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Simultaneous Relation (*Sahabhū-hetu*): A Study in Buddhist Theory of Causation¹

by *Kenneth K. Tanaka*

The two major Hīnayāna schools, the Sarvāstivādins and Theravādins, each posited a concept of mutually simultaneous "causation," *sahabhū-hetu* (*chü-yu yin*) and *aññamañña-paccaya*, respectively.² The Sarvāstivādins in particular were severely criticized by their doctrinal antagonists, the Darṣāntikas and the Sautrāntikas, for undermining the basic assumption of the theory of causation: the temporal sequence between cause and effect.³ 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."⁴ Th. Stcherbatsky similarly states, "It is curious that the *citta* is related to *caitta* 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."⁵

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 *Abhidharmakośa* (henceforth *Kośa*) interpretation, which suffers both from brevity and a pronounced Sautrāntika bias when compared to the major orthodox Sarvāstivādin texts.⁶ Japanese studies on causation have fared a little better, in that they allude to the major

Sarvāstivādin texts, most of which are available only in their Chinese translations.⁷ 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 Sarvāstivādin texts, notably the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (*Ta pi-p'o-sha lun*) and the *Nyāyānusāra* (*Shun cheng-li lun*).⁸

The *sahabhū-hetu* belongs to a category of Six relations (*liu-yin, ṣaḍ-hetavaḥ*) 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.⁹ 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 Sarvāstivādins 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 Nāgārjuna (c. 150–250 C.E.), as Th. Stcherbatsky has suggested.¹⁰ The Six relations appear in both of the Chinese translations of the *Jñānaprasthāna-sāstra*, a major Sarvāstivādin work attributed to Kātyāyanīputra, who is believed to have lived no later than the latter half of the first century B.C.E.¹¹

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 mithaḥ phalāḥ*).¹²

Vasubandhu elaborates:

Together (means) mutuality (*parasparam*); dharmas which are mutual effects are mutually *sahabhū-hetu*.¹³

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 (*aṅkura*) 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 (*haitukāh*):

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 *sahabhū-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 (*pūrvotpanna-sāmagrī*) of dharmas, functioning as *sabhāga-hetu* or one of the other three relations (of the Six relations besides *sahabhū* and *samprayukta-hetus*), 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 (*tridaṇḍa*), where the three sticks are able to stand on the strength of their mutual support (*tridaṇḍānyonyabalāvasthānavat*); the three sticks act as cause and effect for each other.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

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*).²⁰ 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* (*chü-sheng yin; sahotpanna-hetu*) and the latter sūtra (passage) then reveals the meaning of the previously-produced *hetu* (*ch'ien-sheng yin; pūrvotpanna-hetu*).²¹

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?"²²

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 excellance* 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.”²⁴ If the *sahabhū-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 *Kośa* 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-bhavaḥ*) 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 *Mahāvibhāṣā*, 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 *Mahāvibhāṣā* 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 *aññamañña-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 indispensable 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.³⁴

Saṅghabhadra’s preference for common effect as the primary meaning is further attested in his other major work, *Hsien-tung 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*.³⁵ 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.³⁶

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 effort³⁷ (*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.³⁸

The emphasis on “common effect” in these statements shows that Saṅghabhadra 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 constitute the principal meaning for the Sarvāstivādins.³⁹ The tripod metaphor, on the other hand, is reported in association with the *aññamañña-paccaya* of the Theravādins.⁴⁰

As to the actual mechanism by which *sahabhū-hetu* dharmas share a common effect, we were unable to find any clear explanation that specifically addressed itself to this issue in Saṅghabhadra’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 production of a common effect.

According to Saṅghabhadra, a common effect is included in the category of the *puruṣakāra-phala* (*shih-yung kuo*; man-function effect), one of the Five effects (*wu-kuo*; *pañcaphalāni*) of the Sarvāstivādin theory of causation. There are three kinds of *puruṣakāra-phalas* in connection with *sahabhū-hetu*: “simultaneously-produced” (*sahotpanna*), “subsequent” (*samanantara*) and “separated” (*viprakṛṣṭa*).⁴¹ Of these three, however, Saṅghabhadra does not recognize the simultaneously-produced as a common effect of *sahabhū-hetu*;⁴² the latter two—which he admits as a common effect of *sahabhū-hetu*—turn out to be none other than the effects of *sabhāga* and *sarvatraga hetus* (*niṣyanda-phala*), and of *vipāka-hetu* (*vipāka-phala*), respectively.⁴³ Hence, a common effect which the *sahabhū-hetu* dharmas share is produced 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* dharmas by definition can only have their effect produced in the same moment as themselves.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*; *grhṇāti*) 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.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 Saṅghabhadra, 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*.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 no[t] causes and conditions, into causes. What co-ordinates them for a united effort, for a common end.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.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*.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; anu(pari) vṛt*) is embodied in the dharmas that accompany others (*anuparivar-tikāḥ*). 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*.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*).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 Goṣaka:

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.⁵²

It is tempting to suggest, in light of the correspondences noted in the statements by Goṣaka 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 *sahabhū-hetu* shares with the two concepts which denote unity and aggregation; this lends further support to our finding regarding the nature of *sahabhū-hetu*.⁵³

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 *sahabhū-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 *Saṅgītiparyāya-(śāstra)* a reference made to a cat-

egory of dharmas called “simultaneously-produced dharmas” (*chü-sheng fa*). But at this stage, this notion had yet to be associated with that of a *hetu*.⁵⁴ 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.”⁵⁵ Ledi Sadaw, based on Pāli material and drawing especially from *Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha*, concludes that Buddhism has expounded relations (*pañcāyā*) by two methods: 1) the law of production via a cause (*patīccasamuppāda*) 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*.⁵⁶

D. Kalupahana, in one of the most detailed studies on the subject of Buddhist causality, discusses the usage of the term “*idampratyayatā*,” meaning “conditionality” or “relativity.” He cites Candrakīrti, whom he suggests distinguished *idampratyayatā* in the sense of “relativity” from *pratītyasamutpāda*, which denotes “active causation.” What is highly interesting is that Candrakīrti supports this distinction with exactly the same set of sūtra passages as found in Saṅghabhadra: *idampratyayatā* correlates with “When this exists, that exists” and *pratītyasamutpāda* 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*.”⁵⁷

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 Vijñānavādin 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.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.

VII. Conclusion

1. *Sahabhū-hetu* constitutes a unifying relationship between simultaneously-produced dharmas.

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

3. Not being a theory of causation, *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. *Sahabhū-hetu*, at least from the period of the compilation of the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (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 *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 *sahabhū-hetu*, and not causation.

6. Common effect, much neglected in the *Kośa*, constituted the principal meaning of *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. *Sahabhū-hetu*, along with *samprayukta-hetu*,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, *Abhidharmaśāstra*, ed. by P. Pradhan, (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1975), pp. 83–85. The *aññamañña-paccaya*, which is one of the twenty-four *paccayas*, is discussed in the *Paṭṭhāna*; see Nyanatiloka Mahāthera, *Guide Through the Abhidhamma-piṭaka*, (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*, *Taiśhō Daizōkyō* (henceforth *T*) 27, p. 79c7–8.

4. D. Kalupahana, *Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, (Honolulu: The Univ. of Hawaii Press, 1975), p. 167.

5. Th. Stcherbatsky, *The Central Conception of Buddhism*, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974), p. 36 note 3.

6. Sogen Yamakami, *Systems of Buddhist Thought*, (Calcutta: Univ. of Calcutta, 1912), pp. 309–315; William M. McGovern, *A Manual of Buddhist Philosophy*, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1923), pp. 192–205; Stcherbatsky, *Central Conception*, pp. 31–37; E. Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India*, (Ann Arbor: The Univ. of Michigan Press, 1967), pp. 153–156; Y. Karunadasa, *Buddhist Analysis of Matter*, (Colombo: The Dept. of Cultural Affairs, 1967), pp. 126–132.

7. Takagi, S., *Kusha kyōgi*, (Kyōto: Nozogawa Shoten, 1918), pp. 122–149; Funabashi, M., *Kusharon kōgi*, (Kyoto: Dōbōsha, 1932), pp. 157–204; Fukuhara, R., *Ubu-abidatsuma-ronsho-no hatten*, 198–217; Sakurabe, T., “Abidatsuma bukkyō no ingaron,” *Inga*, Bukkyō shisō-shi 3, (Kyōto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1980), pp. 127–146.

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

9. Vasubandhu, *Kośa*, pp. 83: 20–24 and 88: 15. *Sahabhū-hetu* encompasses the four dharma categories of mind (*citta*), mental concomitants (*caitta*), form (*rūpa*) 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 (*saṃvara*); *caittas* and characteristics (*lakṣaṇas*); *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 (*catuḥ-pratyāyah*; *ssu-yüan*), the other of the two major theories of relations advocated by the Sarvāstivādins, was, however, severely attacked by Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti, in *Madhyamaka-śāstra* 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.

11. *T* 26, No. 1543, p. 773a and *T* 26, No. 1544, pp. 920c-921a. The dating of the author is based on Fukuhara, *Ubu ronsho*, p. 174.

