CHAPTER VIII

THE PROOF OF THE LAW OF CAUSATION ACCORDING TO THE
BUDDHISTS AND THE NAJĘYIKAS

I

LAW OF CAUSATION AS THE BASIS OF INDUCTION

The Buddhist logicians maintain that the basis of the material validity of a 'vyāpti' is either the relation of 'identity of material essence' (tādātmya) or the relation of 'being produced from' (taduttapatti) between the entities which correspond to the logical terms viz., 'hetu' and 'sādhya'. The universal propositions based on the relation of identity are analytical propositions. Those which are based on the law of causation are the synthetic propositions. Since the Buddhists regard the law of causation as the basis of universal and necessary character of all the empirical propositions, it is for them to show that there is the law of causation which governs the phenomena. They hold that the law of causation is 'a priori'. The thought of an effect is necessarily related to the thought of a cause. They try to show that the nature of the phenomena is such as cannot be explained without accepting that they are governed by the necessary law of causal dependence.

The Naiyāyikas do not hold that the law of invariable concomitance between two phenomena is essentially either of the nature of causal relation or that of identity. However, they accept the law of causation as the basis of induction. The method of 'reductio ad absurdum' (tarka) suggested by them as the final test of the necessary character of a particular law of invariable concomitance known by the inductive methods of agreement and difference, presupposes the law of causation. Thus, the Naiyāyikas also reject the Carvaka's theory of 'spontaneous production' or 'accidentalism' and try to prove the reign of the law of universal causation regarding the events of nature.

II

REFUTATION OF THE CĀRVAKAS' DENIAL OF THE LAW OF CAUSATION
BY THE BUDDHISTS AND THE NAJĘYIKAS

Dharmakīrti offers the following argument to prove the law of causation.
"If a thing were to be produced without a cause, it would either be an eternal or a non-existent entity. But we observe that all that comes into existence (bhāva) is neither eternal nor non-existent. Events arise occasionally. The occasional occurrence of the events would have been impossible, if they had not been conditioned by certain definite factors."

Following the above argument of Dharmakīrti, Udayanācārya also tries to refute the Carvakas denial of the law of causation. The Carvakas hold that the events arise accidently. Udayanācārya asks what is meant by saying that the events arise accidentally. Does it mean that an event occurs without a cause? Or, does it mean that there is no production? Or, does it mean that an event is produced by itself? Or, does it mean that it is produced by something which is not real, e.g., the sky flower?

Udayanācārya tries to show that none of the above four alternatives is tenable. The first alternative which denies causation is untenable because if it is denied that an event occurs depending upon something other than itself, then it has to be accepted that it arises unconditionally. Anything which is unconditional is either eternal or completely non-existent. It cannot have existence at some specific time. Its existence cannot be contingent. But the phenomena which we perceive have contingent existence. It is also wrong to hold that there is no production because it, too, contradicts our experience. We observe that a thing which is non-existent at one time, comes into existence at another time. But if there is no production, then what is non-existent at one time must be eternally non-existent. The third alternative which holds that a thing is produced by itself is also untenable. The causal relation is the relation of antecedent and consequent. A cause is antecedent to its effect, and an effect is consequent to its cause. But a thing cannot be both its antecedent and its consequent. A thing which is produced is completely non-existent prior to its production. Therefore,
a thing cannot be regarded as its own cause. The fourth alternative also
is not tenable. A thing cannot be produced by an unreal thing. An unreal
thing is eternally non-existent. Therefore, if a thing is caused by an
unreal thing, it must have eternal existence. Thus, unless it is accepted
that a thing is produced by something which is different from itself, the
contingent character of the things cannot be explained.

