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Simultaneous Relation (Sahabhū-hetu): A Study in Buddhist Theory of Causation

by Kenneth K. Tanaka

The two major Hīnayāna schools, the Sarvāstivādins and Theravādins, each posited a concept of mutually simultaneous "causation," sahabhū-hetu (chū-yu yin) and aṇñamaṇṇa-paccaya, respectively. The Sarvāstivādins in particular were severely criticized by their doctrinal antagonists, the Darśāntikas and the Sautrāntikas, for undermining the basic assumption of the theory of causation: the temporal sequence between cause and effect. Modern researchers as well seem to find it difficult to accommodate sahabhū-hetu's anomalous nature as causation into the traditional framework of causation. D. Kalupahana, for example, comments, "This relation seems to refute the idea that a cause should always be temporally prior to its effect." Th. Stcherbatsky similarly states, "It is curious that the citta is related to caicca by the sahabhū relation which is defined as mutual causality, one being the cause of the other as much as the latter is the cause of the former."

This paper will focus on the theory of the sahabhū-hetu of the Sarvāstivādins and attempt to clear up the ambiguities that surround the interpretations given for this hetu. This will allow us to determine whether the antagonists of the Sarvāstivādins were justified in their criticism and modern scholars in their skepticism.

Previous treatments of the hetu in Western languages have been handicapped by the over-reliance on the Abhidharmakosā (henceforth Kośa) interpretation, which suffers both from brevity and a pronounced Sautrāntika bias when compared to the major orthodox Sarvāstivādin texts. Japanese studies on causation have fared a little better, in that they allude to the major
Sarvastivadin texts, most of which are available only in their Chinese translations. However, even these cannot be said to constitute an in-depth examination of the sahabhū-hetu. In order to correct the shortcomings of the earlier studies, this paper will draw largely from the orthodox Sarvastivadin texts, notably the Mahāvibhāṣa (Ta pi-p'ō-sha lun) and the Nyāyañusāra (Shun cheng-li lun).

The sahabhū-hetu belongs to a category of Six relations (liuyin, saö-hetavah) which also includes kāraṇa (basic), sabhāga (homogeneous), sarvatraga (dominant), vipāka (retributive) and samprayukta (associated). Of these six, samprayukta and sahabhū are closely related; the major difference being that the former applies to a smaller number of dharmas, i.e., mental dharmas only. Hence, it should be tacitly understood that much of our discussion will be directly relevant to samprayukta-hetu as well.

It is highly unlikely that the Six relations were taught by the Buddha as the Sarvastivadins take pains to show, for no occurrences are found in the Pāli Nikāyas, Chinese Āgamas or the Vinaya texts. The Six relations, however, could not have first appeared after Nagarjuna (c. 150–250 C.E.), as Th. Stcherbatsky has suggested. The Six relations appear in both of the Chinese translations of the Jñānaprasthāna-sūstra, a major Sarvastivadin work attributed to Kātyāyaniputra, who is believed to have lived no later than the latter half of the first century B.C.E.

I. The Objections to Sahabhū-hetu

Let us begin with Vasubandhu's definition from the Kośa:

Sahabhū(-hetus) are those (dharmas) that become effect together (sahabūr ye mithah phalāh).

Vasubandhu elaborates:

Together (means) mutuality (parastaparam); dharmas which are mutual effects are mutually sahabhū-hetu.

The interlocutor vehemently objects to what he sees as an abrogation of the temporal sequence pertaining between cause and effect:
... but because this line of reasoning does not apply to seed, (sprout, stem,) etc., which have been recognized (by the world) as constituting cause and effect, it should be taught (by you, the Sarvāstivādins) as to how the dharmas which are produced simultaneously can be both cause and effect. (If you answer that these simultaneously-produced dharmas are mutually cause and effect) in the same manner as the lamp and lamp-light or sprout (āṅkura) and shadow, then let the following be properly discussed: whether, 1) the lamp is the cause of the lamp-light, or 2) there is a previously-produced cluster (of dharmas) that is the cause of the production of lamp-light and lamp or of sprout and shadow? 14

Vasubandhu responds to the objection by citing the basic premise of the Logicians (haitukāḥ):

When there is existence of one, there is invariably existence of the other, and when there is non-existence of one, there is invariably non-existence of the other; then the former is the cause and the latter is the effect. And among the co-existent dharmas, when one exists then all exist, and when one does not exist then all do not exist; therefore, they do constitute cause and effect. 15

This succeeds in placating the objector regarding the simultaneity (sahotpannam) but not regarding the aspect of mutuality (parasparam) in sahābhū-hetu. 16 This response is significant in that it shows that the Buddhists, at least the two schools represented here, at the time recognized at least two separate dimensions for this hetu. It further shows that simultaneity in the production of the dharmas was not the real issue; rather the point of controversy was mutuality, i.e., the simultaneously-produced dharmas which are mutually cause and effect.

Regarding the second point of the question, Vasubandhu acknowledges that the previously-produced cluster (pūrvopannā-sāmagrī) of dharmas, functioning as sahāga-hetu or one of the other three relations (of the Six relations besides sahābhū and saṃprayukta-hetu), was responsible for the production of the simultaneously-produced dharmas. 17 Vasubandhu is clear on this point, but the same cannot be said for the first point of the question, which asked whether or not the lamp was the cause of lamp-light. Vasubandhu, by citing the views of the
Logicians, purports to answer the question, but in our view, the response is not clear in its full meaning.

