The Discussion of Simultaneous Existence of Two Minds Concomitant with the Demonstration of Three Temporal Existences: Hypotheses on a Reduction to Absurdity in the Vijñānakāya

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The objective of this paper is to propose two hypotheses on the aim of the reduction to absurdity (reductio ad absurdum) regarding simultaneous existence of two minds that is concomitant with the discussion of existences in the past, present, and future ("the present source of evil, greed cannot be observed on account of the three conditions"), refuting the traditional claim that this reduction to absurdity indicates a motivation to introduce the theory of three temporal states of existence.

The method is to examine what stance the proponent (the Sarvāstivādin) and his opponent take toward the three conditions that are the core of this reduction to absurdity; that is, 1) the observing mind cannot observe itself, 2) the observing mind (*citta) cannot observe the concomitant minds and emotions with the observation (*cāitta), and 3) two minds never appear in the observer at the same time.

First of all, the traditional claim that this reduction to absurdity is a motivation of introducing the theory of three temporal existences can be refuted, because it can be deduced both from the principle of the demonstration of three temporal existences and from the principle of this reduction to absurdity itself that these three conditions do not occur in both the proponent and the opponent; rather they occur only in the mental system of the opponent.

Secondly, however, the discussion of the Mahāvibhāṣā (阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論), which was written in later years, indicates that the opponent who recognizes these three conditions did not really exist.

Therefore, two possibilities can be deduced. 1) The possibility that the reduction to absurdity regarding simultaneous existence of two minds was carried out by the proponent (the Sarvāstivādin), as no one but he recognized the three conditions under the situation that the formation process of the demonstration of three temporal existences had been completely forgotten. Alternatively, 2) the possibility that the reduction to absurdity regarding simultaneous existence of two minds was carried out, but that there existed none who recognized the three conditions because the formation process of the demonstration of three temporal existences was fully realized by the proponent (the Sarvāstivādin).

From these two possibilities, the following two hypotheses can be derived. With regard to the possibility 1), it can be hypothesized that Sarvāstivādins tried to solve the contradiction concerning simultaneous existence of two minds in their doctrinal system by making use of the existing theory of three temporal existences. As for the possibility 2), it can be hypothesized that
Sarvāstivādins tried to make their opponents recognise again the demonstration of three temporal existences—that there must exist the feature that can be a reason for the demonstration of three temporal existence in the entity that is the subject (pakṣadharmatā) — through the discussion of the reduction to absurdity regarding simultaneous existence of two minds, which had less validity.