

Study Group – *Aryadeva's 400 Verses*

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As usual, we sit in a relaxed and comfortable position and generate a positive motivation in our mind, such as, 'In order to benefit all sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment, so for that purpose I will listen to the teachings and put them into practice well.'

1.1.1.1.2. Establishing its mode [of operation]

This heading establishes the mode of the earlier syllogism, which is:

The subject, a sprout, is not produced by way of its own entity, for neither that which exists at the time of its cause nor that which does not exist at the time of its cause is produced by way of its own entity.

This syllogism refutes both possibilities of an effect being produced by way of its own entity, either the instance of the effect existing at the time of the cause, or the instance that it doesn't exist at the time of the cause.

Since the effect destroys the cause, 352
That which does not exist will not be produced.
Nor will that which exists be produced
Since what is established needs no establisher.

In relation to the first two lines, the commentary explains:

Since the sprout cannot be produced unless the seed undergoes change, the process which produces the resultant sprout destroys the causal seed. Thus something which does not exist at the time of the seed will not be produced by way of its own entity.

¹The Vaisheshikas use the first part of the reasoning (also presented earlier in the text) to assert that the effect exists at the time of the cause. Thus for them the fact that the seed undergoes change and that the resultant sprout destroys the causal seed, is a reason for the sprout to exist at the time of the cause. They state that there is a sprout at the time of the seed, because if not then how could the sprout be produced later through the change of the seed? They conclude that it has to be the case that the sprout already exists at the time of the seed. Their assertion however implies that the sprout exists at the time of the seed by way of its own entity and is thus also produced by way of its own entity. In our system, the fact that the seed undergoes change and that the resultant sprout destroys the seed, does not serve as a reason to establish the existence of the sprout at the time of the seed. Rather it serves as a valid reason to show that there cannot be truly existent production. As the commentary further explains:

In general, even though a sprout which is non-existent at the time of the seed is produced, it is incorrect to accept truly existent production, for then one must also accept the production of rabbits' horns.

This is refuting the assertion that there is inherent production of a sprout because it exists at the time of the seed. The fact that the seed undergoes change and produces a sprout means that there is no inherently existent sprout at

the time of the seed. Thus it is not correct to accept that the sprout is produced by way of its own entity, even though a sprout that is non-existent at the time of the seed is produced.

What is being refuted is, that there is a truly existent production of a sprout. This also implies that the sprout does not exist at the time of the seed, however because of the lack of the sprout at the time of the seed, it doesn't mean then that there is a truly existent production. If there was indeed truly existent production, then anything could be produced from anything and thus the absurdity of having to accept the production of rabbits' horns, which is a non-existent phenomenon.

In relation to the last two lines, the commentary says:

Since something which is established at the time of its cause does not need anything to establish it, that which exists at the time of its cause will not be produced.

This is refuting that the effect exists at the time of the cause, with the reasoning that something that is already established at the time of the cause does not need to be produced. In our own system the sprout is not established at the time of the seed, and it is thus produced later. Even though the sprout does not exist at the time of the cause, that does not however imply inherent production, as there cannot be production from its own side.

The last part of the commentary says:

...that which exists at the time of its cause will not be produced.

If the effect does exist at the time of the cause, then there is no need for it to be produced, because that is already established or existent at the time of the cause.

1.1.1.1.3. Refutation by examining the time of production

There is no production at that time, 353
Nor is there production at another.
If not produced at that time nor another,
When will there ever be production?

As the commentary reads:

At a time when the sprout itself exists there is no production, since it does not need to be produced.

Again, what is implied is an inherently existent production or production by way of its own entity:

Other than that, when it does not exist there is no production, since it cannot be produced. If it is not produced at that time nor at the other, when will there ever be production?

The last sentence in the commentary is a rhetorical question, implying that there couldn't be a time of production. What is being explained is that if it is not produced at that time or at any other time, then that exhausts any possibility of it being produced. Again, this refers to being produced by way of its own entity, and that is what is being refuted.

The refutation is of production by way of its own entity. The main point of the verse is presented as a counter question: if something is to be produced by way of its own entity, then is it produced at the time that it exists, or at any other time? If you say that it is produced at the time of its existence, then that is redundant since it already exists. That's an absurdity in itself, for if it already exists then there is no need for it to be produced. If it is not produced at its own time, then the only other option is for it to be produced at another time when it doesn't exist. But how can it be produced at a time when it doesn't exist?

¹ Trans: This section has been revised extensively after discussion with Geshe Doga to clarify the finer points of the argument.

1.1.1.1.4. Refutation by examining the thing itself and another thing

Assertion: Milk turning into something which is curd constitutes production.

