The last reason for satkāryavāda

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This modest contribution to the volume in honour of Professor Minoru Hara contains a supplementary observation to the lecture which, at his invitation, I had the pleasure of giving at the International Institute for Buddhist Studies in Tokyo in May 1996, and which became the basis for a series of lectures (Paris 1997) that have now been published under the title Langage et réalité: sur un épisode de la pensée indienne (BRONKHORST, 1999). This note is not based on new independent research, but has been inspired by and draws upon Professor Phyllis GRANOFF’s contribution to the conference on Sāṃkhya and Yoga (Lausanne 1998) which too has now been published (GRANOFF, 1999).

The Sāṃkhya-kārikā justifies the doctrine of satkāryavāda in kārikā 9, which reads:

\[
\text{asadakaranād upādānagrahanāt sarvasambhavabhāvāt /} \\
\text{śaktasya śakyakaranaṭ kārāṇabhāvāc ca sat kāryam //9//}
\]

This kārikā contains five arguments, the last of which concerns us at present. It reads, in Sanskrit: kārāṇabhāvāt sat kāryam. This is ambiguous, and allows of at least three different interpretations:

1. "Because [the cause] is a cause, the product exists."
2. "Because [the product] is [identical with] the cause, the product exists."
3. "Because of the existence of the cause, the product exists."

Only the Jayamaṅgalā appears to opt for interpretation (3), in the following obscure passage:

kārāṇabhāvāc ceti: kāraṇasya sattvād ity arthah. yady asat kāryam upadyate kim iti? kāraṇād eva na kāryasya bhāvo bhavati, bhavati ca. tasmāc chaktirūpeṇavasthitam iti gamyate.

"Kārāṇabhāvāc ca means: because of the existence of the cause. If it is asked: 'the product, [though] non-existent, comes into being, what [is the conse-

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quench? [then the answer is:] 'The product does not exist as a result of the cause only, and yet it exists. It is therefore understood that [the product] is present [in the cause] in the form of a potency.'"

The logic of this argument is not fully clear to me. It may be something like this: The very fact that there can be a cause implies that there must be a product. Understood in this way interpretation (3) is not very different from interpretation (1).²

Most of the surviving commentaries on the Sāṁkhyakārikā prefer interpretation (2). They all seem to agree that the product is identical with the cause. The Gaṇḍa-pādabhāṣya, for example, states:

kāraṇaṁ yallākṣanāṁ tālākṣanāṁ eva kāryam api

"Whatever is the nature of the cause, the same is the nature of the effect" (tr. Mainkar).³

The Mātharavṛtti and the Sāṁkhyasaptavṛtti use practically the same words.⁴ The Jayamangalā, having first presented interpretation (3), then gives, as an alternative, interpretation (2): yatsvabhāvam kāraṇaṁ tatvabhāvam kāryam.⁵ Vacaspati Miśra’s Tattvakaumudi formulates the same position in the following words: ‘kāraṇabhāvac ca: kāryasya kāraṇātmakatvāt. na hi kāraṇād bhinnām kāryam, kāraṇaṁ ca sat iti kathām tadabhinnam kāryam asat bhavet.’⁶ The commentary translated by Paramārtha into Chinese appears to have adopted the same position.⁷ The Sāṁkhya-vṛtti edited under the name V₁ by Esther A. SOLOMON seems to accept a variant of this interpretation. If we accept the corrections proposed by its editor, it reads: kāraṇabhāvād iti: kāraṇaṁ prāg utpatteḥ sat kāryam iti. This suggest the interpretation: "Because [the product] is in the causes [before it comes into being], the product exists."

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¹ I thank Professor Wezler for help in interpreting this passage.
⁵ Satkārīśarmā Vangiyā, 1970:74.
⁷ Cp. Takakusu, 1904: 991: "L’effet est de la même espèce que la cause."
The similarity between these commentaries is great, and it is not surprising that Solomon in her comparative study of the commentaries remarks (Solomon, 1974: 27): "kāraṇabhāvāt is similarly explained by all." This is not however fully correct. The Yuktidīpikā, the "most significant commentary on the Sāṃkhya-kārikā", comments in a manner which allows us to conclude that it accepts interpretation (1). It states:

'kāraṇabhāvāc ca sat kāryam': ihāsatī kārye kāraṇabhāvo nāsti tadyathā vandhyāyāḥ. astī ceha kāraṇabhāvas tantupatāyoh. tasmāt sat kāryam.8

The explanation can be translated:

"On the one hand (ihā), something or somebody — as for example a barren woman — is not a cause in case there is no product. On the other hand (ihā), from among the thread and the cloth [one of the two, viz. the thread] is a cause [because there is a product, viz. the cloth]. For this reason the product exists [while the cause is there]."

