

THE ONTOLOGIES OF THE SARVĀSTIVĀDINS AND OF VASUBANDHU¹

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1. SARVĀSTIVĀDIN ONTOLOGY

1.A “EVERYTHING EXISTS”

As encapsulated in the name ‘Sarvāstivādin,’ the Sarvāstivādins are characterized as maintaining that “everything exists” (*sarvam asti*).² However, the simplicity of this ontological assertion contains the seeds of doctrinal divergence because the referent of the term ‘everything’ and the manner in which this “everything” is considered to “exist” must be specified. Certain early Abhidharma texts identify the term ‘everything’ in the declaration that “everything exists” as referring to the twelve sense spheres including the six sense organs and their corresponding object-fields.³ So also the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, in a discussion of the twelve sense spheres, cites a *sūtra* passage in which the term ‘everything’ is defined by the Buddha as “precisely the twelve sense spheres from the form sense sphere (*rūpāyatana*) up to and including the factor sense sphere (*dharmāyatana*).”⁴ Thus, according to these early texts, “everything” does not refer to gross material entities or to the conventionally understood ideas or objects of untutored experience, but rather to the ultimate products of a Buddhist analysis of experience, all of which can be enumerated among the six sense organs and their six corresponding object-fields.⁵

In later Abhidharma texts, this simple definition of the term ‘everything’ is elaborated further in accordance with growing doctrinal complexity and an emerging ontology. The very *sūtra* passage that defines the term ‘everything’ as the twelve sense spheres is cited by both Vasubandhu and Saṅghabhadra as scriptural justification for their divergent ontological positions.⁶ They differ, however, concerning the extent of the domain encompassed by “everything” and the manner in which this “everything” is understood to exist. For Vasubandhu, “everything” should be understood simply as the twelve sense spheres, which, as functioning sense spheres, occur in the present moment. This “present existence” is then defined in another *sūtra* passage that refers to a factor that “exists not having existed (*abhūtā bhavati*), and having existed, no longer exists” (*bhūtā punar na bhavati*).⁷ The *sūtra* passage specifying “everything” does not, Vasubandhu suggests, support the Sarvāstivādin claim that factors exist <135> in the three time periods. Even if, like the Sarvāstivādins, one takes the three time periods as the referent of “everything” and interprets the *sūtra* passage as stating that factors of the three time periods exist, then these past and future factors must not be understood

to exist in the same way as factors in the present. Past and future factors, Vasubandhu argues, unlike present factors, cannot be said to exist as real entities, but rather exist only provisionally; past factors can be said to exist only in the sense that they existed previously, and future factors, only in the sense that they will exist.⁸

Saṅghabhadra responds to Vasubandhu's interpretation by noting that this *sūtra* passage does not explicitly limit the referent of "everything" only to present factors and that, indeed, there is no other passage that denies the existence of past and future factors.⁹ Therefore, for Saṅghabhadra, the Sarvāstivādin declaration, "everything exists," as specified in this *sūtra* passage, should be understood to include factors in all three time periods as well as the three unconditioned factors. In other words, "everything" mentioned in this passage includes all factors recognized in the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma taxonomy.¹⁰ Though Saṅghabhadra will not accept Vasubandhu's attempt to limit existence to the present moment, this does not mean that one must understand past and future factors to exist in the same way as present factors. As Saṅghabhadra attempts to demonstrate, the differences among factors of the various time periods are determined by the presence or absence of their activity, not by any change in their intrinsic nature. The *sūtra*, he argues, in using the phrases 'exists not having existed' and 'having existed, no longer exists,' is definitely not attempting to preclude the existence of past and future factors. The first phrase 'exists not having existed' indicates that the effect does not preexist in the cause, and the second phrase 'having existed, no longer exists' indicates that a factor's activity is exerted and then disappears.¹¹

There is evidence of Abhidharma ontological models other than those adopted by Vasubandhu and Saṅghabhadra. For example, Saṅghabhadra cites five interpretations of varieties of existents and of the modality of their existence:¹² (1) those who "superimpose" (**Samāropavādin*) claim that there exists a real individual (*pudgala*) in addition to factors in the three time periods and the three unconditioned factors; (2) those who "discriminate" (*Vibhajyavādin*) claim that the present and that portion of past factors that have not yet delivered their effects exist; (3) those who maintain "momentariness" (**Kṣaṇikavādin*) claim that only the twelve sense spheres of the single present moment exist; (4) those who maintain existence only as "provisional designation" (*Prajñaptivādin*) claim that even factors in the present time period only exist as provisional designations (*prajñapti*); and (5) those who "negate" (**Nāstivādin*) claim that all factors lack intrinsic nature, like sky flowers. The *Abhidharmadīpa* offers a fourfold classification of views of existence:¹³ (1) those who maintain that all exists, or the Sarvāstivādins, for whom the factors of the three time periods and the three firm (*dhruva*), or unconditioned, factors exist; (2) those who maintain that "part" exists, including the Vibhajyavādins and the Dārṣṭāntikas, for whom "part" refers to factors of the present time period; (3) those who maintain that nothing exists like the Vaitulikas or the Ayogagaśūnyatāvādins;¹⁴ and (4) those who maintain that existence is indeterminate like the Paudgalikas who claim that given entities are indeterminate (*avyākṛtāvastuvādin*) or that the individual (*pudgala*) also exists as a real entity.

1.B

PAST AND FUTURE FACTORS—EXISTENTIAL STATUS

Thus, for texts of the later Abhidharma period, a simple definition of 'everything' and a simple model of 'existence' were no longer adequate. The ambiguous existential status of many commonplace objects of experience and the manner in which the recognized primary constituent factors (*dharma*) could be said to exist had to be explicitly addressed. Should the

existence of the composite objects of everyday experience be denied? And, what is the existential status of problematic objects such as the objects of memory and presentiment, or the products of sensory error or mistaken cognition, or certain meditative objects, dream images, reflected images, echoes, illusions, magical creations, or the seemingly nonexistent objects of certain linguistic conventions?¹⁵ To deny one's experience of these objects is impossible, and to ignore them in one's taxonomy of factors would deprive Buddhist doctrinal analysis of its all-inclusive character and, thereby, its soteriological efficacy. Thus, the Ābhidhārmikas expend great effort in a thorough analysis and comprehensive classification of all possible factors and, by extension, in a defensible and universally applicable definition of existence by which a factor's existential status could be clearly determined.

