Research Article

Jain Anekāntavāda and Buddhist Pratītyasamutpāda: A Comparative and Critical Study of the Multidimensional Conception of Reality in Indian Philosophy

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Abstract

Two major philosophical doctrines of the Śramaṇa tradition-Jain anekāntavāda and Buddhist pratītyasamutpāda-are often placed side by side under the label of a "multidimensional understanding of reality." This research paper critically examines that generalization. Drawing on the original texts of the Tattvārthasūtra, Pañcāstikāyasāra, Āptamīmāṃsā, and Sanmatitarka; the Pāli Nikāyas (Saṃyutta, Dīgha, Udāna, Dhammapada); and Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, it argues that the two doctrines converge in their criticism of ekāntika (absolutist, one-sided) standpoints, but differ in their metaphysical purposes, logical structures, and conclusions. Anekāntavāda accepts the co-presence of origination, cessation, and permanence (utpāda-vyaya-dhrauvya), together with multiple properties, in a single substance, and, with the help of naya and syādvāda, resolves apparently conflicting statements by reference to differences in standpoint. Pratītyasamutpāda, by contrast-and, in the Mādhyamika tradition, its interpretation in terms of śūnyatā-denies the very svabhāva (independent, absolute being) of phenomena (dharmas). Thus the former safeguards the "multi-property substance," whereas the latter dissolves the notion of a "substance endowed with svabhāva." By comparing the saptabhaṅgī with the catuṣkoṭi, the Jain jīva-dravya with the Buddhist anātman, and the naya-system with the two-truths framework, the paper also evaluates the contemporary relevance of both doctrines and the limits of that relevance..

Keywords: Anekāntavāda, syādvāda, nayavāda, saptabhaṅgī, pratītyasamutpāda, śūnyatā, svabhāva, two truths (dvisatya), Jain philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, Indian philosophy.

Introduction

In the Indian philosophical tradition, the explanation of being (sat), knowledge, and causality has not been a mere adjunct of soteriological reflection; it has also been a domain of independent rational debate. Alongside the Vedic-Brahmanical tradition, the Śramaṇa currents-especially the Jain and the Buddhist-deepened this debate. The repeated mention of Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta (Mahāvīra) and his followers in early Pāli literature1 is evidence that the two traditions remained, within a single intellectual milieu, both rivals and interlocutors.

Two doctrines emerge from this milieu that are often cited together in modern writing. Jain anekāntavāda holds that a thing possesses many properties (dharmas) and cannot be described completely on the basis of any single one of them. Buddhist pratītyasamutpāda says that whatever arises, arises in dependence on causes and conditions. Both display a dissatisfaction with one-sidedness (ekāṅgitā), and for that reason it seems easy to place the two in a single category under general terms such as "relativity," "interdependence," or "pluralism."

But this ease may be misleading. Relativity can mean "relativity of standpoint" or "relativity of being." In anekānta, relativity is chiefly the acceptance, at the level of statement and knowledge, of the many aspects of a thing in accordance with differences of reference (apekṣā); in pratītyasamutpāda, dependence is, at the level of being, the denial of the independence of dharmas. The central question of this paper is therefore: Are anekāntavāda and pratītyasamutpāda two forms of one and the same multidimensional conception of reality, or are they two distinct metaphysical projects that issue from a shared critical tendency?

The main argument of the paper is that between the two there is convergence at the level of criticism (both oppose ekāntavāda), but divergence at the level of construction (one establishes a multi-property substance, while the other makes the very notion of a substance endowed with svabhāva incoherent).

Research Questions and Hypothesis:

The research addresses three questions: (a) What is the metaphysical basis of anekāntavāda, and what roles do naya and syādvāda play in it? (b) What is the early Buddhist form of pratītyasamutpāda, and how did Nāgārjuna connect it with śūnyatā? (c) Where do the common ground and the fundamental differences between the two lie?

