

# THE RECOGNITION OF TIME AND ITS MEANING IN THE THOUGHTS OF BERGSON AND NĀGĀRJUNA

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to investigate the thoughts of both Bergson and Nāgārjuna through the motion impossibility of Zeno. The concepts of both the duration (*durée*) of Bergson and the sunya (空, *Śūnyatā*) of Nāgārjuna cause both the controversy and the misunderstanding in studies, and in these days this situation is still unchanged. Since the studies for the reasons why this misunderstanding happens and why this should happens are not satisfactory, we would shed new light on the understanding for the duration and the sunya by the revealing of origin of these reasons through the investigation of the time and the limit of thought. Even though both Bergson and Nāgārjuna show one aspect for the limit of thought, there is still unnoticed limit in their thoughts. To attain this limit, firstly we should ask ourselves “why do we think ‘something is’ rather ‘anything is not’?” From Zeno’s paradoxes, we could start investigation for this question. By means of Bergson and Nāgārjuna’s thoughts, we point out the misunderstanding of time as everything comes out illusion by thought of the reflection of time. We confront the instant which approaches to the limit of thought via Zeno’s paradoxes. We would name that instant as the new time ‘Now’. We interrogate the new time ‘Now’ with the limit of thought through Zeno’s paradoxes and Bergson and Nāgārjuna’s thoughts.

**Key words:** Nāgārjuna, Bergson, time, the paradox of Zeno, Mahayana

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Time is an age-old question that has become a preeminently modern problem. The acts to ask about the time itself are related with the metaphysical questions as we recognize in Confession by Augustine. Also, the various ways how we could understand the time in both real and mental life are considered as the level of the development at the civilization. Therefore the studies which are related with the time are very diverse and orientations of studies are very different. For example, how people recognize the time. And what the time and the sense of the recognition of the time do mean etc. Although in this variety of the questions, there are novel attempts about the recognition of the time and its meaning in the thoughts of Bergson and Nāgārjuna.

Bergson urged us to think time concretely. He invited us to consider the real act of moving, the happening of what happens (*ce qui ce fait*), and asked us to consider movement in terms of qualitative change, not as change that we measure after the fact and map onto space. When we figure out time as a line, or a circle, the time stops moving. We inadvertently turn time into space. Bergson writes that our ordinary logic is the logic of retrospection. He thinks the time as a force. This is what he meant by the real duration (*durée*). Western philosophy, he argues, has lost sight of this efficacy of time, and the productive force is displayed in the emergence of the absolutely new. When Bergson had started his thought, the effect of science is increased and then the time is treated as a kind of spatialization of time through the science. He found the concept of duration criticizing the motion-impossibility of Zeno and opened the new metaphysics in western philosophy.

Nāgārjuna is surely one of the most difficult philosophers to interpret in any tradition. His texts are terse and cryptic. He does not shy away from paradox or apparent contradiction. Nāgārjuna's main work in the Mahayana, the Wide Path, was the *Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*, the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. The purpose of the verses, the *Karikas*, is to counter the extreme views of belief in a substance or eternal essence to phenomena, and the opposing view of belief that nothing exists or matters. Nāgārjuna developed a body of thought that accepted our diverse and impermanent empirical reality, and rejected the concepts of the eternal souls and the substantial selves, and of the substance or self of phenomena, while also balancing this rejection to assure meaning in agency to develop personal liberation from suffering. Like the same situation as Bergson, Nāgārjuna confronted Sarvastivadins who insisted that there is substance in the universe. But it went against the three dharma mark (三法印) of Buddha, then he asserted that the everything is the sunya (空, Śūnyatā) which is against Sarvastivadins.

Middle Way (*Madhyamaka*) philosophy was formalized by Nāgārjuna in the 1st century AD from the huge transcendent wisdom (prajnaparamita) literature developed in the sutras, or words of the Buddha, during the previous 600 years. There has been continual discussion and commentary on this philosophy since then. Such discussion involves considerable debate and disagreement about the nature of our world that is discovered through both metaphysical analysis and meditative equipoise. All of the major writers on Madhyamaka were renowned in both techniques. Middle Way Buddhist philosophy analyses phenomenal objects with the view that they have no inherent existence, but have only interdependent and conventional existence. The view of personal identity is similar.