The central problem confronting Ābhidhārmikas in these systematizing efforts was the existential status of past and future factors. In presenting the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika justification for the existence of past and future factors, Vasubandhu cites two passages as scriptural authority (*āgamataḥ*) and two reasoned arguments (*yuktitaḥ*),¹⁶ arguments that are offered also in the *Vibhāṣā* compendia.¹⁷ According to the first reasoned argument, if the existence of past and future factors were not admitted, perceptual consciousness without an object would also have to be admitted, since perceptual consciousness of past objects through memory and of future objects through presentiment is a commonly attested experience. A given instance of perceptual consciousness is said to arise only in dependence upon two <137> conditions: the sense organ and its corresponding object-field. This implies that perceptual consciousness arises only in conjunction with an appropriate and existent object; perceptual consciousness of a nonexistent object or without an object is, therefore, impossible.¹⁸ Since mental perceptual consciousness of past and future factors does indeed occur, in order to preclude the absurdity of perceptual consciousness without an object-field, these past and future factors too must be acknowledged to exist.¹⁹

According to the second reasoned argument, if the existence of past factors were not allowed, causal processes could not be explained. Since causal efficacy cannot be attributed to a nonexistent object, if past factors are allowed to act as causes in producing present factors, then past factors must be acknowledged to exist. Specifically, the causal force of past virtuous or unvirtuous actions must be explained if the power of action (*karman*) and the efficacy of the path are to be admitted. The fundamental Buddhist assumption that all conditioned factors are impermanent and the more radical Sarvāstivādin assumption that impermanence means discontinuous momentariness make the need to justify the existence of past and future factors even more urgent. Otherwise the whole fabric of causal interrelations that constitutes experience would disintegrate. Factors, as radically momentary, would not persist beyond the period of one moment; a factor that will arise in the subsequent moment does not yet exist when its prior cause is present. Similarly, when the subsequent factor arises, the prior moment will have passed away, and, together with it, the prior causal efficacy. How then can there be any causal interaction between a prior cause and a subsequent effect? Thus, the Sarvāstivādins conclude that the two scriptural passages and the two reasoned arguments justify the existence of factors in the three time periods.

TEMPORAL AND ATEMPORAL ONTOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATIONS

In the later Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣika treatises, the problems of the criteria by which the existential status of factors is to be determined, the specific factors that are considered to exist, and the distinctions among the three time periods are treated together. However, the character of Sarvāstivādin ontology and the meaning of the terminology used are revealed more clearly by distinguishing these three problems. Specifically, it is useful to distinguish the atemporal issue of the existence of factors in the abstract from the temporal issue of the mode of existence of those factors in the three time periods.²⁰

Saṅghabhadra considers the atemporal issue of the nature of existence in his comments upon Vasubandhu's previously described discussion of the <138> existence of past and future factors. He begins with a definition of the characteristic of existence (*sallakṣaṇa*, *sattvalakṣaṇa*), which, he claims, if correctly understood, will demand acceptance of the existence of past and future factors.²¹ Saṅghabhadra first cites the view of some (like Vasubandhu himself) who define this characteristic of existence as "that which has already been produced and has not yet passed away." This, Saṅghabhadra objects, is the distinguishing characteristic only of existence in the present time period, and not a definition of existence in general. Saṅghabhadra next offers his own definition that will not preclude the existence of past and future factors: "To be an object-field that produces cognition (*buddhi*) is the true characteristic of existence."²² With this definition, Saṅghabhadra follows the Buddhist assumption, as evidenced in the traditional twelve sense sphere and eighteen element classifications, that consciousness is intentional and that only that which falls within the range of that consciousness can be said to exist.²³ Accordingly, since past and future factors can become objects of perceptual consciousness, they can be held to exist.

However, existence is not uniform; though all objects of perceptual consciousness can be said to exist, the existential status of these objects varies. Saṅghabhadra next distinguishes two types of existence: existence as a real entity (*dravyasat*), which is equated with absolute existence (*paramārthasat*), and existence as a provisional entity (*prajñaptisat*), equated with conventional existence (*saṃvṛtisat*).²⁴ The former category of real entities includes the ultimate constituent factors such as visible form or feelings, which produce cognition without depending upon anything else. The latter category of provisional entities includes entities such as a pot or an army, which can produce cognition only in dependence upon a real entity that serves as its basis. This dependence upon real entities may be either direct, as in the case of a pot, which depends directly upon the fundamental material elements (*mahābhūta*) of which it is made, or indirect, as in the case of an army, which depends first upon other provisional entities—that is, its human members—and secondarily upon real entities—that is, the ultimate factors of which these humans are composed.

Here, by "dependence," Saṅghabhadra does not understand causal dependence; all conditioned factors, real entities and provisional entities alike, are causally dependent or are related through conditioning interaction. Rather, "dependence" in the case of a provisional entity refers to the possibility of further analysis; any entity that can be analyzed further into constituent elements is considered "dependent" upon those elements.²⁵ The possibility of further analysis then becomes the criterion by which conventional (*saṃvṛtisatya*) and absolute truth (*paramārthasatya*) are distinguished. If the notion of a particular entity disappears when that entity is broken (e.g., a pot) or can be resolved by cognition into its components <139>

(e.g., water), that entity exists only conventionally. Entities that are not subject either to this further material or mental analysis exist absolutely. Thus, actual existence as a real entity (*dravyasat*) is attributed only to the ultimate constituent factors, which are not subject to further analysis.

Each such primary factor, or *dharma*, is determined or distinguished by an intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), which is itself defined as the particular inherent characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*), or distinctive characteristic, that can be applied to that factor alone and to no other.²⁶ Since factors are distinguished from one another through a unique intrinsic nature, the Abhidharma taxonomy of factors is built up through a process of determining and distinguishing varieties of intrinsic nature. The term 'intrinsic nature' does not indicate a factor's temporal status, but rather refers to its atemporal underlying and defining nature. Intrinsic nature thus determines the atemporal, existential status of a factor as a real entity (*dravya*). Nevertheless, it is precisely in this sense of intrinsic nature that factors can be said to exist at all times (*svabhāvaḥ sarvadā cā 'sti*); intrinsic nature, as the particular inherent characteristic, pertains to or defines a factor in the past, present, and future, regardless of its temporal status.²⁷

Saṅghabhadra's analysis of existence does not consist merely of this atemporal distinction between real entities endowed with intrinsic nature and entities that exist as provisional designations. As he notes: "It is our accepted doctrine that there are many types of existence: namely, existence as intrinsic nature, as activity, as provisional designation, or as real entity."²⁸ Temporal existence—that is, existents as sequentially experienced—also demands explanation. In other words, if the Sarvāstivādins recognize the existence of factors as real entities possessed of intrinsic nature in the three time periods, how can factors of one time period be distinguished from those of another? The Sarvāstivādin tradition recognizes four interpretations of this distinction. The master Dharmatrāta attributes the difference among the time periods to a transformation in a factor's mode of existence (*bhāva*), as when a metal vessel is destroyed and shaped into another object. The master Ghoṣaka appeals to a change in characteristic (*lakṣaṇa*), whereby a factor is said to be present if marked by the characteristic of the present—that is, of having reached the state of functioning activity—but is not bereft of the other characteristics of the past or future. It is compared to the case of a man who is attracted to one woman, and yet not unattracted to others. The master Vasumitra attributes the difference between factors in the three time periods to a difference of state (*avasthā*), as when a counter signifies different values if located in different places. Finally, the master Buddhadeva appeals to a difference in relative dependence (*apekṣā*), whereby a factor is given different names as past, present, or future in dependence upon its relation to surrounding factors, as when <140> one woman can be referred to either as a mother or a daughter.²⁹