In other words, without a product being there, a cause is not a cause; or, the other way round, because a cause is a cause, there must be a product. This is interpretation (1).

It is surprising that interpretation (2) is so strongly represented in the surviving literature of Sāṃkhya, and interpretation (1) so weakly. Interpretation (1) is of a type that is wide-spread in Indian philosophical literature, as we shall see below; this is not true of interpretation (2).

Let us now turn to the material presented in Granoff's article mentioned above. Granoff draws attention to a Buddhist text — Śāntarakṣita's Tattvasamgraha and its commentary Pañjikā by Kamalaśīla — and to a number of Jaina texts which all cite and discuss Sāṃkhya-kārikā 9, i.e. the Sāṃkhya arguments in defence of satkāryavāda. She argues convincingly that the Jaina texts follow here the lead of the Tattvasamgraha. All these texts offer an interpretation of kāraṇabhāvāt which is close to what is offered in the Yuktidīpikā. The Tattvasamgraha, for example, gives the following explanation:

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8 Wezler and Motegi, 1998: 124 l. 6-8.
kāryasaivam ayogac ca kim kurvat kāraṇam bhavet / tataḥ kāraṇabhāvo 'pi bijāder nāvakalpate /

"And because the product would in this way be impossible, what is it that the cause would produce? As a result the seed etc. cannot even be cause."

The Pañjikā comments:

asaṅkāryavāde sarvathāpi kāryasyāyogat kim kurvat bijādi kāraṇam bhavet. tataś caivaṁ śakyate vaktum: na kāraṇam bijādiḥ, avidyamānakāryatvād, gaganābjāvad iti. na caivaṁ bhavati, tasmād viparyaya iti siddham: prāg upatteḥ sat kāryam iti.

The logical proof contained in this passage can be translated as follows:

"The seed etc. are no cause, because no product is present, like a lotus in the sky [which, being totally non-existent, is not accompanied by a product, and is therefore no cause]. However, it is not like this (i.e., seed is a cause); therefore the reverse [must be true], and thus it is established that the product is present before it comes into being."

Abhayadeva’s Tattvabodhavidhāyinī cites the above verse from the Tattvasamgraha and explains the last argument in exactly the same terms as the Pañjikā. But also Prabhācandra's Prameyakamalamārtanda is clearly influenced by these two Buddhist texts when it states: bijādeḥ kāraṇabhāvāc ca sat kāryam kāryāsattve tadāyogāt. tathā hi: na kāraṇabhāvo bijādeḥ avidyamānakāryatvā kharaviṣānavat. tat siddham upatteḥ prāk kāraṇe kāryam. In his Kumudacandra Prabhācandra explains the logic behind the argument: ‘kāraṇabhāvāc ca sat kāryam‘. kāraṇabhāvo hi kāraṇatvam, tca nityasambandhitvāt kāryasambandham apeksate, na ca asatā gaganāmbhjojapra-khyena kāraṇasya kaścit sambandhaḥ, atah kāraṇe kāryam tādātmyena varṣate.

GRANOFF sums up the arguments as follows (p. 583): "The Jain texts (and the Buddhist Tattvasamgraha ...) agree that the argument is something like this: The product must exist, since we speak of a cause and causality is a relationship. A non-existent entity cannot be one term of a relationship. We do not see hare’s horns

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10 Samghavi & Doşi, 1924-1931: I: 283 l. 22-27.
11 Kumar, 1990: 288 l. 9-11.
12 Kumar, 1991: 353 l. 5-7.
entering into any kind of relationship with anything. Therefore the product must exist in order for us to speak of something being a ‘cause’ at all." That is, they all follow interpretation (1) of the sentence kăraṇabhāvāt saṃ kāryam "Because [the cause] is a cause, the product exists."

