

# Conceptual Interrelatedness in Ksanikavada and Svabhavoparamavada

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**Abstract-** Ayurveda, the science of life identifies man as an embodiment of nature. It encloses the essential concepts in various streams of Indian philosophy. Theory of instantaneous or ksanikavada is a significant concept in Buddhism, according to which all the universal things are momentary. A similar thought can be seen in Ayurveda known as Svabhavoparama or natural destruction, this expounds that all the things are in a succession of natural destruction. According to this theory, the process of ending occurs without a specific reason. Even though there are numerous conceptual similarities in the Buddhist and Ayurvedic doctrines, the present study mainly concentrates on the analysis of Ksanikavada and Svabhavoparamavada.

**Index Terms-** pratityasamutpada, ksanikavada, svabhavoparamavada, similarity, Buddhism, Ayurveda

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda and Buddhism are two important knowledge systems in Indian history. These two systems are developed side by side, and they shared many common concepts. Bhuddhist philosophy emerged as a way to find out a solution for sufferings in the world. In Indian context it had a deep influence unlike the orthodox systems as it open a new path to enlightenment for everyone, irrespective of their caste. Buddhism established a distinct perspective about the life unfamiliar to the then society, and recommended the eight fold path for a peaceful life. The teachings of Buddha have been a topic of discussion among the scholars for last two and a half millennia. Buddha's theory of *Pratityasamutpada*, developed as *Ksanikavada*-a well discussed doctrine in the later Buddhism. This theory implies that there is nothing in the universe that is stable. All the things are in a continuity of origin and decay. The universe is always moving and the momentary entities themselves act as their causes. This implies that the existence of the things means its efficiency to produce something. It means every object exists as itself as well as the cause of another one. Such an existence, which acts as cause and effect at the same time, is momentary. Causality, reality, efficiency and instantaneous are interchangeable terms in this system<sup>1</sup>. Causation or *Pratityasamutpada* is kinetic. What exists is always moving, it is an illusion that a thing exists without acting. This motion itself is causation<sup>2</sup>. Buddha explained *Pratityasamutpada* by using the example of river. The waves in a river are not same which are changing in every second and different from one another. This is the same in the case of all universal things, which are momentary without exception.<sup>3</sup> In a nutshell the idea of this doctrine is that everything in the universe is transient, ie., originating and ceasing constantly, and nothing

exists in eternity or annihilation. This principle was later adapted as the doctrine of *Ksanikavada* by the *Sautrantrika* sect of Buddhism.

## II. KSANIKAVADA

*Ksanikavada* or the theory of momentariness, the modified form of *Pratityasamutpada*, explains that the cause and effect are momentary. The cause does not exist when the effect has appeared, i.e. the cause and effect cannot be exists simultaneously. The concept that a thing ceases to be the same as soon as it originates is called momentary or *Ksanika*. This term refer to the thing that does not continue to exist after its origin. In other words the existence is identical with the moment i.e. existence is a point of instant<sup>4</sup>. The later philosophers like Dharmakirti, Kamalasila etc. hold the view that the real things are efficient to produce a purposive action i.e. arthakriyakari<sup>5</sup>. This real is momentary, the succession of moments produce the illusion that the real or existence is constant and uninterrupted.

*Niribhanda hi samagri svakaryotpadane yatha/  
Vinasam prati sarvepi nirapeksasca janminah||*<sup>6</sup>

Thus Ksanikavada explained the same theory of Pratityasamutpada of Buddha. The major criticism against this principle is that if everything is in a succession and continually renewed, then how the recognition of objects is explained. The Buddhists answer that the things in two moments of cognition are only similar and we mistake them to be the same. All the recognition is erroneous since similarity is mistaken for its identity.<sup>7</sup> As most of the Sautrantika works are not available or lost, the details of Ksanikavada was accessible only through the purvapaksas of the scholars of Nyaya- Vaishesika, who were always dead against the Ksanikavada. In Ayurveda this theory is known as *Svabhavoparamavada*. According to *Carakasamhita* knowledge of this basic theory is essential for a doctor while treatment.

## III. SVABHAVOPARAMAVADA

*Carakasamhita* explains Svabhavoparamavada in the context of defining the importance of treatment. The word Svabhavoparama means 'svabhavat vinasah', the natural end. In *Carakasamhita*, the sage Atreya elucidates Svabhavoparamavada and the purpose of treatment in Ayurveda as a response to purvapaksa<sup>8</sup>. He says that

*Jayante hetuvaisamyatvisama dehadhatavah/  
Hetusamyat samastesam svabhavoparamah sada*||<sup>9</sup>

This implies that it is always the nature of the constitution of body to suffer decay or destruction and it never need a cause. Cakrapanidatta the commentator of *Carakasamhita*, says that 'svabhavat vinasakarananirapeksat uparamo vinasah svabhavoparamah'. This principle suggests that for the generation of all existent objects, there is an adequate cause, but for their ceasing there is no cause; it is natural.

