

gustav / October 28, 2010 11:15AM

[A Step Back: What's the Point to Be Critical? \[Dignāga's Nyāyamukha\]](#)

As the incongruence between the two palms on one flat can become congruent when an additional dimension is introduced, the seemingly contradictory pairs of propositions lingering around the borderline of our experience can be resolved with the same method. The critical investigation introduces the additional dimension, i.e., the dimension of the conditions, which is neither of the resulted cognition nor of the naïve a priori. Without the critical dimension, both the resulted of cognition and the a priori assumptions are the same type of knowledge on an identical flat, so that some non-empirical propositions about the non-perceivable would find themselves in a predicament with its counterpart, which is empirical, in the pair. With the critical dimension, when a more proper perspective to regard the non-empirical, i.e., the non-perceivable, than the naïve a priori assumptions (e.g., the naïve idea of the independent external world held by Naiyayikas, Abhidharma, and Sūtrāntika) is identified, the illusoriness of the conflicts will be unfolded.

Ou-yang Jing-wu 歐陽竟無 attaches a nice brief commentary to the 《Nyāyamukha》 in 《Zangyao藏要》, which begins by pointing out that the essence of the logic rests upon its “productivity and creativity” (有產生創立之能) so that the study of it surpasses any other empirical sciences which can never transcend their own predicaments (無超跡 (走 + 亦) 濟窮之望). His analysis of the text, which holds that the part of the establishing (能立) of the text is divided in (a) the criteria for, or true meaning of, the proper thesis (能立) and (b) the means for it (立具), namely, the pramāṇa (perception and inference). By the above, we can say that Ou-yang would agree with the approach as well to put logic back to its epistemological context, and we can even say that he is aware of the function of the additional dimension (pramāṇa as “conditions”) that makes the transcendence in spiritual development possible.

An instance of the incongruent conflict is between (a) logic is inductive and (b) logic is deductive. When both (a) and (b) are restricted in the scope of the results of cognition, they are contradictory to each other. When we know that the science of the conditioned is valid for all that can ever happen must be so conditioned, the empirical rules we obtained in experience and the necessary logic functions which allow for inferential reasoning find their grounds in logical function of cognition itself.

Another instance of the conflict is between (a) the universe (i.e., the synthesis of space and time) is close and (b) the universe is open. If (a), then (a-1) there must be an independent first cause for time must have a beginning, (a-2) there must be a simple, non-divided basic entity for otherwise the close composition of the universe would become impossible, (a-3) the developments of all existents must be determined in causality, and (a-4) the world in itself as the a priori cause must be there. If (b), then (b-1) time never begins, for the beginning of it presupposes a previous stage, (b-2) no smallest spatial unit exists, for the division of space is in infinite regress, (b-3) beside of the natural causality, there must be an additional cause (free from temporal order) so that the first cause happens not a priori but in every activity of cognition, for otherwise there is no possibility for development at all, and (b-4) the world in itself as a cause is impossible. If (a) is located in the scope of the result of cognition, while (b) is located in the scope of the conditions for the cognition, while both scopes are regarded as one and the same world in a proper identification of perspective, i.e., (a) as the resulted/produced of logic while (b) as the producing operation of logic in so far as the production here is remarked as without a real process in time, the illusoriness of the conflict in between would be unfolded.

If (a) the universe is close and (b) the universe is open are found congruent, a spiritual development from the constrained to liberty can then happen as a dynamical process, in a sense that, instead of the development as one-way from the constrained to liberty, the dialectics between the constrained and the liberty self-sustainingly continue to happen in parallel and get entangled with each other. It then follows that on the one hand, the validity of empirical sciences and the values of morality in our experience find their effective supporting ground, and, on the other hand, the spiritual development and freedom are possible as well. This philosophical perspective echoes with Nāgārjuna's middle way as well: do not fall into the persistence in grasping 有見 and the nihilism 斷滅.

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