The interlocutor—in probable dissatisfaction with Vasubandhu’s ambiguous answer—suggests that the relationship of the simultaneously-produced dharmas, like lamp and lamp-light, may be compared to a tripod (*triṇāṇḍa*), where the three sticks are able to stand on the strength of their mutual support (*triṇāṇḍānyonyabalaśvasthānavat*); the three sticks act as cause and effect for each other. Since Vasubandhu does not object, it seems safe to assume that he accepted this as an appropriate metaphor for this *hetu*. While this metaphor does to some extent succeed in elucidating the nature of mutuality, the absence of further elaboration by both Vasubandhu and Yaśomitra in his commentary, the *Abhidharmakośa-vyākhyā*, leaves us with an incomplete picture of this dimension of the *hetu*.

II. Saṅghabhadra’s Defense and Explanation of “Mutuality”

Fortunately, Saṅghabhadra (Chung-hsien, c. 400 C.E.) in his *Nyāyānusāra* fills in this incomplete picture with an extensive amount of scriptural and logical argument from the orthodox Sarvāstivādin point of view. In the text we find the Sautrāntikas rejecting mutual causation on the following grounds:

1) At the point when the dharmas are about to be produced, they have not already been produced, and both, therefore, should not yet exist. How can you speak of dharmas that produce (= cause) and those that are produced (= effect)? 2) Since it is explained, “Because there is cause there is effect,” if dharmas can be produced in the future period, there would be the fault of perpetual production of the dharmas. 3) There exists no definite criterion for determining which among the simultaneously-produced dharmas are the effect and which the cause. They are like the two horns of an ox (i.e., indistinguishable). 4) Furthermore, with regard to the things of the world that are produced as the seed and sprout (as found) in the recognized characteristics of (the law of) cause and effect, we have not yet seen cause and effect (functioning at) the same time as this. Thus, you must now explain how there can be a meaning for cause and effect among the cluster of mutually-produced dharmas.
These arguments are unknown in the Kośa, except for the last, which argues on the basis of “common sense” understanding. The first argument is based on the assumption that if a group of dharmas function mutually as cause, then they would also have to do so in the future moment, immediately prior to the production of their corresponding effect in the present moment. But since the Sautrāntikas do not recognize the real existence of dharmas in the future and past moments, they point out it is ludicrous to speak of some dharmas as “causes” and others as “effects.” In the second argument, the Sautrāntikas claim that if a cause-and-effect relation were recognized for the future, an unacceptable situation would result in which the dharmas would exist in the future and the past as well as in the present, making dharmas eternal. The third argument is related to the first; here the emphasis is on the lack of criteria for determining which of the simultaneously-produced dharmas constitute the cause and which the effect.

Saṅghabhadra then proceeds to refute the Sautrāntika objection on the basis of canonical sūtra passages and the metaphor of the lamp and lamp-light.

Saṅghabhadra cites two of the most-often quoted sūtra passages on causation: “Relying on this, that exists” (i t’zu yu pi yu; imasya sato idam bhavati) and “Because this is produced, that is produced” (t’zu sheng ku pi sheng; imasyotpādād idam utpadyate). It is especially interesting that he views these two as representing two distinct kinds of hetu: What the former and the latter (passages) require are different. Thus, what we advocate is that the first sūtra (passage) is intended to reveal the meaning of the simultaneously-produced hetu (chū-sheng yin; sahotpanna-hetu) and the latter sūtra (passage) then reveals the meaning of the previously-produced hetu (ch’ien-sheng yin; pūrvotpanna-hetu).

Saṅghabhadra further explains it is wrong to inquire regarding the first passage, “On account of whose production was that produced?” or state, “Because the cause is produced, the effect is produced.” These are, instead, appropriate for the second passage, the one explicating the previously-produced hetu. What constitutes an appropriate question for the first passage is, “Relying on whose existence does that exist?”
For Saṅghabhadra, the simultaneously-produced hetu is not responsible for the production (sheng) of dharmas; he attributes such function to the previously-produced hetu. It is in this latter kind of hetu—where the relation between cause and effect is indicated by “because” or “on account of” (ku)—that he saw causation and, thus, the production of new dharmas. On the contrary, the former type emphasizes the mutual reliance (i) which allows the “member” dharmas to co-exist but which cannot by itself lead to the production of new dharmas.

With regard to the metaphor of the lamp and lamp-light, the Kośa completely fails to elaborate on it, but Saṅghabhadra vigorously defends it as example par excellence of sahabhū-hetu. The Sautrāntika initiates the polemics with a biting attack on the Sarvāstivādin interpretation of the metaphor:

I also accept that lamp-light is produced on account of the lamp, but do not accept that its cause is the lamp which is produced simultaneously with it. What is the reason? It is because if the lamp and lamp-light are produced simultaneously, the lamp-light could not have been produced having required (—as it should—) the lamp. The simultaneously-produced dharmas which require each other (for their production) do not accord with the principle, just as an entity does not require itself in order for its production. Merely on account of the previously-produced lamp, which functions as condition, lamp-light is able to be produced in the immediately subsequent thought moment. Thus, you should not cite this as metaphor (for sahabhū-hetu).

