The Validity of a Robinsonian Interpretation of the Nāgārjuna’s Logics of Catuskoṭī: Comparing Prasaṅga with Hegel’s Dialectics*  
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ABSTRACT [Keywords: catuskoṭī (teralemma), the logics of catuskoṭī, Hegelian dialectics, prasaṅga (negative logic), perspectives, expedient]

Kajiyama Yuich understands Nāgārjuna’s logics of catuskoṭī in terms of Hegelian Dialectics, while interpreting the negation formula of 4th koṭi in tetralemma as the religious truth of Madhyamika, which cannot be negated as an ultimate truth. And Richard Robinson also posits this proposition as dissolving the entire drṣṭi.

Examining these approaches, this thesis argues against the dialectical interpretation of catuskoṭī with reference to its logical structure. For this, reference will also be made to Pingala and Candrakīrti’s commentary comparing them to Robinson’s and Kajiyama’s. Here, focus will be put on the aspect of ‘perspectives.’

Upon further examination, it was determined that a Hegelian dialectical approach is not plausible for interpreting Nāgārjuna’s logic, which is purely negative and skeptical in its character. And through reformulating the structure of catuskoṭī in terms of prasaṅga, this paper compares it with a dialectical formula to more clearly evaluate

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the implication of negative logic for *catuskoti*.

Thereby, it was seen that Nagārjuna has neither equated propositions on the basis of identity, nor postulated any hierarchy through classifying the grade of these *koṭis*. Accordingly, on the strength of various perspectives, any proposition in the *catuskoti* can be understood with logical clarity, without positing any metaphysical or dialectical interpretation.

Further, the possible reconstruction of Nagārjuna’s understanding of the tetralemma supports a semantic approach to truth, while revealing the absurdity of perceiving identity or causal relations as possessing intrinsic substance.

I. Foreword

In my previous paper on the “Validity of Robinsonian\(^1\) critique of *catuskoti*” which was presented in *Vol. 44*, an attempt was made to show that Robinson and Kajiyama’s charge of violation of the rule of classical formal logic is not plausible. Yet, this time, my argument goes further by claiming that it is not plausible to interpret Nagārjunian interpretation of *catuskoti\(^2\)* as

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1) Just like my previous paper in *Vol. 44*, the term ‘Robinsonian’ is used in the sense that Kajiyama Yuich shares a lot of similarities with Richard Robinson on his evaluation of Nagārjuna’s logic in the appropriate context. And the term ‘Nagārjunian’ will be used to incorporate the view of later Madhyamaka philosophers such as Candrakirti and Pingala.

2) To evaluate the validity of Robinsonian critique on *catuskoti*, some clarification must be made on the meaning of ‘*catuskoti*’, as compared to the ‘Nagārjunian critique’ or ‘negation of *catuskoti* (prasaṅga)’. First, *catuskoti* is ‘a logical arguments of a series of four discrete propositions’ or ‘philosophical judgements’ made to a certain topic,
a form of Hegelian Dialectics, as Robinson and Kajiyama do. With these two successive critiques, both Robinsonian points can be considered unsuccessful on account of the horizontal structure of \textit{catuṣkoṭi}.

In relation to the 2\textsuperscript{nd} critique of the problem of dialectics, this paper focuses on the validity of Robinson and Kajiyama's dialectical interpretation of \textit{catuṣkoṭi} with reference to its logical structure, while repudiating dialectical standings throughout the related verses on \textit{catuṣkoṭi}. Through this examination, we will see why Robinson and Kajiyama's Hegelian presentation of the problem on dialectics is not a plausible interpretation of Nāgārjuna's logic, which is purely negative and skeptical in its character. And through reformulating the structure of \textit{catuṣkoṭi} in terms of Nāgārjunian \textit{prasanga}, we can compare it with a dialectical formula to evaluate the implications of negative logic for \textit{catuṣkoṭi} more clearly.

possessing multiple applications. It has been widely used and shared as an efficient way of proposing one's views in ancient Indian logical context like that of Syādvāda of Jainism, which has a sevenfold logical formulation to convey the insight of Anekantavada, or philosophical scepticism of Sanjaya Belatthiputta, as well as that of Brahmajala Sutta, recording Buddha's teaching in early Buddhist context. Yet, 'Nāgārjunian critique of \textit{catuṣkoṭi}' denotes the Madhyamaka view of emptiness(śūnyatā), criticising any view positing identity(svabhāva) or qualitative hierarchy(rank) among each \textit{koṭi}(propositions) like that of Robinson and Kajiyama. Later, in Buddhist logico-epistemological traditions of Madhyamaka, this critique(negation) of \textit{catuṣkoṭi} was regarded as a middle way to view the right purport of Buddha as well as Nāgārjuna, while criticizing the view claiming for the substantive identity of each \textit{koṭi}. Here, please note that despite the single usage of the term '\textit{catuṣkoṭi}' in this paper, it mainly denotes the Nāgārjuna's interpretation of it, following 'the real purport of \textit{catuṣkoṭi}' as was used and suggested by Budhha.
II. The Content and Validity of Robinson and Kajiyama’s Dialectical Interpretation of *catuskoti*