Of these four views, Vasumitra's is preferred because it does not result in confusion of the three time periods, and because it best represents the difference in activity that is accepted as distinguishing the three time periods.³⁰ As the **Mahāvibhāṣā* makes clear, the temporal distinction between the three time periods is determined not by a factor's status as a real entity (*dravya*) or as a provisional designation (*prajñapti*), but rather depends upon the presence or absence of that factor's manifest activity (*kāritra*):

How are the distinctions between the three time periods established? The three time periods are differentiated by activity That is to say, a conditioned factor that does not yet have its activity is referred to as future, one that is just at the point of

having its activity is present, and one whose activity has already passed away is past.³¹

Though Saṅghabhadra also accepts activity as the basis of the distinction among the three time periods, he disagrees with the traditional criticism of Dharmatrāta as proposing a theory of transformation (*pariṇāma*) like that of the Sāṃkhya school. Instead, Saṅghabhadra suggests that Dharmatrāta's appeal to a difference in mode of existence (*bhāva*) is similar to the sanctioned view of Vasumitra. Relying on Dharmatrāta's model, Saṅghabhadra proposes that a factor remains unchanged in intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), but changes in mode of existence (*bhāva*) due to the arising and passing away of its activity (*kāritra*). Saṅghabhadra explains that a factor can exist in several such modes: that is to say, a real entity undergoes no change in its intrinsic nature, but is subject to transformation in its mode of existence. A real entity can exist either as intrinsic nature alone or as intrinsic nature that is also possessed of activity. Whereas past or future factors are characterized by intrinsic nature alone, factors characterized by both intrinsic nature and activity can only be present.³²

A factor can thus be said to exist as a real entity at all times, because its intrinsic nature continues with no alteration. Conditioned factors can, however, be said to have transformation, which is tantamount to claiming that they are impermanent, precisely because their activities arise and pass away. When a future factor meets an appropriate collocation of previously existent and simultaneous conditions, its activity is produced and that factor becomes present. When its activity ceases, the factor is said to "pass away," but it continues to exist as intrinsic nature even when its activity is past.³³ Therefore, given the transformation in its mode of existence, that <141> factor cannot be said to be constant, but rather is impermanent.³⁴

1.D

ACTIVITY AND CAPABILITY

This distinction between a factor's intrinsic nature and its activity allows the Sarvāstivādins to establish their model of factors existing in the three time periods while conforming to the Buddhist principles of conditioning and impermanence. The solution offered by this distinction, however, also raises certain problems. The existence of past and future factors is asserted precisely because they, like present factors, are believed to have a kind of efficacy: namely, past and future factors act as objects in producing cognition and, further, are capable of functioning as conditions in the production of present factors.³⁵ However, since activity is limited to a factor in the present moment, the efficacy of past and future factors cannot be referred to as "activity." Saṅghabhadra resolved this difficulty by proposing a distinction in the mode of a factor's operation: the term 'activity' (*kāritra*) is reserved for a factor's specific operation in the present time period; a more general efficacy, which can occur in the past, present, or future, is then referred to as capability (*sāmarthya*).³⁶ Like the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, Saṅghabhadra maintains that activity (*kāritra*) characterizes a factor only in the present; in fact, it determines a factor's status as present. However, if past and future factors are to act as objects that produce cognition, or are to function as condition, then they too must have a kind of efficacy; Saṅghabhadra refers to this past and future efficacy as capability (*sāmarthya*).³⁷

The distinction between activity and capability stems from the need to account for the observed operation of factors in all three time periods, while, in some way, distinguishing the present from the past and future. Since even past and future factors can be efficacious, it is impossible to assert that present factors alone exert a function. And yet, this past and future

functioning, or capability, must be something other than activity, which, by definition, applies only to present factors. This present activity (*kāritra*) is explained by Saṅghabhadra as a subset of a more general power (*śakti*, also called *sāmarthya*) that includes both activity (*kāritra*) and capability (*sāmarthya*).³⁸ In the discussion of the four conditioned characteristics, the question of a future factor's efficacy becomes particularly important.³⁹ Since the characteristic of birth (*jāti*) is thought to function in producing a factor simultaneous with it, this productive function can only occur when both the characteristic of birth and the factor to be produced are future—specifically when both are in the state of being about to be produced. As a result, this productive function of birth that occurs in the future must be its capability, not its activity.

Initially, the distinction between activity and capability might appear <142> merely semantic: the operation of a factor in the present is simply called activity in order to distinguish its operation in the present from that in the past or future, which is called capability. However, upon closer examination, the functioning of activity and capability are distinguished through two non-semantic criteria. First, they differ in the locus of their operation—that is, relative to the stream (*saṃtāna*) constituted by the functioning factor. Activity is considered an internal causal efficacy that contributes toward the production of an effect within a particular factor's own stream. Capability, however, is considered an external conditioning efficacy directed toward the stream of another factor; it constitutes a condition that assists another factor in the production of its own effect. A present factor must function as activity in the continuation of its own stream. When past, present, or future, that factor may also function as capability in conditioning the arising of a factor of another stream. Past and future factors, however, can function only as capabilities conditioning a factor of another stream.⁴⁰

The second criterion by which activity and capability are distinguished concerns the stage that each represents within a single causal process. According to Sarvāstivādin theory, causal efficacy is divided into two stages. The first is that of projecting (*ākṣip-*), or seizing (*pratigrah-*), the effect; this stage occurs only when the causal factor itself is present. The second stage of presenting (*dā-*), or delivering (*prayam-*), the effect can occur when the causal factor is already past. When the causal factor is present, it “projects” its own effect; when its effect arises, the cause, even if past, is said to “present” that effect. Activity can then be defined as the power of a factor to project its own effect (*phalākṣepaśakti*) and capability, as its power to produce an effect (*phalajanana*).⁴¹ Every factor, when present, must function to project its own effect; this is referred to as its activity, and it is this function that determines its very status as present. A factor's capability, as the cause that stimulates the arising of the effect, is always simultaneous with the effect, but need not be exerted when the causal factor itself is present. Thus, a causal factor can exert its capability when it is past, present, or future. If the cause and its effect are simultaneous, the cause exerts its capability when it is either present or future. If the cause and effect are not simultaneous—that is, if the effect arises after the cause—the cause's capability of giving rise to the effect is exerted when that causal factor is past.⁴²

The distinction between activity and capability is illustrated through the example of an eye in the dark, or an eye whose function of seeing is otherwise obstructed.⁴³ Since such a seemingly non-operational eye is not performing what might be assumed to be its proper function, what then is its activity that determines its status as present? Both Saṅghabhadra <143> and the **Mahāvibhāṣā* assert that such an eye acts as a homogeneous cause (*sabhāgaḥetu*) in the production of an eye in the subsequent moment, a subsequent eye that arises as an effect of uniform outflow (*niṣyandaphala*). Precisely this efficacy as a homogeneous cause is the eye's

activity, which, when performed, defines its status as present. The eye's function as a condition for the arising of visual perceptual consciousness is, according to Saṅghabhadra, capability, and not activity. Though this capability as a condition may occur in any given present moment, it is directed toward the stream of another factor—that is, the stream of visual perceptual consciousness—and not toward its own stream. Thus, it would appear that for any factor, its present activity of projecting its own effect is its conditioning efficacy as a homogeneous cause within its own stream. Capability is a less restricted efficacy that can include any variety of causal functioning; it can also be directed toward the stream of another factor and can occur in any of the three time periods. Thus, for the four conditioned characteristics also, their function as conditioning characteristics, though occurring in the present time period, is considered capability, and not activity. Their activity is, as in the case of any factor, their function as homogeneous causes projecting a uniform effect in the next moment.