The working hypothesis is that both doctrines are alike in their opposition to ekānta, but fundamentally different in their attitude toward the concept of svabhāva; this difference is the root of the divergences concerning permanence, the self (ātman), causality, the logic of language, and the two-truths framework

Literature Review and Research Gap:

One major strand of modern research on anekāntavāda is logical. B. K. Matilal presented anekānta as the central doctrine of Jain philosophy, linking it with the multi-sidedness of things and the relative truth of the nayas.2 Jonardon Ganeri analyzed the pluralist foundations of Jain logic,3 and Graham Priest attempted to read the saptabhaṅgī in the light of contemporary paraconsistent logic.4 Paul Dundas's The Jains is the standard survey for the historical and doctrinal background,5 and P. S. Jaini's The Jaina Path of Purification offers a balanced introduction to Jain metaphysics and practice.6

The literature on pratītyasamutpāda may be divided into two parts. With reference to the early Buddhist Nikāyas, studies by scholars such as Sue Hamilton and Rupert Gethin read it chiefly as a process-account of experience and suffering,7 while in the Mādhyamika context the works of J. Garfield, J. Westerhoff, and M. Siderits offer a philosophical analysis of Nāgārjuna's critique of svabhāva.8 The research gap is that the two doctrines are compared either (i) in the language of a general "relativism," or (ii) by reading one as a modern, science-like interpretation of the other. Avoiding both tendencies, this paper conducts the comparison at the level of the original texts, placing technical terms such as "svabhāva" and "dravya" at the center.

The Metaphysical Basis of Anekāntavāda:

The term "anekānta" is formed from aneka + anta; here "anta" means dharma, aspect, or standpoint. Anekānta therefore denotes the condition or view in which a thing is regarded as possessing many dharmas. "Ekānta," by contrast, is the insistence that any single dharma is the whole truth. The Jain ācāryas regarded it not merely as a method of knowledge but as a doctrine arising from the very nature of being (sat). Siddhasena Divākara, regarding it as the basis even of everyday practice (loka-vyavahāra), pays homage to anekāntavāda:

jeṇa viṇā logassa vi vavahāro savvahā ṇa ṇivvaḍai | tassa bhuvaṇekkaguruṇo ṇamo aṇegaṃtavāyassa ||9

The meaning is: homage to anekāntavāda, the unique teacher of the world, without which the practical life of the world cannot be established in any way.

The Characteristic of Being: Origination, Cessation, and Permanence:

The foundation of Jain metaphysics lies in the definition of sat propounded by Ācārya Umāsvāti. In his celebrated work Tattvārthasūtra, clarifying the nature of sat, he states: "utpāda-vyaya-dhrauvya-yuktaṃ sat",10 that is, that in which origination, destruction, and permanence (dhrauvya) are all present is sat. This sūtra provides the basis for understanding the Jain doctrines of dravya, guṇa, and paryāya.

The meaning is that sat (reality) is that which is endowed with utpāda (the arising of a new state), vyaya (the destruction of the former state), and dhrauvya (the continuity of the original nature).

The Prakrit form of the same principle is found in Kundakunda's Pañcāstikāyasāra, where dravya is described as "characterized by sat" and as conjoined with origination, destruction, and permanence:

davvaṃ sallakkhaṇiyaṃ uppādavvayadhuvattasaṃjuttaṃ | guṇapajjayaāsayaṃ vā jaṃ taṃ bhaṇṇaṃti savvaṇhū ||11

Meaning: The omniscient ones call that dravya which is characterized by sat, which is conjoined with origination, destruction, and permanence, or which is the substratum of qualities and modes.

A subtle point is implicit in these two statements. In Jain philosophy, "sat" does not mean an unchanging principle but a being in which change and permanence occur together. This position differs both from Parmenidean-style monism (everything is fixed) and from Heraclitean-style momentariness (everything is flux). Kundakunda formulates the same point in another gāthā:

bhāvassa ṇatthi ṇāso ṇatthi abhāvassa ceva uppādo | guṇapajjaesu bhāvā uppādavaye pakuvvaṃti ||12

Meaning: Of that which is, there is no utter destruction, and of that which is not, there is no utter origination; beings (substances) bring about origination and destruction only in their qualities and modes.

This gāthā is decisive for the present paper because it shows the point at which the Jain view diverges fundamentally from Buddhist pratītyasamutpāda: in the Jain view a substance is neither produced nor destroyed; origination and cessation occur at the level of paryāyas, while the substance remains self-established (svayaṃsiddha) and eternal. (See Section 8.1.)

Substance, Quality, and Mode:

guṇaparyāyavad dravyam ||13

The meaning is that a substance is that which possesses qualities and modes. Here guṇas are the co-existent, relatively stable properties of a substance (for example, consciousness in the jīva, or form, taste, smell, and touch in pudgala), whereas paryāyas are successive, changing states. In this way the possibility of permanence and change together in a single thing arises. This very thesis is the metaphysical foundation of anekānta: if a thing were only dravya there would be no change; if it were only paryāya there would be no stable substratum.