The Carvaka may point out that when he says that the events arise
accidentally, he does not mean to have any of the four views refuted above.
That he intends to express is simply this that just as a thing does not
depend upon anything other than its own nature for its relation to a
particular place, similarly for its relation to a particular time it should
not be conditioned by other things. The Nyayaika accepts that the ether
(ākāśa) is all pervasive, and that an atom is limited to a particular point
of space. The difference in the spatial position of the ether and an atom
is not determined by anything else. An atom is eternal but not all-pervasive.
The ether is eternal as well as all pervasive. Though the former is eternal,
it has infinitesimal dimension. On the other hand, the latter is eternal,
yet it has infinite dimension.

Now, just as the spatial position of an atom and ether etc. is
unconditional, similarly, the temporal position of such objects as jet etc.
should also be unconditional.

Udayana shows that the above argument of the Carvaka is based upon
his ignorance of the nature of a contingent object. There are two character-
istics of a contingent thing. First, it has relation to some definite period
of time. Secondly, the period of its existence is necessarily preceded by the
period of its non-existence. A contingent thing is non-existent at one
moment but comes into existent at another moment. It means that it is
produced at some specific moment prior to which it was non-existent. Thus,
unless it is accepted that a thing is produced at some specific moment,
its contingent nature cannot be explained.

The Ājñākya may urge that the proposition that a thing comes into existence at some specific point of time is not identical with the proposition that it is produced by something else.

The Naiyāyika replies that the above two propositions may not be identical, but the former necessarily implies the latter. We cannot understand the origin of a particular thing at a particular moment, unless we hold that it is produced by some conditions which invariably precede it.

The Ājñākya may argue that as the prior non-existence (prāabhava) of a thing necessarily precedes its origin, the same should, therefore, be regarded as its cause.

The Naiyāyika replies that this is not free from difficulties. First, an event is preceded not only by its prior non-existence (prāabhava) but by some positive events also, otherwise, the cognition of the 'prābhava' itself would have been impossible. Secondly, the prior non-existence of a thing has been there since the beginningless time. If the prior non-existence of a thing had been the cause of its production, it would have existed since the beginningless time. Therefore, the positive entities which invariably precede a thing determine its origin at some definite point of time.

The Ājñākya may urge that he does not dispute the question of certain things invariably precede the occurrence of an event or not. He simply wants to emphasise that a thing does not depend upon the things which precede it for its coming into existence. This is what he means by his theory that the things come into existence spontaneously.

Udayana asks what is the exact meaning of the statement that a thing is produced without depending upon any of its antecedents. Does it deny that the occurrence of an event is invariably preceded by certain other events? Or, does it mean that though the origin of a particular thing may invariably be preceded by some other things, yet the former does not depend upon the latter
for its origin?

The first alternative means that there is no definite cause of a thing. Any thing may happen to be the antecedent condition of an event. Even a donkey may be the antecedent condition of smoke. There is no law that only one specific condition or a group of definite conditions must invariably precede the production of a thing. This is one possible interpretation of the theory of spontaneous production and may be called accidentalism.

IV

THE THEORY OF ACCIDENTALISM AND THE THEORY OF PLURALITY OF CAUSES

This theory roughly resembles Mill's theory of Plurality of causes. However, both these theories should be clearly differentiated from each other. According to the former, there cannot be any definite number of the causes which may severally produce an identical effect. But according to the latter, the number of the causes which may produce the same effect alternatively is not indefinite. According to the theory of the plurality of causes, the gratification of hunger can be effected by different causes separately. But the causes which give rise to the gratification of hunger cannot be indefinite. Mill would not accept that the fire may be the cause of the gratification of hunger in some cases. But according to the theory of accidentalism it may be so in some unknown cases.

A close examination of the theory of the plurality of causes will show that accidentalism is its logical conclusion. Suppose, an event x is thought to be produced severally by four different causes - A, B, C, D. It means that the presence of A gives rise to x. But for the production of x, the presence of A is not necessary. In the absence of A, x may be produced by any of the three other causes. Thus A is not indispensable for the production of x. Similarly, none of the other three causes is indispensable for the
production of $X$. Now, when none of the four known causes of a thing is indispensable for the production of $X$, it may also be produced by some fifth cause, which too cannot be indispensable for its production. Thus, the plurality of causes is nothing but the theory of accidentalism which, as the Buddhists and the Naiyāyikas show, is the denial of the law of causation.