By distinguishing between activity and capability in terms of a two stage analysis of the causal process, Saṅghabhadra accounts for a factor's efficacy at times other than the present and also establishes a way by which factors in each of the three time periods can be identified.⁴⁴ Saṅghabhadra's assertion that factors in the past and future have only intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) is intended to suggest simply that they do not have activity, which characterizes factors only when they are present. Since past and future factors also exist as real entities, they too are able to function, not as activities, but as capabilities. Even though a factor's intrinsic nature is without variation at all times, there are differences in its mode of existence (*bhāva*) determined by the presence or absence of either its activity or its capability. The term "mode of existence" thus describes the temporal status of a factor relative to its functioning efficacy, and not its atemporal, existential status as a real entity (*dravya*) endowed with intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*).

Thus, Saṅghabhadra uses the three terms *dravya*, *svabhāva*, and *bhāva* to describe the existence of a factor that is recognized as real. However, these terms characterize a factor's reality from three different perspectives. *Svabhāva* refers to a factor's underlying intrinsic nature, its particular inherent characteristic that distinguishes it from all other factors. *Dravya* refers to any factor that exists by virtue of its own intrinsic nature, as distinct from entities that exist merely as provisional designations (*prajñapti*), lacking any intrinsic nature as such. *Bhāva* is used to describe a real <144> entity (*dravya*) in its various modes as manifesting activity in the present or manifesting capability in the past, present, or future.

What then is the relation between a factor's activity or capability and its intrinsic nature? Critics of the Sarvāstivādin model contend that either identifying a factor's functioning with, or distinguishing it from, its intrinsic nature results in an undesirable conclusion.⁴⁵ If a factor's intrinsic nature and its functioning were the same, then its intrinsic nature would also change when its activity arises and passes away. If they were different, then each factor would, in effect, be two factors: one endowed with functioning, the other, with intrinsic nature. Saṅghabhadra responds that activity and intrinsic nature are neither the same nor different:

Activity is not different from the factor because the intrinsic nature [of a factor] cannot be understood apart from that [activity]. Nor is [activity] simply that factor itself because there are times when [the activity] is absent even though the intrinsic nature exists. Nor are [activity and intrinsic nature] without distinction because [the factor's] activity is absent prior [to its arising, while its intrinsic nature is never absent]. [The relation between activity and intrinsic nature should be understood]

like [the case of] the stream of conditioned factors. That is to say, the uninterrupted arising of factors is referred to as a stream, and yet there is no [stream] apart from the factors because it is not apprehended as distinct from them. Nor is the [stream] simply the factors themselves because that would result in the undesirable conclusion that even one moment has the nature of a stream. Nor [can it be said that] the stream does not actually exist, because there is real existence of its activity. It is said: "The activity of the stream is accepted, but no stream is to be found [as a discrete entity]." Through reasoning in this way one should understand that the time periods are established by activity.⁴⁶

Saṅghabhadra summarizes the relation between intrinsic nature and activity as follows:

The real characteristic, [or intrinsic nature,] of factors is without change, but their mode of existence is not without distinction. The real characteristic and mode of existence are neither different nor the same. Therefore, the particular inherent characteristic of conditioned factors always exists, and yet their predominant capability has arising and disappearance.⁴⁷ <145>

Thus, though factors remain the same in their intrinsic nature and can be said to exist at all times from the standpoint of this intrinsic nature, they are also, by nature, potentially capable. Their mode of existence is determined by the presence or absence of their activity. This presence or absence of activity is, in turn, determined by the presence or absence of appropriate causes and conditions. When certain conditions assemble, a factor's activity is produced; when other conditions assemble, its activity is destroyed.⁴⁸ However, it is fallacious to speak of the production and destruction of a factor's intrinsic nature.

To understand Saṅghabhadra's position, it is helpful to remember that intrinsic nature is used not as the determinant of a factor's temporal existential status, but rather as the atemporal determinant of a factor's existential status as real or provisional. As a factor's defining characteristic, intrinsic nature exists, or characterizes a factor, irrespective of time. Considerations of time are nothing other than considerations of causal relations, and causal relations depend upon activity or capability, not intrinsic nature. As existents that are experienced and are subject to causal forces, factors are, by nature, able both to manifest activity through the projection of their own effect and to manifest capability by assisting in the production of another factor. Though factors can exist in the past and future simply as intrinsic nature without either manifest activity or capability, because such non-functioning past or future factors are nonetheless potentially capable, they are said to be conditioned.⁴⁹

2. **VASUBANDHU'S ONTOLOGY**

For Vasubandhu, the Sarvāstivādin claim that factors exist in the three time periods is unacceptable, their arguments in defense of their claim, merely semantic. Vasubandhu's arguments indicate that he objects primarily to the Sarvāstivādin attempt to draw distinctions among various types of existence, specifically, between activity and intrinsic nature. How is activity related to intrinsic nature? Vasubandhu summarizes his criticism as follows:

The intrinsic nature [of factors] exists at all times, and yet the mode of existence is not claimed to be permanent. Further, the mode of existence is not claimed to be different from intrinsic nature. Surely, this is an act of the lord.⁵⁰

If the Sarvāstivādins claim that a factor's mode of existence (*bhāva*) and the activity (*kāritra*) by which that mode of existence is determined are nothing other than its intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), its activity, like its <146> intrinsic nature, must exist at all times. If they respond that activity arises due to a complete assemblage of causes and conditions and is, therefore, not to be identified with intrinsic nature, since those causes and conditions, as factors themselves, also exist as intrinsic nature in the three time periods, the activity of the factor to be produced must accordingly arise at all times. To respond that the activity of those causes and conditions arises in dependence upon yet other causes and conditions, Vasubandhu argues, incurs the fault of infinite regress.⁵¹