The Jain Definition of Permanence:

A common misconception is that "dhrauvya" means immutability. Umāsvāti gave his definition of "nitya" precisely to prevent this misconception: tadbhāvāvyayaṃ nityam ||14 The meaning is that permanence is the non-destruction of one's own nature (tadbhāva). That is, permanence does not mean remaining motionless, but not losing one's fundamental kind or form even amid changes. For example, when a lump of clay turns into a pot, it does not lose its "clayness." Samantabhadra explained this very fact with a famous illustration:

ghaṭamaulisuvarṇārthī nāśotpādasthitiṣv ayam |

śokapramodamādhyasthyaṃ jano yāti sahetukam ||15

Meaning: One who wants a golden pot, one who wants a golden crown, and one who wants only gold-these three people, on seeing respectively the destruction of the pot, the arising of the crown, and the persistence of the gold, experience grief, joy, and neutrality; this difference in reaction is not groundless but has a cause.

The philosophical import of the illustration is that in a single transformation of a thing, three facts-destruction, origination, and persistence-are objectively present at once. Samantabhadra establishes anekānta from this same argument in the following kārikā:

payovrato na dadhy atti na payo 'tti dadhivrataḥ | agorasavrato nobhe tasmād vastu trayātmakam ||16

Meaning: One who has taken the vow of consuming only milk does not eat curd; one who has taken the curd-vow does not drink milk; and one who has renounced all milk-products (gorasa) abstains from both. Therefore a thing is threefold in nature (consisting of origination, destruction, and persistence).

Naya, Pramāṇa, and Syādvāda:

Pramāṇa and Naya:

In Jain epistemology, two means of comprehending things are accepted-pramāṇa and naya: "pramāṇanayair adhigamaḥ."17 The meaning is that objects are known through pramāṇa and naya. Pramāṇa grasps a thing in its totality, whereas naya grasps one aspect of it. In the enumeration of the nayas, the basic division into dravyārthika (viewing the substance or universal) and paryāyārthika (viewing the mode or particular) is accepted from Siddhasena down to the later ācāryas. Umāsvāti's sūtra enumerates seven nayas: naigama, saṃgraha, vyavahāra, ṛjusūtra, śabda, samabhirūḍha, and evaṃbhūta.18 The most important feature of a naya is that it keeps its statement "true but partial"; when it begins to deny the other aspects, it becomes a "nayābhāsa," that is, an ekānta. Amṛtacandra expressed this method of Jain policy (nīti) through a beautiful image:

ekenākarṣantī ślathayantī vastutattvam itareṇa | antena jayati jainī nītir manthānanetram iva gopī ||19

Meaning: Just as a milkmaid, while churning, pulls one end of the churning-rope and relaxes the other, so Jain policy triumphs by making one anta (aspect) of the nature of a thing primary and keeping the other secondary.

This image makes clear that anekānta involves an ordering of the "primary" and the "secondary"; all aspects cannot be

stated simultaneously with equal force, yet no aspect is wholly denied.

The Meaning of "Syāt": In syādvāda, "syāt" does not mean "perhaps" or "possibly." According to Samantabhadra, it is a nipāta (indeclinable particle) that signals anekānta in a sentence and qualifies the meaning to be conveyed by a particular reference (apekṣā):

vākyeṣv anekāntadyotī gamyaṃ prati viśeṣakaḥ | syān nipāto 'rthayogitvāt tava kevalinām api ||20

Meaning: The particle "syāt" signals anekānta in sentences and specifies the meaning to be conveyed (gamya); because it is connected with the meaning, it is employed in your statements and in those of the kevalins as well.

Hence "syād asti ghaṭaḥ" means: "the pot exists with respect to its own substance, place, time, and mode (bhāva)"; this statement is not doubtful but determined by reference.

