

Why Change Is the Only Constant: The Teachings on Momentariness Found in Xuanzang's Translation of the Abhidharma Treatises of Saṅghabhadra*

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I. Introduction

II. Saṅghabhadra on the Constancy of Change

III. Untangling the Knots in the Theory of the Continuum of Nine Factors

IV. Conclusion

Summary

Within the Abhidharma literature, the doctrinal discussions on momentariness composed by the fifth-century C.E. Indic theorist, Saṅghabhadra, and rendered into Chinese by the pilgrim and scholar-monk, Xuanzang (602?-667 C.E.), stand as rigorous and detailed defenses of the Buddhist tenet of momentariness. This paper examines several passages on the doctrine of momentariness that are extant only within Xuanzang's Chinese translations of two treatises by Saṅghabhadra, the *Treatise Conforming to the Correct Logic of Abhidharma* (Sanskrit, hereafter Skt. **Abhidharmanyāyāmusāraśāstra*; Chinese, hereafter Chi. *Apidamo shun zhengli lun* 阿毘達磨順正理論) and the *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* (Skt.

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**Abhidharmasamayapradīpikāśāstra*; Chi. *Apidamo zang xianzong lun* 阿毘達磨顯宗論). In these masterworks, Saṅghabhadra uses the Abhidharma theory of the “conditioned factor” (Skt. *saṃskṛta-dharma*; Chi. *youwei fa* 有爲法)—the discrete entity that comes into being as the result of the myriad of “causes and conditions” (Skt. *hetu-pratyaya*; Chi. *yin-yuan* 因緣) that precede it—to construct a philosophical explanation for change as a pervasive and invariable feature of reality. In their meticulous translations and commentaries on these texts, Xuanzang and his Tang Dynasty disciples examine the four “stages” (Skt. *avasthā*; Chi. *fenwei* 分位) of a conditioned factor and reconsider the arguments enlisted by Saṅghabhadra to buttress the proposition that a conditioned factor activates another of its own kind in the moment that follows its cessation. This paper uses a source criticism research method to illustrate how several understudied translations of the Abhidharma works of Saṅghabhadra by Xuanzang—and the commentaries on these texts by his Tang disciples—contribute to the theoretical basis of the doctrine of momentariness within Chinese Buddhism.

Keywords

Saṅghabhadra, Vasubandhu, Conditioned Factor (Skt. *saṃskṛta-dharma*; Chi. *youwei fa* 有爲法), Doctrine of Momentariness, **Nyāyānusāraśāstra*, **Samayapradīpikāśāstra*, Stage (Skt. *avasthā*; Chi. *fenwei* 分位)

I. Introduction

Throughout the long history of Chinese Buddhism, the thematic topic of change has been viewed in terms of “momentariness” (Sanskrit, hereafter Skt. *kṣaṇa-bhāṅga*; Chinese, hereafter Chi. *cha'na mie* 刹那滅),¹⁾ the Buddhist proposition that all entities

1) von Rospatt (1995) argues that the doctrine of momentariness originates in the traditions of Abhidharma Buddhist exegesis on the ancient *Āgama* literature. Von Rospatt (1995, 17) concludes: “Since the teaching that all conditioned factors are momentary is not recorded in the *Nikāyas/Āgamas*, it must have been attributed to the Buddha after their compilation or within a tradition which was not incorporated into the canon.” Through a fastidious investigation into these later sources in section 1.A (“The Earliest Textual Evidence for the Doctrine of Momentariness”) of his book, von Rospatt (1995, 16) provides ample evidence that there is reason to doubt the authenticity of “some isolated occurrences where the Buddha is

in the phenomenal world are “momentary” (Skt. *kṣaṇika*; Chi. *cha’na xing* 刹那性). According to the Abhidharma Buddhist doctrine of momentariness, all physical and mental phenomena are comprised of discrete entities or “conditioned factors” (Skt. *saṃskṛta-dharma*; Chi. *youwei fa* 有爲法) that are constantly “becoming otherwise” (Skt. *anyathā*; Chi. *yi* 異) within each moment in time.²⁾ A factor is “conditioned” (Skt. *saṃskṛta*; Chi. *youwei* 有爲)—that is, altered or changed—by the series of events that take place in the moments prior to its coming into being. Conditioned factors cluster into composites, or “continua” (Skt. *saṃtāna*; Chi. *xiangxu* 相續),³⁾ of plural factors that constitute all sentient and insentient entities in existence.

The doctrine of momentariness proposes that every mental and physical entity in the universe ceases to be as soon as it arises. As one factor passes out of being, it initiates the four “stages” (Skt. *avasthā*; Chi. *fenwei* 分位)⁴⁾ of “arising” (Skt. *jāti*,

cited as teaching the momentariness of all conditioned factors.”

- 2) Dessein (2011, 341) renders this third (or fourth) of the characteristic marks of the conditioned factor (Skt. *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇa*; Chi. *youwei xiang* 有爲相) as “change in continuance,” reflecting the appearance of the Sanskrit compound *sthityāyathāva* (Chi. *zhuyi* 住異; Tib. *gnas pa gzhan du ‘gyur ba*) in *Abhidharmakośa* 2.45cd (Pradhan 1967, 75; T1558, 29:27a20; D4090, 80b3). The different enumerations of three or four marks found in the body of Abhidharma teachings derive from different ways of parsing the same compound. While some parse the compound as a coordinative compound (Skt. *dvanda*; Chi. *xiangwei shi* 相違釋) meaning “change-and-continuance,” and hence take there to exist four marks, others parse it as a dependent (Skt. *taṭpuruṣa*; Chi. *yizhu shi* 依主釋) compound. Hence, the translation as “change-in- continuance” and the view that there exist only three marks.
- 3) La Vallée Poussin (1926: vol. 1, 215) and von Rospatt (1995, 1) translate the word *saṃtāna* as “series.” Frauwallner (1995, 200) translates as “causal chain.” Dessein (2011, 350) and Shiga (2018, 437) translate the Sanskrit term most literally as “stream.” Von Rospatt (1995, 15, n. 11) glosses the word the *saṃtāna* as “the homogenous series of conditioning activity” (Skt. *saṃskāra*) [i.e., where earlier and later segments do not differ qualitatively], citing the definition found in Saṅghabhadra’s *Treatise Conforming to Correct Tenets* (T1562, 29:534c14-15). For Saṅghabhadra, who upholds the Sarvāstivāda teaching that a moment consists in a finite temporal duration, a continuum can be composed of multiple factors undergoing discrete stages during one moment in time or it can be composed of a multiple factors undergoing discrete stages over multiple moments in time. Saṅghabhadra maintains that once arisen, all conditioned factors undergo discrete stages of abiding, changing, and ceasing during a present moment in time and, hence, a cluster of factors that is present during one moment in time comprises an individual continuum.
- 4) Shiga (2018, 441) and Dessein (2007, 332) translate as “state.” The theory that the past, present, and future being of a factor differ in terms of their *avasthā* is attributed by the **Mahāvibhāṣā* to the Sarvāstivādin master Vasumitra (T1545, 27:396b22). For analysis of this theory, see Dessein 2007, 341.

upapatti; Chi. *sheng* 生), “abiding” (Skt. *sthiti*; Chi. *zhu* 住),⁵⁾ “changing” (Skt. *anyathātvā*; Chi. *yi* 異) or “aging” (Skt. *jarā, jṛṇa*; Chi. *lao* 老),⁶⁾ and “ceasing” (Skt. *anityatā*; Chi. *wuchang* 無常) of another factor.⁷⁾ Because the generation and the cessation of factors of nearly the same nature occur within a rapid and uninterrupted succession of momentary events, the composite entities made up of plural factors are perceived to be continuous even as they change. Embedded within the doctrine of momentariness is the foundational Buddhist teaching on radical impermanence, the idea that change is not constituted in terms of an enduring entity that undergoes alteration but by the moment-to-moment arising and ceasing of earlier and later entities within a continuous series of temporal events.

During the fifth century C.E. in Kashmir, Saṅghabhadra and Vasubandhu engage in a debate on the doctrine of momentariness. Several foundational Buddhist teachings are at stake in the discussions between these two influential Indic scholar-monks: the nature of the conditioned factor, the tenet of radical impermanence, and the theory of the constancy of change. Two centuries later in China, the Buddhist pilgrim and scholar-monk Xuanzang (602–667 C.E.) and a cohort of disciples and scribes translate two Abhidharma masterworks by Saṅghabhadra—the eighty-fascicle *Treatise Conforming to the Correct Logic of Abhidharma* (Skt. **Abhidharmanyāyānusārasāstra*; Chi. *Apidamo shun zhengli lun* 阿毘達磨順正理論) and the forty-fascicle *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* (Skt. **Abhidharmasamayapradīpikāśāstra*; Chi. *Apidamo zang xianzong lun* 阿毘達磨顯宗論).⁸⁾ In these two treatises, Saṅghabhadra undertakes an

5) La Vallée Poussin (1926: vol. 1, 215), Pruden (1990, vol. 1, 238), and von Rospatt (1995, 24) all translate the Sanskrit word *sthiti* as “duration.” Gold (2017, 153) translates it as “stability.”

6) The Sanskritic Buddhist philosophers use two different names for the same concept of “becoming otherwise,” which is the literal meaning of the word *anyatā*. Paramārtha renders this third mark as “aging,” signifying the inexorable process of senescence. From the Buddhist perspective, aging is the process of something—whether sentient or insentient—that will sooner or later come to an end. In the case of sentient beings, this is the process that precedes the stage of the end-of-life.

7) These four characteristics of existence are rendered into Chinese by the Sanskritic scholar-monk Paramārtha 真諦 (499–569) as “arising,” “abiding,” “aging,” and “impermanence” (T1559, 29:185b19). The above are the renderings used by Xuanzang (T1558, 29:27a13).

analysis of the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness and argues that, while the entities in the phenomenal world appear to persist over time, the single conditioned factors that comprise them “cease” (Skt. *vi√nāś*, *vya√y*; Chi. *mie* 滅) in the present moment and generate a new factor of nearly the same, or a similar nature, in the moment that follows.⁹⁾

The arguments made by Vasubandhu in support of the doctrine of momentariness, located within his masterwork of Abhidharma doctrinal theory *The Treasury of Abhidharma* (Skt. *Abhidharmakośa*; Chi. *Apidamo jushe lun* 阿毘達磨俱舍論),¹⁰⁾ are translated into Chinese during the mid-sixth century by the Indic scholar-monk Paramārtha (499–569 C.E.).¹¹⁾ However, Xuanzang and his Tang Dynasty cohort of translators, editors, and scribes are the first to translate Saṅghabhadra’s *Treatise Conforming to the Correct Logic* and *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* into Chinese. The Chinese translations of the treatises of Saṅghabhadra stand as the only complete surviving versions of the texts in which he presents the philosophical argumentation for the Buddhist proposition that the conditioned factor ceases as it arises in the present moment and is replaced by a new factor in the following moment.¹²⁾

8) Original title is alternately reconstructed as **Abhidharmakośaśāstrakārikāvibhāṣya* or **Abhidharmapiṭakaprakaraṇaśāsanāśāstra*. See Cox 1998, 242, n. 308 for an in-depth discussion of the various Sanskrit reconstructions of the title of this Sanskrit treatise.

9) The Sanskrit philosophers use different names for the same concept of something *currently* coming to its end. The word *nirodha* is also sometimes used to signify the fourth mark fourth characteristic mark of the conditioned factor. Paramārtha renders the fourth characteristic mark using the Chinese word meaning “impermanence” (Chi. *wuchang* 無常). Sometimes the character *huai* 壞, meaning “destruction,” is used. Xuanzang’s translation of the fourth mark as “cessation” (Chi. *mie* 滅) more clearly distinguishes the characteristics of the third mark (rendered as “change” in the present article) from the characteristics of the fourth mark which denotes something’s currently coming to an end. Katō (1991, 38) looks at how the ancient Sarvāstivāda masters developed the doctrine that cessation is characterized by the deprivation of the causal capacity of the conditioned factor to persist—thus causing a present factor to fade away into the past. Saṅghabhadra abides by this basic definition of cessation.

10) *The Record of Śākyamuni’s Teachings Compiled During the Kaiyuan Period* (Chi. *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄), T2154, 55:557a23, records that Xuanzang’s Chinese text of the *Treasury of Abhidharma* was compiled between June 3, 651 C.E., and September 13, A.D. 654.