It is well known that Hegelian dialectics consists of multiple mediations of contraries in a continual progression of transcending the former contraries into realizing the state of 'becoming' (*das Werden*).\(^3\)

Following this line of thought, Robinson and Kajiyama interpret the ultimate truth of the *tetralemma* as something similar to a binary negation formula of the 4th *koti* (proposition), according to which the 4th *koti* is transcended through the negation of its self-contradiction. Based on this substantialist conception with a Hegelian emphasis on 'progression', Robinson

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3) Hegel (1974; 1977) *Introduction*; Hegel (1963) pp. 91–92; Hegel (1998) pp. 105–106; While differentiating dialectic from sophistry, Hegel explains his 'dialectic' and 'becoming' as follows, "We call dialectic the higher movement of reason in which such seemingly utterly separate terms pass over into each other spontaneously, through that which they are, a movement in which the presupposition sublates itself. It is the dialectical immanent nature of being and nothing themselves to manifest their unity, that is, becoming, as their truth"; Then he further explains 'the sublation of contraries into becoming' as follows, "Becoming is in a double determination ... the former is coming-to-be and the latter is ceasing to-be. This coming to be is the other direction: nothing passes over into being, but being equally sublates itself and is rather transition into nothing, i.e., ceasing-to-be. They are not reciprocally sublated—the one does not sublate the other externally—but each sublates itself in itself and is in its own self the opposite itself. ... Becoming, as this transition into the unity of being and nothing, a unity which is in the form of being or has the form of the one-sided immediate unity of these moments, is determinate being."
posits the negation formula of 4th koṭi, as dissolving the entire drṣṭi.\textsuperscript{4) And} Kajiyama also understands this as 'the religious truth of Madhyamika, which cannot be negated in that it is a limit of ultimate truth.'\textsuperscript{5)}

Then, are these seeming contradictions in tetralemma really posited as a form of Hegelian conception of 'self-contradiction' implying that they are to be transcended? If not, then how can we eschew this misconception by demonstrating that the seeming contradiction in catuṣkoṭi is different from the Hegelian notion of mediation?\textsuperscript{6)} With this question in mind, let's examine

\textsuperscript{4) Hegel(1963) pp. 93–94; Hegel(1998) pp. 106–107; Hegel explains the dialectical progression into a sublated being as follows: "What is sublated is not thereby reduced to nothing. Nothing is immediate; what is sublated, is the result of mediation; it is a non-being but as a result which had its origin in a being. It still has, therefore, in itself the determinateness from which it originates."}

\textsuperscript{5) Oetike(2003) p. 451; In respect of paramārtha, Ruegg argues that "the overwhelming majority of interpretations from the Madhyamaka school have held that, no assertion whatever will be a real, self-existent(i.e. hypostatized) thing." Yet in my opinion, Kajiyama(and broadly Robinson) can be included in this group in that their views do not represent the real purport of śūnyatā and dharmahīśvabhāva/dharmā-nairātmya Since their approaches definitely attempt to ascribe an ultimately real status to the entity of Nāgārjuna’s statement, these would fall under the extreme of eternalism, which the Madhyamaka avoids.}

\textsuperscript{6) Related to this topic, please refer to Hegel(1981); Hegel(1963) p. 95; Hegel(1998) pp. 107–108; According to Hegel, this transition is made through 'moments': "The more precise meaning expression which being and nothing receive, not that they are moments, is to be ascertained from the consideration of determinate being as the unity in which they are preserved. Being is being, and nothing is nothing, only in their contradiction from each other; but in their truth, in their unity, they have vanished as these determinations and are now something else. Being and nothing are the same; but just because they are the same}
how we can respond to this sort of Hegelian interpretation suggested by Robinson and Kajiyama, while reconstructing a possible way of evading its logical and semantic traps.

1. Robinson’s dialectical interpretation of catuskoti

Despite his criticism on the metaphysical character of Murti’s interpretation of Nāgārjuna, Robinson himself takes a Hegelian understanding of the catuskoti like that of Murti or Stcherbatsky. According to his interpretation, Nāgārjuna’s catuskoti follows Hegelian Dialectic, with hierarchical categorizations in which “the later proposition negates the former one.”

they are no longer being and nothing, but now have a different significance. In becoming they were coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be; in determinate being, a differently determined unity, they are again differently determined moments. This unity now remains their base from which they do not again emerge in the abstract significance of being and nothing.”

7) Robinson(1957) pp. 291-293: Robinson also criticizes Murti’s misuse of logical concept like, “Every thesis is self-convicted,” while interpreting it as “Every proposition is self-contradictory,” which falls into falsity on the grounds of not being true of tautologies.