Answer: That is incorrect.

*Just as there is no production
Of that as the thing it is,
Neither is it produced
As something else.* 354

What is being refuted here is that there is inherent production either because things maintain their own entity, or because they transform into something else. The example used is of milk (the cause) and curd (the effect). If milk maintains its own entity then, as the commentary explains, with the meaning of the first two lines:

Since something which exists as milk does not need to become milk, there is no production.

Thus the absurdity of a production of something that maintains its own entity is being pointed out.

If you (Vaisheshikas and the like) however conclude that things must be produced by transforming into another entity, again implying a production by way of its own entity, then as the commentary further explains:

Neither is that milk produced as something else, i.e. curd, for the two are different entities.

The main point being made here is that the milk and curd are two different entities. This indicates that milk has its own characteristics, and that curd has its own characteristics. This in turn implies that those particular characteristics that constitute milk, and those which constitute curd, come about due to certain causes and conditions, which means there cannot be inherently existent milk or curd. Thus milk cannot produce curd as something else by way of its own entity.

1.1.1.1.2. REFUTATION BY EXAMINING THE BEGINNING, MIDDLE AND END

There is no inherent production for the following reason too.

*The first, intermediate and last
Are not possible prior to production.
How can each begin
Without the other two?* 355

As the commentary explains the verse:

First production, then duration and lastly disintegration are not possible prior to production, because that which is unproduced cannot have production, duration and disintegration.

What is being refuted is production by way of its own entity. If production were to be by way of its own entity, then the characteristics of whatever is produced, which are production, duration and lastly disintegration would not be possible. If inherently existent production or production by way of its own entity occurs prior to production, then that implies the absurdity of the different instances of production, duration and disintegration becoming one. That is there would be no distinction between production, duration and disintegration. This absurd implication would occur if there was inherent production or production by way of its own entity, and that is what is being refuted.

As it mentions in the text:

...because that which is unproduced cannot have production, duration and disintegration.

What is being mainly refuted are these three instances of production, duration and disintegration existing by way of their own entity. If each were to exist by way of its own entity, then they would not be related to each other. But these three phenomena *are* clearly related to each other: because of production there is duration and so duration is related to production. Likewise, because there is duration, then what follows is disintegration and thus it is clearly a fact that disintegration relates to duration. So production, duration and disintegration are interdependently related and thus cannot be inherently existent. Having refuted the possibility of an inherently existent production, duration and disintegration, the counter-assertion is:

Assertion: Production while a thing is being produced, duration while it lasts and disintegration when it disintegrates exist consecutively by way of their own entity.

What is being established in this counter-assertion is that while it is being produced there is production, and while it lasts there is duration, and that there is disintegration when it disintegrates, which implies that each characteristic of production exists by way of its own entity.

First of all, the assertion implies that production, duration and disintegration are all separate entities. Asserting that production, duration and disintegration exist by way of their own entities, implies that these three instances of production, duration and disintegration are completely separate entities, and that there is no relationship with each other, i.e. that they occur at different times and also exist as separate entities. The refutation to that is found in the last two lines of the verse. In explaining that refutation the commentary says:

How could each at its particular time begin without the other two? Duration and disintegration are impossible without production. The same applies to the other two. Moreover a product is not feasible without any one of these characteristics.

The definition of a product is that which has three instances within one entity, the product. Thus a product has, by its very nature, production as well as duration and disintegration, and all three occur in the one product. Everything that is a product has an instance of production, an instance of duration and an instance of disintegration and all occur in the same product. So there is a relationship between the duration, disintegration and production. The earlier assertion implies that it is completely separate, however how could each particular instance occur without the other two? As explained earlier, each of the instances of a production has to rely upon the earlier moments.

As we go into each of the assertions and refutations, we come to realise that these later assertions relate to the earlier refutations, which were made to the assertions of the non-Buddhist schools. An earlier assertion implied that there is no production, duration and disintegration, but from the point of view of our own system, it was established that production, duration and disintegration occur in every product.

The other system implied that there is no production, duration or disintegration by stating that a product is existent by way of its own entity. That was refuted, by establishing that although there is production, duration and disintegration, they cannot exist by way of their own entity. Having refuted their initial assertion in that way, what they now assert is that there is production, duration and disintegration, but that each exists at its own time.

Production exists at a certain time, then duration exists separately by way of its own entity and then disintegration exists by way of its own entity. This assertion is refuted by asserting that their assertion implies that there is no relationship between production, duration and disintegration.