Greek philosopher and mathematician Zeno of Elea was the first great philosophical skeptic in western tradition. He is famous for his paradoxes, which deal with the continuity of motion. He made a series of arguments in which he purported to prove by logical means that motion and plurality are impossible. In his view all human knowledge is based on an unprovable hypothesis: that time and space are continuous.

In this paper, we should ask ourselves “why do we think ‘something is’ rather ‘anything is not’”. From Zeno's paradoxes, we could start investigation for this question. By means of Bergson and Nāgārjuna's thoughts, we point out the misunderstanding of time as everything comes out illusion by thought of the reflection of time. We confront the instant which approaches to the limit of thought via Zeno's paradoxes. We would name that instant as the new time ‘Now’. Last we interrogate the new time ‘Now’.

## I. TIME FROM ZENO' PARADOX

For almost 2500 years, Zeno's paradoxes of motion have attracted the interest of philosophers, mathematicians, and scientists.<sup>1</sup> They came to realize that to escape the contradictions found in Zeno's paradoxes, it was necessary to radically reinterpret the concepts of space, time, and motion, as well as the mathematical ideas of line, number, measure, and the sum of a series. Contributors to the resolution of the paradoxes include: Isaac Newton, Gottfried von Leibniz, Augustin Cauchy, Karl Weierstrass, Richard Dedekind, Georg Cantor, Albert Einstein, and Henry Bergson etc.

Almost everything that we know about Zeno of Elea is to be found in the opening pages

<sup>1</sup> See, W. C. Salmon (ed), 1970, *Zeno's Paradoxes*, Bobbs-Merrill, New York, 5-44.

of Plato's Parmenides. There we learn that Zeno was nearly 40 years old when Socrates was a young man, say 20. Since Socrates was born in 469 BC we can estimate a birth date for Zeno around 490 BC. Beyond this, really all we know is that he was close to Parmenides and that he wrote a book of paradoxes defending Parmenides' philosophy. Sadly this book has not survived, and what we know of his arguments is second-hand, principally through Aristotle and his commentators<sup>2</sup>. There were apparently 40 'paradoxes of plurality', attempting to show that ontological pluralism—a belief in the existence of many things rather than only one—leads to absurd conclusions. Aristotle speaks of a further four arguments against motion (and by extension change generally), all of which he gives and attempts to refute. In addition Aristotle attributes two other paradoxes to Zeno. Sadly again, almost none of these paradoxes are quoted in Zeno's original words by their various commentators, but in paraphrase.

Zeno's arguments concerning motion introduced the element of time, and revealed that time cannot be considered merely the sum of moments. Briefly the three arguments are as follows:

1. *The Dichotomy*: Motion cannot exist because if something moves from one place to another, it must first reach the midpoint of the distance to be traveled, but before it can do that it has to reach the midpoint of the first half, and before it can do that it must reach the midpoint of the first fourth, and so on ad infinitum. It must, therefore, pass through an infinite number of points, and this is impossible in a finite amount of time.<sup>3</sup>
2. *The Achilles*: In a race between the running Achilles and the crawling tortoise, the former can never overtake the latter if the tortoise has a head start. Before Achilles reaches the point from which the tortoise started, the tortoise will have move ahead a little way and Achilles must run to this new position but by the time he reaches it the tortoise has moved ahead again, and ad infinitum. English mathematician and writer Charles Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, used the characters of Achilles and the tortoise to illustrate his paradox of infinity.

<sup>2</sup> Here I have drawn particularly on Simplicius, who, though writing a thousand years after Zeno, apparently possessed at least some of his book (with reference of Salmon's book, *Zeno's Paradoxes*).

<sup>3</sup> Generally, including 'the Stadium', there are four paradoxes. As Zeno's misunderstanding of 'the Stadium' is obvious, it seems good to me to omit this paradox in this paper.