*Pravrttiheturbhavanam na nirodhesthi karanam*||<sup>10</sup>

Here Cakrapanidatta explains that the harmonious condition and its imbalance of the body are of some reasons but it will cease in the next moment without any cause. He uses an example of candle to explain this. Oil, thread etc. needed for the enlightenment of a candle, but it turns off without any cause. All the constituent elements of the body have this feature of svabhavanasa. The imbalanced elements also have this nature. The whole body is always in a process of origin and ceasing. So it can be observed that all the things are momentary or Ksanika. In *Carakasamhita* Agnivesa raises a question about the relevance of treatment thus: 'if all the things including the imbalanced elements are naturally ceases without any reason, then what is the purpose of treatment?' His teacher Punarvasu said that, for the destruction of existing objects there is no cause. The same happens with that of the time, which goes on ceaselessly the cause which brings about destruction cannot be ascertained. As the time passes out quickly, the existent objects also are destructed, even in the lack of causes.<sup>11</sup> Still the medical treatment never becomes inoperative.

*Yabhihi kriyabhirjayante sarire dhatavah samah /  
Sa cikitsa vikaranam karma tadbhisajam smrtam* ||<sup>12</sup>

The treatment in Ayurveda aims at the 'dhatu-samyam' or harmony of elements in the body. When the elements become imbalanced, the Ayurvedic treatment tries to remove the cause of it. According to Svabhavoparama theory the imbalanced elements of the body ceasing in every moment and cause the generation of another imbalanced element. Since this is a continuous process, the physician treats for the harmonizing of imbalanced elements. It helps to destroy the cause of disease and make the successive elements in harmony. This implies that the medicinal treatment provides balance to the successive dhatus, by destructing the cause of visama or imbalance and serving the cause of samya.<sup>13</sup> This is the nature of the principle of Svabhavoparama is discussed in *Carakasamhita*. The other treatises on Ayurveda also speak of this principle indirectly.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

It can be assumed that at the time of Agnivesa itself the idea of Ksanikavada was established in the society. Ayurveda accepts this doctrine at the same time it declares the relevance and effectiveness of treatment. It opines that all the existing objects which are made up of pancabhuta suffer a series of natural decay. In *Nyayabhasya*, Vatsyayana presents an example

of Ksanikavada doctrine as a purvapaksa, he says that the body is always in a process of growth and decay. The continuous process of growth generates new cells in the body and the natural decaying process causes the destruction of matured cells. It should be understood that as in the case of body all the things have the quality of Ksanika.<sup>14</sup>

All the above points lead to the conclusion that Svabhavoparamavada and the Ksanikavada hold the same principle. Ayurveda and Buddhism are closely related knowledge systems and are greatly influenced each other in their development. It may also be observed that the base of Svabhavoparamavada in Ayurveda is Ksanikavada, in other words Svabhavoparamavada is an extension or adapted version of Ksanikavada.

#### NOTES

- [1] Joshi, L.M., 1967, *Studies in the Buddhist Culture of India*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, p.198.
- [2] Ibid; p.197.
- [3] Because of the peculiarity of Pratityasamutpada theory, Buddhism came to be designated as Madhyamamarga, for it never denies the existence of cause and the reality of effect. Unithiri, N.V.P., 2006, *Indian Bhauthikavada Paithrikam*, Progress publications, Calicut, p.148.
- [4] Joshi, L.M., op.cit; p.197.
- [5] Ibid;
- [6] Quoted in Unithiri, N.V.P., op.cit; p.165.
- [7] Hiriyanna, M., 1994, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, p.141.
- [8] According to the followers of Ksanikavada the diseases are also Ksanikas the treatment is ineffectual. Sharma, T.Yadhav (Ed.), 1994, *Carakasamhita, Chowkhamba Sanskrit series*, Varanasi, p.97.
- [9] Ibid;
- [10] Ibid;
- [11] Ibid; p.98.  
Na nasakaranabhatbhavan/E nasakaranam |  
jnayate nityagasyeva kalasyatyayakaranam ||  
sighragatvadyatha bhutastatha bhavo vipadyate |  
nirodhe karana/Em tasya nasti naivanyathakriya || (su.s 17, 32-33)
- [12] Ibid; p.98.
- [13] Ibid;
- [14] Tyagatvisamahetunam samanam copasevanat | Visama nanubadhnanti jayante dajtavah samah || (su.s.17, 36) Cakrapanidatta says that evam manyate -yadhyapi dhatuvaisamyam ksanikatvena vinasvaram, thatapi vinasyadi tad dhatu vaisamyam svakaryam visamameva dhatumarabhate, evam sopyaparam visamamiti na dhatuvaisamyasantananivrtti dhatu-samyam janakahetum vina; yada tu dhatu-samyaheturpayukto bhavati, tada tena sahitam vaisamyasantati patitamapi karanam samamevadhatusantanamarabhate//
- [15] Sastri, D.D (Ed.), 1986, *Nyayabhasya*, Sudhi Prakashana,

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- [8] Stecherbatsky,T, 1923, *Central Conception of Buddhism and the Word Dharma*, Asian Educational Services, Delhi.
- [9] ~~~~~, *Buddhist Logic*, Part One, Reprint 2004, Kessinger Publishing, USA.
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