

I'd like to begin by saying something about the motivation behind any action we perform. It is critical in steering the practice to varying destinations. If one listens to teaching or undertakes practice to achieve happiness in this life time the merit ceases with that goal achieved. If it is done with a view to seek happiness in future lifetimes as a human, reaching that goal will bring about the end of the merit. If it is done with a view to attain nirvana then the potency of merit will last as long as nirvana lasts for one. Ultimately if one participates in teachings and practices to achieve the highest state of Buddhahood for the sake of all beings the merit will last until and beyond this and in fact the merit will never end. From this we see how powerful motivation is.

Tonight we are here to discuss Buddhist Tenets. I've been teaching about the early tenets which subscribe to selflessness of person, Vaibashika and Sautantrika. Last week we talked about different objects presented under various dichotomies, single and multiple etc. Today I'd like to talk about the position of the school regarding cause and effect.

Sautantrika position on cause and effect

Causes according to Sutra School

What is cause? It is a functional phenomenon that can give rise to its effect/result. It is a phenomenon that exists prior to its effect. All in all it is an impermanent or functional phenomena that has the ability to produce effects.

According to Sautantrika there are two types of causes; *main/appropriating causes and subsidiary/cooperative causes*.

Eg; the appropriating cause of a seedling/sprout is the potency of the seed. It also needs other things like moisture heat and soil etc which are cooperative causes/conditions of a sprout.

The definition of appropriating cause is that which principally produces the effect in the form of substantial continuity of the phenomenon.

Higher schools believe that appropriating/main causes don't necessarily need to continue to produce substantial continuity. E.g. compassion is appropriating cause of bodhicitta, but the two are distinctly different minds. Compassion is one of 51 mental factors and bodhicitta is primary consciousness or mind. Compassion gives rise to something which is totally different from itself in terms of their continuity.

There is a difference between these two terms substantial continuity and continuity of similar type. E.g. a human being comes to this world from a celestial realm. That human has the substantial continuity of a celestial being but it is not a continuity of a similar type because humans and celestial beings are totally different. To be a similar type a human must have a previous moment of a human form, not another species form.

These two types of causes have deep implications about our minds and omniscient consciousness. Our mind can be the main cause of omniscient consciousness when we become Buddhas. Our body can't, but it may play a part as a cooperative cause for such an omniscient mind.

There is another dichotomy of cause and effect – *direct and indirect cause*.

A direct cause actually produces its effect without need of any intervening causes.

E.g. the last moment of the seed before it sprouts and the first moment of its seedling is a direct cause and effect relationship because there are no other intervening moments. When other moments intervene between cause and effect those moments would become indirect causes.

Relating it back to the deeper meaning of direct and indirect cause; the last moment of your mind on threshold of Buddhahood, the last moment in the mind of a non Buddha being, and is the direct cause of the next moment when you become an omniscient being; that is direct cause and effect. Whereas our present moments of mind are

indirect causes, as we inch imperceptibly towards Buddha-hood. All moments of consciousness up until the last moment before Buddhahood are indirect causes of B'hood.

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Just as we talk about main and cooperative causes we can say the same about effects. There are appropriating effects and cooperative effects.

This Sutra school presents another division of causes: *six types of causes: 1) acting cause; 2) simultaneous cause; 3) concomitant cause; 4) ripening cause; 5) equal state/fortune cause; 6) omnipresent cause.*

1) Acting/action cause (jegyü)

It is not normally considered a fully fledged cause – it is the absence of obstructions to the production of an effect. Jegyü is of two kinds; potent and impotent:

Potent acting cause includes all functional/impermanent things and impotent acting cause refers to all that is permanent.

Action cause includes everything other than itself. As long as they do not obstruct the arising of a subsequent moment of phenomenon X all other things are acting causes. All other phenomena apart from X are acting causes of X because the mere absence of obstruction from other phenomena which co-exist with X do not obstruct the continued moment of X. Acting causes can be simultaneous or sequential acting causes.

2) Simultaneous cause is a phenomenon that exists but is not a fully fledged cause.

It coexists with effect and does not obstruct continued existence of effect. E.g. a pot - already made. It is a result. Within it is contained the four elements earth water etc. The presence of these elements within the pot, which is in a resultant state, are instances of simultaneous existences, they coexist within the pot and do not impede the continued existence of the pot.

3) Concomitant cause is to do with mind and any of the 51 mental factors.

The six primary consciousnesses and 51 mental factors can have concomitant cause and effect relationship.

There could be as many as five modes of concomitance:

concomitant time – a primary mind and a mental factor or factors coexist simultaneously;

concomitant base – five sensory consciousnesses/ primary minds and mental factors E.g. visual consciousness is dependent on the eye sense base, the eyeball. If an instant of a mental consciousness arises from its eye sense base and one has had a pleasurable sensation, that experience was produced by the visual consciousness and the feeling, a mental factor. These two share the same base, the eye sense base, the eyeball.

concomitant substance - one primary mind can't have two contrasting feelings. Eg; depending on what visual consciousness perceives and how the person considers it, some sensation is in the mind, but it can not be two contracting sensations – one pleasurable another painful, there can only be one at a time.

concomitant aspect (difficult to translate) - when the visual consciousness perceives a vase, it takes on the aspect of the vase; reflects the image in the eye consciousness. When it does so all other attending mental factors also must take on the reflection of the vase.

concomitant object - similar to the last one. If a visual consciousness is attending to an object x all other consciousnesses attending that mind must share the same object x.