The Buddhists and the Naiyāyikas who try to prove that the law of causation governs all the phenomena give a very incisive criticism of the theory of plurality of causes. Dharmakīrti declares that to deny that a thing is invariably produced by some definite cause would amount to hold that it is produced without a cause. Fire is the uniform cause of smoke. It has been observed that smoke is produced by fire. It is never produced without fire.

The Carvāka may say that it is probable that in future, smoke may be produced without fire. Dharmakīrti replies that if smoke is produced without fire, then it will be produced without a cause. None of the things in the absence of which a thing can be produced can be regarded as its cause. If smoke is produced in the absence of fire, fire cannot be regarded as its cause.

The Carvāka may assert that if fire is not the cause of smoke, something else may be its cause. The Buddhist replies that if fire is not the cause of smoke, then nothing else can be its cause, because, then, nothing can be the indispensable antecedent condition for the production of smoke.

But it is observed that smoke is produced by the fires of different kinds e.g. the fire of a straw, the fire of leaves, the fire of dry cow-dung etc. Keeping such instances in view, how can it be hold that smoke is invariably produced by the same cause?

It is replied that the fires of different kinds cannot produce an identical smoke. If the cause is different, its effect too must be different.
An identical effect can be produced by an identical cause only. If an identical effect is produced by different causes, there cannot be any law of causation. All the events of universe, then, would be produced without cause, or every thing may be produced by every thing else. Then, the identity and difference of an effect would not be determined by the identity and difference of its cause. Thus, to hold that an identical effect is produced by different causes amounts to a denial of the law of causation. But the law of causation cannot be denied as explained above.

If the distinguishing features of the fires of the different kinds are to be emphasised, then the difference among the smokes produced by them cannot be ignored. Thus, the smoke of a specific kind can be produced by the fire of a specific kind. An identical smoke cannot be produced by the fires of different kinds separately.

If in the case of smokes of different kinds produced by the fires of different kinds, the differences of the smokes of different kinds are overlooked and they are regarded as just one identical smoke, then the differences of the fires of the different kinds should also be overlooked. Thus, without making distinction of the kinds of smoke and the kinds of fire, it will be hold that fire is the cause of smoke. A thing which is produced by something other than fire is definitely different from smoke in quality e.g. vapour.

Udayana also offers a similar argument to refute the theory of accidentalism or the theory of plurality of causes.

Both the Buddhists and the Naiyāyikas, thus, try to show that it cannot be denied that the occurrence of an event is invariably proceeded by some definite cause.

* Though the use of the terms 'smokes' and 'fires' in the plural number is against the usage of the English language, it has become unavoidable to me in this context.
To the Carvākas argument that an event may be invariably preceded by some condition or a group of conditions and yet may not be caused by them, the Naiyāyikas as well as the Buddhists reply that to be caused by certain conditions mean nothing more than being invariably preceded by them.

V

THE INDIAN THEORIES OF CAUSATION

The problem of causation is one of the basic problems of Indian Philosophy. The metaphysical theories of the different systems of Indian Philosophy are supported by their respective theories of causation. There are four important theories of causation which figure prominently in Indian Philosophy viz. (1) the modification theory of the Śāmkhya, (2) the theory of unreal or apparent production of the Advaitavedānta (vivartta-vāda), (3) the theory of emergent production (ārambhavāda) or the theory of non-existence of effect in 'cause' (sattkāryavāda) of the Nyāya-vaiśeṣika, and the theory of the dependent origination (Pratīyā samutpādavāda) of the Buddhists. To these four theories of causation, we should also add here the Carvākas' theory of spontaneous production.

According to the Śāmkhya, there is an abiding substance which runs through the causal series. Production means the modification of the form of the causal stuff. The fundamental stuff which runs through the causal series is neither produced nor destroyed. It is eternal. Ultimately, the whole world of the manifold objects, except the individual souls, is the modification of the primordial matter, the 'ātm prakṛti'.