8) Murti(1977) pp. 45-46: According to Murti, catuskoti, as a ‘tetra-lemma,’ or ‘four-pronged propositions’, have taken Hegel’s Dialectic towards the interpretation of Nāgārjuna’s catuskoti.

9) Robinson(1978) p. 56: Dialectical sequence of negation consists of: (1) affirmation (2) negation (3) negation of negation, which is, affirmation of something new. And when something is sublated, it is not done away with but retained and preserved in the higher product which supersedes it. Likewise, sublation involves mediation and (determinate) negation. Related to this, please refer to the supplementary discussion
In terms of Robinson's logic, the 1st koti of the catuṣkoṭi, referring to 'p' in its logical form, can be viewed as the thesis, while the 2nd koti '¬p' becomes the antithesis. And the combination of 'p' and '¬p' becomes higher level truth as synthesis (which literally means, 'in and for itself'; 'an und für sich' in Hegelian terms), in contrast to the 1st and 2nd kotis where the 2nd koti (antithesis; which literally means, 'for itself'; 'für sich') is superior or more real than the 1st koti (thesis; which literally means, 'in itself', 'an sich').

At the 2nd phase of mediation, the 3rd koti ('p and ¬p') works as the thesis, with the following 4th koti '¬p & ¬(¬p)' as its antithesis. Hence, Robinson's understanding of the purport of Nāgārjuna's catuṣkoṭi follows Hegelian Dialectic, characterized by moving toward a higher truth with its dualistic structure of thesis and antithesis located at different phases. Then, is it right to interpret each koti of the catuṣkoṭi as located at a different level, while retaining a dualistic structure?

In Hegelian dialectic, 'p and ¬p' in a proposition are not just the contraries, but the contradictories located at different phases of progress, while being negated into a synthesis. 11) On the
contrary, each lemma in the catuskoṭi is just a parallel juxtaposition of contrary case, where the 1st koṭi does not have to be negated by the latter through its dialectical movement of mediation.

Now, we will examine the logical structure of catuskoṭi, focusing on four-pronged propositions (tetralemma) as were suggested by Murti and Robinson.\(^\text{12}\) Then, we will see whether it denotes any progress toward the remaining koṭis, step by step.

In case we assume to quantify the proposition of each koṭi as (1), (2), (3), (4) and some entity as x and existent (bhāva) as p, then the four kinds of formations would follow like this.

(1) The negative tetralemma where any existent (bhāva) is negated. ["x is p"/"x is −p"/"x is not p and −p"/"x is not −p and −(−p)"

(2) The affirmative tetralemma where any form of something can be qualified. ["x is p"/"x is −p"/"x is p and −p"/"x is −p and −(−p)"

(3) The similarity of the catuskoṭi, which does not possess any form of something as; that ‘is’, ‘is not’, ‘both is and is not’, and ‘neither is nor is not.’ Here, no two forms are identical as to be categorized as four defined propositions. ["x is not p,” “x is not q,” “x is not r,” “x is not s”]

Here, whereas Nāgārjuna uses all of these alternately, while frequently using (1), Hegelian Dialectic has a logical structure close to (2). In this respect, let me focus on the positive case (2), while taking 18.8 as its example among some of the examples (22.11, 25.17, 27.15−18) that Robinson has taken for his consideration.13)

“All is real, or all is unreal, all is both real and unreal, all is neither unreal nor real”; this is the graded teaching of the Buddha.14)

Here, Robinson points out that these four options are positively manifested before negating these with this formula [Ax v ▲Ax v Ax ▲Ax v ▲(Ax). ▲▲(Ax)], and these options can be quantified universally for ‘x’. And with this affirmative logic, Robinson seems to view the 4th option [“x is -p and -(−p)”], as “No x is I and no x is −I.”

Yet, as he acknowledges, this is only true when x is null.15)

14) 18-8. sarvān tathāyam na va tathāyam tathāyam cātathāyam eva ca/ naivātathāyam naiva tathāyam etadbuddhānuśāsanam.
15) Robinson(1957) p. 302; However, according to Robinson, since negations and conjunctions of the basic proposition do not transcribe regardless of quantification that, −p becomes the contradictory of p, although “some x is I” is not the contradictory of “some x is not I.” Interpreting ‘p, −p’ as contradiction in this case, he follows Nakamura’s interpretation that the tetralemma algebraically is: ‘I’, ‘−I’, ‘I−I’ and ‘−(−I−I)’. Since I−I equals ‘O’ and ‘−(−I−I)’ equals ‘O’, the third and fourth alternatives are redundant and senseless. But, can we suppose that Nagarjuna’s purport for negating each of these options is that its terms are null, as defined by his opponents? In other words, is this the real reason that Nagarjuna has rejected the 4th option? Here, Robinson’s interpretation looks like the hybrid of Aristotelian and Boole Schröder notation, emphasizing more on the
And only in that context, it can have the equivalent value as the 3rd proposition. ["x is p and \(-p\)"]\(^{16}\)