11) *Apidamo jushe shilun* 阿毘達磨俱舍釋論, T1559, translated in 22 fascicles between 29:563–7; for this dating see *Record of Śākyamuni’s Teachings Compiled During the Kaiyuan Period* (T2154, 55:545c16).

In their meticulous translations of his two Abhidharma masterworks, Xuanzang and his disciples introduce Saṅghabhadra's rigorous defense of the doctrine of momentariness and reconstruct his debate with Vasubandhu regarding the nature of the conditioned factor. Xuanzang and his team of translators and exegetes carefully examine the rejoinder in the debate, wherein Saṅghabhadra presents his Sarvāstivāda (Chi. *Shuo yiqie you bu* 說一切有部) Buddhist argument that the four stages of the arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing of a factor take place in two temporal moments—in the future and in the present.¹³⁾ In their commentarial works, the contemporary disciples of Xuanzang—including Fabao法寶 (n.d.), Kuiji 窺基 (632–

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- 12) There remains extant a Tibetan translation of a commentary on the Treasury of Abhidharma attributed to Saṅghabhadra ('Dus bzang) and/or one Vinītabhadra ('Dul bzang) in the Derge Canon (Tōhoku, No. 4091; P5592). As Mejer (1991, 29) shows, this commentary has been miscatalogued as Tibetan translation of Saṅghabhadra's *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* (**Samaya pradīpikā*). Based upon correspondences with a partial Tibetan manuscript from Dunhuang (Stein 90), Mejer identifies this Tibetan commentary as **Sūtrānurūpābhidharmakośavṛtti*. Mejer (1991, 38) concludes: "It seems possible that the **Sūtrānurūpābhidharmakośavṛtti*'s author is Saṅghabhadra. The text itself, however, represents but a recast and abridgement of one of his treatises, perhaps the **Samayapradīpikā*, and is presumably the work of the Tibetan translator(s)." Also see Cox 1995, 62, n. 31; Cox 1998, 245–46.
- 13) von Rospatt 1995: 51 observes that in contrast to the **Mahāvibhāṣā* (see, for instance T1545, 27:200a3-13), the foundational compendium of the Kāśmīra tradition of Vaibhāṣika teaching—where it is taken for granted that the secondary factor of arising is causally efficient at the time when the primary factor arises (this time being considered to belong already to the primary factor's existence in the present)—Vasubandhu describes in the *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chapter 2, verse 46 (Pradhan 1967, 76; for Xuanzang's translation, see T1558, 29:28c7) that the Sarvāstivādins maintain that the secondary factor of arising initially discharges its function in the future moment before the primary factor becomes active so that the secondary factor of arising is causally efficient one moment earlier (T°) than the secondary factors of abiding, change, and cessation are (T¹). The difficulty that the secondary factor of arising has to be simultaneous with the primary factor was solved on the basis of the doctrine that past and future conditioned factors always exist (Skt. *sarvadā asti*). That is, while the primary factor exists at both T° and T¹, it remains latent as it gathers power at T° and only becomes active at T¹. Saṅghabhadra defends the teaching—attributed to the Sarvāstivādin interlocutor in the *Treasury of Abhidharma*—which holds that the secondary factor of arising is causally efficient before time has passed from the future to the present (see his commentary on *Treasury of Abhidharma* 2.46 in *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic*, T1562, 29:411a2). Thus, the secondary factor of arising is causally efficient in the moment before the other secondary factors of abiding, changing, and ceasing are. Although this is not explicitly spelled out, the assumption seems to be that the secondary factor of arising functions at both T° and T¹—first qua causal capacity (Skt. *sāmarthya*) to initiate action, and then qua causal capability (Skt. *kāritra*) to execute action. Fabao (T1822, 41:551a19) summarizes this view in his *Commentary on the Treasury of Abhidharma* (Chi. *Jushe lun shu* 俱舍論疏): "the secondary factor of arising awaits the convergence of causes and conditions (at T¹), and only then gives rise to the factors it should give rise to" 生相得因緣合方能生法.

682), Puguang 普光 (n.d.), and Shentai 神泰 (n.d.) and their descendants, most notably Yuanhui 圓暉 (n.d.), the influential scholar-monk of the eighth century—analyze and critique the explication of the four stages of a conditioned factor put forth by Saṅghabhadra.

The complete versions of the *Treatise Conforming to the Correct Logic* and the *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets*¹⁴⁾ are no longer extant in Sanskrit or Tibetan. Because they are unavailable for comparison against the seventh-century Chinese translations, scholars use a source criticism methodology to make inferences about the interpretive styles, editorial practices, and translation choices employed by Xuanzang and his team.¹⁵⁾ For example, a comparison between the surviving Sanskrit text of Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma*¹⁶⁾ to the translation of the same text by Xuanzang reveals that specific Sinitic terms are enlisted in the rendering of several passages into Chinese. Through source criticism, researchers infer that Xuanzang and his cohort are engaged in an active refinement of the ideas of Vasubandhu, rather than in a passive conveyance of the Sanskrit original into Chinese. As in his translations of the Abhidharma corpus of Vasubandhu, Xuanzang utilizes Sinitic terminology in his Chinese versions of the treatises of Saṅghabhadra. For example, in his translations of the passages in which Saṅghabhadra delineates the composition of the continuum of nine conditioned

14) *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* (T2154, 55:557a26) records that the Chinese text of the *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* was compiled by Xuanzang between April 30, A.D. 651 and November 26, A.D. 652. *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* (T2154, 55:557a24) records that the Chinese text of the *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* was compiled by Xuanzang between February 3, 653 C.E. and August 27, 654 C.E.

15) For an example of this source criticism methodology as applied to Xuanzang's translation of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, see Delhey 2016.

16) The exegetical practices of imposing original Sinitic terminology to render Sanskrit terms, and of adding new sentences into the existing Sanskrit text, are also employed by Xuanzang in his Chinese translation of Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma*. This has been noted by Cox 1995, 62, n. 36. Since Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma* survives in the original Sanskrit, it is possible to compare Xuanzang's Chinese text with the original Sanskrit in order to isolate these original interpretations. For example, one may point to the additional commentarial glosses found in Xuanzang's version of Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma* and not found in the other Chinese translation of this text by Paramārtha.

factors, Xuanzang introduces the Chinese term *benfa* to describe the “primary factor” (Skt. *dharmā*; Chi. *benfa* 本法),¹⁷⁾ which is the conditioned factor to which the four “secondary factors” (Skt. *lakṣaṇa*; Chi. *fa* 法, *benxiang* 本相)¹⁸⁾ and the four “subsidiary factors” (Skt. *anulakṣaṇa*; Chi. *suixiang* 隨相)¹⁹⁾ cohere. By comparing the Sanskrit texts by Vasubandhu to their Chinese and Tibetan counterparts, inferences can be made as to how Xuanzang, in his exegesis and translation choices, endeavors to make the Abhidharma treatises of Saṅghabhadra more accessible to a seventh-century Chinese readership.

To date, there has been scant secondary scholarship regarding the contributions of Saṅghabhadra to the development of the doctrine of momentariness.²⁰⁾ The original work by Saṅghabhadra regarding the nature of the conditioned factor, made available only through the translation corpus and commentarial work of Xuanzang and his followers, has implications that range from the soteriological to the mundane.

17) As far as I can tell this is Paramārtha’s (T1559, 29:186c14) original Chinese coinage and Xuanzang later avails himself extensively of it in his translation of the *Treasury of Abhidharma*. For one such example, see T1558, 29:28b17. A digital search of electronic versions of the Derge Tengyur canon yields many hits for the Tibetan counterpart of this Chinese terminology, *rtsa ba’i chos*, including in **Sūtrāmūrūpārṭti* (D4091, 199a.5) and in the Tibetan translation of Skandhila’s *Abhidharmāvatāra* (D4098, 320a). However, the explicit qualification of a factor as “primary” (Skt. *mūla*; Chi. *ben* 本), while widespread across the Chinese discussions, is not clearly reflected in any Abhidharma work available in the original Sanskrit, such as the *Treasury of Abhidharma*, which simply refers to a dharma in these instances and not to a **mūladharma* (see Pradhan 1967, 79, corresponding to T1558, 29:28b17; 84, corresponding to T1558, 29:30c21).

18) In the context of the Sarvāstivāda theory, *dharmā* (Chi. *fa* 法) *simpliciter*, can refer to the four secondary factors that cluster around the primary factor and that induce in it the activity of arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing. For one such example, see Xuanzang’s translation of *Treasury of Abhidharma* 2.46 at T1558, 29:27b16, corresponding to Pradhan 1967, 76. Xuanzang also refers to these four secondary factors accompanying the primary factor as the “primary characteristic marks” (Skt. *lakṣaṇa*; Chi. *benxiang* 本相; Tib. *rtsa ba’i mtshan nyid*). This Chinese terminology is sensitive to the fact that, for Sautrāntika theorists, the primary characteristic marks are not factors in and of themselves but rather refer to the mutable characteristics that qualify (Skt. $\sqrt{\text{lakṣ}}$) a conditioned factor.

19) For Vasubandhu’s definition of the four subsidiary factors as a set, see Pradhan 1967, 76 corresponding to T1558, 29:27b11-23. Translators of Indic Abhidharma works into Tibetan render the Sanskrit word *anulakṣaṇa* as *rjes su mthun pa’i mtshan nyid*.

20) See Matsushima’s ground-breaking Japanese-language study on Saṅghabhadra’s inference for momentariness from cessation (Skt. *vināstivānumāna*). This present paper is part of a series of papers on Saṅghabhadra’s teachings on momentariness, a topic which exceeds the scope of one article.

Saṅghabhadra's teaching that all entities in the universe, including the sentient beings that inhabit it, are comprised of clusters of nine factors that arise, abide, change, and cease in the present moment and regenerate in the moment that follows²¹⁾ is central to the understandings of momentariness within the Chinese Buddhist doctrinal traditions that emerge after Xuanzang. His articulation of the stages of arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing of the psycho-physical "aggregates" (Skt. *skandha*; Chi. *yum 蘊*) are viewed as analogous to the sequence of the four events that are observed in the "bases of mindfulness" (Skt. *smṛtyupasthāna*; Chi. *nianchu 念處*)²²⁾ of meditation practices. The formative discussions on the Abhidharma doctrine of momentariness, preserved within the Chinese translations of Saṅghabhadra and the commentarial work of Xuanzang and his disciples, lay the theoretical foundation for the teachings on the nature of change formulated by Sinitic Mahāyāna Buddhist scholars during the years of the Tang Dynasty.²³⁾ The philosophical argument developed by Saṅghabhadra

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- 21) Ronkin writes: "that a single event undergoes four phases within a given moment, inevitably infringes upon its momentariness," citing Cox 1995, 151 and von Rospatt 1995, 52ff. However, it is important to point out that for Saṅghabhadra, the secondary factor of arising initially exerts function in the future to give rise to the cause of its own arising—namely, the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising. Saṅghabhadra defends the position that this exertion of causal capacity (Skt. *sāmarthya*) is an event which takes place in the future. This position that the initial event of arising takes place in the future is well attested in the Sinitic commentarial literature on Buddhist Abhidharma; for example, see Puguang's *Study Notes on the Treasury of Abhidharma* (Chi. *Jushe lun ji 俱舍論記*), T1821, 41:103c26-27. Kuiji explains in his *Nexus of the Treatise Demonstrating Consciousness-Only in the Palm of the Hand* (Chi. *Cheng weishi lun zhangzhong shuyao 成唯識論掌中樞要*), T1831, 43:625b11-16: "for the ancient Sarvāstivāda masters (i.e., the Vaibhāṣikas), arising is located in the future. The [other] three characteristic marks [of abiding, changing, and ceasing] are located within a single present moment, while their times differ [within that present moment]. The initial stage [of the present] is called 'abiding,' wherein it is capable of achieving an effect, because of the fact that it possesses predominating power. [The secondary factors of] change and cessation are not capable [of achieving an effect], because they are weak in power. The stage after the stage of abiding is completed wherein [the secondary factor of change] causes the [primary] factor to subtly decay, is called 'change.' The stage after the stage of change is completed, wherein the [secondary factor of cessation] causes the [primary] factor to lack function later on, is called 'cessation.' For Saṅghabhadra, arising is located in the future, while the three — abiding, change, and cessation — all function at one time [in the present]." 古一切有師，生在未來，現在一剎那三相時別，初位名住。此能取果，有殊勝力(emend to 力)故。異滅不能。其力弱故。住位以後，令法衰微，名為異位。異位已後，令法後用無，名之為滅。若正理師，生在未來，住、異、滅三同一時用。
- 22) See von Rospatt 1995, 201-15 for an examination of the development of the contemplation of the momentary nature of all physiological and psychological phenomena within the framework of the application of mindfulness in the Abhidharma and early Yogācāra traditions.