Saptabhaṅgī:

When, concerning a single subject, seven possible sentences are formed through the combination of three basic modes of statement-existence, non-existence, and inexpressibility-this is called saptabhaṅgī. The following gāthā of Kundakunda presents its earliest systematic form:

siya atthi ṇatthi uhayaṃ avvattavvaṃ puṇo ya tattidayaṃ | davvaṃ khu sattabhaṃgaṃ ādesavaseṇa saṃbhavadi ||21

Meaning: Concerning a substance, seven bhaṅgas are possible according to standpoint (ādeśa): syāt asti, syāt nāsti, syāt ubhaya (asti-nāsti), syāt avaktavya, and the combinations of avaktavya with each of the first three. The accepted order of these seven bhaṅgas is as follows:

1. syād asti (in some respect, it is),
2. syān nāsti (in some respect, it is not),
3. syād asti ca nāsti ca (in sequence, from both standpoints, it both is and is not),
4. syād avaktavyam (from both standpoints simultaneously, it cannot be stated),
5. syād asti cāvaktavyam,
6. syān nāsti cāvaktavyam,
7. syād asti ca nāsti cāvaktavyam.

Samantabhadra regarded this same syādvāda, like kevalajñāna, as illuminating all realities, and stated that the difference between them is only that of the direct versus the indirect:

syādvādakevalajñāne sarvatattvaprakāśane | bhedaḥ sākṣād asākṣāc ca hy avastv anyatamaṃ bhavet ||22

Meaning: Syādvāda and kevalajñāna both illuminate all realities; the difference between them is that of sākṣāt (pratyakṣa, direct) and asākṣāt (parokṣa, indirect). That which is illuminated by neither of the two would be a non-entity (avastu).

Svacatuṣṭaya: The Structure of Reference:

In the saptabhaṅgī, the opposition between "asti" and "nāsti" is not placed within a single standpoint. In the commentarial tradition, this is resolved through "svacatuṣṭaya" and "paracatuṣṭaya": a thing "is" with respect to its own dravya, kṣetra, kāla, and bhāva, and "is not" with respect to the dravya, kṣetra, kāla, and bhāva of another.23 This arrangement proves decisive later in the Buddhist–Jain comparison: in anekānta, difference of reference removes the contradiction, but a definite "own-nature" (sva-rūpa) of the thing remains.

Pratītyasamutpāda in Early Buddhist Texts:

The Basic Formula:

The most concise and most frequently repeated formula of pratītyasamutpāda in the Pāli Nikāyas is the one that modern scholars know as the formula of "idappaccayatā" (this-conditionality, "when this exists, that comes to be"):

imasmiṃ sati idaṃ bhavati, imassuppādā idaṃ uppajjati | imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na bhavati, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati ||24

Meaning: When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises.

When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases.

This formula expresses a general causal rule that concerns not any particular "entity" but the relations of "being" and "non-being." Its purpose is, from the beginning, soteriological: on which conditions suffering depends, and by the cessation of which it ceases.

The Twelve Links:

The specific sequence of links of pratītyasamutpāda is found in the first sutta of the Nidānasaṃyutta of the Saṃyutta Nikāya as follows-

avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ, nāmarūpapaccayā saḷāyatanaṃ, saḷāyatanapaccayā phasso, phassapaccayā vedanā, vedanāpaccayā taṇhā, taṇhāpaccayā upādānaṃ, upādānapaccayā bhavo,

bhavapaccayā jāti, jātipaccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ ||25

Meaning: Dependent on ignorance, formations (saṅkhārā); dependent on formations, consciousness; from consciousness, name-and-form; from name-and-form, the six sense bases; from the six sense bases, contact; from contact, feeling; from feeling, craving; from craving, clinging; from clinging, becoming; from becoming, birth; and from birth, aging-and-death (as well as sorrow, lamentation, and suffering) arise.

Three points deserve attention here. First, this chain is fundamentally set in the context of psycho-physical experience and rebirth, not as a general theory of physical causation. Second, the cause-effect relation is one of "dependence"; the presence of an independent "agent" (kartā) or "self" (ātman) is not required in it. Third, in the Dīgha Nikāya the Buddha himself stresses its profundity;26 this doctrine is not simple cause-and-effect but a subtle structural insight.

The Middle Path: The Kaccānagotta Sutta:

The relation of pratītyasamutpāda to the two extremes of existence and non-existence becomes clear in a famous sutta. In response to Kaccānagotta's question the Buddha says:
sabbaṃ atthīti kho, kaccāna, ayaṃ eko anto, sabbaṃ natthīti ayaṃ dutiyo anto | ete te, kaccāna, ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammaṃ deseti ||27

Meaning: "Everything exists," Kaccāna-this is one extreme; "nothing exists"-this is the other. Without approaching either of these two extremes, the Tathāgata teaches the Dhamma by the middle (and that middle is the sequence of links of pratītyasamutpāda).