Yet, in case of Nāgārjuna, it is true that the definitions of the entities vary with each proposition. And since they do not have any intrinsic value, each entity or existent should not be regarded as real. Nor the 4th option be treated as equal to the 3rd one, with any change of the definitions or status of the entities. Here, the case is that “if x denotes the certain entity p, then y and z just reveal different, yet horizontal aspects of x”, unlike the difference of entities corresponding to different phases in Hegelian mediation. Then let’s see the horizontal aspects of these four options:

1) The 1st option: “y is p”
2) The 2nd option: “z is \(-p\)”
3) The 3rd option: “y is p”, while “z is \(-p\)”
4) The 4th option: “x is \(-p\) and \(-(p)\)”

Pingala is also follows this line of interpretation, while further arguing that Buddha interpreted the same entity with four characteristics of conjunctions in 3rd and 4th options than treating it as a simple proposition, while surpassing the explanation both of conjunction of I and O forms as well as E and A forms. And through this way, he might have attempted to enlarge his interpretation including Boole Schröder notation, which Kajiyama also adopts.

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\(^{16}\) *Ibid.* p. 305; According to Robinson, related to this line of thought, most discussion of *śūnyatā* has centered on whether it is a ‘positive or a negative’ concept, or whether it has a transcendental significance or a nihilist one. On the positive side of interpretation, he mentions on La Vallee Poussin’s view of absolute base of existence and Suzuki’s positive interpretation on ‘*Śūnyathā* and *Tathatā*’, which belongs to the realm of intuition.
different viewpoints to address different people with skillful means. We shall now see his elucidation at the evaluation level and view the point on 4th option to compare it with Robinson’s view on four-pronged affirmation of the *catuskoti*. 

All the Buddhas have unlimited powers of skillful means, and dhārmas have no fixed characteristics. In order to save all living beings, they may reach that “everything is real”, or they may teach that “everything is unreal”, or that “everything is both real and unreal”, or that “everything is neither unreal nor not unreal.”

“Neither real nor unreal”, “Neither unreal nor not unreal” is taught in order to negate ‘both real and unreal’.17)

According to Pingala, the 1st *koti* ("X is p") is manifested from the view of ultimate reality to look at the dharmas(existent). Here, the term ‘real’ means an ‘ultimate.’ In the 2nd *koti* ("X is ~p"), it is taken from the perspective of pratityasamutpāda to denote the niḥsvabhāva of dharmas.

The 3rd *koti* (“X is p and ~p”) subsumes both viewpoints of ultimate reality and pratityasamutpāda, featuring the fact that all dharmas possess the same feature, while not retaining svabhāva.

And the 4th *koti* ("X is ~p and ~(~p)") refutes the 3rd one, following the internal logic of this four pronged affirmation, while also refuting the 1st and 2nd ones altogether. This is because the 1st and 2nd *kotis* are subsumed under the boundary of the 3rd category. Yet, if the 4th *koti* is taken to be as a supreme truth, it contradicts the rules of this four-pronged affirmations since the premise of this affirmation includes that four

koṭis are equally real and unreal.

Thus, in the four-pronged affirmation of catuṣkoṭi, the difference can be seen as the result of different perspectives, rather than different phases of reality based on dualistic dichotomy of p and -p. Thus, nonetheless the entities in the four koṭis use identical referent, every proposition possesses different entities. Here, even in Pingala's interpretation, a commentary which is often supposed to be suspicious of its metaphysical traits, Robinson's interpretation of hierarchical progress does not hold. Since each proposition only represents a therapeutic purpose corresponding to the different objects of edification.

With this question of difference in viewpoint, Candrakīrti's interpretation of expedient also supports Pingala's, despite its presupposition of the difference in quality or grade between the four alternatives, since this presupposition works only in the limit of therapeutic strategy corresponding to different levels of understanding and perspective of listeners.

Besides, in Hegelian Dialectic, the process of thesis–antithesis and synthesis can go on when a newly attained synthesis becomes another thesis again. And, this is clearly not the case for the critique of the catuṣkoṭi. Since it purports to end all misconceptions or wrong views on intrinsic nature of all theses, without falling into an Infinite Regress. Thus, it can be said that Hegelian dialectic has different logical structure from catuṣkoṭi, unlike Robinson's interpretation.

Then, we will examine how Kajiyama addresses this issue of the catuṣkoṭi in the following section.