(Saṅghabhadra:) What you say is not correct, since when the lamp is first produced it is impossible to have the lamp exist without the light. In other words, we have yet to see a lamp which existed without a light. Thus, (your opinion) is incorrect.23

Here, we see more clearly the fundamentally different assumptions from which the two positions view the relationship between the lamp and the lamp-light. The Sautrāntikas adhere to the view that the two represent a sequential causal relation where lamp is the cause and light the effect. The lamp exists one moment prior to the light and directly causes the production of the light. The metaphor is seen as illustrating the previously-produced hetu.

On the other hand, Saṅghabhadra sees the metaphor as
illustrating the simultaneously-produced hetu, concerned more with the spatial—as opposed to temporal—relation among the co-existent dharmas, with emphasis on their inseparability. In fact, the lamp and the lamp-light are not viewed as two entities existing independently of each other at any time, but as an inextricable unit in which both support each other; thus, the above statement, “We have yet to see a lamp when it existed without a light.” In other words, Saṅghabhadra argues on the premise that a lamp is always lit; an unlit lamp is inconceivable within his framework. Like the Sautrāntika, he supports his position with evidence from what he deems “common human experience”: “However, (in reality) there has never existed even a small number of unlit lamps; the world has established this well.” If the sahabhu-hetu as a simultaneously-produced hetu is not responsible for the production of the lamp and light, how then does Saṅghabhadra explain their coming into existence? His position is that the previously-produced hetus are responsible. They are the previously-produced lamp and light which in this case function as sabhāga-hetu and kāraṇa-hetu. This is in basic accord with the view as delineated in the Kośa (p. 93 above).

III. The Root of the Controversy

The Sautrāntika criticism of the simultaneously-produced hetu stemmed, in our estimation, from their failure to distinguish the fundamental difference between these two kinds of hetus. They incorrectly sought to find “sequential causation” in the simultaneously-produced hetu, when the Sarvāstivādins had always reserved that function for the previously-produced hetus.

In light of the above analysis of Saṅghabhadra’s views, the earlier-quoted statement of the Logicians (p. 93) in the Kośa makes more sense. It was cited in response to the Sautrāntika objection to the sahabhū-hetu. As in the case of Saṅghabhadra, this statement by the Logicians also presupposes a set of dharmas that are produced together inseparably (sahabhūvām dharmānām). Once this premise is understood, this passage becomes more intelligible. It was precisely due to the failure to do so that the Sautrāntika respondent continued to take exception to the Sarvāstivādin position, as he persisted in denying the meaning of
mutuality (*parasparam*). The Sarvāstivādin response was simply to refer him to the statement of the Logicians under discussion, apparently out of exasperation with the objector’s inability to comprehend his position. While the *Kāśa* appends no further explanation of the statement of the Logicians, Yaśomitra comments:

Because there is *citta* when there are *caittas*, and because there is no *citta* when there are no *caittas*, the *caittas* are the causes of *citta*. . . . If one exists then all (the rest) exist, and if all (the rest) do not exist then the one does not exist; therefore, they are mutually cause and effect.\(^{25}\)

What is clearly shown here is that “to be mutually cause and effect” (*anyonyam hetu-phala-bhavah*) does not refer to causation. It, instead, points to the relationship in which the one is inextricably related to the rest and vice versa. Like *citta* and *caitta*, they are always produced together. It is a matter of relation, and does not refer to one causing the other to be produced.\(^{26}\)

Saṅghabhadra’s understanding of mutuality also is corroborated by the *Mahāvibhāṣa*, which concludes the section on *sahabhū-hetu* with the following question and answer:

What are the meanings of *sahabhū*?

Non-separation (*pu hsiang-li*), sharing a common effect (*tung i-kuo*) and mutual accompanying (*hsiang sui-shun*) are the meanings of *sahabhū*.\(^{27}\)

None of these three meanings exhibits any high degree of causation. Instead, all three meanings—particularly the first and the third (the second will be discussed in detail below)—support the relations characterized by the *Nyāyānusāra* metaphor of the lamp and lamp-light: inseparability and simultaneity. We maintain that these correspond to the above *Mahāvibhāṣa* meanings of “non-separation” and “mutual accompanying,” respectively.