—that a conditioned factor ceases in the present, after arising in the future, and becoming replaced by a new factor in the past—is embedded within the doctrine of momentariness of Chinese Buddhism.

II. Saṅghabhadra on the Constancy of Change

In the *Treatise Conforming to the Correct Logic of Abhidharma* and the *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets*, Saṅghabhadra conceptualizes momentariness in terms of the atomized nature of the conditioned factor. He engages in a rigorous examination of the inherited Abhidharma Buddhist teachings that describe the composition, the characteristics, and the dynamic properties of the conditioned factor and the continuum (the assemblage of nine conditioned factors that undergoes change). The early Sarvāstivāda teachings maintain that the factors that comprise all insentient things and sentient beings²⁴) in the world come into “being” (Skt. *bhāva*; Chi. *you* 有, *xing* 性, *ti* 體)²⁵) and perish immediately afterwards. The doctrine of momentariness passed down to Saṅghabhadra in the early teachings holds that a myriad of “causes and conditions” (Skt. *hetu-pratyaya*; Chi. *yin-yuan* 因緣)—

23) For example, “momentariness” (Chi. *chana mie* 刹那滅) is one of the six characteristics of the seeds (Chi. *zhongzi liuyi* 種子六義) making up the store consciousness (Skt. *ālayavijñāna*; Chi.: *alayeshi* 阿賴耶識), a seminal concept of Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions as they developed in China, including Yogācāra, Tiantai, Huayan, Chan, and esoteric Buddhism.

24) A *samtāna* can be either sentient or insentient. Saṅghabhadra postulates that sentient continua are constituted in five aggregates (Skt. *skandha*), namely: physical body (Skt. *rūpa*), sensation (Skt. *vedanā*), perception (Skt. *saṃjñā*), conditioning activity (Skt. *saṃskāra*), and consciousness (Skt. *vijñāna*)—while insentient continua are constituted in one aggregate. Saṅghabhadra states in his *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:402c11) and *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* (T1563, 29:807c21) that: “insensate beings only bear one [type of] aggregate” 無有情唯具一蘊.

25) Xuanzang frequently translates the Sanskrit word *bhāva*, meaning “being,” using the Chinese character *xing* 性, meaning “nature,” or *ti* 體, meaning “body.” See Hirakawa 1997, 14 for one of numerous examples of the former and (1997, 17) for an example of the latter. *Xing* also renders *svabhāva*, meaning something’s abiding “self-nature” or “intrinsic nature,” as *zixing* 自性. Another word for *svabhāva* is *ziti* 自體, meaning something’s body (Hirakawa 1997, 84). For the various Sanskrit correlates of *ti* in Xuanzang’s corpus, see Sakurabe 1954, 617–19.

events that take place prior to the coming into being of a factor—bring about the arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing of a factor. According to the inherited Sarvāstivāda teachings, a factor is conditioned by the series of causally linked temporal events that occur prior to its origination.

In his exegesis of the doctrine of momentariness located within Xuanzang's Chinese translations of the *Treatise Conforming to the Correct Logic of Abhidharma* and the *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets*, Saṅghabhadra addresses three questions: Why is change a constant feature of each, and every, conditioned factor that comes into being? How does a factor undergo the three discrete stages of alteration within the container of a moment in time and arise in the next moment? And how do the factors within a continuum generate the four discrete stages of change?

1. Why Is Change a Constant Feature of Each, and Every, Conditioned Factor That Comes into Being?

Saṅghabhadra addresses the paradox of why constant change is an invariable feature of reality in his analyses of the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness. He begins by examining the basic constituent of the phenomenal world—the conditioned factor—and explores how a factor persists through the constant press of moment-to-moment change. His explorations into the paradoxical nature of constant change take Saṅghabhadra into two directions: first, into a detailed examination of phenomena within the natural world and, second, into a comprehensive exegesis of the sūtras on the conditioned factor and the continuum that are located within the *Āgamas*²⁶⁾ and the earlier Sarvāstivāda Buddhist texts.²⁷⁾ Saṅghabhadra's careful observations of

26) he Buddha is said to have delivered the teaching, preserved in the *Dīrghāgama* (T1, 1:7b23) [corresponding to Dīghanikāya 14] and *Samyuktāgama* 287 (T99, 2:80c9) [corresponding to *Samyuttanikāya* 12]: “Because of arising and ceasing, aging and death come to cease” 生滅故老死滅。

27) In particular, Saṅghabhadra draws from the Abhidharmapiṭaka of the “orthodox Sarvāstivāda school.” For the authoritative *Abhidharmapiṭaka* of Sarvāstivāda Buddhism, see Cox, Dessein, and Willemans

natural phenomena, and his reconsiderations of the inherited Abhidharma theories of the conditioned factor and the continuum, buttress and embellish the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness.

In his translations of the *Treatise Conforming to the Correct Logic of Abhidharma* and the *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets*, Xuanzang renders into elegant classical Chinese prose several passages in which Saṅghabhadra reflects upon how phenomena in the natural world illuminate the paradox of the constancy of change. Saṅghabhadra concludes that all phenomena in the world appear to be continuous because they are composed of arising and ceasing factors that, while undetectable to the naked eye, create the illusion of continually existing entities. Like the series of individual frames in a film that produce a continuous image, the succession of arising and ceasing conditioned factors in a continuum create the impression of a continuous entity. While the entities within the phenomenal world may appear as constant, they are theorized by the Sarvāstivādin to be changing moment to moment.

In the *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets*²⁸⁾ and the *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic*,²⁹⁾ Saṅghabhadra uses the lyrical example of the waxing and waning of the moon to illustrate how entities in the natural world are constantly changing while appearing, during distinct intervals of time, to be stable and unchanging.³⁰⁾ Saṅghabhadra describes how the moon, within a series of separate and distinct phases, appears variously as a crescent, a half-circle, in the convex shape

1998, 63-80.

28) Xuanzang's text of Saṅghabhadra's *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* reads: "We give the example of the waning moon, which is capable of being destroyed, and hence is called 'momentary.' This means that this [destruction] serves as the cause of the cessation of factors. This refers to the mark of impermanence (Skt. **anityatā-lakṣaṇa*) which is capable of causing factors to cease. These factors (i.e., change and cessation) operate in the same moment and hence are called 'momentary.'" 如有月子, 或能滅壞故名剎那, 是能爲因滅諸法義, 謂無常相能滅諸法。此俱行法名有剎那 (T1563, 29:86b18-20). Asterisk indicates a Sanskrit reconstruction. This statement also appears in *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:533b12-14).

29) *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:533b12-14).

30) This particular example is found in the **Sūtrānūrūpāvṛtti* (D4091, 158a.5).

of a gibbous, and as a full-circle. Within each of its phases the moon appears to be constant and unchanging, yet within the course of a few days and weeks the moon changes quite radically—appearing full for a moment in time before disappearing entirely out of view.

In his efforts to provide an explanatory account for the phenomena of the waxing and waning of the moon, Saṅghabhadra—in his two *Abhidharma* treatises—returns to the inherited Sarvāstivāda theories on the conditioned factor. Saṅghabhadra asserts that the waxing and waning of the moon can be explained in terms of the continuum, the cluster of conditioned factors that comprise all entities in the phenomenal world. Because the moon is comprised of multiple continua of conditioned factors, it is constantly being generated, altered, and replaced. One moment of the arising and ceasing of the conditioned factors in the continuum of the moon is immediately followed by another moment of the arising and ceasing of the conditioned factors in the continuum of the moon. Saṅghabhadra maintains that the rapid succession of discrete moments—during which the conditioned factors of the continua of the moon arise, abide, change, and cease—creates the illusion of the moon as continuous object in the night sky. Saṅghabhadra avers that, while the moon may appear to be a stable and continuous entity within each of its phases, in every moment the continua of the conditioned factors that comprise it are arising, abiding, changing, and becoming “destroyed” (Chi. *huai* 壞).

In the *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets*, Saṅghabhadra observes that the moon does not wax or wane at the same time. He notes that the moon approaches fullness and then disappears in phases; the visual alterations of the moon occur within discrete stages of temporal duration. Here Saṅghabhadra equates the phases of the waxing and waning of the moon to the stages of the generation and decay of the conditioned factor. Just as the moon appears and disappears in phases during a month, the conditioned factor arises and ceases within in stages during a moment.

2. How Do Factors Arise and Immediately Undergo Three Discrete Stages of Alteration within the Container of a Present Moment?

To address the proposition of momentariness Saṅghabhadra turns to a teaching, attributed to the ancient *Āgamas*, in which a “moment” (Skt. *kṣaṇa*; Chi. cha’na 刹那) is defined as the ephemeral container within which a conditioned factor arises, abides, changes, and ceases.³¹⁾ The Abhidharma philosophers allocate and categorize time into units of ever-decreasing duration. The *muhūrta* (Chi: *muhulita* 牟呼栗多),³²⁾ for example, is the forty-eight minute-long unit of time within which a meditator maintains focused attention on an object of contemplation;³³⁾ the *lava* (Chi. *lafu* 臘縛) is the one-minute-and-thirty-six second unit of time within which a meditator observes the psycho-physical aggregates of arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing,³⁴⁾ and the *kṣaṇa* is unit of time within which the four discrete stages of the conditioned factor take place. The *kṣaṇa*³⁵⁾ is theorized to be the smallest unit of time in the

31) Saṅghabhadra cites a *sūtra* of hazy provenance which states that *citta*, *manas*, and *vijñāna*—three terms for mental consciousness (the fifth of the five psycho-physical aggregates)—is constantly changing from *lava* to *lava*, *muhūrta* to *muhūrta*, and *kṣaṇa* to *kṣaṇa*: “Again, it is proclaimed that what goes for the body goes for consciousness. A *sūtra* says: ‘*citta*, *manas* and *vijñāna*, discretely change and arise, and discretely change and cease.’” 又身如識而宣說故。謂契經言：是心意識，刹那臘縛牟呼栗多，別異而生，別異而滅 (T1562, 29:534c8-9). This is von Rospatt’s translation (1995: 15, n. 11), with modifications.

32) The **Mahāvibhāṣā* (T1545, 27:701b9) defines the *muhūrta* as the 30th part of the day and night. Vasubandhu reiterates this definition in his *Treasury of Abhidharma* (Pradhan 1967, 177). Saṅghabhadra also restates this definition in his *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic*, T1562, 29:522b17.

33) See the description in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, of the contemplative practice wherein the meditator views the changing condition of the psycho-physical aggregates from each *muhūrta* to *muhūrta* (T1545, 27:840c29-a3). Under the rubric of ten contemplations (Skt. **daśa-saṃjñā*; Chi. *shixiang* 十想), this falls under the first, the contemplation of impermanence (Skt. *anitya-saṃjñā*; Chi. *wuchang xiang* 無常想).

34) The **Mahāvibhāṣā* makes mention of a particular contemplative practice wherein the meditator views the successive arising and ceasing of the psycho-physical aggregates within the duration of one *lava* (T1545, 27:841a4).

35) The editors of the **Mahāvibhāṣā* (T1545, 27:200a4-12) define a “moment” as the time required for the primary factor to complete its activity. The editors arrive at this definition in the context of a refutation of the theory of the Dārṣṭāntikas, which appears to be that the characteristic marks of the conditioned (Skt. *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇa*) are causally efficient in successive moments: “Some posit that the three characteristic marks of the conditioned do not exist within one moment in time. The Dārṣṭāntikas are of the opinion: if

Abhidharma taxonomy because it cannot be divided into an interval that occurs either “before or after” (Chi. *qian hou* 前後).³⁶⁾ For scholars associated with the Sautrāntika (Chi. *jingliang bu* 經量部) tradition of Buddhism, the infinitesimally brief duration of time defined as the *kṣaṇa* is analogous, in its fundamental indivisibility, to a mathematical point in space. However, for Saṅghabhadra and the scholars associated with the Sarvāstivāda tradition, the *kṣaṇa* is equivalent to 0.013333 of a second (and can be divided into smaller units). The claim that the *kṣaṇa* is infinitely divisible³⁷⁾ is crucial to the theory of the four stages of change of the conditioned factor articulated by Saṅghabhadra. By theorizing that the *kṣaṇa* can be atomized, the Sarvāstivādins provide an explanation for how the present moment can be divided into the three stages of abiding, changing, and ceasing.