2. Kajiyama and Hegelian Dialectics
We have seen that Robinson, following Hegelian dialectic, argued that the aim of Nāgārjuna’s *catuskotī* is to move through the dialectical process to reach into the 4th *koṭi* as a synthesis, which is a higher truth than the other *koṭis*. Related to four-pronged affirmation, he pointed out the logical contradiction within the 3rd and 4th lemmas. Along this line, Kajiyama delineates his view of the *catuskotī* while agreeing that the *catuskotī* is not a logic established on the ground of formal logic. Yet, related to the above question on the affirmative case of the *catuskotī*, he says the following.

Thus, it is problematic to understand *catuskotī* in the position of formal logic. It should be understood that *catuskotī* has a dialectical character as a process of negating a proposition established in certa in area of discourse at a more multi-dimensional area of discourse.18)

Since the four-pronged affirmation cannot all be true and simultaneous with the logical form, each following proposition becomes higher than the previous one, while negating the previous proposition as well. Therefore, there are different levels of truths in the four-pronged affirmation and every proposition that follows is higher than its previous proposition. Hence, the 4th proposition[“x is −p and −(−p)]] is the highest proposition which reveals the truth that the *Madhyamika* school intended to demonstrate. … Nothing is true and not untrue. The 4th *koṭi* signifies the religious truth of *Madhyamika* as an ultimate truth. Thus, it should not be negated in that limit. Yet, this truth cannot be established in the area of discourse where the 1st phrase is established, and likewise, it is not be established in the areas of 2nd and 3rd *koṭis*. *Cest-a-dire*(That is to say), in the area where the 1st, 2nd and 3rd *koṭis* are established, the 4th *koṭi* should be negated.19)

Seen from this sort of dialectical interpretation based either on the degree of development or a synthesis of ontological forms among the gap in the root *primordia*, it might be interpreted as a falsification of Nāgārjuna’s view in a way to classify values of each *koṭi*.

On the grounds of this gradational analysis, Kajiyama Yuichi proposes the following thesis.

Since the four-pronged affirmation cannot all be true at the same time in terms of its logical form, every succeeding proposition should be interpreted as higher than the previous *koṭi*, while negating the former. Hence, each proposition should represent different levels of truths accordingly in the four-pronged affirmation that every proposition that follows is higher than its previous proposition.

Yet, here the problem arises related to its interpretation on the gradual progression of each *koṭi*. Following Kajiyama’s Hegelian interpretation, the 2nd *koṭi*, which is considered to be an anti-thesis should be higher than the 1st *koṭi* (thesis) in its value. Further, the 3rd *koṭi*, interpreted as a synthesis, transcends both the thesis and antithesis. Accordingly, it constitutes itself as superior or more real than both.

And in the second phase of mediation, synthesis (3rd *koṭi*) becomes a thesis to the fourth *koṭi*, whereas the 4th *koṭi* becomes the antithesis to the 3rd one. In this way, the antithesis always has to be superior or more real than the thesis. And it negates its contradiction within the thesis. As a consequence, the four-pronged propositions are divided into two separate levels from which begins another progression and etc. Yet, this

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corresponds to an infinite regress in terms of Nāgārjuna’s logic.

To prevent this kind of regressio ad infinitum, Kajiyama proposes that the fourth proposition (koṭi), ‘X=¬p∧¬(¬p)’ should be the most supreme proposition which reveals the truth that Madhyamikas intended to demonstrate. Yet, he does not explain the logical inconsistency between this final phase of supreme truth and the possibility of reaching a synthesis which becomes another thesis in the next cycle of mediation.

Explaining the 4th koṭi of 18.8(20) which delineates the graded teaching of Buddha in MMK, Kajiyama just states this.

Since the 4th koṭi is the supreme religious truth of Madhyamikas, it cannot be negated in that limit. Yet, that truth is neither established in the area of discourse where the 1st koṭi is established, nor in the area where the 2nd and 3rd koṭis are established. In other words, the 4th koṭi is the kind of thing to be negated in the area where the 1st and the 3rd koṭis are established.21)

Thus, Kajiyama proposes that, “if we see the 4th koṭi as corresponding to a synthesis, it should not be negated in that limit.”22) And this is actually the point where the Pudgalavādins and most East Asian Buddhists have regarded the 4th koṭi as the ultimate form of truth.

In this respect, Kajiyama’s substantial understanding of ca-tuṣkoti, emphasizing on ‘its gradational progression into the

20) 18-8) sarvam tathyaṃ na và tathyaṃ tathyaṃ cātathyam eva ca/naivatathyaṃ naivatathyaṃ etadbuddhānuśāsanam (All is real, or all is unreal, all is both real and unreal, all is neither unreal nor real; this is the graded teaching of the Buddha)
highest truth’ does not seem to share any affinities with Nāgārjuna than Pudgalavādins or East Asian Buddhists who share certain degree of Hegelian characteristics.