Vasubandhu would also reject any distinction among activity, capability, and a factor's intrinsic nature. For Vasubandhu, a factor's activity (*kāritra*) constitutes its very nature, its very existence as a factor.⁵² Since factors only exist by virtue of their activity, existence can be applied only to the present moment in which the activity occurs.⁵³ Accordingly, a moment is defined as a factor having acquired its own nature (*ātmalābha*), that is to say, its own activity.⁵⁴ Production in the present moment is defined as the fact that a factor "exists not having existed" (*abhūtā bhavati*), and its destruction is the fact that "having existed, it no longer exists" (*bhūtā punar na bhavati*).⁵⁵ The past is thus defined as that which existed previously (*yad bhūtapūrvam*), and the future, as that which will exist when there are appropriate causes (*yat sati hetau bhaviṣyati*).⁵⁶ Factors are said to exist in the past and future only in the sense that they "were" and "will be;" their existence is thus simply a manner of speech and does not denote actual existence. Therefore, Vasubandhu, like the Sautrāntikas, would not admit that past or future factors themselves function as causes in the production of a subsequent or simultaneous effect. Instead, an effect arises through a process of successive dependence. An initial action conditions the arising of a subsequent factor, and so on, in serial dependence until the final condition, in dependence upon yet other conditions, functions to condition the arising of the effect; this final condition is referred to as the distinctive characteristic in the transformation of the life-stream.⁵⁷

3.

ABBREVIATIONS

AAŚ	<i>Abhidharmāvātāraśāstra</i> [Ju a-p'i-ta-mo lun]. T 28 (1554). Attrib. Skandhila ?, trans. Hsüan-tsang.
ADV	Padmanabh S. Jaini, ed. <i>Abhidharmadīpa with Vibhāṣāprabhāvṛtti</i> . Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series 4. Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1977.
AKB	P. Pradhan, ed. <i>Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam of Vasubandhu</i> . 2d ed. Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series 8. Patna: Kashi Prasad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1975.
MN	Treckner, V., R., Chalmers, and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, eds. <i>The Majjhima-Nikāya</i> . 3 vols. 1888-1925. Reprint. London: The Pali Text Society. 1977-1993.
MVB	* <i>Mahāvibhāṣāśāstra</i> [A-p'i-ta-mo ta p'i-p'o-sha lun]. T 27 (1545). Transl. Hsüan-tsang.
NAS	* <i>Nyāyānusāraśāstra</i> . [A-p'i-ta-mo shun cheng-li lun]. T 29 (1562).
SA	<i>Saṃyuktāgama</i> [Tsa a-han ching] T 2 (99). Trans. Guṇbhadrā.
SAHŚ	* <i>Saṃyuktābhidharmahrdayaśāstra</i> [Tsa a-p'i-t'an hsin lun]. T 28 (1552). Dharmatrāta, trans. Saṅghavarman, Pao-yün.

- SAKV** Unrai Wogihara, ed. *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā: The Work of Yaśomitra*. Tokyo: The Publishing Association of the *Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, 1932.
- SN** L. Feer, ed. *The Saṃyutta-Nikāya*. 6 vols. 1884-1904. Reprint. London: The Pali Text Society, 1975-1991.
- TSP** Swami Dwarikadas Shastri, ed. *Tattvasaṅgraha of Ācārya Shāntarakṣita with the Commentary 'Pañjikā' of Shri Kamalashīla*. 2 vols. with continuous pagination. Bauddha Bharati Series 2. Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati, 1982.
- TSŚ** **Tattovasiddhiśāstra* [Ch'eng shih lun]. T 32 (1646). Harivarman, trans. Kumārajīva.
- VB** **Vibhāṣāśāstra* [Pi-p'o-sha lun]. T 28 (1547). Trans. Saṅghabhūti (or Saṅghabhadra ?), Dharmanandin, Buddhārakṣa, Min-chih.
- VSŚ** **Āryavasumitrabodhisattvaśāṅgitiśāstra* [Tsun p'o-hsü-mi p'u-sa so-chi lun]. T 28 (1549) Attrib. Vasumitra, trans. Saṅghabhadra (or Saṅghabhūti ?), Dharmanandin, Saṅghadeva, Chu Fo-nien.

- ¹ **Lodrö Sangpo:** This article forms a section (pp. 134-146) of Chapter 9: The Four Characteristics of Conditioned Factors, of Collett Cox's *Disputed Dharmas. Early Buddhist Theories on Existence. An Annotated Translation of the Section on Factors Dissociated from Thought from Saṅghabhadra's Nyāyānusāra*. Studia Philologica Buddhica. Monograph Series XI. Tokyo. The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1995. It is reprinted with the kind permission of Collett Cox.
- ² See AKB 5.25c-d p. 296.2ff.; NAS 51 p. 630c6ff.; ADV no. 299 p. 257.1ff. Cf. Yoshimoto (1982) 84ff.; Tabata (1975).
- ³ See VSŚ 9 p. 795b11ff., which devotes an independent section to the position that "everything exists." See also TSŚ 2 no. 23 p. 256a19ff.; SAHŚ 11 p. 963a22ff., which explicitly identifies this position as established by the Sarvāstivādins. Cf. KV 1.6 p. 115ff.
- ⁴ MVB 73 p. 378b28ff. Cf. SA 13 no. 319 p. 91a27ff. SN 35.23 *Sabbasutta* 4: 15. *kiṃ ca bhikkhave sabbaṃ. cakkhuṃ ce 'va rūpā ca sōtaṃ ca saddā ca ghāṇaṃ ca gandhā ca jivhā ca rasā ca kāyo ca phoṭṭhabbā ca mano ca dhammā ca idaṃ vuccati bhikkhave sabbaṃ*. Cf. AKB 5.27c p. 301.8.
- ⁵ The **Mahāvibhāṣa* (MVB 73 p. 378c8ff.) notes several other definitions of "everything" that still follow the same principle of an all-inclusive taxonomy. For example, "everything" refers to any of the following: the eighteen elements; the five aggregates together with unconditioned factors; the four noble truths, space, and cessation not resulting from consideration; or name and form.
- ⁶ AKB 5.27c p. 301.6ff.
- ⁷ See AKB 2.46b p. 78.3, 5.27c p. 299.15ff. Cf. SA 13 no. 335 p. 92c16ff.; MN no. 111 *Anupadasutta* 3: 25.
- ⁸ See AKB 5.27c p. 299.1ff.: "We also say that the past and future exist. But the past is that which existed previously. The future is that which will exist when there are causes. Taking it in this way, it is said that [the past or future] exists, but not as a real entity." *vayam api brūmo 'sty atitānāgatam iti. atitaṃ tu yad bhūtapūrvam. anāgataṃ yati sati hetau bhaviṣyati. evaṃ ca kṛtā 'sti 'ty ucyate na tu punar dravyataḥ*.
- ⁹ NAS 51 p. 630c14ff.
- ¹⁰ NAS 51 p. 630c6ff.
- ¹¹ See NAS 51 p. 626a17ff.
- ¹² NAS 51 p. 630c9ff. Cf. AKB 5.25c-d p. 296.4ff.
- ¹³ ADV no. 299 p. 257.1ff.
- ¹⁴ Padmanabh Jaini interprets Ayogaśūnyatāvādin as those who maintain that *śūnyata* is *ayoga*, where *ayoga* is interpreted as referring to the absence of actual conditioning activities. He then suggests that it can represent "the *śūnyavāda* of both the Mādhyamika and Vijñānavāda Buddhism." See Jaini's introduction to ADV p. 123-124. Cf. TSŚ 14 no. 186 p. 356c21, 16 no. 192 p. 365b18ff.
- ¹⁵ For an examination of these issues, see Cox (1988).
- ¹⁶ AKB 5.25 p. 295.8ff.; SAKV p. 468.28ff. Cf. NAS 51 p. 625b22ff.; TSP nos. 1787-1788 p. 614ff. For translations of the section in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* examining the existence of past and future factors, see de La Vallée Poussin, (1923-1931) 5: 50ff.; Stcherbatsky [1923] 1970) 76ff.; Tatia (1959), Akimoto and Honjo (1978). For the corresponding section in the **Nyāyānusāra* and an analogous discussion from the **Mahāvibhāṣa*, see de La Vallée Poussin, (1936-1937a). For an examination of