The early Sarvāstivādin theorists conceptualize time as flowing from the future,

there exist three characteristic marks in a single moment, then the single [primary] factor would be arising, decaying, and ceasing, all at one time. However, [what the Dārṣṭāntikas say is not logical], since those (the three characteristic marks) are mutually incompatible. It should be said that the initial activation (Skt. **ādirutpāda*) of factors is termed ‘arising’ (Skt. **jāti*), their later termination (Skt. **nivṛtti*) is termed ‘ceasing’ (Skt. **vyāya*) and their maturation in between is called ‘aging’ (Skt. **jarā*). In order to refute their (the Dārṣṭāntikas’) theory, we reveal that three characteristic marks fully exist in one moment in time. Question: But if that is the case, then the single [primary] factor would be arising, aging, and ceasing, all at one time. Response: the time of their [discharge of] causal efficacy differs, thus there is no [problem of] incompatibility. This is to say that when a [primary] factor arises, the [secondary factor of] arising possesses causal efficacy, when [the primary factor] ceases, only when [the secondary factor] of ageing comes to cease, does [cessation] possess causal efficacy. Although in essence (Chi. 體) they (i.e., the secondary factors) are synchronous, their functions have a ‘before and after.’ ‘One moment’ denotes the [time required for the] completion of the [discharge of] causal efficacy bringing about the arising and ceasing of a single [primary] factor. Hence, there is no error [of arising, aging, and ceasing taking place all at once].” 或有執三有為相非一剎那。如譬喻者彼作是說。若一剎那有三相者。則應一法一時亦生亦老亦滅。然無此理互相違故。應說諸法初起名生。後盡名滅。中熟名老。為遮彼執顯一剎那具有三相。問：若如是者，則應一法一時亦生亦老亦滅。答：作用時異，故不相違。謂法生時，生有作用，滅時老滅方有作用。體雖同時，用有先後。一法生滅作用究竟名一剎那，故無有失。 This translation makes reference to that of Dessein 2007, 346.

36) Xuanzang’s Chinese rendition of Saṅghabhadra’s core definition of a *kṣaṇa* in the *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* reads: “What is a moment? It is the shortest unit of time that does not permit of being further analyzed into before and after.” 剎那何謂？謂極少時，此更無容前後分析 (T1562, 29:533b7). This definition of a *kṣaṇa* also appears in *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* (T1563, 29:860b12).

37) Sanderson 1997, 42.

through the present, and into the past. The future is the moment that precedes the present moment; the past is the moment that follows the present moment. The Sarvāstivādins contend that a conditioned factor “always exists” (Skt. *sarvadā asti*; Chi. *heng-you* 恆有) because it persists throughout the three temporal dimensions of the future, the present, and the past.³⁸⁾ Saṅghabhadra integrates the Sarvāstivāda paradigm of the three dimensions of time with the inherited theories of the conditioned factor to build a philosophical account for how change, while constant, occurs within the container of a present moment. Saṅghabhadra takes great care in examining the characteristics and the activities of the three types of nine conditioned factors that comprise a continuum: the primary factor that imparts the capacity to generate to a primary factor in another continuum; the four secondary factors that induce the four characteristic actions of arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing in each one of the nine conditioned factors; and the four subsidiary factors that empower the secondary factors to perform one of the four characteristic actions.

In his fifth-century debate with Saṅghabhadra that is reconstructed in Xuanzang’s Chinese translations, Vasubandhu reprises the ancient Sarvāstivāda analogy of a hen who lays eight eggs to describe how a secondary factor engenders the four characteristic activities of change in the eight other factors that comprise a continuum. In the same way that a hen imbues her eight eggs with the potential to hatch and execute the activities of living, a secondary factor imbues the eight factors in a continuum with the potential to arise and execute the characteristic activities of abiding, changing, and ceasing.³⁹⁾ Extending this analogy, Vasubandhu observes that the four subsidiary

38) Strictly speaking, no movement in space is possible because factors cease in precisely the same spatial location as where they arose but their continua move through the three temporal dimensions. Xuanzang translates a famous quatrain—of elusive origin found in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (T1558, 29:105b2-3)—stipulating that an abiding intrinsic nature does not refer to a unitary, permanent, and unchanging nature: “The essence of the factor always exists, but this does not mean that its nature is permanent, nor that the nature of its essence (Chi. *xingtǐ* 性體) is furthermore different [from its intrinsic nature]: this is clearly proclaimed by the Buddha.” 許法體恆有；而說性非常；性體復無別；此真自在作。 This is actually Pruden’s translation (1990, vol. 3, 813), with heavy modifications. For the original Sanskrit text, see Pradhan 1967, 298. This quatrain also appears in Saṅghabhadra’s *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:633c17-18).

factors are like hens who are capable of laying only one egg at a time. While the secondary factors can induce activity in all eight factors of the continuum, a subsidiary factor can imbue one conditioned factor with the potential to execute only one of the four characteristic activities. The delineation between the capacities of the secondary and the subsidiary factors made by Vasubandhu appears in verse 46 of chapter two of Xuanzang’s translation of the *Treasury of Abhidharma*. Xuanzang renders this statement by Vasubandhu as follows:

於八一有能

[The secondary factors] function with respect to the eight [other factors] and the [subsidiary factors] function with respect to one [other factor].⁴⁰⁾

In this terse hemistich Xuanzang stipulates the different functions of the types of factors that generate the stages of change in a continuum.

Saṅghabhadra upholds the Sarvāstivāda theory that the three types of factors possess two intrinsic features: “causal capability” (Skt. *sāmarthya*; Chi. *gongneng* 功能), the potential to generate,⁴¹⁾ and “causal efficacy” (Skt. *kāritra*; Chi. *zuoyong* 作用), the energy that is required to execute the actions of abiding, changing, and ceasing.⁴²⁾ The causal efficacy of each conditioned factor is discharged in the present

39) his example is found in Xuanzang’s version of the *Abhidharmakośabhasya* (T1558, 29:27b19). It is also found in Xuanzang’s text of the **Mahāvibhāṣā* at T1545, 27:201a2.

40) Skt. *te 'ṣṭadharmaikavṛtti*. See *Treasury of Metaphysics* 2.52a, Pradhan 1967, 76; D4089, 5b6; T1558, 29:27b8.

41) In his *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:409c28), Saṅghabhadra defines causal capability as “the ability to serve as a condition for assimilating [power from factors of] different types.” 能為緣攝助異類。See Cox 1995, 331 for a translation of the full discussion on the distinction between causal capability and causal efficacy.

42) A fragment in the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* of Kamalaśīla (ca. 8th century), contains Saṅghabhadra’s signature gloss on “causal efficacy” in the original Sanskrit, which reads: “The causal efficacy of factors refers to the power to project an effect” *dharmāṅām kāritram ucyate phalākṣepasaktiḥ!* Shastri 1968, vol. 2, 617. In his *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic*, Saṅghabhadra states that the causal efficacy of a primary factor to impact another primary factor is initially discharged during the stage of abiding, decays during the stage of changing, and becomes depleted during the stage of ceasing (T1562, 29:410a13-23). The secondary factors of abiding, changing, and ceasing possess their own causal efficacies to abide,

moment during the activities of abiding, changing, and ceasing. The causal capacity of a conditioned factor, however, remains intact during the present moment and persists in a state of dormancy through the future and into the past. Saṅghabhadra reasons that an able-bodied normally functioning pair of eyes does not lose its capability to serve as a cause for eyesight later in time simply because of entering a dark room.⁴³⁾ A conditioned factor is theorized to exist throughout the three dimensions of time because the causal capacity within it is never depleted or destroyed during the activities of change. In his analysis of momentariness, Saṅghabhadra specifies that a conditioned factor *exists* in the future, the present, and the past—but is *active* only in the present moment, when it discharges its causal efficacy in the actions of abiding, changing, and ceasing.⁴⁴⁾

Saṅghabhadra, as translated by Xuanzang, describes how a conditioned factor undergoes change within a present moment while retaining the capacity to change in the future and in the past. Xuanzang writes:

法體恒存，法性變異。謂有為法行於世時，不捨自體隨緣起用。從此無間所起用息。由此故說法體恒有，而非是常性變異故。⁴⁵⁾

The factor as an entity perpetually continues, while the nature of the factor is subject to alteration. This is to say, when conditioned factors operate in the world and give rise to functions in accordance with conditions, they never sacrifice their self-nature. In this way, without interruption, they give rise to

change, and cease during their respective stages of activity.

43) See *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic*, T1562, 29:410a1-2. For translation, see Cox 1995, 334.

44) von Rospatt 1995: 39 points out this important analytical distinction between “existence” and “presence” inherent in the Sarvāstivāda teaching on the existence of the factor in all three temporal dimensions of future, present, and past. The discharge of causal efficacy becomes the basis for the discrimination of the present dimension of the dharma from its future latency and its ceasing in the past, after it has been exhausted. For the contending theories of Dharmatrāta, Ghoṣaka, Vasumitra, and Buddhadeva that were later superseded by the theory of causal efficacy as the determinant of the duration of the present moment, see Frauwallner 1995, 101-106; Shiga 2018, 440-41.

45) *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic*, T1562, 29:633c25-6.

functions that come to perish. Therefore, it is said that the factor as an entity perpetually exists, but it is *not* because there exists a permanent nature that is subject to alteration (emphasis added).

By conceptualizing the conditioned factor as having the potential to discharge casual efficacy in the present moment, while retaining the causal capacity to generate, Saṅghabhadra builds the case for how the conditioned factor can undergo alteration in the present and persist through the future and into the past. Saṅghabhadra states, rather emphatically, that a conditioned factor maintains its integrity throughout the radical transformations of change without the benefit of a permanent “essence” (Chi. *tī* 體).⁴⁶ He rejects the notion that a conditioned factor possesses an enduring aspect that inures it to the alterations of arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing. Instead, Saṅghabhadra contends that a conditioned factor “perpetually continues” (Chi. *heng cun* 恆存) because it never loses the intrinsic capacity to change. With this formulation Saṅghabhadra skillfully dismisses the possibility that a factor persists through the vagaries of change because it contains a core that is permanent and lasting.⁴⁷ By theorizing that the only constant feature of a conditioned factor is its inherent capacity to change, Saṅghabhadra reinforces the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma notion of impermanence as a constant and pervasive feature of a conditioned factor.

In the passages that depict the activities of a conditioned factor within the present moment, Xuanzang translates the stage of ceasing as the reversion of a factor into a

46) Sakurabe (1954, 264) has observed that, in the *Treasury of Abhidharma*, Xuanzang uses the Chinese character *tī*, meaning, “core,” literally depicting something’s body to render a number of different Sanskrit terms, including (but not limited to) *ātman*, *bhāva*, *svabhāva*, *dravya*, and *dharma*. According to Sarvāstivāda teachings, dharmas exist as real entities (Skt. *dravyasat*; Chi. *shiyōu* 實有), although they cannot be characterized by an enduring *ātman*. Cox (1990, 93) writes: “No constant unchanging substratum provides an underlying unity or linkage among the discrete factors constituting the experience of one sentient being and distinguishing one life-stream from another.”

47) Cox (1990, 93) explains that Abhidharma theorists reject the notion of any unchanging core of the causal factor that is not susceptible to change. Cox (1990, 93) writes: “No constant unchanging substratum provides an underlying unity or linkage among the discrete factors constituting the experience of one sentient being and distinguishing one life-stream from another.”

state of “non-being” (Skt. *abhāva*; Chi. *wu* 無). Xuanzang poignantly portrays the process of cessation as the “returning home” (Chi. *gui* 歸)⁴⁸ of a conditioned factor. After performing the three stages of change, rather than passing out of “existence” (Skt. *sat*; Chi. *you* 有) a conditioned factor returns to the past. With this poetic and deft translation choice, Xuanzang navigates the paradox of the radical impermanence of momentariness that is encountered by Saṅghabhadra—the idea that, within the three temporal dimensions of the phenomenal world, the only constant is change.