A little reflection will show that according to this theory, there is no real production because it holds that the essence of an effect is identical with the essence of its cause. The difference between cause and effect is not the difference between two basically different entities but the difference
between the two forms of the identical stuff. This theory holds that in a causal process, the form of a cause is changed into a new form without involving any change in the essence of the causal stuff. Now, unless there is change in the essence of the causal stuff, there cannot be any real change even in the form of that stuff. The Advaitins, therefore, hold that what is regarded as the real modification of the causal stuff is only an appearance. There is no real change in the abiding eternal substance, the 'Brahman'. The manifold world of different forms and names is not the result or the real modification of Brahman but only an appearance generated by the beginningless 'avidya.' Thus, the 'Viveka Parinamavada' of Sākhya logically leads to the Vivrttavada of Ākāra, according to which, there is no real production.

The Nyāyavaisesikas are the champions of realism. In order to uphold the reality of the manifold world of experience, they maintain that production does not mean the change in the form of the causal stuff, but the emergence (prabha) of a new entity which is completely non-existent (asat) in the cause. An effect is a real entity completely different from its cause. It is well known to a student of Nyāyavaisesika Philosophy that according to it an effect is a 'whole' (avayavi) which arises in its parts. The recognition of the reality of the 'whole' over and above the parts in which it resides by the relation of 'samavaya' is a specific feature of Nyāyavaisesika metaphysics.

As to the relation of cause to its effect, two different theories have taken shape in the course of the history of the Nyāyavaisesika. These two theories are called the earlier and the later theories. The Theory of causation which is pronounced in the N1 and in the N2 is not the same as the theory of causation discussed in the manuals of the syncretic school. The theory of causation which is discussed in the manuals of the syncretic school crystalised in Nyāyakandali and Kārnāvali, though the beginning of this theory
is made in the Nyāyavrātikātāpanārūpā.

While according to the earlier theory a cause is destroyed at the moment of the origin of the effect, according to the later theory, the cause continues to exist along with the effect. According to the later theory, the effect resides in the cause by the relation of 'samevāya'. Though the concept of the 'avyayavin' is discussed and defined in the IS and Nādi, yet the simultaneous existence of effect and cause is not accepted therein. Gautama says, "As an effect-substance is produced only when the cause-substance is disjoined, it is inferred that the cause is destroyed prior to the production of the effect."

According to the earlier theory both the cause-substance and the effect substance are 'wholes (avyayavins). In a causal process, the cause-substance which is an 'avyayavin' residing in its parts is destroyed leaving behind it its parts in which another 'avyayavin' the effect substance is born. The cause substance is different from the effect substance. The latter arises when the first is destroyed.

Though according to this theory, the cause is destroyed before the emergence of the effect, yet it accepts some sort of bond between the cause and the effect through the identity of their parts. The parts left over by the destruction of the cause substance the 'avyayavin', carry, as if, the essence of the cause to the effect. This theory, thus, avoids the position of holding that an effect arises from void. Vatsyāyana says, "Then an old 'avyayavin' (cause) is destroyed by disjoining the arrangement of its parts, and the parts are rearranged, a new 'avyayavin' or substance (dravya) is born in them, the new-born substance is not born out of nothing. According to this theory the parts are not regarded as separate substances.

According to the later Īyāvāsaśeṣika theory of causation, there is no destruction of the cause prior to the emergence of the effect. The
cause continues to exist even after its effect is produced. According to this, cause is not thought to be an 'avayavin' residing in some parts but the parts themselves. While according to the earlier theory, the 'whole and the 'parts together constitute one substance, according to the later theory they constitute two different substances.

The later theory holds that the parts form the cause and they continue to exist along with the emergent effect. It is to be noted that though according to the later theory, the cause continues to exist even after the effect is produced, yet there is no internal relation between the cause and the effect. The cause and the effect, the parts and the whole, are two different substances which are related by an external xxxi relation known as 'samaveya'.