It appears that modern researchers on the subject have repeated the same error as the Sautrāntikas in holding this *hetu* responsible for the production of new dharmas.\(^{28}\) They have, in our opinion, taken the expression, “dharmas which are mutual effects are *sahabhū-hetus* to each other,” to mean that
one member of the sahabhū-hetu dharmas produces the other, and vice versa; each is, thereby, the effect of the other as well as the cause of the other. Such an understanding goes contrary to the above findings, which showed that mutuality in sahabhū-hetu for the Sarvāstivādins meant the inseparable nature of the relationship pertaining between simultaneously-produced dharmas. It is noteworthy that Kamālaśīla (c. 740–795) also questioned the validity of this hetu as a theory of causation, though for reasons different from ours.29

IV. "Common Effect" as the Principal Meaning of Sahabhū-Hetu

We have noticed so far through our examination that the sahabhū-hetu subsumes the meanings of simultaneity and mutuality. If this hetu were confined just to these two dimensions, it would virtually correspond to the Theravādin's aṇṇamaṇṇa-paccaya in terms of nature and scope.30 However, Saṅghabhadra introduces the importance of another sense of the term—that of sharing a "common effect" (i-kuo; eka-phala)—which he views as the principal dimension of sahabhū-hetu.31 This is not to suggest that this particular sense was totally absent in the Kośa, but that it was overshadowed there by the meaning of mutuality. It should be noted that while some earlier scholars have alluded to the difference in the emphasis between the Kośa and Saṅghabhadra's works, no one to our knowledge has so far treated this subject in detail.32

The arguments presented in the previous section show that while Saṅghabhadra did define sahabhū-hetu as mutuality, he also included "common effect" among the indispensible dimensions of this hetu:

Also, we do not accept that all dharmas that are produced simultaneously have the meaning of mutually functioning as cause and effect. Which are the ones that we accept (as having that meaning?) (Only dharmas which) share a common effect or those that are mutual effects have this meaning.33

However, when we ask which of the two meanings Saṅghabhadra valued more, we find that "common effect" took precedence:
One ought not teach that (dharmas) are sahabhū-hetu merely on the basis of their being mutual effects. A dharma and its secondary characteristics are mutual effects but are not (sahabhū-hetus). . . . From this meaning, one ought to determine that “those conditioned dharmas with a common effect are sahabhū-hetu.” Since the authoritative text explains (accordingly), this is bereft of error.  

Saṅghabhadra’s preference for common effect as the primary meaning is further attested in his other major work, Hsien-tsung lun (Pradīpaka). Whereas the kārikas (verses) cited in the Nyāyānusāra are identical to those of the Kośa, Saṅghabhadra in the Pradīpaka alters the first kārika on sahabhū-hetu to read, “Sahabhūs are (dharmas with) the common effect dharma,” rather than “Sahabhūs are (dharmas) which are mutual effects,” as found in the Kośa and the Nyāyānusāra. This alteration, we believe, better reflects Saṅghabhadra’s true position, for in this work he was more at liberty to expound his own views, unlike in the Nyāyānusāra, where his main objective was to refute the Kośa by adhering closely to its format.  

In turning to the earlier Sarvāstivādin texts to determine which of the two meanings was emphasized, we find the Jñānaprasthāna—the earliest text to expound the Six relations—to be of little help, since it merely lists the categories of dharmas that qualify as sahabhū-hetu. The Mahāvibhāṣā, on the other hand, contains extensive discussions on this hetu, which show that the “common effect” dominated the meaning of sahabhū-hetu:

1) To carry out a common effort (pan i-shih) is the meaning of sahabhū-hetu.
2) Our position is that citta and the accompanying body and speech actions are sahabhū-hetus. Why is this so? It is because they have a common effect; it is because they carry out a common effort.
3) Are the obstructable derivative-forms (upādāya-rūpa) and other obstructable derivative-forms mutually sahabhū-hetus? No, . . . . The reason for this is that the meaning of sahabhū-hetu is the (carrying out of) a common effect, but they (the derivative-forms) do not carry out a common effect; (hence, they are not sahabhū-hetu).
4) Why is it said that “mutuality” is not sahabhū-hetu? Because
it is not common effect, it is not sahabhū-hetu, since sahabhū-hetu
dharmas definitely have a common effect.\textsuperscript{38}

The emphasis on “common effect” in these statements
shows that Saṃghabhadra was in accordance with the
Mahāvibhāṣā and that this emphasis was, therefore, the orthodox
Sarvāstivādin position. It is worth noting that none of the three
major Sarvāstivādin texts mentions the metaphor of the tripod,
suggesting further that “mutuality”—the concept which the
metaphor was intended to illustrate in the Kośa—did not consti-
tute the principal meaning for the Sarvāstivādins.\textsuperscript{39} The tripod
metaphor, on the other hand, is reported in association with
the aññamañña-paccaya of the Theravādins.\textsuperscript{40}

As to the actual mechanism by which sahabhū-hetu dharmas
share a common effect, we were unable to find any clear expla-
nation that specifically addressed itself to this issue in
Saṃghabhadra’s writings or in the Mahāvibhāṣā. However, in
attempting to reconstruct the mechanism based on scattered
information, we have found that the sahabhū-hetu dharmas
merely assist and are not by themselves responsible for the pro-
duction of a common effect.

According to Saṃghabhadra, a common effect is included
in the category of the purusakāra-phala (shih-yung kuo; man-func-
tion effect), one of the Five effects (wu-kuo; pañcaphalāni) of the
Sarvāstivādin theory of causation. There are three kinds of
purusakāra-phalas in connection with sahabhū-hetu: “simultane-
ously-produced” (sahotpanna), “subsequent” (samanantara) and
“separated” (viprakṛṣṭa).\textsuperscript{41} Of these three, however,
Saṃghabhadra does not recognize the simultaneously-produced
as a common effect of sahabhū-hetu;\textsuperscript{42} the latter two—which he
admits as a common effect of sahabhū-hetu—turn out to be none
other than the effects of sabbhāga and sarvatraga hetus (nisyanda-
phala), and of vipāka-hetu (vipāka-phala), respectively.\textsuperscript{43} Hence,
a common effect which the sahabhū-hetu dharmas share is pro-
duced not in the same moment as the sahabhū-hetu dharmas,
but in one of the subsequent moments.