12. Vasubandhu, *Kośa*, p. 83: 18.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 83: 19.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 84: 20-24.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 84: 25-85:1. The *Kośa* makes no other reference to the Logicians; Yaśomitra'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 Mahā-sāṅghikas 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.

16. Vasubandhu, *Kośa*, p. 85: 1.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 85: 5-7.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 85: 3.

19. *T* 29, p. 418c22-28.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 419a1-2.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 419b7-8.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 419b1-7.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 420a11-17.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 420a20-21.

25. Yaśomitra, *Sphuṭārthābhīdharmakośa-vyākhyā*, ed. U. Wogihara, (Tokyo: Sankibō Buddhist Book Store, 1971), p. 197: 31-34.

26. See note 15 above and its quoted passage in the text for parallels.

27. *T* 27, p. 85b23-25.

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, *Tattvasaṅgraha-pañjika*, Gaekward's Oriental Series 30, (Baroda: Central Library Baroda, 1926), p. 175. Kamalaśīla argues that, in essence, *sahabhū-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 *sahabhū-hetu*, *aññamañña-paccaya* includes the two dimensions of simultaneity and mutuality, and applies to the four great elements (*mahābhū-tāni*).

31. 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: Yaśomitra, *Sphuṭārtha*, p. 192: 10, “*sādhāraṇa*”; 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).

32. Takagi, *Kusha-kyōgi*, pp. 124–127; McGovern, *A Manual of Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 194; Funabashi, *Kusharon kōgi*, pp. 164–169; Fukuhara, *Ubu ronsho*, pp. 204–205.

33. *T* 29, p. 419c26–28.

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.

36. Cf. McGovern, *A Manual of Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 194.

37. The terms “effort” (*shih*; *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. P'u-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 *viśamyoga-phala* (*li-hsi kuo*) along with *puruṣa-kāra-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 *puruṣakāra-phalas* are recognized, we have omitted the fourth, “non-production” (*pu-sheng*), which corresponds to *viśamyoga-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 *puruṣakāra-phala*. In its narrow sense, only the “simultaneously-produced” as effect of *sahabhū* and *samprayukta 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 *puruṣakāra-phalas* form a “harmonious cluster” (*ho-ho chü*) wherein the dharmas function as “mutual effects” (= inseparability). See *T* 29, pp. 418a14–17; 436a9–12. In our view, the simultaneously-produced *puruṣakāra-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 *puruṣakāra-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.

44. Vasubandhu, *Kośa*, p. 96: 16–17.

45. *T* 41, p. 114a12–15.

46. *Sung kao-seng chaun*, *T* 50, p. 727a10–11.

47. T.V.R. Murti *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1960), p. 175.

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 *aññamañña* (mutuality). Common effect, however, does not seem to have a counterpart among the *paṭṭayas*; 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. *Sanḅitiparyāya(-śāstra)*, *T* 26, p. 384b20-c2. In a somewhat later Abhidharma text, the *Vijñānakāya(-śāstra)*, which is still earlier than the *Jñāna-prasthāna*, *sahabhū* and *samprayukta* dharmas are identified with causal-condition (*yin-yüan*; *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 Buddhist Thought*, pp. 309–310. I acknowledge the fact that his observation provided the initial 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.

56. Ledi Sadaw, “On the Philosophy of Relations,” *The Journal of the Pāli Text Society* (1915-6): 22.

57. Kalupahana, *Causality*, pp. 54–56; 96–97.

58. Nagao Gadjin, *Chūgan to Yuishiki*, (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1978), pp. 354-357.

59. See note 9 above.

Glossary

ch'i	起
ch'ien-sheng yin	前生因
ch'ü	取
Chü-she lun chi	俱舍論記
chü-sheng fa	俱生法
chü-sheng yin	俱生因
chü-yu yin	俱有因
Chung-hsien	衆賢
dōji	同時
ho-ho	和合
ho-ho chü	和合聚
hsiang she-i	相攝益
hsiang sui-shun	相隨順
Hsien-tsung lun	顯宗論
Hsüan-tsang	玄奘
ijiteki	異時的
i-kuo	一果
i t'zu yu pi yu	依此有彼有
ku	故
kung	共
li-hsi kuo	離繫果
liu-yin	六因
pan i-shih	辦一事
pu hsiang-li	不相離
P'u-kuang	普光
pu-sheng	不生
sheng	生
shih-yung kuo	士用果
Shun cheng-li lun	順正理論
sui-chuan	隨轉
sui-shun	隨順
ssu-yüan	四緣
Sung kao-seng chuan	宋高僧傳
Ta pi-p'o-sha lun	大毘婆沙論
tung i-kuo	同一果
t'zu sheng ku pi sheng	此生故彼生
wu-kuo	五果
yin-yüan	因緣
yung	用