Here the "opposition to ekānta" is evident, and this is the point at which a superficial similarity to anekāntavāda appears. But in the Kaccānagotta Sutta the two extremes are resolved not through a third, "conjunctive" (saṃyojaka) position (such as "correct from both standpoints") but through the observation of the experiential process of cause and effect. This difference will prove important later.

Impermanence and Non-Self:

The second aspect of pratītyasamutpāda is the impermanence and non-self of conditioned dharmas. The famous verses of the Dhammapada formulate it thus:
sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā ti yadā paññāya passati | atha nibbindati dukkhe esa maggo visuddhiyā ||28

Meaning: When a practitioner sees with wisdom that "all saṅkhārā are impermanent," he becomes disenchanted with suffering; this is the path to purification.

sabbe dhammā anattā ti yadā paññāya passati | atha nibbindati dukkhe esa maggo visuddhiyā ||29

Meaning: When a practitioner sees with wisdom that "all dhammas are non-self," he becomes disenchanted with suffering; this is the path to purification.
A detailed exposition of non-self is given in the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta through an analysis of the five aggregates.30 The argument here is that none of form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness is a controllable, permanent, and pleasant "self."

Nāgārjuna: Pratītyasamutpāda, Śūnyatā, and the Two Truths:

Nāgārjuna (c. second–third century CE) transformed the denial of svabhāva implicit in the early Buddhist sūtras into a system of argument. His Mūlamadhyamakakārikā begins with a foundational negation in its explanation of cause and

effect:

na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyāṃ nāpy ahetutaḥ | utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kvacana kecana ||31

Meaning: No bhāva (entity) is ever found anywhere to arise from itself, from another, from both, or without a cause. This negation is not a refutation of pratītyasamutpāda but of svabhāva-endowed origination. Nāgārjuna himself provides the definition of svabhāva: akṛtrimaḥ svabhāvo hi nirapekṣaḥ paratra ca ||32 The meaning is that svabhāva is that which is uncreated (not made by anything) and independent of another. By this definition, whatever depends on causes and conditions is empty of svabhāva. From here arises the equivalence of śūnyatā and pratītyasamutpāda:

yaḥ pratītyasamutpādaḥ śūnyatāṃ tāṃ pracakṣmahe | sā prajñaptir upādāya pratipat saiva madhyamā ||33

Meaning: Whatever is pratītyasamutpāda, that we call śūnyatā. That (śūnyatā) is upādāya prajñapti (a conventional designation established in dependence), and that itself is the middle path. The import of śūnyatā is not "non-existence" but "absence of svabhāva." Nāgārjuna himself warns that grasping even śūnyatā as a new entity or view is itself an ekānta:

śūnyam iti na vaktavyam aśūnyam iti vā bhavet | ubhayaṃ nobhayaṃ ceti prajñaptyarthaṃ tu kathyate ||34

Meaning: One should not say "empty," nor "non-empty," nor "both," nor "neither"; these are stated only for the purpose of prajñapti (conventional designation). In this verse there is a negation of the catuṣkoṭi (the four alternatives: is, is not, both, neither), which is decisive in the later comparison with the saptabhaṅgī (Section 8.4). To defend his doctrine, Nāgārjuna directly linked the negation of existence and non-existence with the Kaccānagotta Sutta:

kātyāyanāvāde cāstīti nāstīti cobhayam | pratiṣiddhaṃ bhagavatā bhāvābhāvavibhāvinā ||35

Meaning: The Blessed One, who discerns bhāva and abhāva, in his teaching to Kātyāyana (Kaccāna) negated "it is," "it is not," and "both."