3. How do the factors within a continuum generate the four discrete stages of change?

In Sarvāstivāda theory, the subject of change is the continuum—the cluster of nine conditioned factors that consist of one primary, four secondary, and four subsidiary factors. Bundled together, the nine conditioned factors that comprise a continuum undergo the three stages of abiding, changing, and ceasing in the present moment and the “stage of currently arising” (Skt. **vartamānāvasthā*; Chi. *zhengsheng wei* 正生位)⁴⁹ in the future—the moment before the present moment. In his *Abhidharma* treatises, Saṅghabhadra atomizes and analyzes the stages of the change that each of the nine factors undergo in the present moment and in the moment that follows. His

48) uanzang’s translation of Vasubandhu’s auto-commentary on the *Treasury of Abhidharma* 4.2 reads: “As soon as obtaining their being, conditioned factors uninterruptedly and necessarily return to non-being.” 諸有爲法纔得自體，從此無間必滅歸無 (T1558, 29:67c13, corresponding to Pradhan 1967, 163; D4090, 166b3). Reference has been made to English translation by Pruden (1990, vol. 2, 553) and French translation by La Vallée Poussin (1926, vol. 3, 4–5). Xuanzang translates the Sanskrit verb \sqrt{dhvam} , meaning “to perish,” as “to return to non-being.” Xuanzang’s translation (T1559, 29:225b18) thus puts a more positive slant on the idea of cessation than that presented by Paramārtha’s translation as “to become non-existent” (Chi. *ji buyou* 即不有). This translation choice by Xuanzang shows sensitivity to the Sarvāstivāda theory that factors never ultimately pass away into non-existence, as factors exist throughout all three temporal dimensions of past, present, and future. Because of this theoretical presupposition, the term “non-being” is used here to render the Chinese character *wu* 無, rather than “non-existence.”

49) Fukuda (1988, 60) observes that activity of gathering up of power by the primary factor takes place in the interval between the stage of currently arising in the future and the stage of “already having arisen” (Skt. **upapannāvasthā*; Chi. *yisheng wei* 已生位) in the present.

treatises provide exquisite and detailed descriptions of the coordinated activities and individual roles played by each conditioned factor in the continuous drama of moment-to-moment change. Saṅghabhadra's theory of change is formulated in the debates with Vasubandhu and in his exegesis of the inherited texts and culminates in his articulation of the transformation of the continuum as taking place within the two moments of the present and the future.

In his treatises, Saṅghabhadra summarizes the process of change of the continuum as follows: After each of the conditioned factors in a continuum abide, change, and cease in the present moment, they clear out of the way so that a primary factor in another continuum can arise in either the same place, or in a neighboring location, in the moment that follows. While the secondary and the subsidiary factors discharge their causal efficacies during their respective three stages of change, the primary factor retains its causal efficacy for the entire duration of a present moment. Once the eight other conditioned factors have performed their designated functions of abiding, changing, and ceasing, the primary factor decays and ceases. Prior to ceasing in the present moment, however, the primary factor discharges its causal efficacy and triggers the arising of another primary factor in another continuum. The action of the arising of a primary factor in another continuum is theorized to be an "effect" (Skt. *phala*; Chi. *guo* 果) of the causes and conditions that surround the cessation of the primary factor in the continuum of the preceding moment.⁵⁰⁾ Here Saṅghabhadra upholds the Sarvāstivāda doctrine that the radically impermanent aspect of each

50) In his *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic*, Saṅghabhadra describes that arising is the ultimate cause of cessation in that, if a factor never arose in the first place, it would never come to cease. Saṅghabhadra describes the teaching that the later event of ceasing is dependent upon an initial event of arising as follows: "Again, the characteristic marks of the conditioned factor all operate as reciprocal causes, since necessarily there must be arising before there can be ceasing, necessarily there must be ceasing in order for [the next factor] to arise, necessarily there must be abiding, for there to be change, and necessarily there must be change in order for there to be abiding to give way to flux (i.e., becoming otherwise)." 又諸有為相皆展轉為因，必由有生，方可滅故，必有滅法，方可生故，必由有住，方有異故，必由有異，住可遷故 (T1562, 29:412b22-24). Although the secondary factor of arising—in conjunction with causes and conditions external to the continuum—initiates the series of events that inevitably results in cessation (that is, the termination of the activity of a continuum), the *proximate* cause of the cessation of the continuum is the secondary factor of cessation and not the secondary factor of arising.

conditioned factor of a continuum is the “power” (Skt. *śakti*; Chi. *shili* 勢力)⁵¹⁾ within each factor to alter and transform the factors of a continuum in the moment that follows.

Saṅghabhadra portrays the activation and generation of a conditioned factor in terms of a sequence of events that occur during two moments in time. In the first moment, the future (T°), the secondary factor of arising, gives rise to the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising.⁵²⁾ The primary factor, already existing in the future, begins to gather power, yet remains inactive.⁵³⁾ In the second moment, the present (T¹), the secondary factor of arising—after having arisen through interactions with the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising—meets with the “convergence” (Skt. *sāmagrī*; Chi. *hehe* 和合) of a primary factor in a continuum nearby.⁵⁴⁾ The convergence that is carried by a conditioned factor is the collection of the preceding causes and conditions that inform the power of a conditioned factor to engender, alter, and transform the activity of another conditioned factor. Convergence is the history of the present continuum that informs the future continuum. In the present (T¹), the interaction of the secondary factor of arising with the convergence of another primary factor⁵⁵⁾ initiates the activity of the eight other factors in the continuum, including the

51) Xuanzang’s translation of Saṅghabhadra’s *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:631c5-11) explains that power is essential to the definition of both capability and efficacy. Saṅghabhadra discriminates between causal efficacy and causal capability by adducing the example of a pair of eyes in the dark being unable to detect an object shrouded in darkness. Saṅghabhadra emphasizes that darkness impedes the power (Skt. *śakti*; Chi. *shili* 勢力) of sight, but the causal efficacy is not impeded by the darkness. See analysis of this passage in Cox 1995, 142-3 and Frauwallner 1995, 201.

52) von Rospatt 1995, 51, n. 103: “Though this is not explicated, the reciprocal relationship between the primary and secondary mark of origination (i.e., secondary factor of arising) implies that also the secondary mark should function when it is still future.” Parentheses added.

53) Lingtai notes that the primary factor, while already existing together with the secondary and subsidiary factors, remains inert in the future. See his Jottings on Kuiji’s *Study Notes on the Treatise Demonstrating Consciousness-only* (Chi. *Cheng weishi lun shuchao* 成唯識論疏抄), X819, 50:174a12-13.

54) The Sarvāstivādin interlocutor in Xuanzang’s translation of *Treasury of Abhidharma* (T1562, 29:411a9-10) 2.46cd states: “Alone, apart from the convergence of other causes and conditions, the secondary factor of arising does not have the power to give rise to [the primary factor] it should give rise to. Therefore the various [factors] do not all simultaneously become active in the future.” 非離所餘因緣和合, 唯生相力能生所生, 故諸未來, 非皆頓起. Corresponding to Pradhan 1967, 79; D4090, 83b5. Translation has made reference to that of Cox 1995, 341.

55) uanhui identifies these external causes and conditions as the six types of causes (Skt. *hetu*) and four types

primary factor.⁵⁶⁾

In Saṅghabhadra's theory, the secondary factor of arising causes the other three secondary factors and their corresponding subsidiary factors to become activated at the outset of a present moment in time. Thus, the "nine factors simultaneously become active" (Chi. *jiufa juqi* 九法俱起) in the present.⁵⁷⁾ The causal conditions that allow for a primary factor to arise—the presence of the secondary factor of arising—are partially obtained in the future, but fully obtained at the outset of the present moment when the secondary factor of arising meets with the convergence of another primary factor.⁵⁸⁾ Therefore, the secondary factor of arising completes its function of activating the primary factor, along with the other seven secondary and subsidiary factors in the continuum in the present moment.⁵⁹⁾

of conditions (Skt. *pratyaya*) taught in Abhidharma Buddhism (T1823, 41:851c21).

- 56) Saṅghabhadra avers in *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* (T1563, 29:810a25-b3): "In accordance with the principle of dependent origination as applied to distinctions [between factors] The activation of the functions of the four characteristic marks differs in terms of stage. That is to say, just when [a primary factor] is currently arising [in the future], the secondary factor of arising activates its function. When the stage of [the primary factor] having arisen arrives, [the secondary factors of] abiding, change, and cessation all activate their functions discretely within one period of time." 由斯差別，緣起正理，四相起用分位不同。謂正生時，生相起用。至已生位，住異滅三同於一時各起別用。 This passage appears, almost verbatim, in *Treatise Conforming to the Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:409b29-c2). Reference has been made to translation in Cox 1995, 333.
- 57) This is Xuanzang's translation of the Sanskrit phrase: *ātmanā navamo hi dharmā utpadyate* appearing in *The Treasury of Abhidharma* (T1558, 29:27b17); see Pradhan 1976, 76, corresponding to D4090, 81a4 in Jinamitra's Tibetan translation.
- 58) This entails that the secondary mark of arising is causally efficient at two moments in time—the future moment (T°) and the present moment (T'). This is criticized by the Sautāntikas on the grounds that it violates the definition of the future as the time at which the causal efficacy has not yet been discharged, a common Abhidharma definition strictly maintained by both Sautāntikas and Sarvāstivādins; see Cox 1995: 141. In his *Study Notes on the Treasury of Abhidharma* (T1821, 41:106b21), Puguang states that for the secondary factor of arising to be causally efficient in the future means for it to have future causal capability and not causal efficacy, which is restricted to the present moment. Vasubandhu appears to assume that the Sarvāstivāda theory of arising involves two moments of causal efficiency in his *Treasury of Abhidharma* (T1558, 29:28b11-12; Pradhan 1967, 78; D4090, 83a.5), when he critiques it as logically inconsistent with the definition of causal efficacy as restricted to the present moment: "The function of arising refers to projecting what it should give rise to (i.e., the primary factor), causing it to enter the present [from the future], because what has already been projected should be further projected again." 夫生用者，謂引所生令入現在，已入不應復引入故。
- 59) See Fukuda 1988, 61, who identifies the present mark of arising as the "same-type cause" (Skt.

After the activity of the arising of a primary factor is completed in the initial stage of the present moment, the primary factor enters the “stage of having already arisen” (Chi. *yisheng wei* 已生位).⁶⁰⁾ At this point the primary factor has gathered power and is preparing to enter the stage of abiding. When the primary factor attains the stage of having already arisen, the causal efficacy of the secondary factor of arising has been depleted and the factor becomes inert. This leaves room for the subsidiary factor of the abiding of abiding to motivate the secondary factor of abiding to induce the action of abiding in the primary factor.⁶¹⁾ During the stage of abiding, the primary factor “projects its own effect” (Chi. *yin ziguo* 引自果) of generating the activity of another primary factor.⁶²⁾ The effect of a primary factor can take the form of engendering a mental activity, a material activity, or a partially material and partially mental activity.⁶³⁾

sabhāgahetu; Chi. *tonglei yin* 同類因) that “projects” (Skt. *ā√kṣip*; Chi. *yin* 引) the “homogenous effect” (Skt. *niṣyandaphala*; Chi. *dengliu guo* 等流果) turning future potency into present activity.

- 60) In the *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:422b28-c2) and the *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* (T1563, 29:816a19-22), Saṅghabhadra states that the primary factor does not yet possess differentiable causal efficacy in the future: “Although past factors all appear before, it is already settled that when they achieve their effect (i.e., the present) is divided into before and after. It is not the case that right at the time that the future factor is currently arising, the causal efficacy is also [like the present] separated into beginning and later. It must be the case that the stage of already having arisen in the present has arrived, which reduces its power in the future, causing it to enter the later stage where it achieves its effect of grasping another [factor] through its own causal efficacy.” 過去諸法雖皆是前，而取果時已定前後。非未來法於正生時，作用別餘可立前後，要至現在已生位中，方簡未來令成後位，以已作用取彼為果。
- 61) Saṅghabhadra writes in the *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1563, 29:810a29-b3): “Again, right at the time it is currently coming to cease, the characterized factor (*lakṣya*, i.e., the primary factor) stably abides to be able to project its own effect due to the secondary factor of abiding acting as the predominant cause. At precisely that time, is it caused to decay due to the secondary factor of change acting as the predominant cause. And at precisely that time, it is caused to become destroyed due to the secondary factor of cessation acting as the predominant cause. Therefore, there is no error of mutual incompatibility in the three [secondary factors functioning] at one time.” 又正滅時，此所相法由餘住相為勝因故暫時安住能引自果，即於爾時由餘異相為勝因故令其衰損，即於爾時由餘滅相為勝因故令其滅壞，故三一時無相違失。 Reference has been made to translation of Cox 1995, 333.
- 62) Saṅghabhadra offers this definition of the secondary factor of abiding as that which enables the discharge of causal efficacy by the primary factor at T1562, 29:410b12-3. For translation, see Cox 1995, 337.
- 63) von Rospatt 1995, 58: “without the mark of duration (*sthitihetu*) mental events and factors could not grasp their object.”