When ever a mind shares these five concomitants around a – such are called concomitant causes.

Mind and mental factors is a big topic in itself. What are types and functions of 51 mental factors, what is mind etc. I will discuss these in Thursday classes further down the track. The first three causes, acting, simultaneous and concomitant causes are all imputed and not fully fledged causes as we know them to be.

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4) Ripening cause – all negative actions of body speech and mind, as well as contaminated virtuous actions are ripening causes. Contaminated virtue is that which has a smear of craving; or is mildly polluted by craving. That is called an afflicted, non liberating virtue.

Virtue is an action classified, specified by Buddha and has a class of positive effects, as does negative action have its negative effects. To simplify, afflicted virtue is that which produces as state of well being within the bounds of samsara. Wellbeing is a positive phenomenon which is a good thing and therefore a result of positive action. However the positive effect we experience is within the bounds of samsara/the suffering round of cyclic existence. Those virtues have not helped us get liberation from samsara. In the hell realms there is incessant suffering, but once in a while a hell being may experience a fleeting soothing breeze. That is also a result of afflicted virtue too. This subject is quite complicated and there are many variations. Ripening causes are all negative actions and all non-liberating virtues.

5) Equal state/fortune cause- is one that gives rise to the effect which is of the same type as itself. E.g. if one dies as a human and as a result of ones good karma/ non liberating virtue comes back as a human, this is an example of status quo/same status/equal state cause. Almost all compounded phenomena have status quo cause but the first moment of your consciousness as an arya being on path of seeing, doesn't have a same status cause because your new consciousness is an arya being consciousness and the moment before it was a non arya being. Status quo cause is of same type. If cause is virtue, effect is virtue. If they are afflicted then both are afflicted.

6) Omnipresent causes - they are necessarily deluded or negative. Omnipresent cause gives rise to its effect of delusion of the same type in same realm or bhumi. E.g a moment of mind in the mind of a being in the desire realm gives rise to a second moment of desire in the same realm.

Effects according to Sutra School

This school has four types effect: *effect caused by a sentient being; main/environmental effect; ripening effect; effect corresponding to cause.*

All compounded phenomena are instances of the first two effects, sentient effect, and main effect. It doesn't mean an effect produced by a sentient being. It just means an impermanent phenomenon that is able to produce its effect. Main effect is an effect produced by its causes.

Ripened effect has three features; virtue, non-virtue or unspecified /either virtue or not. It is necessarily in the continuum of sentient beings.

Effect corresponding to cause - can be afflicted/nonafflicted, upper/ lower realm etc. Effect of this type is for example a sadist who takes great delight in killing animals or humans the tendency is ingrained in their consciousness. Repeated performance is a habit forming force.. In next life, unlike others, they will take great delight in taking life. This ease in killing is a product of great delight in killing in the last life.

For practical purposes of the six causes the last three, ripening, same status and omnipresent are very pertinent to our practice and our evolution through doing causal actions, doing the right thing in our day to day life. For practical purposes the four effects, the last two, ripening and effect corresponding to cause, are highly pertinent to what we need to do and what we should not do.

According to this school, ripened effect is not subject to change. E.g this human life is a ripened effect. Once a human always a human; it can't change in the same lifetime. Our human body came into being when we first began as a fetus. It can't be made into something else. How come we have become so big compared to the fetus? This was contributed by food, exercise etc. Our expanded human body is called developmental body.

The highest school of thought shares this view of ripened effect. Once the effect of an action has ripened it is too late to undo the cause. If a human child has experienced the ripened effect of congenital deafness and blindness, they have these effects on their body for life. Once that is full blown you can not undo it.

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What do we learn from this? We can undo causes of any kind before they give rise to effect. This is why we have purification practice. When you realize you have wronged others, consciously or not, out of deep remorse you undergo purification practice. By doing it you render the causes impotent. Causes will not remain there. They will never be able to give rise to effect. If we know we have done something bad in the past with purification we don't have to face consequences. But also we can undo virtues with anger.

Je lama Tsong Khapa has said "Everything is subject to change unless an effect has ripened. Even enlightened beings cannot do anything to change that".

A classical example of a ripened effect from this Sautantrika/second school of thought is our longevity/given lifespan/ our karma determined the lifespan which we come to this birth with. That's what we have and none can change it. According to this school you can't increase human longevity by any means. The highest school though says you can take long life initiation- this can harness longevity from prematurely cut short previous life-spans and employ that time in this lifetime.

In this way we accept without too much fuss what we face in life. We can think we have created this in past lives. Don't become too stressed or anxious. Living with it can be a good thing to do.