However, this leads to a dilemma, in that sahabhū-hetu dhar-
mas by definition can only have their effect produced in the
same moment as themselves.\textsuperscript{44} How can they, then, share a
common effect—which is produced in one of the subsequent
moments—as advocated in the two major Sarvāstivādin texts? Based on our reading, these two texts do not offer a clear explanation of this problem. Fortunately, P'u-kuang (7th century) throws some light on this point in his commentary to the Kośa, Chü-she lun chi:

The intent of the sahabhū-hetu in taking (ch'ü; gṛṇāti) the simultaneously(-produced) puruṣakāra-phala is to assist the simultaneously(-produced) dharmas to each awaken (ch'i) its function (yung). (To each awaken its function means) to awaken the function of kāraṇa-hetu, or to awaken the function of sabhāga-hetu and sarvatraga-hetu, or to awaken the function of vipāka-hetu, thus each (hetu) taking its own effect.\textsuperscript{45}

In other words, the sahabhū-hetus serve as catalyst for the other hetus to generate their own function, that is to say, the production of their respective effects. Included in these effects are the “subsequent” and “separated" puruṣakāra-phalas, which, for Sanghabhadra, constituted a common effect of the sahabhū-hetu dharmas.

There is no conclusive evidence to prove that P'u-kuang’s view correctly reflects the Sarvāstivādin position, though it is reported that this commentary was compiled from notes taken orally from Hsüan-tsang during the translation of the Kośa.\textsuperscript{46} But for our primary interest, the evidence seen above does not show the sahabhū-hetu playing a direct causative role in the production of a common effect.

Stated differently, sahabhū-hetu is the force that co-ordinates the dharmas for a common effect. Its main concern lies with the “horizontal” relationship among the dharmas, not with the direct production of a common effect. We believe it was this hetu that T.V.R. Murti, the noted Mādhyamika scholar, sought in vain, lending to his criticism of the Sarvāstivādin view of causation:

As causation, on the Vaibhāṣika (= Sarvāstivādin) view, is not self-becoming but the co-operation of several factors (pratyayas) in generating an effect, the question arises: what makes factors A, B, C, D, etc., which by themselves are disconnected entities and not causes and conditions, into causes. What co-ordinates them for a united effort, for a common end.\textsuperscript{47}
We believe this is exactly the role performed by the sahabhū-hetu. It appears that Murti was unaware of this particular function in the sahabhū-hetu, probably due to his over-reliance on the Kośa, which, we noted above, deemphasized this particular meaning in favor of the meaning of mutuality.\textsuperscript{48}

V. Sahabhū-hetu as a Principle of Unifying Relations

We have seen from the above discussions that sahabhū-hetu is comprised of three meanings: simultaneity, inseparability and common effect. These are not three separate kinds of sahabhū-hetu but, instead, three distinct dimensions of the same hetu—two of which, as noted above (p. 99), correspond to some of the Theravādin paccayas.\textsuperscript{49} Because of this multi-dimensional character, the usual English rendering of sahabhū-hetu as “simultaneous” or “co-existent” does not do justice to the full meaning of this hetu. Not all simultaneous dharmas are sahabhū-hetus. Moreover, they must invariably be produced together, i.e., be inseparable. But even these two are insufficient, for finally they must share a common effect.

More significantly for the aims of this paper, all three aspects happen to be aspects of a hetu which has proven to be primarily a principle of spatial unity or aggregation rather than of causation, as was generally understood before. Our findings are further supported by the similar meanings that sahabhū-hetu shares with two concepts that denote unity and aggregation: accompanying and convergence.

The concept of “accompanying” (sui-chuan; anupari) vṛt) is embodied in the dharmas that accompany others (anupariwartıkāh). In the Mahāvibhāṣā, the mental concomitants (caitta), physical (kāya) and speech (vāc) avijñapti and the four great elements (mahābhutāni) are described as dharmas that accompany citta.\textsuperscript{50} When questioned as to why these dharmas are considered “accompanying,” three reasons are given: they accompany one another (sui-shun), mutually benefit each other (hsiang she-i) and carry out a common effort (pan i-shih).\textsuperscript{51} Compared to those of sahabhū-hetu, only the second meaning differs, but even these two—the “mutual inseparability” of sahabhū-hetu and the “mutual benefit” of accompaniment—are in our view related.
To support this, we saw in the Sarvāstivādin understanding of the analogy of the lamp and light that the two were mutually inseparable as well as mutually supportive.