According to the later as well as according to the earlier Nyayavaisesika theory of causation, an effect is entirely non-existent in its cause. It is something which emerges anew. But while the earlier theory holds that the parts of a cause substance are identical with the parts of the effect-substance, according to the later theory there is nothing common between a cause and an effect. The parts which form the cause are different from the effect-substance.

According to the Nyayavaisesika, an effect is never produced out of its cause. The cause is a substance which does not transmit its essence to the effect. Though the effect has nothing in common with the cause, yet the former can reside only in the latter. The effect arises in the cause and resides therein by the relation of inherence (samaveya) which itself is an entity and thus, while it relates the effect to the cause it also serves as a wedge and does not let the one merge into the other.

According to the Samkhya, the principal cause is known as the material (upadana) cause and the effect is produced out of it. But according to the
Nyāya-vaśesika, an effect is not produced out of its cause. It simply arises in its cause and resides therein by the relation of inherence. Therefore, it is known as the inherent cause.

It should be noted that while according to the Śāṅkhyā, there is identity of the fundamental stuff of cause and effect, according to the later Nyāya-vaśesika theory, there is no internal relation between cause and effect, no transference of an essence from the cause to the effect. The earlier Nyāya-vaśesika theory of causation is a middle position between the Śāṅkhyā theory and the later Nyāya-vaśesika theory. It differs from the Śāṅkhyā theory in holding that the cause substance is different from the effect substance. But there is agreement between them in so far as they hold that the destruction of a cause is not its complete annihilation.

According to the earlier Nyāya-vaśesika theory of causation, a cause is an 'āvayavin' and its destruction means the destruction of cause as a 'āvayavin' only. Then a cause is destroyed, it is not completely annihilated but it leaves behind it its parts which are rearranged and thus, the effect, a new 'āvayavin' a different substance, is born therein. The main difference between the Śāṅkhyā theory and the early theory of Nyāya is this that while according to the latter the whole residing in the parts is a new substance a new entity, according to the former it is simply the new form of the abiding stuff.

VI

CONCLUSION

According to the later Nyāya-vaśesika theory of causation a cause does not transfer anything to its effect. It is the cause by virtue of the fact that it precedes the effect. This theory comes very near to the Buddhist theory of causation, in so far as it holds that a cause is an invariable antecedent of its effect. According to the Buddhist theory of causation, a cause is
completely annihilated without leaving anything behind it and the effect arises after the annihilation of the cause. Thus, according to the later Nyāyavaiśeṣikā theory of causation and the Buddhist theory of causation, the relation between what is regarded as cause and what is regarded as its effect is nothing but the relation of antecedent and consequent.

Now, if there is nothing common between a cause and its effect, how can we say that the latter is produced by the former. According to the Śāmkhya, a bracelet of gold is produced out of a gold because gold as such is the very stuff of the bracelet. But when what is regarded as cause is completely annihilated prior to the emergence of what is regarded as its effect, how can we say that the latter is produced by the former or the latter is the effect of the former? Similar will be the position in the case of the later Nyāyavaiśeṣikā theory of causation according to which cause and effect are completely different entities. Unless an effect contains some essence of its cause, how can it be held that there is causal relation between them? If the cause does not transfer any essence to the effect, does it not mean that the effect is produced spontaneously without depending upon any thing else? When A derives some property from B, we can legitimately say that A depends upon B or A is caused by B. But when A does not derive any of its properties from B the occurrence of the latter prior to the occurrence of the former has no relation to the occurrence of the former. The conclusion is, thus, inevitable that A is produced spontaneously without depending upon anything else. This is the position of the Cārvāka, as explained by Udayana in his Nyāyakusumāñjali.

