with the innate and essential capacities of things—only sufficient conditions can properly be considered causes.

Translation (p. 76, lines 22-29)

Ratnakīrti: No. For if something existing on its own were a cause just in making its own effect (*svakārya*), then it would be understood that the non-existence of it (the cause) would be connected to the non-existence of that (the effect). If not, how could the doubt be put to rest that just as the effect does not come to be from its own power although there is a cause (in this sense), so, although there is non-existence of this (the cause), that (the effect) does not come to be from its own power?

So it is said:

If though this (*x*) exists there is no coming to be of that (*y*), then why should it be that that (*y*) does not exist when this (*x*) is absent? Why is it so, namely, that the very non-existence of this is connected to the non-existence of that?

Therefore, just as only when this (*x*) is non-existent that (*y*) does not exist by rule, in the very same way when this (*x*) exists that (*y*) should indeed come to be by rule. Furthermore, something not existing does not support an attribution to itself of causality for an effect.

Comments

The opponent has tried to maintain that a cause can occur without its effect occurring by defining causality as a connection between two types of absence, namely, absence of the cause securing absence of the effect. This would mean, however, that in the case where the cause exists and the effect does not, the effect's non-existence would not be due to the cause's non-existence. The non-existence of the effect would in that case be independent of the cause's presence or absence. This leaves us in doubt about the opposite case where the cause does not exist: is the effect's non-existence due to the non-existence of the putative cause, or, as the other case suggests, is it independent of it? The absence of the cause is only unambiguously and indubitably connected to the absence of the effect if we accept the rule that when the cause exists, the effect occurs too. Then it becomes clear that when the effect does not exist its absence would be due to the absence of the cause. However, on the negative rule alone—without its counterpositive, which takes a positive form: that the presence of the cause guarantees the presence of the effect—it is possible that the effect be independent of the cause. Thus it would come about on its own—a proposition that is to be rejected again as absurd.