the same topic in an earlier Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma text, the *Vijñānakāya*, see de La Vallée Poussin (1925).

- ¹⁷ Among the reasons offered in the **Vibhāṣāśāstra* (VB 7 p. 464b25ff.) three are relevant here. If past and future factors did not exist: (1) cognition would not be produced with regard to past and future factors, since no cognition is produced without an object-field; (2) there would be no accompaniment nor non-accompaniment of, for example, past or future virtuous or unvirtuous factors, and the process of defilement and purification would, thereby, be undermined; (3) it would be impossible to explain conditioning in which the cause precedes the effect. The **Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra* (AVB 40 p. 293c28ff.) and **Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 76 p. 393a20ff.) omit the first reason concerning the arising of cognition. Cf. TSS 2 no. 21 p. 255b12ff.
- ¹⁸ The assumption that perceptual consciousness is, by nature, intentional and, conversely, that all objects, as existent—that is, as experienced—are dependent upon perceptual consciousness is evident in the early Buddhist taxonomic system of the twelve sense spheres and the eighteen elements. Since all that exists can be included in these twelve or eighteen categories, it follows, as Saṅghabhadra will conclude, that only those entities that can be objects of perceptual consciousness—that is, whose effects or activities can be experienced—can be said to exist.
- ¹⁹ Though the need to assume the existence of past and future factors is obvious in the case of the experiences of memory and presentiment, the Buddhist analysis of the process of ordinary perception also demands that past and future objects exist. All six varieties of perceptual consciousness arise only in dependence upon their corresponding object-fields; for example, visual perceptual consciousness arises only when presented with form, and so on. Though the five externally directed varieties of perceptual consciousness depend only upon present, and therefore, simultaneously occurring objects, mental perceptual consciousness may depend upon an object of any time period. The Sarvāstivādins allow that only one type and, specifically, only one instance of perceptual consciousness arises in any given moment. Therefore, when an external object is perceived by an appropriate type of perceptual consciousness, that object can only be cognized by mental perceptual consciousness in a subsequent moment when that object is already past. For an examination of Sarvāstivādin and Dārṣāntika models of perception, see Cox (1988) 33ff.
- ²⁰ For this interpretative distinction, I am indebted to Sakurabe (1975a) 73-74 and Williams (1981) 241ff. See also Nishi ([1931] 1975a).
- ²¹ NAS 50 p. 621c14ff. See also Cox (1988) 46ff. For a treatment of Saṅghabhadra's ontology, see Sasaki (1974) 148-321.
- ²² NAS 50 p. 621c20-21. Cf. NAS 17 p. 430a10-11, 20 p. 450c24-25. Saṅghabhadra's discussion of existence here very closely parallels that found in the **Tattvasiddhiśāstra* (TSS 2 no. 19 p. 253c27ff., esp. 2 no. 19 p. 254a2-3): "That range (*gocara*) upon which knowledge operates is referred to as the characteristic of existence." Cf. ADV no. 304 p. 262.1ff.
- ²³ The **Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 44 p. 228b20ff., 108 p. 558a7ff.), in refuting the opinion of those who maintain that knowledge or cognition is possible without an existing object, states that "all cognition has an actually existent object-field There is no knowledge capable of knowing that does not know [a particular thing] to be known, and there is no object-field to be known that is not known by knowledge."

- ²⁴ The *Abhidharmadīpa* (ADV no. 304 p. 262.2ff.) adds two types of existence to those mentioned by Saṅghabhadra: (1) existence through both (*dvaya*, *ubhayathā*), referring to entities that can be understood as either real or provisional depending upon the context; for example, earth (*pṛthivī*), when understood as one of the four fundamental material elements (*mahābhūta*), exists in an absolute sense, and when understood as ordinary soil, exists only in a conventional sense; (2) relative dependent existence (*sattvāpekṣā*), which refers to such correlative states as father/son, teacher/student, or agent/action. The **Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 9 p. 42a24ff.) includes three different classifications of types of existence. The first includes two types: (1) existence as a real entity (*dravya*), such as the aggregates (*skandha*) or elements (*dhātu*), and (2) existence as a provisional entity (*prajñapti*), such as male or female. The second classification includes three types: (1) relative dependent existence (*hsiang-tai*, **apekṣā*), as when something exists relative to one thing, and not relative to another; (2) existence as a composite (*ho-ho*, **sāmagrī*), as when something exists in one place, and not in another; and (3) existence in accord with temporal state (*shih-fen*, **avasthā*), as when something exists at one time, and not at another. The third classification includes five types: (1) nominal existence (*nāma*), such as hair on a tortoise, the horn of a hare, and so on; (2) existence as a real entity (*dravya*), such as all factors (*dharma*), each of which is defined by intrinsic nature; (3) existence as a provisional entity (*prajñapti*), such as a pot, a cloth, a chariot, and so on; (4) existence as a composite (*ho-ho*, **sāmagrī*), such as the personality (*pudgala*), which is a provisional designation based on a collocation of the aggregates; and (5) relative dependent existence (*hsiang-tai*, **apekṣā*), such as the two shores of a river, or long and short. For Saṅghabhadra's treatment of existence, see Aohara (1986b).
- ²⁵ For a description of this process of analysis, see *SAHŚ* 10 p. 958b8ff.; *AKB* 6.4 a-d p. 333.23ff.; *SAKV* p. 524.8ff.; *NAS* 58 p. 666a7ff. For Saṅghabhadra's treatment of this issue, see de La Vallée Poussin (1936-1937b) 169ff.
- ²⁶ See *AKB* 6.14c-d p. 341.11-12: "Their particular inherent characteristic is precisely [their] intrinsic nature." *svabhāva evai 'śāṃ svalakṣaṇam*. However the particular inherent characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*) need not refer to a factor's distinctive intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) as a discrete real entity (*dravya*), but can, in certain contexts, refer to a factor's nature as belonging to a particular sense sphere (*āyatana*). See *SAKV* p. 472.26ff. See also *MVB* 13 p. 65a13ff., 27 p. 665b1ff.; *SAHŚ* 1 p. 870c7ff.; *AKB* 1.10d p. 7.18ff.; *SAKV* p. 28.10ff.; *NAS* 60 p. 675b4ff.
- ²⁷ The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* uses two phrases to present the ontological position of the Sarvāstivāda-Vaibhāṣikas: *sarvakālāstitā* (*AKB* 5.25a p. 295.6) and *svabhāvaḥ sarvadā ca 'sti* (*AKB* 5.27c p. 298.21). In the Abhidharma traditions of China and Japan, these two phrases were combined as the definitive statement of the Sarvāstivādin ontological position. The second phrase *svabhāvaḥ sarvadā ca 'sti* is unanimously interpreted as "the intrinsic nature of factors exists at all times." The first phrase *sarvakālāstitā*, however, is the focus of considerable controversy and has been interpreted in two ways: (1) "the existence of all time periods"—that is, the time periods themselves actually exist; and (2) "the existence of factors in all time periods." However, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* (*MVB* 76 p. 393a9ff.; cf. *MVB* 135 p. 700a26ff.) would appear to preclude any interpretation that considers the time periods to be discrete entities apart from factors: "Further, there are three factors: namely, past, future, and present factors. Why is this doctrine presented? It is presented in order to refute the position of other sects and manifest the correct principle. There are those, like the Dārṣṭāntikas and the Vibhajyavādins, who