Regarding the concept of "convergence" (ho-ho; sāmagrī, saṃnipāta), the Mahāvibhāṣā recognizes two kinds: dharmas that 1) a) are produced together and b) do not separate, and 2) carry out a common object without conflict. While no example for the former kind is given, the second is represented by a quote from Gośaka:

Because the faculty, object and consciousness similarly carry out a common object, it is called "convergence," and not because they are produced together and are mutually inseparable. \(^5\)

It is tempting to suggest, in light of the correspondences noted in the statements by Gośaka and Saṅghabhadra, that there was a borrowing of meanings among the three concepts; without more information, however, we cannot know. What is significant for our main interest are the virtually identical meanings that sahābhū-hetu shares with the two concepts which denote unity and aggregation; this lends further support to our finding regarding the nature of sahābhū-hetu. \(^6\)

VI. The Two Categories of Relations

The above findings suggest deep implications for our understanding of the Buddhist theories of relations. As Saṅghabhadra incisively perceived, there are two general categories of hetu: the previously-produced and the simultaneously-produced. The former represents causation where \(a\) having been produced prior to \(b\) causes the production of \(b\). In the latter category, \(a\) and \(b\) are produced simultaneously without one being responsible, at least directly, for the production of the other. The two should not be confused with one other.

The confusion surrounding the sahābhū-hetu can be partly blamed on the fact that it was classified among the Six relations as a "hetu" along with the other previously-produced hetus. Prior to its appearance as one of the Six relations in the Jñānaprasthāna, we find in the Saṅgītāparīyāya-(śāstra) a reference made to a cat-
egory of dharmas called "simultaneously-produced dharmas" (chii-sheng fa). But at this stage, this notion had yet to be associated with that of a hetu. It was under the Six hetu-relations that the Sarvāstivādin systemizers consolidated the various relations of heterogeneous nature.

Some modern scholars have alluded to the existence of the two distinct kinds of categories. S. Yamakami, in explaining the scope of the Six relations states, "This law has to show the causal relation of the 'dharmas,' not only in (temporal) succession, but also in their (spatial) concomitance; so its scope is vast." Ledi Sadaw, based on Pāli material and drawing especially from Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha, concludes that Buddhism has expounded relations (paccaya) by two methods: 1) the law of production via a cause (paticcasamuppāda) and 2) a system of correlations (paṭṭhāna-naya). While his categorization does not agree exactly with that of Saṅghabhadra, the former group definitely corresponds to the latter's previously-produced hetu.

D. Kalupahana, in one of the most detailed studies on the subject of Buddhist causality, discusses the usage of the term "idampratyayata," meaning "conditionality" or "relativity." He cites Candrakirti, whom he suggests distinguished idampratyayata in the sense of "relativity" from pratityasamutpāda, which denotes "active casuation." What is highly interesting is that Candrakirti supports this distinction with exactly the same set of sūtra passages as found in Saṅghabhadra: idampratyayata correlates with "When this exists, that exists" and pratityasamutpāda with "When this is produced, that is produced." The former corresponds to Saṅghabhadra's "simultaneously-produced hetu" and the latter to the "previously-produced hetu."

Nagao Gadjin, in reference to Yogācārin materials, offers his views on the difference between what he calls the "sequential" (ijiteki) and "simultaneous" (dōji) causations. The latter includes, for example, the relation between the first seven consciousness (vijñāna) and the ālayavijñāna, which are said to be mutually cause and effect and which are produced simultaneously. Nagao explains that in the case of simultaneity—despite its being one of the categories of time—temporal considerations are relegated to the background while the abstract dimension is emphasized. Such methods were employed by the major Vijnānavādin figures, including Asaṅga, Vasubandhu and Dharmapāla. Nagao
later adds, based on Sthiramati's view, that simultaneity in causation indicates the "mutually dependent relations" of the law of co-dependent production.\textsuperscript{58}

Admittedly, the scope and viewpoints of the above opinions may vary somewhat. Nevertheless, they not only reinforce the findings of this paper, but also call attention to the need for further research in clarifying the nature of the two fundamentally distinct types of relations.

\textit{VII. Conclusion}

1. \textit{Sahabhū-hetu} constitutes a unifying relationship between simultaneously-produced dharmas.

2. Therefore, both the Sarvāstivādins' opponents and the modern scholars who viewed this \textit{hetu} as causation failed to understand correctly its nature.

3. Not being a theory of causation, \textit{sahabhū-hetu} does not undermine, as was feared by the above two groups, the traditional assumption of causation being a cause which is produced simultaneously with its effect.

4. \textit{Sahabhū-hetu}, at least from the period of the compilation of the \textit{Mahāvibhaṣa} (c. 150 C.E.) on, was defined by three distinct meanings: simultaneity, inseparability (with mutual support as its corollary) and common effect. This simultaneity was broad in scope, and was not contested by the critics of \textit{sahabhū-hetu}, who also recognized its validity.

5. Inseparability (or mutuality)—expressed as "mutual cause and effect"—was severely attacked by the other schools, the Sautrāntikas in particular. However, their criticism was misdirected and unwarranted, since we found "mutuality" to mean in actuality the "inseparability" of the dharmas that comprise \textit{sahabhū-hetu}, and not causation.

6. Common effect, much neglected in the \textit{Kośa}, constituted the principal meaning of \textit{sahabhū-hetu} for the Sarvāstivādins. Though this meaning involved some semblance of causation, it still was not directly responsible for bringing another dharma into existence.