After the primary factor has abided, the subsidiary factor of the abiding of abiding and the secondary factor of abiding fall away like booster rockets. This leaves space for the secondary factor of changing and the subsidiary factor of the changing of changing to induce the action of changing in the primary factor. Once the primary factor has changed, the secondary and subsidiary factors of changing decay, thereby leaving room for the secondary and subsidiary factors of cessation to induce the action of ceasing in the primary factor. Saṅghabhadra upholds the inherited Sarvāstivāda theory⁶⁴⁾ that the subsidiary factor of ceasing is caused to cease by the very secondary factor it causes to cease.⁶⁵⁾ Essentially, the two factors destroy one another. The mutual destruction of cessation and the cessation of cessation occurs as the secondary factor of cessation causes the seven other factors that comprise the continuum to cease.⁶⁶⁾ After the cessation of the nine factors of continuum, the factors remain dormant in the past until they are activated by another conditioned factor in the present.

III. Untangling the Knots in the Theory of the Continuum of Nine Factors

Xuanzang and the scholar-monks involved in the translation of the *Treatise Conforming to the Correct Logic of Abhidharma* the *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury*

64) von Rospatt (1995, 243) explains: “According to Sarvāstivāda theory, the secondary *vināśalakṣaṇa* is in turn destroyed by the very *vināśalakṣaṇa* which it destroys so that no infinite regress entails.”

65) The *Clarification of Tenets* (T1563, 29:809c8-9) reads: “The subsidiary factor of the cessation of cessation is capable of serving as a proximate condition within [the continuum] of nine factors only with respect to the secondary factor of cessation, and what is meant by ‘serving as a proximate condition’ is causing the causal efficacy to project its own kind of effect to terminate—that is the causal capability of cessation.” 隨相滅滅能為親緣，於九法中唯滅本滅，謂為親緣，令引自果作用滅壞是滅功能。

66) Although this point is not explicitly spelled out in extant Indic Sarvāstivāda sources, it is spelled out in the body of Sinitic exegesis on this literature; see Jingying Huiyuan’s 淨影慧遠 (523-592) *Essay on the Mahāyāna Doctrines* (Chi. *Dasheng yizhang* 大乘義章), T1851, 44:508b25 and *Notes on the Doctrines of the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* (Chi. *Dabo niepanjing yi ji* 大般涅槃經義記), T1764, 37:790b16-17.

of *Abhidharma Tenets*, as well as the Buddhist scholars and philosophers of the later Tang Dynasty, raise several questions regarding the proposition laid down by Saṅghabhadra that the continuum of nine factors is the basic subject of the four stages of change. In their commentaries on the Abhidharma texts, scholars query several aspects regarding the articulation by Saṅghabhadra of the characteristic activities of the conditioned factors that comprise a continuum. They ask: Why does a secondary factor require a subsidiary factor to achieve its characteristic function? Why are some and not all factors active in the present moment? If the eight secondary and subsidiary factors exist in each moment, why are they not simultaneously active in each moment? What allows the factors of abiding, changing, and ceasing to discharge to their causal efficacies in a sequence?

At the heart of these questions is the integrity of Saṅghabhadra's theory that the nine factors comprising the continuum are the basic subject of change. Ultimately, the rigorous analyses conducted by Xuanzang and the scholar-monks of the later years of the Tang dynasty serve to buttress Saṅghabhadra's understandings of the nature of the conditioned factor, the tenet of radical impermanence, and the theory of the constancy of change.

1. Why Does a Secondary Factor Require a Subsidiary Factor to Achieve Its Characteristic Function?

In his commentary on the debate between Vasubandhu and Saṅghabhadra regarding the nature of the conditioned factor, Yuanhui 圓暉—a scholar-monk who flourished during the reign of Tang Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713–756)—raises the question of why a secondary factor requires a subsidiary factor to achieve its characteristic function. Yuanhui observes that, while the secondary factors bring about the four functions of arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing in the eight other factors that comprise a continuum, they require one of the four subsidiary factors to accomplish each function.⁶⁷⁾

Saṅghabhadra theorizes that the secondary and subsidiary factors function as “simultaneous causes” (Skt. *sahabhūhetu*; Chi. *juyou yin* 俱有因⁶⁸) in that they interact to bring about the four characteristic activities. Each secondary factor is induced into a specific action through the action of a corresponding subsidiary factor: the secondary factor of arising is caused to arise by the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising, the secondary factor of abiding is caused to abide by the subsidiary factor of abiding of abiding, and the secondary factor of changing is caused to change by the subsidiary factor of the changing of change. Paradoxically, the secondary factor of cessation is caused to cease by the subsidiary factor of the cessation of cessation.

The four characteristic activities of each conditioned factor in a continuum, including the actions of the primary factor, can be generated only with the cooperation of other conditioned factors. For example, the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising serves as the simultaneous cause of the activity of arising in the secondary factor of arising. Dhammajoti (2003, 48) points out that the secondary factor of arising, and the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising, work together to activate the primary factor, therefore enabling it to arise during the initial stage of the present moment.⁶⁹ However, while a secondary factor functions as the simultaneous cause for the actions of a primary factor, and a subsidiary factor functions as the simultaneous cause for the actions of secondary factor, a primary factor does not directly depend upon a subsidiary factor to generate its activities. Therefore, the

67) See Yuanhui (T1823, 41:851c2); Nāgārjuna also lodges this point in his *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 7.25 (T1564, 30:11b18) in the context of a critique of Sarvāstivāda doctrine.

68) Fukuda (1988, 61) notes that the four secondary factors bring about the “cooperative effect” (Skt. *puruṣakārāphala*; Chi. *shiyong guo* 士用果) of activity in the primary factor through simultaneous causation. See also Dhammajoti 2003, 20 for the attribution of the cooperative effect of activity in the primary factor to the simultaneously arising and mutually interactive secondary and subsidiary factors in Sarvāstivāda teaching.

69) In his *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets*, Saṅghabhadra defines the capability of secondary factor of abiding as “being able to temporarily stabilize the [primary] factor to be able to project its own effect.” 令法暫住能引自果 (T1563, 29:809c3). The power to “project its own effect” (Chi. *yinshē ziguō* 引攝自果) is the very definition of causal efficacy for Saṅghabhadra; see *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:409b5); also Fukuda 1988: 61.

subsidiary factor does not serve as a “proximately assisting cause” (Chi. *jinzhu yin* 近助因)⁷⁰ of activity in the primary factor. The interaction between the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising and the secondary factor of arising concludes in the future, prior to the activities of abiding, changing, and ceasing that are contained in the present moment. Gold (2017, 7) succinctly states that the subsidiary factor “is the cause of its own cause.” Here he underlines the important point made by Saṅghabhadra—that is, that the activity of arising is completed when the subsidiary factor discharges its causal efficacy in the moment before the present.⁷¹ This stipulation is crucial to Saṅghabhadra’s contention that the activities of arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing occur in two moments.

2. Why Are Some, and Not All, Factors Active in the Present?

In Saṅghabhadra’s description of the two moments of time incurred in the alteration of the continuum, another question emerges: Why are some, and not all,

70) Saṅghabhadra’s *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:409a28-b1) describes the secondary factors as the “proximately assisting cause” of activity in the primary factor: “although conditioned factors have external contributory causes and conditions, they necessarily have [the secondary factors of] arising, abiding, changing and ceasing as their proximate assisting cause, and only then achieve their operation in periods of time (Skt. **adhyvan*).” 諸有為法雖有種種外助因緣，而必有內生住異滅為近助因，方得行世。

71) The editors of the **Mahāvibhāṣā* describe this future activity using a palindromic five-character phrase: “The arising of arising solely gives rise to arising” (Chi. *shengsheng wei sheng sheng* 生生唯生生). The **Mahāvibhāṣā* (T1545, 27:200c20-22) reads: “There are other masters who say: ‘when the conditioning activity arises, three factors arise together—namely, the primary factor, [the secondary factor of] arising, and [the subsidiary factor of] the arising of arising. Among these three, [the secondary factor of] arising is capable of giving rise to two factors: namely, the primary factor and [the subsidiary factor of] the arising of arising. The [subsidiary factor of] arising or arising, is only capable of giving rise to one factor—namely, [the secondary factor of] arising. Because of this principle there is no infinite regress.’” 有餘師說：諸行生時三法俱起：一者、法；二者、生；三者、生生。此中生能生二法：謂法及生生。生生唯生一法，謂生。由此道理，無無窮失。As for why arising can give rise to the other eight factors, but the arising of arising can only give rise to arising, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* editors at this point state that this is simply the in the nature of factors—and likens some factors to hens or dogs, sometimes giving birth to eight progeny, and sometimes only giving rise to one progeny—in either case, the generation of the different number of progeny invariably takes places through a singular act of reproduction. For translation of this passage, see Dessein 2011: 346.

factors active in the present? To address this question, Saṅghabhadra adheres to the teaching—laid out in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*⁷²⁾—that the characteristic activity of arising occurs prior to the activities of abiding, changing, and ceasing.⁷³⁾ This teaching avers that the secondary factor of arising—and the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising—begin to function together in the moment prior to the activation of the seven other factors that comprise the continuum. Saṅghabhadra maintains that the coordinated activities of the secondary factor of arising and the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising take place in the future and are brought about by the pure causal capability of these two factors. In the sequence of change, the primary factor gathers its power in the future as the secondary factor of arising and the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising interact. The primary factor then discharges its effect, decays, and ceases as the secondary and the subsidiary factors of abiding, changing, and ceasing execute their respective functions in the present moment.

Saṅghabhadra makes a temporal distinction between when the activities of the arising of the secondary factor of arising and the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising take place—and when the cessation of the primary factor occurs. He makes it crystal clear that the factors comprising a continuum cannot arise and cease at the same time. Therefore, the actions of arising and ceasing must occur in two separate

72) At T1545, 27:200a4-6, the editors of the **Mahāvibhāṣā* discuss the teaching that one primary factor does not arise, abide, change, and cease at one time because the functioning of the four secondary factors has “a before and an after” (Chi. *qian hou*前後). There is another solution offered by the editors of the **Mahāvibhāṣā* which suggests that the stages of arising and of ceasing as pertaining to one primary factor do not constitute a single moment—yet in every moment, each primary factor possesses all the secondary and subsidiary factors. For this other solution, see Cox 1995, 149.

73) Saṅghabhadra avers in *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* (T1563, 29:810a25-b3): “In accordance with the principle of dependent origination as applied to distinctions [between factors] The activation of the functions of the four characteristic marks differs in terms of stage. That is to say, just when [a primary factor] is currently arising [in the future], the secondary factor of arising activates its function. When the stage of [the primary factor] having arisen arrives, [the secondary factors of] abiding, change, and cessation all activate their functions discretely within one period of time.” 由斯差別，緣起正理，四相起用分位不同。謂正生時，生相起用。至已生位，住異滅三同於一時各起別用。 This passage appears, almost verbatim, in *Treatise Conforming to the Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:409b29-c2). Reference has been made to translation in Cox 1995, 333.

moments; a conditioned factor arises in the future moment (T°) and ceases in the present moment (T^1).

3. If the Eight Secondary and Subsidiary Factors Exist in Each Moment, Why Are They Not Simultaneously Active in Each Moment?

Although Saṅghabhadra locates the initiation of the activity of arising in the future—such that it does not take place in the same moment as the later initiation of abiding, cessation, or cessation—a difficulty arises when compressing the other three secondary factors of abiding, change, and cessation into the present moment. If the secondary factor of arising is active in the future, and therefore pre-exists the present moment, why do remaining the eight factors that compose a continuum arise in the present moment and not, simultaneously, with the secondary factor of arising in the future?