3. *The Arrow*: An arrow shot in the air is either in motion or at rest. An arrow cannot move, because for motion to take place, the arrow would have to be in one position at the beginning of an instant and at another at the end of the instant. But as time is made up of instants, which are the smallest measure of time and are not further divisible, this is a contradiction. Hence, the arrow is always at rest.

We will analyze briefly the problem of motion at an instant in time by introducing the classic expression of Zeno's Arrow. If, during the flight of an arrow going from bow to target, one freezes time—such as with a very high speed camera or a thought experiment—the arrow would look as if it were at rest. If this were an accurate representation of the state of the moving arrow at every instant of time, then perhaps one could say that the arrow was at rest at each moment during its movement.

Time enters mechanics as a measure of interval, relative to the clock completing the measurement. Conversely, although it is generally not realized, in all cases a time value indicates an interval of time, rather than a precise static instant in time at which the relative position of a body in relative motion or a specific physical magnitude would theoretically be precisely determined. For example, if two separate events are measured to take place at either 1 hour or 10.00 seconds, these two values indicate the events occurred during the time intervals of 1 and 1.9999 hours and 10.00 and 10.9999...seconds, respectively.

If a time measurement is made smaller and more accurate, the value comes closer to an accurate measure of an interval in time. Regardless of how small and accurate the value is made however, it cannot indicate a precise static instant in time at which a value would theoretically be precisely determined, because there is not a precise static instant in time underlying a dynamical and physical process. If there were, the relative position of a body in relative motion, although precisely determined at such a precise static instant, it would also by way of logical necessity be frozen static at that precise static instant.

Furthermore, events and all physical magnitudes would remain frozen static, and as such a precise static instant in time those would remain frozen static at the same precise static instant: motion would not be possible. Rather than facilitating motion and physical continuity, this would perpetuate a constant precise static instant in time. And as is the very nature of this ethereal notion i.e. a physical process frozen static at an 'instant' as though stuck on pause or freeze frame on a motion screen, physical continuity is not possible if such a discontinuous

chronological feature is an intrinsic property of a dynamical physical process. And as such, a meaningful (and actual physical) indicator of a time at which the relative position of a body in relative motion or a certain physical magnitude is precisely determined as has historically been assumed, physical continuity is not possible. That is, it is the human observer who subjectively projects and assigns a precise instant in time upon a physical process, for example, in order to gain a meaningful subjective picture or 'mental snapshot' of the relative position of a body in relative motion.

It might also be contended in a more philosophical sense that a general definition of static would entitle a certain physical magnitude as being unchanging for an extended interval of time. But if this is so, how then could time itself be said to be frozen static at a precise instant as if it must be unchanging for an extended interval of time? As a general and sensible definition this is no doubt correct, as we live in a world where indeed there is interval in time, and so for a certain physical magnitude to be static and unchanging it would naturally also have to remain so for an extended duration, even though, short.

There is something of a paradox here, however. If there were a precise static instant underlying a dynamical physical process, everything, including clocks and watches would also be frozen static and discontinuous, and as such, interval in time would not be possible either. There could be no interval in time for a certain physical magnitude to remain unchanging. Thus this general definition of static breaks down when the notion of static is applied to time itself. We are so then forced to search for a revised definition of static for this special temporal case. This is done by qualifying the use of stasis in this particular circumstance by noting static and unchanging, with static and unchanging as not being over interval, as there could be no interval and nothing could change in the first instance. At the same time, however, it should also be enough just to be able to recognize and acknowledge the fault and paradox in the definition when applied to time.

Nonetheless Zeno's paradoxes reveal the ultimate space which does not have length and ultimate time which does not pass by. Even if there is no length and no time, we could think the length and time. But in this case, both length and time is retrospective. The western philosophy, including the Parmenides, Heraclitus of Ephesus and even Bergson, focuses on the view of retrospection. But oppositely when we see the acts to divide with Zeno's paradoxes, namely, what we think is after we experience the 'Now' at no length and no time. Therefore, on concentrating on Zeno's paradoxes, we could absorb into 'Now'.