Does this mean that these Jaina texts and the Tattvasamgraha from which they borrowed have all undergone the influence, direct or indirect, of the Yuktidipikā? GRANOFF emphatically denies this: "the Jain texts show little or no awareness of the often unique arguments of the Yuktidipikā, which might lead to the further speculation that the Yuktidipikā was not a text whose theories were hotly debated outside Sāṃkhya circles" (p. 582). With regard to the first four arguments presented in Sāṃkhya-kārikā 9 she observes: "The Yuktidipikā ... deviates from the other interpretations [offered in the other commentaries on this text] considerably, but the Jain texts I have examined show absolutely no awareness of its arguments for much of the verse" (p. 583).

All this means that the Tattvasamgraha and the Jaina texts that borrow from it share the fifth argument in favour of satkāryavāda with the Yuktidipikā and with no other Sāṃkhya commentaries, but are totally ignorant of the first four arguments presented in that same Yuktidipikā. How is this to be explained? GRANOFF offers the following solution (p. 583): "It seems ... likely that [these Jaina texts and the Tattvasamgraha] derive their interpretation from some text that we no longer have at our disposal today." She adds (p. 584): "There remains, then, considerable detective work to be done on this question."

Such detective work cannot be carried out here and now. It is however interesting to conclude that the Yuktidipikā appears not to have been the only text that followed interpretation (1). This is reassuring, because there are good reasons to believe that interpretation (1) was the original interpretation of the sentence kāraṇabhāvāt saṃ kāryam.

How can one know the original interpretation of an ambiguous sentence that allows of at least three interpretations? Several factors support interpretation (1), all of them based on other texts than the Sāṃkhya-kārikā and its commentaries.13 One is that Āryadeva’s *Satakā, which is older than the Sāṃkhya-kārikā, appears to contain the same argument, apparently in the same ambiguous form. Its commentator Vasu,

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13 For details, see Bronkhorst, 1999.
by stating "If the pot does not pre-exist in earth, then earth could not become the cause of the pot", shows that he opted for interpretation (1).

More important is that the kind of argument embodied in interpretation (1) was widely used in Indian philosophy at the time when Śāmkhya as a system was being created. For details I have to refer to my book *Langage et réalité*. Here I will merely cite a verse from Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, which uses this argument:

naivāsato naiva satāḥ pratyayo 'ṛthasya yuyjyate/ asataḥ pratyayah kasya sataś ca pratyayena kim ?/\(^{14}\)

"Neither of a non-existent nor of an existent object is a cause possible. Of which non-existent [object] is there a cause? And what is the use of an existent [object]?"

We recognize the assumption which also underlies interpretation (1): for something to be a cause, there has to be a product, there and then. Once one accepts this assumption, one may be induced to drawing various counterintuitive conclusions: Nāgārjuna that no cause can exist, the Śāmkhyas their no less extraordinary position that the product is there before it has been produced.

Is it possible to say more about the assumption underlying these and other arguments? GRANOFF formulates it as follows, as we have seen: "The product must exist, since we speak of a cause and causality is a relationship. A non-existent entity cannot be one term of a relationship. We do not see hare’s horns entering into any kind of relationship with anything. Therefore the product must exist in order for us to speak of something being a 'cause' at all." This formulation takes care of the fifth argument in the *Yuktidipikā* which we also find in the *Tattvasamgraha* and the Jain texts considered, and also of Nāgārjuna’s above argument, and no doubt of many other arguments found in Indian philosophical texts of that period. However, there are textual passages which allow us to conclude that a formulation has to be accepted in which the parallellism between what we say and the situation described finds expression. An example is the following passage from Śaṅkara’s *Brahmasūtra Bhāṣya*, which argues precisely in defense of the *satkāryavāda*:

prāg utpattेः ca kāryasyāsattve utpattir akartṛkā nirātmikā ca syāt / utpattis ca nāma kriyā, sā sakartṛkaiva bhaviyum arhati gatyādīvat / kriyā ca nāma syād akartṛkā ceti vipraśiṣṭidhyeta / ghaṭasya cotpattir ucyamānā na ghaṭakartṛkā.