maintain that conditioned forces and the time periods are different. They make the following statement: ‘The nature of the time periods is permanent and the nature of conditioned forces is impermanent. The conditioned forces pass through the time periods like fruit in baskets. They emerge from this basket and enter into that basket. Conditioned forces are also like a group of people that emerge from this cottage and move into that cottage. From the future time period, they enter the present time period, and from the present, they enter the past.’ In order to refute their opinion, we maintain that the time periods and conditioned forces are, in their nature, without distinction.” Cf. VSŚ 1 p. 724b19ff.; MVB 76 p. 393c4ff., which identifies the time periods with conditioned forces. See also Nishi ([1933] 1975b) 406-409, 425-431; Sasaki (1974) 184ff.

²⁸ NAS 15 p. 421b29ff., 19 p. 447c23ff.

²⁹ See VSŚ 1 p. 724b4ff.; VB 7 p. 466b7ff.; AVB 40 p. 295c6ff.; MVB 77 p. 396a13ff., where the four views are attributed to specific masters; AKB 5.26a-b p. 296.9ff.; SAKV p. 469.20ff.; NAS 52 p. 631a12ff.; ADV no. 302 p. 260.14ff.; TSP nos.1786-1789 p. 614ff. For a discussion of the four views as presented in the **Aryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgitiśāstra* see Watanabe (1954) 186ff. The **Vibhāṣāśāstra* (VB 7 p. 466b19ff.) includes the example of the woman as either daughter or mother in the third alternative of difference in state.

³⁰ VB 7 p. 466b24; AVB 40 p. 295c20; MVB 77 p. 396b5ff.; AKB 5.26c p. 297.9ff.; SAKV p. 471.4ff.; ADV no. 302 p. 259.7ff.

³¹ MVB 76 p. 393c14ff., 77 p. 396b6ff. Cf. NAS 52 p. 631b16ff.

³² See *infra*, translation, NAS 13 p. 409b2ff.; NAS 50 p. 625a27ff., 51 p. 627b3ff., 51 p. 628b26ff., 51 p. 630b3ff., 52 p. 631b6ff., 52 p. 633b2gff., 52 p. 633c24ff., 52 p. 635c27, 52 p. 636a29ff

³³ See MVB 39 p. 200a29ff.; NAS 52 p. 633a7ff.

³⁴ See AAŚ p. 987c20ff.; NAS 51 p. 625a17ff., 51 p. 627b3ff., 51 p. 630b3ff., 52 p. 633c24ff.

³⁵ See MVB 76 p. 393a20ff.; AKB 5.25a-b p. 195.7ff.; NAS 52 p. 636a22ff.

³⁶ See *infra*, translation, NAS 13 p. 409b4ff.; NAS 51 p. 631c5ff.

³⁷ Though this distinction between activity and capability is explicitly developed by Saṅghabhadra, it is possibly suggested by certain passages in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. For example, in a passage discussing varieties of transformation, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 39 p. 200a29ff.) juxtaposes a transformation in activity (**kāritra*) and a transformation in capability (**sāmarthya*), both of which are contrasted to the absence of transformation in intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*). Whereas activity characterizes a factor only when it is present, capability occurs in the future time period in the case of the capability of birth, and so on, in the present time period in the case of the capability of desinence, and so on, and in the past time period in the case of a factor delivering (*prayam-*) its effect. See also MVB 21 p. 105a17, 39 p. 200a23ff., 55 p. 283b25ff., 93 p. 480a26ff. Cf. *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Saeki ([1886] 1978) 2: 837; Aohara (1986a). Tan’ē (Tan’ē 5 p. 868a10ff.) distinguishes between the “Old Sarvāstivādins,” for whom, he claims, activity and capability are merely synonyms, and the “New Sarvāstivādins,” namely, Saṅghabhadra, for whom “activity necessarily has capability, but capability does not necessarily have activity due to a difference in scope.” See also *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* Saeki ([1886] 1978) 1: 222; P’u-kuang 5 p. 104b29ff.; Fa-pao 5 p. 548c25ff.; Aohara (1986c).