The Two-Truths Framework:

If everything is empty of svabhāva, how can conventional practice, the fruit of action, and moral responsibility be explained? In reply, Nāgārjuna takes recourse to the two-truths framework-

dve satye samupāśritya buddhānāṃ dharmadeśanā | lokasaṃvṛtisatyaṃ ca satyaṃ ca paramārthataḥ ||36

Meaning: The Buddhas' teaching of the Dharma rests on two truths-the conventional truth of the world (loka-saṃvṛti-satya) and the ultimate truth (paramārtha-satya)-and he also makes clear the necessity of this framework by saying that, without the conventional, the teaching of the ultimate is not possible. This is the point where Madhyamaka philosophy answers the charge of "ethical nihilism" leveled against it: it is precisely because of śūnyatā that action, fruit, and path are possible, because they all occur dependently.37

Permanence and Change: "Dravya" versus "Svabhāva-śūnyatā":

Both philosophies accept change, but on different foundations. In Jain philosophy, change is "within the dravya": a dravya is neither produced nor destroyed (PAS 15); only its paryāyas change. In Buddhist philosophy, especially in Madhyamaka, no such stable entity, in which change occurs, is required at any level. This is why Jain ācāryas (such as Samantabhadra) criticized momentariness (kṣaṇikavāda): if everything is utterly momentary, continuities such as rebirth, the fruit of action, and memory become incoherent. In reply, Buddhist philosophers explained these continuities by means of the santāna (continuum), the succession of saṃskāras, and conventional truth (saṃvṛti-satya). One may therefore say that Jain philosophy resolves the opposition between "permanence and change" through the distinction between dravya and paryāya, whereas Buddhist philosophy resolves the same opposition by showing the very notion of "svabhāva-endowed permanence" to be incoherent.

Self and Non-Self:

In Jain philosophy, the jīva is a real, conscious, beginningless dravya, bound by karmic matter (pudgala) and liberated through practice. In Buddhist philosophy, a permanent self is denied, and the "person" is merely a continuum of conditioned dharmas. This difference readily raises a serious question: on the basis of anekānta, is a reconciliation of the Buddhist and Jain views on the self possible? From the Jain standpoint, the answer would be that the Buddhist "anātman" is an ekānta of the paryāya-view; from the Buddhist standpoint, the answer would be that the Jain "jīva-dravya" involves the attribution of svabhāva. Both answers confirm that anekānta cannot be regarded as a "reconciling extension" of pratītyasamutpāda.

Causality:

Both philosophies accept the cause-effect relation, but its status differs. In Jain philosophy, causality is the arrangement of upādāna (material cause) and nimitta (instrumental cause) within the succession of a dravya's paryāyas. In Buddhist philosophy, causality is "idappaccayatā"-origination from hetu-pratyayas and cessation upon their cessation; in Madhyamaka this causality too is empty of svabhāva. Hence the "acceptance of cause" is shared, but the nature of the "units of cause and effect" is not.

Saptabhaṅgī and Catuṣkoṭi:

The saptabhaṅgī and the catuṣkoṭi are often compared superficially on the ground that both contain alternatives such as "asti, nāsti, ubhaya, anubhaya." Jayatilleke has discussed at length the relation between the catuṣkoṭi and Jain syādvāda in the context of early Buddhist theory of knowledge.38 But the purposes of the two differ. In the saptabhaṅgī, each bhaṅga is true "from some standpoint," and its aim is to organize various correct statements about one and the same thing. In the catuṣkoṭi, Nāgārjuna negates all four alternatives because every one of them rests on some presupposition of "svabhāva." One method leads toward "everything can be stated from some standpoint," the other toward "svabhāva cannot be established through any alternative."

Epistemology: The Naya-System and the Two Truths:

In anekānta, nayas are partial yet reality-grasping cognitions; comprehensive awareness occurs in kevalajñāna. In Madhyamaka, saṃvṛti-satya is valid at the conventional level, but at the ultimate level no dharma is found to exist by its own nature. Both accept "valid knowledge at the conventional level"; but in Jain philosophy this knowledge is a partial apprehension of some objective dimension, whereas in Madhyamaka it is dependent on prajñapti. That is, nayas are "aspects of reality," whereas saṃvṛti-satya is "the conventional naming of reality."

Historical Dialogue and Mutual Criticism:

The dialogue between the two traditions is not merely a subject of modern comparison but a historical reality. In the Pāli suttas the Nigaṇṭhas are mentioned and their doctrine criticized; on the other side, Jain texts contain refutations of momentariness. In later periods, works such as Haribhadra Sūri's Anekāntajayapatākā offer extensive refutations of Buddhist views,39 while in the Buddhist tradition of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, anekānta is refuted through the examination of syādvāda (Syādvādaparīkṣā).40

The main axis of Buddhist criticism has been that the "coexistence of contradictory dharmas in a single thing" is possible only if difference of reference is real at the level of the thing, which, even from the Madhyamaka standpoint, leads back to the notion of svabhāva. The main axis of Jain criticism has been that a doctrine of utter momentariness or utter emptiness destroys the coherence of everyday practice, memory, recognition (pratyabhijñā), and the fruit of action. Both criticisms arise from within their own metaphysical frameworks; they are not decisive refutations of one another.