In other words their assertion implies that at the time of production, there is only production and during the time of duration, there is only duration and during the time of disintegration there is only disintegration. This shows that there is no relationship, and that is what is being refuted here. If you accept their assertion, then the product loses its characteristics, because every product has to have production, duration and disintegration within its own entity.

Let us use a vase as a particular example of a product. As it is a product, a vase has to have all characteristics of a product, which are production, duration and disintegration. If it is asked whether it is a production, then yes, it is a production. Does the vase have the characteristic of duration and disintegration? Yes, that same vase has the characteristics of duration as well as disintegration. So, all three characteristics exist in the one product, the vase. If we don't establish a vase in that way, then it fails to be a product, which is impermanent, because all those characteristics will not be present. That is how a vase is to be established.

In establishing the vase as a product, one is establishing the vase having all three characteristics of production, duration and disintegration. Establishing the vase as a production, which is an effect, implies it has to have a cause, as without a cause there cannot be production. That has to be understood. One also has to understand that establishing the vase having duration implies that it is a production. That is because it is a product that has been produced over a period of time, and thus it has duration. Establishing that a vase has the characteristic of disintegration also implies that the vase had duration. Without duration there cannot be disintegration. So establishing the characteristics in this way shows how production, duration and disintegration are interdependently related. Thus, just as the vase cannot exist by way of its own entity, neither can its characteristics exist by way of their own entity.

As one contemplates whether a vase could exist by way of its own entity or not, one can investigate by relating to its characteristics in this way. The characteristic of a vase is that it is impermanent, and that it is a product. What are the reasons of a vase being a product? They are that it is a production, a duration and disintegration. Then one contemplates each of the characteristics, e.g. does the production of the vase exist by way of its own entity? By contemplating in this way one should then come to the conclusion that because it is a production, then that implies that there is a cause. So the production of the vase could not exist by way of its own entity because it depends on a cause. The very fact that it depends on a cause implies that it exists interdependently.

Then one can further contemplate on the duration of a vase. Is the duration of the vase by way of its own entity? In relation to other characteristics one must then come to the understanding that the duration of the vase could not exist by way of its own entity. Why? Because it depends on production, and without production there could not be duration. It is the same with disintegration. By investigating whether the disintegration of the vase exists by way of its

own entity, one also comes to the conclusion that disintegration cannot exist by way of its own entity, because it depends on the duration. In this way, by contemplating the basic definition of a product, one gains a further understanding of how the vase is interdependent and thus how it cannot exist by way of its own entity.

1.1.1.1.3. REFUTATION BY EXAMINING BOTH SELF AND OTHER

For this reason too products cannot be inherently produced [with the following reasons].

*The thing itself does not occur
Without other things.
Thus there is no coming into existence
Either from self or from other.* 356

The meaning of the verse as presented in the commentary is:

The thing itself, such as a clay pot [the clay pot being an example of a thing], does not occur without other things, such as clay, since it depends upon clay.

First of all an earthen vase or clay pot, for example, cannot occur without other things, such as clay. In other words being an earthen vase it has to depend on other factors, the first of which is clay. Furthermore:

The clay does not exist by way of its own entity either, since it depends on pebbles.

The Tibetan word, *sek*, translated here as pebbles, has two possible meanings. You have to fire any clay pottery in order for it to be produced and *sek* could refer to the firing of the vase. However the English commentary translates *sek* as 'pebbles'. That could also mean that the clay itself is not an inherently existent thing, as it depends on many of its own parts, such as small pebbles and so forth, to become clay. Thus the clay itself is dependent. The commentary further explains:

Thus the pot does not come into existence either from self or from other, for since neither self nor other exist by way of their own entity, there is no inherent production.

As mentioned previously, one of the schools from the other systems established that the vase is both self-produced as well as produced by others. That very assertion is an absurdity in itself. They assert that a thing, for example a vase, is self-produced because it has its own characteristics. However it is also produced by others because it is produced from other things. In both instances their assertions imply that the vase is an inherently existent self-production as well as an inherently existent production by others.

The refutation from our system is that:

...since neither self nor other exist by way of their own entity, there is no inherent production.

1.1.1.1.4. REFUTATION BY EXAMINING SEQUENTIALITY AND SIMULTANEITY

That is sub-divided into two:

1.1.1.1.4.1. Actual meaning

1.1.1.1.4.2. Refuting proof of inherent production

1.1.1.1.4.1. Actual meaning

*It cannot be said to exist
Before, after or simultaneously.
Therefore production does not occur
Simultaneously with the pot.* 357

The commentary explains the meaning:

Moreover there is no inherent production, since it is impossible to say that production and so forth exist before, after or simultaneously with the pot.