7. \textit{Sahabhū-hetu}, along with \textit{samprayukta-hetu},\textsuperscript{59} constitutes one of the two fundamentally distinct types of relations found in Buddhist literature.
NOTES

1. I wish to acknowledge P.S. Jaini, Kenyō Mitomo and, in particular, Robert Buswell for their suggestions.

2. For a concise discussion of sahabhū-hetu, see Vasubandhu, Abhidharmakosābhāṣyam, ed. by P. Pradhan, (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1975), pp. 83–85. The arañamañña-paccaya, which is one of the twenty-four paccayas, is discussed in the Paññāvatī; see Nyanatiloka Mahāthera, Guide Through the Abhidhamma-pitaka, (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1971), p. 120.

3. The Sautrāntika objections will be discussed in detail below. For passages indicating that the Darśāntikas also objected to what they viewed as simultaneous causation, see Mahāvibhāṣā, Taishō Daizōkyō (henceforth T) 27, p. 79c7–8.


8. T 27, No. 1545 and T 29, No. 1562, respectively.

9. Vasubandhu, Kosa, pp. 83: 20–24 and 88: 15. Sahabhū-hetu encompasses the four dharma categories of mind (citta), mental concomitants (caittas), form (rupa) and the non-accompanying (viprayukta-hetu), while samprayukta-hetu applies only to the relationship between the first two. More specifically, sahabhū-hetu applies to the following relationships: citta and caittas; citta and two restraints (samyas); caittas and characteristics (laks,anas); citta and characteristics; among the great elements (mahābhūtāni).

10. Th. Stcherbatsky, The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977), p. 174 note 4. Stcherbatsky bases his suggestion on the grounds that Nāgārjuna does not mention the Six relations at all. The Four conditions (catuh-pratyāyah; ssu-yiian), the other of the two major theories of relations advocated by the Sarvāstivādins, was, however, severely attacked by Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, in Madhyamaka-sastra and Prasannapadā, respectively. But there is no specific reference to sahabhū-hetu or samprayukta-hetu that I was able to find in these two texts. See Stcherbatsky, The Conception of Buddhist Nirvāṇa, pp. 72–192. According to Sakurabe, the Four conditions
appeared earlier in the literature than the Six relations and were recognized by the other Buddhist schools. See Sakurabe, “Abidaruma ingaron,” pp. 127-128.


13. Ibid., p. 83: 19.


15. Ibid., pp. 84: 25–85:1. The _Kośa_ makes no other reference to the Logicians; Yasomitra’s commentary also does not elaborate. A possible candidate would be the Hetuvādins mentioned in the _Kathāvatthu_; in it, they are treated as one of the early Buddhist groups in the same sense as the Mahāsāṅghikas and the Sabbatthivādins. (p. xxvi). Very little is known about these Hetuvādins, as they appear to have been a minor school, if not, in fact, simply specialists in the area of causation and reasoning within each of the various schools. (p. xlv) See S.Z. Aung and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, _Points of Controversy_, (London: Luzac & Company, Ltd., 1960), pp. xxvi and xlv.


18. Ibid., p. 85: 3.


20. Ibid., p. 419a1–2.

21. Ibid., p. 419b7–8.

22. Ibid., p. 419b1–7.


24. Ibid., p. 420a20–21.


28. Stcherbatsky, _The Central Conception_, p. 31, “The Sarvāstivādin school reckons in all six different causal relations, . . .”; McGovern, _A Manual of Buddhist Philosophy_, p. 194, “In certain cases co-existing dharmas . . . have a causal influence on one another.” Conze, _Buddhist Thought_, p. 154, “Therefore they mutually condition one another.” See also notes 4 and 5 above.

29. Kamalaśīla, _Tattwasaṅgraha-paṇḍika_, Gaekward's Oriental Series 30, (Baroda: Central Library Baroda, 1926), p. 175. Kamalaśīla argues that, in essence, _saḥabhū-hetu_ cannot be a type of causation in which simultaneously-produced dharmas produce each other. Being momentary, a dharma cannot produce the other when it has not itself yet been produced. On the other hand, if a dharma produces the other after it has been produced, then there would be no need for it to produce it again, for there would be a redundancy of production. Hence, Kamalaśīla also seems to have incorrectly treated this _hetu_ as a type of causation.

30. Like _saḥabhū-hetu_, _aṇīmananīpaccaya_ includes the two dimensions of simultaneity and mutuality, and applies to the four great elements (mahābhū-tāni).
The term "eka" in "eka-phala"—one of the ten modalities of this hetu in the Kośa (p. 84: 2–6)—is to be understood as "common," according to later commentators: Yasomitra, Sphutārtha, p. 192: 10, "śādhrāraṇa"; Hsüan-tsang in his translation of the Kośa, interprets as "kung" (T 29, p. 30c5); Saṅghabhadra explains similarly in the Nyāyānusāra (T 29, p. 418b18–19).


34. Ibid., p. 417c23–26. The Sarvāstivādins, at least from the Mahāvibhāṣā on, have maintained that dharmas that are produced simultaneously do not necessarily constitute sahabhū-hetu, since they fail to share a common effect. The relation between secondary characteristic dharmas and a dharma falls within such a category. For list of relations in this category, see Vasubandhu, Kośa, p. 84: 15-19.