In response to this question, Saṅghabhadra reiterates the explanation cited by Vasubandhu in the *Treasury of Abhidharma* that the arising of the other eight secondary and subsidiary factors does not take place until the secondary factor of arising is united with the external conditions of a primary factor in another continuum in the present moment.⁷⁴⁾ Saṅghabhadra expands upon his explanation using the example as follows:

生相雖作俱起近因能生所生，諸有為法而必應待前自類因、及餘外緣和合攝助，如種地等差別因緣，助芽等生，令生芽等。(T1562, 29:411a11-13)

Although the secondary factor of arising serves as the simultaneously activated proximate cause capable of giving rise to what it should give rise to (i.e., the eight other factors composing the continuum), conditioned factors necessarily await for a preceding cause of the same type, along with the convergence of external conditions to assist them [in arising]. We liken it [the

74) Gold (2017, 12) explains: “The birth brings about its result—the arising of the entity—when the entity is still in the future. The other eight are then caused to exist by the birth, in the subsequent moment, so they all exist in the present.” C.f. *Mahāvibhāṣā* (T1545, 27:200c19).

external conditions] to the different causes and conditions such as a seed and earth, etc., which assist the arising of the sprout, etc., and cause it to germinate.

In this passage, found in both of his surviving treatises, Saṅghabhadra returns to his observations of natural phenomena to make a philosophical point. He notes that, although the action of the planting of a seed is the direct and proximate cause of the germination of the seed—as evidenced by the sprout—the germination of the sprout does not take place unless the nutrients of soil, water, and sunlight are also present. To Saṅghabhadra, the full arising of the primary factor does not take place unless the nutrients—in this case, the convergence of causes and conditions in another primary factor—have been supplied.

The proximate causal condition for a primary factor to arise is therefore the presence of the secondary factor of arising, although a primary factor requires the assistance of external causes and conditions to start to exert activity.⁷⁵⁾ The causal conditions of the primary factor therefore are partially obtained in the future, but fully obtained at the outset of the present moment when the secondary factor of arising is met with the external conditions of another primary factor in a neighboring continuum.⁷⁶⁾ It is under a confluence of three causes and conditions—the activities of the secondary factor of arising, the activity of the primary factor in the continuum of the present moment, and the activity of a primary factor in a neighboring location—

75) Dessein (2011, 352) notes that the Dārṣāntikas/Sautrāntikas object to this opinion, because it is the external causes and conditions that make a factor arise, not the secondary factor of arising.

76) In his *Commentary on the Treasury of Abhidharma*, Fabao (T1822, 41:550a27) argues that the position that the secondary factor of arising is causally efficient at two moments (i.e., future and present) is logically inconsistent with the notion that the time required to discharge causal efficacy defines the duration of the present moment: “One cannot say that when the secondary factor of arising has already functioned is still the present (and not the past).” 生相已用時，不得名現在。 Since causal efficacy takes some time to be discharged, by the time the mark of arising, in conjunction with external conditions, finishes discharging its causal efficacy, it is no longer the present moment anymore. Because of the logical inconsistency with the definition of a moment, the present moment must contain the activity of the secondary factor of arising.

that allow the secondary factor of arising to execute its function of activating the primary factor and the other seven factors that comprise a continuum. Saṅghabhadra reasons that the secondary factor of arising must arise and decay in the future if the primary factor and the seven remaining secondary and subsidiary factors “have already become activated” (Chi. *yiqi* 已起) at the outset of the next moment—the present.⁷⁷⁾ In his reprise of the Sarvāstivāda analysis of the conditioned factors found in the Treasury of Abhidharma, Vasubandhu (as translated by Xuanzang) points out:

法現在時，生用已謝⁷⁸⁾

By the time [primary] factor resides in the present, the function of [the secondary factor of] arising has already faded away.

Saṅghabhadra recognizes the basic Abhidharma teaching that the causal efficacy of conditioned factors is restricted to the present moment while causal capability persists through the future and into the past. Therefore the initial activation of the secondary factor of arising and the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising take place as the result of causal capability.⁷⁹⁾ According to Saṅghabhadra, the primary

77) Saṅghabhadra appears to assume that the primary factors have fully arisen by the commencement of the present moment, stating in his *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic*: “In the stage of currently coming to arise (i.e., the future [T°]) [the mark of] arising serves as an internal condition that activates the factor that is to be given rise to in arriving at the stage of having arisen (i.e., the present [T¹]). This factor to be given rise to is said to have ‘already become active.’ When it (the factor) is currently ceasing (also in the present [T¹]), [the mark of] abiding serves as an internal condition to stabilize the factor that is to be stabilized and causes it to project its own effect (i.e., to discharge causal efficacy) in arriving at the stage of having ceased (i.e., the conclusion of T¹). When this [primary] factor to be stabilized is said to be already capable of projecting its own effect, then that is precisely the stage of currently ceasing. When the [mark of] cessation serves as an internal condition, it destroys the factor to be destroyed in arriving at the stage of having ceased. [At this stage,] this factor to be destroyed is said to ‘have already been destroyed’. It should be known that the mark of change is also just like this.” 於正生位，生為內緣，起所生法。至已生位，此所生法，名為已起。於正滅位，住為內緣，安所住法，令引自果至已滅位。此所住法，名於自果已能引發，即正滅位。滅為內緣，壞所滅法。至已滅位，此所滅法，名為已壞。異相亦爾，如應當知 (T29.1562.409b13-19). This explanation is also found in *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* (T1563, 29:810a8). This translation makes reference to that of Cox 1995, 333.

78) T1558, 29:28a29-b1; Pradhan 1967, 78; D4090, 83a.1.

79) Saṅghabhadra argues in a discussion on simultaneous causation in his *Treatise Conforming to Correct*

factor arises in the future, reaches its apex of potency at the outset of the present moment, and then discharges its causal efficacy in the present moment.⁸⁰⁾

4. What Allows the Three Factors of Abiding, Changing, and Ceasing to Discharge Their Causal Efficacy in a Sequence?

Saṅghabhadra avers that the secondary and subsidiary factors of abiding, changing, and ceasing are one in their “essence” (Chi. *ti* 體),⁸¹⁾ yet distinct in their respective “functions” (Chi. *yong* 用) and “temporal frames of reference” (Chi. *suowang* 所望).⁸²⁾

Logic that future factors, though without causal efficacy, can activate factors in the future through pure causal capability: “Since it is granted that future factors have a cause, it must also be granted that the existence of future factors is different from total non-being (Skt. *atyantābhāva*). Those who speak of non-being (Skt. *abhāva*) use various significations, such as ‘[what has] not-yet-arisen’ (i.e., non-being of future factors), ‘[what has] already ceased,’ (i.e., non-being of past factors), ‘ultimate [non-being],’ and ‘non-being of mutual exclusion’ (Skt. *itaretarābhāva*). The first two (i.e., non-being in the future and the past) are simply without causal efficacy, therefore, the existence in the future period of time is not total non-being, since it comes to refer to what is able to give rise to what it should give rise to. During the stage of currently arising, although causal efficacy is not yet present, through causal capability it [the secondary factor of arising] gives rise to what it should give rise to.” 既許有因，亦必應許未來體有異畢竟無。諸所言無，義有多種：未生、已滅、畢竟、互無。初二言無，但無作用，故未來世非體全無，得有能生及所生義，於正生位作用雖無，而有功能生所生法。 T1562, 29:419c5-8.

- 80) In his *Nexus of the Treatise Demonstrating Consciousness-Only in the Palm of the Hand* (T1831, 43:625b16), Kuiji attributes to Saṅghabhadra the view that “the mark of arising causes the [primary] factor to possess causal efficacy in the future.” 生令法將有用。
- 81) See *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:412b8), which contains the statement that secondary factors are “concurrent in essence” (Chi. *yuti ju* 與體俱) with the primary factor. At T1562, 29:633a20, Saṅghabhadra states that while function is concurrent with the essence of factors, and thus “no different” (Chi. *feiyi* 非異) from it—essence can exist without function, and thus function is “not identical” (Chi. *feiji* 非即) to the essence of factors.
- 82) The phrase *suowang*, literally “what it looks forward to,” implies that the primary factor can be in either of the three stages of abiding, changing, and ceasing within one moment in time. In other words, the immediately subsequent stage it “looks forward to” differs within each of these three stages occurring within one present moment. Dhammajoti (2003, 19) notes that two factors can be mutual and simultaneous causes of one another at one moment in time, though they themselves may belong to different time periods with respect to their own temporal frame of reference. Saṅghabhadra’s *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* reads: “In the stage of already having arisen (i.e., the present), the three functions of abiding, change, and cessation are activated discretely, and cause the qualified factor (Skt. *lakṣya*, i.e., the primary factor) to have different temporal frames of reference at one time, thus possessing three significations (i.e., initial abiding, final cessation, and changing in between) [in one moment].” 已生位中，住 || 異滅三起用各別，令所相法於一時中所望 || 不同，具有三義 (T1562, 29:409c18-20).

He notes that abiding “looks forward” (Chi. *wang* 望) to the stage of changing, that changing looks forward to the stage of ceasing, and that ceasing looks forward to the stage of having ceased in the past. Xuanzang, in his translation of the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, states that although the essences of the primary, secondary, and subsidiary factors are present in one moment in time, the functions of the primary, secondary, and subsidiary factors have a temporal aspect, “a before and an after” (Chi. *qian hou* 前後).⁸³⁾

Saṅghabhadra argues that while each of the characteristic activities of the conditioned factors composing a continuum occur in stages that are discrete and sequential, their essential natures remain intact throughout the stages of change. He characterizes the activity of the continuum over two moments—future and present—in terms of the three stages: the stage of “not having acquired” causal efficacy” (Chi. *weide* 未得), the stage of “currently acquiring” (Chi. *zhengde* 正得) causal efficacy, and the stage of causal efficacy “having ceased” (Chi. *yimie* 已滅).⁸⁴⁾ In this explanation the stage of not having acquired causal efficacy is completed when the secondary factor of abiding begins to discharge its causal efficacy; the stage of currently acquiring causal efficacy is completed when the factors of change and cessation discharge their respective causal efficacies; and the stage of having ceased is completed when the factors of cessation discharge their efficacy, weaken, decay, and cause the primary factor to cease.⁸⁵⁾

83) In his *Lamp of the Full Meaning of the Treatise Demonstrating Consciousness-only* (Chi. *Cheng weishi lun liaoyi deng* 成唯識論正義燈), Huizhao (T1832, 43:708b29-709a2) argues that the position, assumed by the editors of the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, that the causal efficacy of the four secondary factors takes place at “different times” (Chi. *yishi* 異時) thus admitting a sequence of “before and after,” infringes upon the definition of a moment as fundamentally indivisible. See also Puguang, *Study Notes on the Treasury of Abhidharma*, T1821, 41:106c11-15.

84) The *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:409b1-2) and *Treatise Clarifying Tenets* (T1563, 29:809c27-28) read: “Now, conditioned factors differ in terms of stage, which are, in brief, threefold—that is to say, they are differentiated between when their causal efficacy to project their effect has not yet been acquired, when it is currently being acquired, and when it has already ceased.” 然有為法分位不同，略有三種，謂引果用未得、正得、已滅別故。

85) In the *Treasury of Abhidharma* (T1558, 29:28b15-19; Pradhan 1967, 79; D4090, 83a.5), Vasubandhu points out that if change and cessation are able to serve to impede (Skt. *prati\bandh*, Chi. *zhang* 障) the continued discharge of causal efficacy of a factor by overcoming it with countervailing power, then these

As soon as the primary factor fully arises in the present it begins to cease—without a temporal hiatus—as the secondary and subsidiary factors of change and cessation disable its capacity to withstand change. The sequence of events that begins with arising and culminates with the abiding, changing, and ceasing of the continuum occurs over two moments in time.⁸⁶⁾ A continuum of clustered factors arises, abides, changes, and ceases during a succession of four stages in two atomically brief moments in time. This means that the primary factor withstands three discrete stages of alteration within a single present moment. Each of these stages is induced in each of the nine factors making up the continuum by a respective secondary factor—the stage of abiding by the secondary factor of abiding, the stage of change by the secondary factor of change, and the stage of cessation by the secondary factor of cessation. In Saṅghabhadra’s theory of change, the activity of the primary factor persists long enough to incur the four stages of arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing—whereas the activities of the secondary and subsidiary factors of arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing persist only to exercise their functions during their specific stages. Thus, the durations of the functions of the secondary and subsidiary factors are significantly briefer than that of the primary factor.⁸⁷⁾

two secondary factors must have greater causal power than arising and abiding, and thus should exercise their functions first.

86) Perhaps this commitment to the teaching of the real existence of past and future factors leads Sarvāstivāda theorists to postulate two moments of causal efficiency in the secondary factor of arising. As Sharf (forthcoming, 11) describes: “For Vaibhāṣika, the present existence of past and future elements is necessitated by the doctrine of momentariness; a transient event that has passed can function as a present cause only to the extent that the past event still exists.”