Then let’s see Nāgārjuna’s way of rehabilitating the purport of catuṣkoṭi, while evaluating the implication of negative logic in his concept of emptiness. To support my claim of the implausibility of a dialectic interpretation, I will also examine some viewpoints of the different stages from Pingala and Candrakīrti’s commentaries like Robinson and Kajiyama have done. Yet I will propose a semantic interpretation of focusing on ‘perspectives’ and ‘expedient’, as against their metaphysical interpretation.

Ⅲ. Possible Reformulation of Catuṣkoṭi with Prasāṅga and its implications

1. ‘Perspectives’ in interpreting tetralemma. Piṅgala and Candrakīrti

In chapter II, we have seen that Robinson and Kajiyama use Hegelian dialectic to claim, that after negating all perverted false views, emptiness reveals itself in the form of ultimate truth. This ultimate truth, despite being called emptiness turns out to be something real, i.e., a synthesis of 4th koṭi. Yet, the fact that emptiness is viewed as the expedient to get rid of all metaphysical views in Nāgārjuna23) shows why Robinson and
Kajiyama's metaphysical interpretation of ultimate truth corresponding to the 4th koti turns out to be a misconception.

Meanwhile, the explanation in terms of Buddha's skill in teaching, as an 'expedient' in Pingala and Candrakīrti's commentaries denotes the way in which the four-pronged affirmation can be interpreted against Hegelian tone. We have also seen that Candrakīrti in his Commentaries, argues that four propositions portray the object from different perspectives.

To Candrakīrti, 'the 1st perspective' shows the view from the conventional reality or from common people, while 'the 2nd perspective' demonstrates the view from the ultimate reality or the view from an awakened one. Further, whereas 'the 3rd perspective' shows both conventional and ultimate reality, 'the 4th perspective' manifests the inner state of an awakened one like Buddha.

Related to this state, when Pingala explains the 4th koti, he describes it as 'the absence of the definite feature of all dharmas'. And he explains that the true character is 'neither falling into permanence nor annihilation', and goes on to say that "there is within this character, no dharmas to be grasped or relinquished so as to be called the characteristic of calm extinction."24)

Here, although Pingala's position is that 'reality is ineffable', his interpretation of the emptiness of the 4th koti like Candrakīrti's,25) is still to insist that 'all dharmas are utterly empty.'26) Likewise, even in Pingala's interpretation, it is more

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23) 13-8) śūnyatā sarvadrṣṭināṃ proktā niḥsaranāṃ jinaiḥ/ yeṣāṃ tu śūnyatadrṣṭistānādhyān babhāsire

24) MT pp. 282-284.

valid to interpret this four-pronged affirmation in terms of 'absence of intrinsic nature.' For Pingala, everything can be interpreted from different perspectives due to this 'absence of intrinsic nature' (niḥsvabhāva), and this seems to be applicable to Buddha's tetralemma.

Taking different perspectives into account, Pingala suggests that the 3rd koṭi embraces the 1st and 2nd koṭi. And it can be interpreted as, 'All dharmas come from both perspectives of ultimate reality and pratītyasamutpāda,' while the 4th koṭi negates the 3rd one. And since the 4th koṭi negates the former, the 1st and 2nd koṭis are automatically negated because the 3rd koṭi encompasses both the 1st and 2nd koṭis.

While this sort of gradational interpretation can be problematic without considering the different perspectives and non-intrinsicness, it does not include Kajiyama and Robinson's claim that the 4th koṭi is superior and the most real. Rather it just signifies the fact that, with various perspectives, one ought not adhere to any koṭi as the most definite because every koṭi represents the same Buddha's teaching.

Therefore, Robinson and Kajiyama's valuing of the 4th koṭi as supreme should also be rejected on a basis of an understanding of all the koṭis as being equal and non being higher than any other. Apart from 'a graded teaching as an expedient by Buddha,' there are no different levels making the tetralemma a vertical hierarchy like that of Hegelian dialectic.

This is more evident when trying to reformulate the tetralemma into logical form and thus seeing the relationship between the subject and the predicate in a koṭi. As is shown in

26) MT p. 284.
Pingala's Commentary, despite the fact that the subjects of the statements in the tetralemma use the same referent, every koṭi comes to possess different subjects due to different perspectives.

Moreover, unlike Robinson's interpretation, the very definitions of the subjects vary with every koṭi due to different combination of positive and negative concomitance by which the characteristics of whole koṭis vary in their respective contexts. And these variations show how each case addresses different perspectives in a binary form of horizontal sequence of concomitance.

Now, let us reformulate the tetralemma case of 18. 8 in MMK in a way to show this sort of multi-faceted horizontal perspective.

[Here, S denotes the subject/ p denotes different perspectives/ p^ denotes another perspective/ Sp denotes different perspectives of S/ r denotes the predicate/ I denotes 'inexpressible'/ and X denotes the presupposition that 'there are such things as 'everything''].