- ³⁸ The term *kung-neng* is used both in a narrower sense of the capability that is opposed to activity, or *tso-yung* (*kāritra*), and in a wider sense of that power that includes both capability and activity. This results in ambiguity concerning its meaning in any given context and in uncertainty concerning its original Sanskrit equivalent. Sasaki Genjun, on the basis of similar passages in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* (TSP nos. 1790-1792 p. 617) and the **Nyāyānusara* (NAS 52 p. 631c5ff.), suggests *vyāpāra* as the equivalent for *kung-neng* when it is used in the narrower sense in opposition to *kāritra*. Other passages in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* could, however, be cited in support of *sāmarthya* as the equivalent of *kung-neng* in this narrower sense. See TSP nos. 1809-1814 p. 622ff., no. 1828 p. 626, no. 1834 p. 627. Cf. Sasaki (1958) 394ff.; Aohara (1986c) 30ff. *Sāmarthya* is also suggested as the equivalent for *kung-neng* by Yaśomitra (SAKV p. 172.29). *Śakti* is a possible equivalent for *kung-neng* in the wider sense including both activity and capability. Or, it is also possible that Saṅghabhadra used *sāmarthya* in both a narrow and wide sense. See NAS 52 p. 632b11.
- ³⁹ See MVB 12 p. 57a24ff.; AKB 2.46b p. 78.16ff.; *infra*, translation, NAS 13 p. 409b25ff., *infra*, translation, NAS 14 p. 409c24ff.; NAS 15 p. 419c2ff. For this future functioning, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 3 p. 12b4ff.) has the term *tso-yung*, usually the equivalent for *kāritra*. Here the **Mahāvibhāṣā* refers to three instances of future causal functioning: internal factors such as the presentiment of the knowledge of the doctrine with regard to suffering (*duhkhe dharmajñānakṣānti*); external factors such as the light of the sun, and so on; both internal and external factors such as the characteristic of birth (*jātilakṣaṇa*).
- ⁴⁰ See *infra*, translation, NAS 14 p. 410a3ff.; NAS 18 p. 437c6ff., 50 p. 621c29ff.
- ⁴¹ NAS 18 p. 437c6ff., 52 p. 631c5ff. See also MVB 18 p. 89b9ff., 47 p. 246a24, 119 p. 618c24ff.; Fa-pao 5 p. 550b10ff.; TSP nos. 1790-1792 p. 617, nos. 1809-1814 p. 622ff. Cf. Aohara (1986c) 28ff.
- ⁴² The six varieties of causes recognized by the Sarvāstivādins can be classified by when they exert their activity and capability. See MVB 21 p. 108c6ff., 196 p. 983a1ff.; SAHŚ 10 p. 954b29ff.; AKB 2.59 p. 96.11ff.; SAKV p. 226.9ff.; NAS 18 p. 437c2ff. Saṅghabhadra (NAS 18 p. 437c15-16, *passim*) presents an inviolable rule concerning this causal process: a factor's causal activity of seizing or projecting its effect must occur when that factor is present; and the presenting or delivering of the effect cannot occur without first seizing or projecting it.
- ⁴³ See *infra*, translation, NAS 14 p. 410a1ff.; NAS 18 p. 437a13ff., 19 p. 447a10ff., 52 p. 631c8ff. The **Mahāvibhāṣā* (MVB 76 p. 393c27ff.) uses the same example to clarify that a factor's function in seizing its effect—or its function as a homogeneous cause—should be considered to be its activity. However, whereas Saṅghabhadra distinguishes *kāritra* from *sāmarthya*, it is difficult to find unequivocal evidence for such a distinction in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. Cf. SAKV p. 471.11ff.; TSP nos. 1790-1792 p. 617.
- ⁴⁴ See also MVB 76 p. 394a8ff.; AKB 5.26d p. 297.15ff.; NAS 32 p. 521b27ff., 19 p. 447a4ff., 52 p. 631b19ff., 52 p. 632b14ff., 52 p. 633b27ff.
- ⁴⁵ See MVB 76 p. 394c5ff.; AKB 5.27a p. 297.18ff.; SAKV p. 471.28; NAS 52 p. 631c22ff., 52 p. 632c7ff.; TSP no. 1793ff. p. 617ff.
- ⁴⁶ TSP no. 1806 p. 621 (cf. NAS 52 p. 633a24ff.): *na kāritraṃ dharmād anyat tadvyatirekeṇa svabhāvānupalabdheḥ. nā 'pi dharmamātram svabhāvāstitve 'pi kadācid abhāvāt. na ca na viśeṣaḥ kāritrasya prāgabhāvāt saṃtānavat. thatā dharmānairantaryotpattiḥ saṃtāna ity ucyate na cā 'sau dharmavyatiriktas tadavibhāgena grhyamānatvāt. na ca dharmamātram ekeḥkṣaṇasyā 'pi saṃtānatvarsaṅgāt.*

na ca nā 'sti tatkāryasadbhāvād iti. āha ca sarīratikāryaṁ ce 'ṣṭaṁ na vidyate sā 'pi sarīratilī kācit. tadvad avagaccha yuktyā kārītreṇā 'dhvasamsiddhim iti. Cf. MVB 76 p. 394c8; NAS 51 p. 624b24ff., 52 p. 632a26ff., 52 p. 632c7ff., 52 p. 633c17ff.

⁴⁷ NAS 52 p. 632c23ff.

⁴⁸ See MVB 39 p. 200a19ff.; NAS 50 p. 625b8ff., 52 p. 631c29ff. See also Nishi ([1933] 1975b) 441ff.

⁴⁹ Since the impermanent aspect of factors is identified as the arising and passing away of their activity, unconditioned factors, which are not characterized by activity—that is, the projection of their own effect—are not impermanent and, indeed, are not subject to any type of temporal determination. See MVB 21 p. 105c15ff., 138 p. 711b3ff.; NAS 52 p. 631c13ff. Cf. NAS 17 p. 432b6ff., which discusses intrinsic nature and activity as they pertain to the unconditioned factor, *nirvāṇa*.

⁵⁰ AKB 5.27c p. 298.21ff.: *svabhāvaḥ sarvādā cā 'sti bhāvo nityaś ca ne 'ṣyate na ca svabhāvād bhāvo 'nyo vyaktam iśvaraceṣṭitam*. Yaśomitra (SAKV p. 472.25ff.) notes that this Sarvāstivādin position is compared to an act of the lord because it represents mere desire (*icchāmātratoāt*) and is not reasonable. Cf. Sasaki (1974) 191ff.

⁵¹ See NAS 52 p. 632a20ff.

⁵² The **Tattvasiddhiśāstra* (TSS 2 no. 20 p. 255a20ff.) takes the same position: “If a factor is without activity, it is without intrinsic nature. If past fire is not able to burn, it should not be referred to as fire. Perceptual consciousness is also so: if, as past, it is not able to perceive, then it should not be referred to as perceptual consciousness. Further, it is not possible that something exists without causes; it is not tenable that past factors are able to exist without causes.”

⁵³ Accordingly, the Dārṣṭāntikas are described as rejecting the two states of “being about to be produced” and “being about to be destroyed,” which are admitted by the Sarvāstivādins. Instead, they admit only the two states of “not yet having been produced” and “having already been produced.” See MVB 27 p. 141b2ff., 183 p. 919b11ff. The Sarvāstivādins claim that it is precisely in this future state of being about to be produced that the characteristic of birth exerts its capability of production. See *infra*, translation, NAS 13 p. 409b13ff.

⁵⁴ See AKB 3.85c p. 176.12, where a moment is defined as follows: “What is the limit of a moment? That during which a factor acquires its own nature when there is an assemblage of conditions.” *Samagreṣu pratyayeṣu yāvātā dharmasyā 'tmaābhaḥ*. Cf. NAS 32 p. 521b17ff.

⁵⁵ See AKB 2.46b p. 78.3, 5.27c p. 299.15ff., 5.27c p. 300.25ff. Cf. Sasaki (1974) 129ff.

⁵⁶ AKB 5.27c p. 299.1ff.; SAKV p. 472.33ff.

⁵⁷ NAS 51 p. 629b2ff., 52 p. 632.2ff.; AKB 5.27c p. 300.22ff.; SAKV p. 476.16ff.