87) In his *Treatise Conforming to Correct Logic*, Saṅghabhadra appears to assume that the ceasing of conditioning activity (Skt. *saṃskāra*), like its arising, can take place over temporal intervals of varying spans, whether longer or shorter. He makes this point in the context of a criticism of Vasubandhu for positing that the cessation does not require external causal stimulus to initiate it: “If one says that the conditioning activity [of conditioned factors] has no other cause of cessation (apart from the secondary factor of cessation), then arising should be the same in not awaiting the presence of a cause, because of the fact that these two (the secondary factors of arising and cessation), are while being concurrent with the essential factor (i.e., the primary factor), both different from it [and from each other]. Otherwise, one should explain the reason that the two differ (i.e., why arising requires a cause, while cessation doesn’t). If one responds that these two (i.e., arising and ceasing) still differ [in terms of their causes], that is to say that because the arising of conditioning activity necessarily awaits a cause, it is vividly seen that the time

Vasubandhu unflatteringly compares Saṅghabhadra's articulation of the four stages of alteration undertaken by a primary factor in a continuum as an attempt to "carve up the ether" (Chi. *fenxi xukong* 分析虛空).⁸⁸⁾ More recently, Cox (1995, 151) and von Rospatt (1995, 52) have argued that the notion that a single factor arises in the future, then undergoes three distinct phases within the present moment that follows, to be an infringement of the doctrine of momentariness.⁸⁹⁾ Saṅghabhadra defends his position that three stages of change occur in a single present moment by acknowledging that the four stages of change are as fine-grained, or as atomic, as the discrete alterations of the primary factor.⁹⁰⁾ Therefore, radical change is as indiscernible as it is continuous and unceasing. For Saṅghabhadra, the transformation of a discrete factor is predicated upon the underlying existence of the moment that contains it.

IV. Conclusion

Throughout his argumentation for the doctrine of momentariness, Saṅghabhadra

during which it arises, differs in terms of being slower or faster. If the cessation of conditioning activity [like its arising] also awaits a cause, then it should also be the case that at the time it ceases, it differs by occurring faster or slower. If its cessation is like the time of its arising, which occurs faster or slower, then that violates the tenet that conditioning activity is momentary (Skt. *kṣaṇika*). Therefore, we avoid the error that cessation is spontaneous and uncaused. This fault (that the cessation of conditioning activity is uncaused), is not incurred, because, the cause of cessation necessarily arises together with the conditioning activity, so their time is no different. The cause of arising (i.e., the secondary factor of arising) and the conditioning activity [of a primary factor] are sometimes concurrent and sometimes separate. Although their time is separated by an interstice, both [the cause of arising and the conditioning activity], can serve as causes [to engender arising]. The time during which conditioning activity arises can be faster or slower." 若謂諸行無別滅因，生亦應然不待因有，此二與體俱異法故。或應說二差別所因。若言此二亦有差別，謂諸行生必待因故，現見生時遲速差別。若諸行滅亦待因者，亦應滅時遲速有異。滅若如生時有遲速，便違諸行剎那滅宗。故知無因自然而滅，無斯過失，滅因與行必俱有故。時無差別，生因與行或俱不俱，雖時隔越亦為因故，諸行生時可有遲速。滅因與行必俱有故，時無差別。生因與行，或俱不俱。雖時隔越，亦為因故。諸行生時，可有遲速 (T1562, 29:412b7-15). Reference has been made to the translation of Cox 1995, 351.

88) *ākāśam pāthyate*. This phrase appears in the *Treasury of Abhidharma* at T1558, 29:27b24, corresponding to Pradhan 1967, 76 and D4090, 81a6.

89) Huizhao lodges this complaint in his *Lamp of the Full Meaning of the Treatise Demonstrating Consciousness-only* at T1832, 43:708c24-709a2.

90) The idea that stages are as fine grained as actual change is associated with stage theory, a theory of persistence developed by analytic philosophers; see Hawley 2002, 50.

seeks to uphold the tenet that the discrete entities that make up the universe are characterized by constant change. In his precise analysis of the conditioned factor and the continuum, Saṅghabhadra builds the case for the momentariness of all phenomena. He contends that, while the individual factors that comprise a continuum are continuously abiding, changing, and ceasing, the inherent disposition to arise persists throughout the three temporal dimensions of the future, the present, and the past. The factors in plural continua constantly arise because of their internal predispositions to generate and because they are triggered into activity via their interactions with other factors within the same, and other, continua.

Saṅghabhadra maintains that the four stages of the alteration of a primary factor of a continuum occur over the two moments of the future and the present. Within the mainstream of Chinese Buddhism, however, there are varying strands of thought on momentary change. The exegetes of the Sinitic tradition of Yogācāra Buddhism posit that the arising, abiding, and changing of a factor occurs in the present and the ceasing of the factor in the past.⁹¹⁾ Scholars from the other Mahāyāna traditions of Tiantai, Huayan, Chan, and esoteric Buddhism contend that the “four marks of the conditioned factor” (Skt. *saṃskṛta-lakṣaṇa*; Chi. *youwei xiang* 有為相) indicate that the four discrete phases of a primary factor take place during a present moment.⁹²⁾ This is essentially the same position as that ascribed to the Sautrāntikas by the editors

91) Kuiji (T1829, 43:155c14-15) writes in his *Concise Commentary on the Yogācārabhūmi*: “For the Hīnayāna traditions, arising is in the future and the other three secondary factors are in the present. Now, for the Mahāyāna, the three secondary factors including arising are in the present, while cessation is in the past.” 若依小乘，生在未來，三相在現在。今依大乘，生等三相，在現在，滅在過去。 This position that cessation occurs in the past is attested in the *Manobhūmi* section of the *Yogācārabhūmi* (T1579, 30:291c19; D4035, 31a1-2; Bhattacharya 1957, 61), attributed to Asaṅga, and the *Cheng weishi lun* (T1585, 31:13a13), compiled by Xuanzang.

92) According to the fourth Huayan patriarch Chengguan 澄觀 (738-839), this is the eighth of ten major points of doctrinal disagreement between the tradition of dharma-nature (Chi. *Faxiang-zong* 法性宗), an umbrella term for Tiantai, Huayan, Chan, and East Asian esoteric Buddhism, and the tradition of dharma-characteristics (Chi. *Faxing-zong* 法相宗), an umbrella term for Abhidharma, Madhyamaka, and Yogācāra Buddhism. See his *Subcommentary and Explanation of the Meaning of the Buddhāvataṃsakasūtra* (Chi. *Da fanguang Fo Huayan jing suishu yan yi chao* 大方廣佛華嚴經隨疏演義鈔), T1736, 36:64b14-15.

of the **Mahāvibhāṣā*⁹³⁾ and in doxographical accounts found in the body of Sinitic exegesis on Abhidharma Buddhist teachings.⁹⁴⁾

In defending the understanding of conditioned factors as radically impermanent, and therefore momentary in nature, Saṅghabhadra upholds three fundamental Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma tenets: firstly, that change is an invariant feature of all entities in conditioned reality; secondly, that the conditioned factor undergoes the four stages of change in over two moments in time; and thirdly, that each of the nine factors of the continuum require the motivational push of other factors to create moment-to-moment change. Saṅghabhadra concludes that no factor works alone.

Saṅghabhadra specifies that the arising of a factor in a continuum is different from its cessation in that it requires the presence of the subsidiary factor of the arising of arising, the secondary factor of arising, and a primary factor in a neighboring continuum. The cessation of a factor, however, only requires the presence of the subsidiary factor of the cessation of cessation and the secondary factor of cessation. While phenomena in the natural world, such as sound and light, appear to subside spontaneously, Saṅghabhadra contends that the subsidiary factor of the cessation of cessation and the secondary factor of cessation are actively involved in the endings of all things.⁹⁵⁾ Essentially, a continuum contains the seeds of its own destruction. A

93) **Mahāvibhāṣā*, T1545, 27:198b3. Dunlin 通麟 also makes this attribution in his *Notes on Yuanhui's Commentary on the Treasury of Abhidharma* (Chi. *Jushe lun song shu ji* 俱舍頌疏記). X841, 53:422b12.

94) This position, attributed to both “Hīnayāna” Sautrāntika and Saṃmitīya (Chi. *zhengliang bu* 正量部) traditions on the one hand, and Mahāyāna traditions on the other, is encapsulated in the four-character phrase “four marks in one period of time” (Chi. *yiqi sixiang* 一期四相). See Huizhao, *Lamp of the Full Meaning of the Treatise Demonstrating Consciousness-only*, T1832, 43:708a8; Lingtai, *Jottings on Kuiji's Study Notes on the Cheng weishi lun* (Chi. *Cheng weishi lun shu chao* 成唯識論疏抄), X819, 50:176a16.

95) Xuanzang's translations of the *Treatise Conforming to the Correct Logic* (T1562, 29:534a13-16) and the *Treatise Clarifying the Treasury of Abhidharma Tenets* (T1563, 29:860c6-8) both read: “If the cessation of the kindling awaited an *extrinsic* cause, then that would be just like the arising of the conditioned factor, which awaits an adventitious cause (i.e., the coalescence of the external causes and conditions). It [the kindling] would await an *extrinsic* cause, and only then come to cease. But we vividly see in the world how awareness, flames, and sounds cease merely due to an intrinsic cause (i.e., the secondary factor of cessation), without awaiting an adventitious cause. Therefore, all conditioning activity ceases without awaiting an adventitious cause.” 若待客因薪等滅者，則有為法應並如生。要待客因然後得滅。而

forthcoming study examines Saṅghabhadra's argumentation in defense of the proposition that the cessation of a factor does not require an "extrinsic cause" (Chi. *keyin* 客因)⁹⁶⁾ that is external to the continuum of nine factors within which it is clustered.⁹⁷⁾

世現見覺焰音聲，不待客因，由主因滅。故一切行滅皆不待客因。

96) See Matsushima 2009, 35-43 for a discussion of Saṅghabhadra's rejoinder to the Saṃmitīya Buddhist and Brāhmanical Vaiśeṣika interlocutors who maintain that cessation invariably requires an extrinsic cause in addition to an "intrinsic cause" (Chi. *zhuyin* 主因).

97) Ernest B. Brewster, "Does the Cessation of an Entity Require an External Cause? The Debate between Vasubandhu and Saṅghabhadra on the Causality of Cessation as Translated by Xuanzang."

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왜 변화만이 변화하지 하는가: 현장(玄奘) 역 중현(衆賢)의 아비달마 논서에 나타난 찰나명론

Ernest Billings (Billy) Brewster

아이오나 대학 강사

인도 유학승 현장(玄奘, 602?-667)이 한역한 아비달마 문헌 중, 5세기 인도 논사 중현(衆賢, Skt. Saṅghabhadra)이 지은 찰나명 논증은 불교 고유의 찰나명론을 엄밀하고 상세하게 변호하고 있다. 본고는 현장의 한역으로만 전하는 중현의 저작 두 본, 『아비달마순정리론(阿毘達磨順正理論, Skt. **Abhidharmasamaya pradīpikāśāstra*)』과 『아비달마현종론(阿毘達磨顯宗論, Skt. **Abhidharmasamaya-pradīpikāśāstra*)』에서 찰나명을 논의하는 몇몇 구절을 고찰하고자 한다. 여기에서, 중현은 아비달마의 교리인 유위법(有爲法, Skt. *samskṛta-dharma*, 무한한 “원인과 조건(因緣, Skt. *hetu-pratyaya*)의 결과로 존재하는 개별적 실체)을 활용하여 현실세계의 보편적이고 불변하는 특징이 바로 변화라는 철학적 해석을 구축하였다. 현장 및 그의 당(唐) 대 제자들은 당 문헌들의 세심한 번역과 주석을 통해 유위법의 네 가지 분위(分位, Skt. *avasthā*)를 논구하면서 ‘하나의 유위법이 사멸할 때 바로 다음 찰나에 자신과 동류의 또 다른 유위법을 작동시킨다’는 명제를 지지하기 위해 중현의 주장을 재고하였다. 본고는 문헌비평적 방법론을 사용하여, 중현의 저작에 대한 현장의 대역(對譯), 그리고 당(唐) 대 제자들의 주석들이 중국 불교에서 찰나명론에 대한 이론적 토대를 마련하는데 어떻게 기여했는지를 추적하였다.

주제어

중현(衆賢), 세친(世親), 유위법(有爲法), 찰나멸(刹那滅), 순정리론(順正理論), 현종론(顯宗論), 분위(分位)

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