1. “Everything(Sp1) is real(r).” [With X, p1=r]
2. “Everything(Sp2) is unreal(r).” [With X, p2=−r]
3. “There is some respect(p) that everything(Sp1) is real(r) and there is another respect(p') that everything(Sp2) is unreal(r).”
   [With X, p1/Sp1=r and p2/Sp2=−r]
4. “Neither real nor unreal.” [With X, S=−r and −(−r)=I]

Logically speaking, we can further diversify this combination in terms of concomitant sequence of each variable from the same subject/object to different subjects/objects, seen from various perspectives. Likewise, from the differences of per-
spectives among subjects we can deduce a logical form without violating any law of classical logic.

Meanwhile, it also shows that this sort of horizontal understanding differs from hierarchical structure of Hegelian dialectics. And due to the absence of hierarchy, Robinsonian dialectical interpretation of the tetralemma fails to the ground.

Now, let us examine into the implication of Nāgārjuna’s negative logic. Using the Nāgārjunian method of reduction ad absurdum (prāsanga) we will reformulate a possible way of negating each affirmation proposed by an opponent.

2. Possible Reformulation of the Negative Logic (Prasanga) in tetralemma

As we have seen above, Robinson and Kajiyama’s analyses lie in the presupposition that catuskoti consists in a dialectical formula emphasizing the 4th koṭi. Yet, Nāgārjuna does not follow this dialectical progression, in that he is mostly using the prasanga method to deduce contradictions inside the appropriate discourses of catuskoti, considering each proposition with different perspectives. Here, every item has to be negated without equating the above items, nor violating the basic rules of formal logic. Upon these speculation on the characteristics shown above, we can see that Nāgārjuna’s use of catuskoti is neither a deviation of classical formal logic, nor an ancestor of Hegelian dialectics.

Then, with this possible reformulation, we can deduce Nāgārjuna’s idea of negation from the general features of his
logical scheme of *reduction ad absurdum* (*prasanga*). Thereby, we find support for my claim of the implausibility of the dialectic interpretation of *catuṣkoṭi*.

Let’s assume that the opponent asserts, “If p, then q”. For this, Nagarjuna would deduce a contradiction that p has to be negated by *prasanga*, while saying, “Yet it’s not q, thus, not p”. Further, if the opponent argues that “If not p, then r”, Nagarjuna deduces the contradiction by showing that “It’s not r, thus, not ¬p”.

Likewise, when the counterpart argues on the negation of p, which is ¬p, Nagarjuna might deduce the contradiction by negating ¬p with double negation. Yet here, the law of double negation is not acknowledged so that the 3rd *koṭi* can be negated. In other words, even though the opponent asserts that the implication of “double negation is affirmation” (The Principle of Equality), Nagarjuna can deduce p with a new perspective to evade the contradiction. [‘Negation of (p and ¬p)’: Principle of Contradiction vs. perspectives]

In this manner, the fourth *koṭi* (‘neither, nor’ thesis) can also be rejected as containing a premise with substantial affirmation, while evading the Law of Excluded Middle. [Negation of (¬p and ¬(¬p)): The Principle of Excluded Middle vs. presuppositions]

In turn, if the counterpart evaluates this result, then he will find that he cannot assert The Principle of the Excluded Middle any more. Because, either case (p, or ¬p) is provided with certain presupposition that the assertion of either case (p or ¬p) will lead to contradiction. And p ∧ p and ¬(p ∧ p) should accordingly be rejected by showing non-intrinsicness of that
presupposition. Thus, there is no reason to elevate $p$ and $\neg p$ or $p \land \neg p$ to a higher stage of $\neg (p \land \neg p)$ as a synthesis, not to be negated in that limit.

Here, Nāgārjuna critiques the \textit{catuskoṭi} is to show the self-contradiction of all possible options for the opponent. Hence, it does not represent a process of dialectical elevation, which criticizes the previous phrase while heading towards the 4th \textit{koti}.

In chapter 2(2.24 and 2.25) of \textit{MMK} \cite{27} for instance, the goer can only be classified as: ‘goer as an affirmation’, ‘goer as a negation’, ‘goer both as an affirmation and negation’, while omitting the 4th \textit{koti}, which can be one of the most negative evidences against Robinson’s interpretation of \textit{catuskoṭi}.

Furthermore, Nāgārjunian usage of negative logic(\textit{prasaṅga}) is mainly come to be made of syllogism deducing a conclusion of the categorical proposition from each corresponding presupposition. Consequently, several variations, consisting of hypothetical and disjunctive proposition, could be drawn to raise one’s own chance of winning the debate, which is definitely not a dialectical process.