The production of a vase cannot exist before the vase occurs, neither can it exist simultaneously with the vase.

Furthermore:

Therefore the pot's production does not occur simultaneously with the pot by way of its own entity. If it did, since the basis and that which is based upon it would be co-existent, it would follow that the pot had been produced, for it must exist even as it is approaching production.

The assertion and its refutation are also related to what was explained earlier, but are from a different perspective. What is asked is that if there was an inherent production of the vase, then would that production exist prior to the production of the vase, or simultaneously with, or after the vase is produced? All instances are absurd. Thus, as the root text says, production 'cannot be said to exist before, after or simultaneously' with the pot.

If it did, then the basis and that which it is based upon would be co-existent. First of all, for the production of the vase to exist prior to its production or after its production is a clear absurdity. The only possibility left is that it is produced simultaneously, and that is what is being refuted here.

If production did occur simultaneously with the vase then the basis and that which it is based upon would be co-existent. It would follow that the vase had already been produced, for it must exist even as it is approaching production. Then as established here, if the basis, and that which is based upon it are co-existent, then one would have to say that the pot has already been produced. Even as it was in the process of being produced you would have to imply that it had already been produced, which is also an absurdity.

1.1.1.1.4.2. Refuting proof of inherent production

Assertion: The pot's production exists, for without it there could be no oldness and so forth, but there is oldness characterized by cessation.

Answer: That is incorrect.

*That which was previously produced
Was not old when first produced. 358
Also that which afterwards has been
Constantly produced is not old.*

'The pot's production exists' implies that the pot's production by way of its own entity exists. They are saying that the pot's production exists (implying existence by way of its own entity) because it could not become old without its production. However you can obviously see that there is an old pot. Of course what has to be understood here is that from our own system we would agree that there is an old pot, however the pot characterised as being old is not existent by way of its own entity. What they are trying to establish is that there is an old pot, and because it is an old pot that implies that there is a production that is existent by way of its own entity.

In relation to the first line of the verse, which refutes their assertion, the commentary states:

The previously produced pot was not old when first produced because at that time it was new.

What is also implied here is that if a pot were to be produced by way of its own entity then it would always have to remain new. You would call it a new pot soon after it is produced, but if that new pot was produced by way of its own entity, then it would have to always remain as new, and

it could never get old. Furthermore as the commentary reads:

A previously produced thing does not grow old by way of its own entity. Nor is that old which afterwards has constantly been produced, for also at that time it is new. Since afterwards it is newly produced, it will not become old by way of its own entity. Furthermore, by refuting production existent by way of its own entity, oldness existent by way of its own entity is refuted, but mere [conventional] oldness is accepted in our system too.

That clarifies the main part of the refutation, which is that 'by refuting production existent by way of its own entity, oldness existent by way of its own entity is refuted'. However conventionally, even in our own system, oldness is accepted, and one accepts that there is an old pot.

What one must understand as a main point from this verse is that refuting that there is a production by way of its own entity also implies that an old pot existing by way of its own entity is refuted. As mentioned here in the commentary the existence of a conventionally old pot is not being refuted, as that is accepted in our system. What is thus being refuted is that the old pot exists by way of its own entity.

1.1.1.1.5. REFUTATION BY EXAMINING THE THREE TIMES

Since there is no inherent production in any of the three times, production does not truly exist.

*A present thing does not 359
Come into existence from itself,
Nor come into existence from the future,
And also not from the past.*

In explaining the meaning of the verse the commentary reads:

Since cause and effect are not simultaneous, a present thing does not come into existence from its present self. Nor does it come into existence from the future, nor from the past. Moreover, since there is no inherent production in any of the three times, one must accept that production is false and like a magician's illusion.

This is asserted quite literally and clearly. What is being established is that cause and effect are not simultaneous. This implies that there is no inherently existent cause or effect in relation to the three times. Of course generally, we would say that the three times are related to each other – the present is related to the past, and the future is related to the present. However if they were to exist inherently then there would be no relationship between the past, present and the future. The main thing is that because there is no inherent production of any of the three times, production itself is like an illusion.

The main point of this verse is in establishing that there is neither production by way of its own entity in the past nor production by way of its own entity in the present, nor in the future. That leaves no room for production by way of its own entity. If there were to be production by way of its own entity, then it would have to be either in relation to the past, or present or future. But having refuted that there is production by way of its own entity in any of the three times, then that exhausts any possibility of a production by way of its own entity.

Following the normal set-up of the study group, the next session will be the discussion session and following that is the exam. As mentioned previously, discussion and the exam are an important element of study and a means of understanding of the material. So one must try to attend those sessions as well.