Critical Evaluation:

Points of Convergence:

- Both criticize ekānta (absolutist, one-sided) standpoints: in Jain philosophy, both the ekānta-permanent and the ekānta-impermanent; in Buddhist philosophy, both extremes of "everything exists" and "nothing exists."
- Both regard the interpretation of reality as an absolute, predetermined, and unchanging entity as inadequate.
- The goal of both is ultimately soteriological: the cessation of bondage through right view.

Points of Divergence:

- In Jain philosophy, the existence of a "multi-property substance" is beyond dispute; in Buddhist Madhyamaka philosophy, this very notion of substance is unacceptable because it is endowed with svabhāva.
- In Jain philosophy, the jīva is a permanent conscious dravya; in Buddhist philosophy, a permanent self is denied.
- In Jain logic, contradiction is removed through difference of reference; in Madhyamaka logic, it is neutralized through the negation of svabhāva in the alternatives.

Critical Questions for Each Doctrine:

The first question facing anekānta is this: if a thing has many dharmas, what is the final basis of the mutual coherence

of these dharmas? The Jain answer is found in the structure of dravya-guṇa-paryāya and in the method of naya-syādvāda, but critics may ask whether "reference" (apekṣā) is itself absolute. In reply, Jain thinkers place apekṣā too under anekānta, but this debate continues to this day.

The question facing pratītyasamutpāda/śūnyatā is this: if all dharmas are empty of svabhāva, how do the stability of causality, knowledge, and moral responsibility persist? The Mādhyamika answer lies in the two truths and in the claim that "everything is possible precisely because of śūnyatā," but critics ask whether "śūnyatā" does not itself return as an ultimate truth. Nāgārjuna's answer, that śūnyatā too is mere prajñapti, is a possible, though contested, resolution of this objection.

Limitations:

This study is based chiefly on representative passages of the original texts; a full treatment of the internal diversity of the Digambara–Śvetāmbara, Theravāda–Mahāyāna, and the Prāsaṅgika–Svātantrika branches of Madhyamaka is not possible here. Moreover, owing to edition differences in the numbering of passages, a final collation of the texts is necessary before publication.

Contemporary Relevance and Cautions:

The contemporary significance of anekānta has been seen in pluralist dialogue, ethical dispute, and the understanding of the standpoint-relativity of knowledge. The significance of pratītyasamutpāda emerges in discussions of "interdependence" in ecology, social structures, and psychology. But two kinds of caution are necessary in the contemporary use of both.

First, anekānta does not mean that "all views are equally true." In syādvāda, each statement is true from a particular reference; a statement that is false within that reference remains false. Likewise, nayābhāsa (ekānta) is rejected. Second, pratītyasamutpāda does not mean merely that "everything is interconnected"; its philosophical center is dependence on causes and conditions (hetu-pratyaya) and the negation of svabhāva. Moreover, declaring either of them to be the "ancient form" of any doctrine of modern physics, ecology, or social theory would ignore the historical and logical structure of the texts.

Conclusion:

This study has examined Jain anekāntavāda and Buddhist pratītyasamutpāda on the basis of the original texts and has shown that the shared ground of a "multidimensional understanding of reality" between the two exists only at the level of criticism. Jain philosophy theoretically safeguards a multi-property substance through the combined structure of utpāda-vyaya-dhrauvya and through naya-syādvāda. Buddhist philosophy, beginning with pratītyasamutpāda, culminates in Nāgārjuna in rendering the entire notion of svabhāva incoherent.

The hypothesis of the paper is thus confirmed: anekānta and pratītyasamutpāda rest on convergent criticism but arrive at divergent construction. To call them synonyms, or "two names of one doctrine," does injury to the philosophical distinctiveness of both. The intellectual richness of Indian philosophy lies precisely in the fact that, on one and the same question-the nature of reality-mutually engaged yet different answers developed. A useful direction for future research would be a more finely grained, text-based comparison of the technical limits of the Jain "dravya" and the Mādhyamika "svabhāva," together with a critical evaluation of attempts to represent the saptabhaṅgī and the catuṣkoṭi in various formal logical systems.

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