35. T 29, p. 814c19.


37. The terms "effort" (shīh; kāryatva) and "effect" (kuo; phala) are, in our estimation, used synonymously by the Sarvāstivādins, particularly in the Mahāvibhāṣā. We shall, therefore, treat them accordingly, referring to both as "effect."

38. T 27, p. 81b20–21; p. 81c7–9; p. 82b3–7; p. 663c17–18.

39. Pu-kuang (7th century), in his commentary on the Kośa, points out how Vasubandhu emphasized mutuality, while the Mahāvibhāṣā and Nyāyānusāra favored common-effect. T 41, pp. 113c7–114a9.

40. On the association of this metaphor with aññamaññam-phala, see Nyanatiloka, Guide Through, p. 120.

41. Saṅghabhadra also includes visamyoga-phala (li-hsi kuo) along with purusakāra-phala as a common effect, but we have expediently left it out, since it does not directly relate to the present discussion on sahabhū-hetu. Also, although four kinds of purusakāra-phalas are recognized, we have omitted the fourth, "non-production" (pu-sheng), which corresponds to visamyoga-phala, for the same reason as above. See T 29, pp. 418b11–14; 437a13-18.

In our view of the Sarvāstivādin position, especially Saṅghabhadra's, there are narrow and broad interpretations as to what constitutes a purusakāra-phala. In its narrow sense, only the "simultaneously-produced" as effect of sahabhū and samprayuktā hetus is included. On the other hand, in its broad meaning, the other two are included. Of the two interpretations, Saṅghabhadra chooses the latter. See T 29, pp. 436a14-29; 437a13-18, and also Vasubandhu, Kośa, p. 95: 5.

42. Saṅghabhadra's reasoning for this exclusion is that there cannot be any effect that is produced in the same moment as its causes; he also says that a dharma cannot function as the cause of its own production. It appears that, for Saṅghabhadra, the sahabhū-hetu dharmas and the simultaneously-produced purusakāra-phalas form a "harmonious cluster" (ho-ho chii) wherein the dharmas function as "mutual effects" ( = inseparability). See T 29, pp. 418a14–17; 436a9–12. In our view, the simultaneously-produced purusakāra-phalas and
sahabhū-hetus constitute interchangeable terms that refer to a same cluster of simultaneously-produced dharmas. Each of the dharmas in the cluster can either be the phala or hetu, depending on the context. For example, of the four great elements, earth, water and fire can function as sahabhū-hetus and space as puruṣākāra-phala; but the roles can be interchanged so that another set of three elements can be the hetus and the remaining element the phala. See T 29, p. 814c22-26.

43. T 29, pp. 418b13–18; 436a8–29.
46. Sung kao-seng chaun, T 50, p. 727a10–11.

48. Murti would more than likely respond to the existence of sahabhū-hetu by saying that it requires a hetu of its own, hence leading to an infinite regress. That may be true from the Mādhyamika standpoint, but it still does not detract from the fact that he appears to be unaware of this co-ordinating function in the sahabhū-hetu.

49. While the correspondence is not precise since they often overlap in meaning, it is possible to make the following correspondences: simultaneity to sahajāta (co-nascence); inseparability to aṇāmanāṇa (mutuality). Common effect, however, does not seem to have a counterpart among the paccayas; if one has to pick one, sahajāta-kamma, i.e., cetanā (volition) best approximates it.

50. T 27, pp. 81b24–82a9.
51. Ibid., p. 82b16–18.
52. Ibid., p. 984a6–8.
53. Saṅghabhadra, elsewhere, also states, "Since (dharmas of) a harmonious cluster become mutual effects,..." See T 29, p. 418b16.
54. Saṅgītispariyāya(-sāstra), T 26, p. 384b20-c2. In a somewhat later Abhidharma text, the Vijñānakāya(-sāstra), which is still earlier than the Jñānaprasthāna, sahabhū and samprayukt dharmas are identified with causal-condition (yin-yían; hetu-pratyaya) one of the Four conditions: hence, we witness the germination of its association with "causation" prior to its full-fledged form in the Six relations.

55. Yamakami, Systems of Buddhistic Thought, pp. 309–310. I acknowledge the fact that his observation provided the intial impetus to re-examine the nature of sahabhū-hetu. One part of my conclusion is essentially the same as his observation, and I have attempted to provide a detailed analysis to support that point.

59. See note 9 above.
Glossary

chʻi
chʻien-sheng yin
chʻü
Chū-she lun chi
chū-sheng fa
chū-sheng yin
chū-yu yin
Chung-hsien
dōji
ho-ho
ho-ho chū
hsiang she-i
hsiang sui-shun
Hsien-tsung lun
Hsūan-tsang
ijiteki
i-kuo
i tʻzu yu pi yu
ku
kung
li-hsi kuo
liu-yin
pan i-shih
pu hsiang-li
Pʻu-kuang
pu-sheng
sheng
shih-yung kuo
Shun cheng-li lun
sui-chuan
sui-shun
ssu-yüan
Sung kao-seng chuan
Ta pi-pʻo-sha lun
tung i-kuo
tʻzu sheng ku pi sheng
wu-kuo
yin-yüan
yung