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\textsuperscript{27) 2–24) sadbhūto gamanām gantā triprakāraṃ na gacchati/ nāsadbhūto 'pi gamanāṃ triprakāraṃ gacchati(One who is a real goer does not perform a going of any of the three kinds. Neither does one who is not a real goer perform a going of any of the three kinds); 2–25) gamanāṃ sada sadbhūtaṃ triprakāraṃ na gacchati/tasmādgatiśca gantā ca gantavyam ca na vidyate(One who is a both-real-and-unreal goer does not perform a going of any of the three kinds. Thus there is no going, no goer, and no destination)
IV. Conclusion

Tuck distinguishes three phases in the Western interpretation of Nāgārjuna and the Madyamaka school: German idealism (Kant, Hegel), Anglo-American analysis and post-Wittgensteinian linguistic functionalism. And like Stcherbatsky or Murti’s understanding on the line of Hegel, which sees the reality of a transcendent world of the thing-in-itself, along with the contradiction and duality of the Phenomenal and the Noumenal, Robinson and Kajiyama take this sort of dialectical view on tetramenma, while retaining analytical method of Anglo-American philosophy based on classical formal logic.

Accordingly, Robinson and Kajiyama propose that ‘(p\&\neg p)’ is similar to the 3rd koṭi, while formally denoting the negation of the 3rd proposition. And they further argue that this corresponds to the negation process of thesis–antithesis and synthesis in Hegelian dialectics.” Yet, is it fair to judge Nāgārjuna’s scheme as corresponding to Hegelian gradational dialectics?

Responding to this problematic interpretation, I have argued that none of these koṭis in tetramenma can be understood as ‘the identity in difference’ thesis of Hegelian dialectics, possessing gradational formulations. Rather, as against Robinson and Kajiyama’s Hegelian interpretations on the 4th koṭi, I have also

argued that Nāgārjuna’s scheme does not find its culminating form in ‘the reality is ineffable’ approach of emptiness based on hierarchical and metaphysical conception of truth.

Following their dialectical interpretation, ‘neither, nor thesis’ of 4th koṭi becomes the true representation of ultimate truth, in the sense that “each koṭi is nothing but a different aspects of one identity as true synthesis or inexpressible.” For this, they use Candrakīrti and Pingala’s Commentaries, explaining the gradational elevation of each perspective to the ultimate.

Yet, this does not do justice to these commentator’s understandings, which regard each koṭi as representing different perspectives without valuing the 4th koṭi as the ultimate. Nor does it respond fairly to the implication of negative logic found in Nāgārjuna’s prasaṅga, which does not posit any identity. In this respect, Nāgārjuna’s horizontal scheme of reduction ad absurdum (prasaṅga) seems to allow no room for accepting dialectic interpretation in evaluating catuskoti.

From this point of view, the possible reconstruction of Nāgārjuna’s interpretation of tetralemma would be closer to semantic and non dualistic approach of truth, saying that “we must abandon the very idea of an ultimate truth.”

Abbreviation and Bibliography


TD: 大正新脩大藏経 中論 TD 30.
三彌底部論 TD. 32.
三法度論 TD. 25


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요약문

용수 사구 논리에 대한 로빈슨식 해석의 타당성
귀류논법과 해겔변증법의 대비를 중심으로

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카지야마 유이치는 용수의 四句論理가 해겔 변증법의 특성을 지니는 것으로 보고, 4번째 구(4句)의 부정 형식을 승의체로서 더 이상 부정될 수 없는 중관의 종교적 진리로 제시한다. 로빈슨 또한 4句를 제 견해를 중식시킬 수 있는 명제로 상정한다.

이러한 해석에 대해, 본 논문에서는 용수가 사용한 사구 논리구조에 변증법을 적용하는 점을 타당하지 않음을 제시한다. 종합적 검토를 위해, 정목과 원칭의 주석 또한 참조했다. 다만, 로빈슨ᆞ카지야마의 해석과 달리, 무자성에 기반한 관점의 차이에 주목하는 해석방법을 취했다. 이로써, 부정과 회의의 방식을 사용하는 용수 논리와 해겔 변증법의 차별성을 드러내고자 했다.

나아가, 귀류논증 방식에 따라 사구부정의 논리구조를 재해석함으로써, 변증법과 대별되는 용수의 부정 논법에 담긴 함의를 의미론적 맥락에서 추정해 보았다. 무자성 공의 함의를 드러내기 위해 상이한 관점을 활용한 용수는 각 구들이 동일성을 지닌 것으로 보지 않았을 뿐 아니라, 각 구들 사이의 수직적 위계를 설정하지도 않았다.

이로써, 사구 안의 어떤 명제 또한 형이상학이나 변증법적 해석을 상정하지 않고도 논리적 명증성을 갖고 이해할 수 있다. 즉, 사구에 대한 용수의 부정은 동일성을 지닌 실제가 존재한다면거나, 연기적 조건이 자성을 지닌 것으로 오인하는 무지를 드러내기 위한 방면적 함의를 지닌 것으로 이해할 수 있는 것이다.
주요어: 四句, 사구 논리, 헤겔 변증법, 귀류논법(부정의 논리), 관점, 방편

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