The later Nyāyavaiśeṣikās and the Buddhists hold that a cause is an invariable antecedent (Nyatanūrvartti) of its effect and the former is absolutely different from the latter. The Cārvāka's objection against this theory is that two absolutely different entities cannot be regarded as
related by the causal relation. To hold that a thing is produced from an absolutely different thing amounts to hold that it is produced out of nothing. If it is produced out of nothing, then the thing which invariably proceeds it has no causal relation of it. It then, arises of its own accord, without depending upon anything else. The Buddhists who hold that in the objectively real world the occurrence of one moment means the death of the preceding moment, would not object to the Carvaka's position which holds that a thing is produced out of nothing.

According to the Buddhists there is no such thing as the production of one event by another event. The events simply occur. But they occur one following the other. There arises no such event which is not preceded by another event. The antecedent event has no mysterious causal force other than the fact of its occurrence. Nor does the following event have its existence in a dormant form at the moment of the occurrence of the preceding event. Thus it is not correct to say that an antecedent event produces its succeeding event out of itself, or lifts it up from its potential state to the state of actuality.

Thus, from the objective point of view, we cannot say that an event is produced or caused by another event. This is acceptable to the Buddhists as well as to the Carvaka. But the Buddhists hold that a world in which the events are not related by causal relation is beyond the realm of human thought. As the relation of causation is not objective, it must be regarded as the superimposition of human thought on the objectively real things which occur in the close succession. Thus, according to the Buddhists causal relation is 'a priori'.

When Dharmakirti argues to prove the law of causation, he does not intend to prove its objective reality. What he intends to say is that
human thought cannot understand the nature of phenomena without holding that a thing is caused by another thing. The Naiyāyika accepts the Buddhist argument but he fails to note that the acceptance of the Buddhist argument will lead him inevitably to the position of holding that the concept of causal relation is 'a priori'. When there is nothing common between two objective events, to hold that one is the cause of the other is nothing but a thought construct. The Naiyāyika may say that the uniformity of succession of events is an objective fact. The objectively real invariable antecedence of one thing to another thing is identical with the causal relation between them. Then how can it be denied that causal relation is objectively real?

This position of the Naiyāyika leads him to another difficulty. If the relation of causation is not a subjectively determined concept but is identical with the invariable concomitance between two events, then our knowledge of causal relation between two events can never attain the state of certainty as the invariable concomitance between two events can never be determined by means of sense-experience. As with regard to every particular event, we can know with certainty what are its invariable antecedents, there remains still less possibility of obtaining the knowledge of the universality of the law of causation. Thus, as the law of universal causation cannot be known by experience with certainty, it will always be open to doubt.

The Buddhist Logicians hold that the law of the universality of causation is not derived from experience. It is 'a priori'. It cannot be proved by inductive methods as it is presupposed by them. Though the law of the universality of causation cannot be proved by empirical methods, it cannot be denied by thought. The function of thought is to understand the events of nature. But no explanation of the events is possible without

* Infact, if properly understood the Buddhist law of causation is not the law of causation in the ordinary sense of the term. It is the law of dynamism.
holding that an event is caused by another event. This is what Dharmakirti has tried to show. But an empiricist cannot have recourse to any such argument. A true and consistent empiricism is bound to end in skepticism. This is shown by Hume in the West and the Carvakas in the East. A way to overcome skepticism is suggested by the Buddhists in India and Kant in the West. To be hostile to all 'a priori' concepts, yet to have a craze to provide a way to obtaining universal and certain knowledge is bound to be fraught with contradictions. Mill's 'Paradox of induction' is an instance of this kind of contradiction. Its another instance is provided by the Naiyayika's acceptance of the Buddhist proof of the law of causation, which is 'a priori' in nature.

In the end, one point more is to be noted. In the western Logic, the law of causation and the law of uniformity of causation are regarded as two different laws. But Dharmakirti has tried to show that they are identical. The denial of the uniformity of causation means the denial of causation as such. The law of causation cannot be reconciled with the principle of the plurality of causes. Dharmakirti has convincingly shown that the fact that an event is contingent is a sufficient reason to hold that it is caused by something other than itself and to hold that it is caused by some other thing means that the thing is its uniform cause. A variable cause is no cause.