\(^{14}\) MadhK(deJ) 1.6.
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kim tarhy anyakarti[kā iti kalpyā syāt / ... / tathā ca sati ghatā utpadyate ity.ukte kulālādini kāraṇāni utpadyante ity uktam syāt / na ca loke ghatotpattir ity.ukte kulālādīnām apy utpadyamānatā pratiyate / utpannatāpratīteh /

"If the effect did not exist prior to its coming into being, the coming into being would be without agent and empty. For coming into being is an activity, and must therefore have an agent, like [such activities] as going etc. It would be contradictory to say that something is an activity, but has no agent. It could be thought that the coming into being of a jar, [though] mentioned, would not have the jar as agent, but rather something else. ... If that were true, one would say "the potter and other causes come into being" instead of "the jar comes into being". In the world however, when one says "the jar comes into being" no one understands that also the potter etc. come into being; for [these] are understood to have already come into being."  

In other words, the situation described has to correspond to the way we describe it. This is also clear from the following verse that occurs in Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*:

\[
gamyamānasya gamane prasaktam gamanadvayam / yena tad gamyamānam ca yac cātra gamanam punaḥ //
\]

"If there is a going of [a road] that is being gone, there would be two goings: that by which the [road] is being gone, and again the going on it."

The only possible reason for thinking that there should be two goings is that the sentence describing the situation — something like "[the road] which is being gone, is being gone" (*gamyamānasti gamyate*) — has the verb ‘going’ twice over.

In the light of these and similar reflections I have proposed to formulate the more or less hidden assumption behind all these arguments as follows: "the words of a sentence must correspond, one by one, to the things that constitute the situation described by that sentence"; I call this the correspondence principle. It takes for granted that there is, at some particular time, a situation in which all the things that constitute it occur together, and this forced many Indian thinkers — among them

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15 Sankara ad Brahmasutra 2.1.18; cited and discussed in Bronkhorst, 1996: 2.
16 MadhK(deJ) 2.5; cited and discussed in Bronkhorst, 1997: 34.
Nāgārjuna and the Sāṃkhyas — to draw counterintuitive conclusions.

We cannot conclude this discussion without addressing the question as to why most of the commentaries of the Sāṃkhya-kārikā have given an interpretation to the fifth argument different from the one originally intended. One answer may well be that the first and the fifth argument would otherwise be almost identical. The first argument, it may be recalled, reads:

\[ asadakaranāt [sa tāryam] \]

"The product exists because one does not produce something that does not exist."

One might elucidate the logic underlying this argument with the following variant of GRANOFF's above explanation: "The product must exist, since we speak of producing and producing something is a relationship (between the maker and the product, or between the making and the product). A non-existent entity cannot be one term of a relationship. Therefore the product must exist in order for us to speak of producing something at all." Or, using the correspondence principle, one might say that there must be something corresponding to the word 'pot' in the situation described by the statement "He produces a pot". Either way the argument presented is close to the the fifth argument in interpretation (1).

However, more may have been involved in the preference for interpretation (2). The commentaries that offer this interpretation in this way take position in an altogether different debate, which may have been initiated by the Vaiśeṣikas. One of the fundamental positions of this school of thought — one of its "axioms" — is that composite objects are different from their constituent parts.\(^{18}\) It may have arrived at this position as a result of opposing the Buddhist point of view according to which no composite objects but only their constituent parts exist. However this may be, once these points of view had been articulated in Indian philosophy, the Sāṃkhya were more or less obliged to determine their own position in this controversy. They chose the position which maintains that composite objects and their constituent parts are not different from each other. Concretely speaking: a cloth is not different from the threads that constitute it.

\(^{18}\) Bronkhorst, 1992.
It will be clear that this position could easily be made to agree with the doctrine of satkāryavāda. The cloth is namely also the product of the threads, which are its cause. The doctrine of satkāryavāda states that the cloth is there, in the threads, at the time when it has not yet been made. The classical Sāmkhya position regarding parts and wholes states that the cloth is not different from the threads that constitute it. Combined they state that the cloth is there, in the threads, because it is not really different from them. This is interpretation (2) of the Sanskrit phrase kāraṇabhāvāt sat kāryam.

It is doubtful whether this argument adds much in support of the satkāryavāda, but this may not have disturbed the Sāmkhya commentators much. The main argument of this doctrine having been given already by the phrase asadakaranāt (see above), the new interpretation (2) of kāraṇabhāvāt sat kāryam made it possible to present supporting evidence from the Sāmkhyakārikā for the position that parts and wholes are identical.

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