

Categories and Madhyamaka

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Categories and Madhyamaka

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Two principles of Madhyamaka thought

- **Common-sense principle [CS]:** only ontological categories of common sense are accepted
 - conflict with ontology as traditionally conceived
 - problem with establishing conventional truth
- **No-analysis principle [NA]:** rejection of analysis of systems of categories

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Conventional truth = what people think?

- criticism by Kamalaśīla
- how can we know common opinion is wrong? Tsong kha pa
- qualification of no-analysis principle
- But this still does not allow ontological analysis since it is a kind of ultimate analysis.

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Madhyamaka and grammatical categories

- sophisticated categorial frameworks employed in Madhyamaka analysis: *kāraṅka* theory
- Candrakīrti's commentary on chapter 2 of Nāgārjuna's MMK
 - constitutive and instantiated properties
 - *kāraṅka* as substance or as power?
- this type of analysis appears to conflict with CS and NA

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Madhyamaka and Abhidharma categories

- Madhyamaka as reaction to Abhidharma metaphysics
- analysis *begins* with an intricate categorial framework, not with an unsophisticated set of conventions
- but is not *any* categorial framework as good as any other as a starting point for Madhyamaka analysis, since all the frameworks are similarly mistaken?

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Madhyamaka and Nyāya categories

- Conflict with NA? Nāgārjuna's Vaidalyaprakaraṇa on argumentative quibbles (*chala*):

It is objected: Even though according to you all have been asserted as categories, they do not exist ultimately. It is to be replied: That is not the case, because there would be this consequence for all replies. It is not like that, because whatever I addressed in a reply, all those are meant precisely as categories. Why is that? All disputants, by agreeing, would undeniably impair their own assertions. Therefore what is said in reply is if not reasonable, rather than a fallacy? Otherwise, if one does not assert this principle then there is no fallacy.

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Madhyamaka and Nyāya categories 2

- Vaidalyaprakaraṇa 62: the Naiyāyika's arguments have no argumentative force since their objects are momentary
- universal momentariness: conventional but not commonsensical truth
- unlike Abhidharma, the Nyāya system is regarded as mistaken even at the conventional level
- Candrakīrti and epistemic instruments
- difficulties with non-Buddhist systems of categories

Conclusions

- conventional truth cannot be merely unreflected intuitions
- from the Madhyamaka perspective the use of systems of categories is merely transactional
- pre-existent systems have to be modified to cohere with Madhyamaka positions
- Criteria:
 - their general philosophical usefulness
 - the extent to which the systems can be made "*svabhāva-free*"