## II. TIME FROM BERGSON WITH ZENO'S PARADOX

The fundamental obstacle to the progress of Western thought is the problem of continuity. Following that, the greatest hurdle is the refusal to confront or even acknowledge its existence. As Bergson for one has pointed out, the problem of continuity underlies that of metaphysics and, accordingly, philosophy as a whole - for the simple reason that we are immanent to it. Although Bergson is not alone in discovering continuity's implication in, for example, the duration of thought itself (the most notable other being Nietzsche), no one else has been more maligned for doing so.

When we consider the problem of becoming in real life, Bergson said that we could not help meeting the problem of continuity. He wrote characterize more precisely our natural attitude towards Becoming, and this is what we find.

Becoming is infinitely varied. That which goes from yellow to green is not like that which goes from green to blue: they are different *qualitative* movements.... The trick of our perception, like that of our intelligence, like that of our language, consists in extracting from these profoundly different becomings the single representation of becoming in general, undefined becoming, a mere abstraction which by itself says nothing and of which, indeed, it is very rarely that we think.<sup>4</sup>

To this idea, always the same, and always obscure or unconscious, we then join, in each particular case, one or several clear images that represent states and which serve to distinguish all becomings from each other. It is this composition of a specified and definite state with change general and undefined that we substitute for the specific change. Bergson said this is the cinematographic view of becoming as below.

Suppose we wish to portray on a screen a living picture, such as the marching past of a regiment.... It is to take a series of snapshots of the passing regiment and to throw these instantaneous views on the screen, so that they replace each other very rapidly. This is what the cinematograph does. With photographs, each of which represents the

<sup>4</sup> Henry Bergson. *L'Evolution créatrice* (1907), translated by Arthur Mitchell as *Creative Evolution* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1911), 303-304.

regiment in a fixed attitude, it reconstitutes the mobility of the regiment marching.<sup>5</sup>

With cinematograph analogy, Bergson criticized that “with immobility set beside immobility, even endlessly, we could never make movement”. The movement does indeed exist here; it is in the apparatus. The process then consists in extracting from all the movements peculiar to all the figures an impersonal movement abstract and simple, movement in general. Such is the contrivance of the cinematograph, and such is also that of our knowledge. Instead of attaching ourselves to the inner becoming of things, we place ourselves outside them in order to recompose their becoming artificially. Perception, intellection and, language so proceed in general. Bergson would sum up that “the mechanism of our ordinary knowledge is of a cinematographical kind”. From this notice, Bergson said that “every attempt to reconstitute change out of states implies the absurd proposition that movement is made of immobilities”. The arguments of Zeno of Elea, although formulated with a very different intention, have no other meaning. Take the flying arrow.

At every moment, says Zeno, it is motionless, for it cannot have time to move, that is, to occupy at least two successive positions, unless at least two moments are allowed it. At a given moment, therefore, it is at rest at a given point. Motionless in each point of its course, it is motionless during all the time that it is moving.<sup>6</sup>

Bergson said yes, if we suppose that the arrow can ever be in a point of its course. And also yes, if the arrow, which is moving, ever coincides with a position, which is motionless. But the arrow never is in any point of its course. The most we can say is that it might be there. It is true that if it did stop there, it would be at rest there, and at this point it is no longer movement that we should have to do with. A single movement is entirely, by the hypothesis, a movement between two stops; if there are intermediate stops, it is no longer a single movement.

At bottom, the illusion arises from this, that the movement, once effected, has laid along its course a motionless trajectory on which we can count as many immobilities as we will. From this we conclude that the movement, whilst being effected, lays at each instant beneath it a position with which it coincides. We do not see that the trajectory is

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 304.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 308.

created in one stroke, although a certain time is required for it; and that though we can divide at will the trajectory once created, we cannot divide its creation, which is an act in progress and not a thing.<sup>7</sup>

The aporetic relation between the primary data of any objective science and the continuity of process emerged with the Eleatic paradoxes. As Zeno pointed out, movement is absent from a world where all processes are either conceived or apprehended as a series of instants. Since the discrete underlies both the apprehension and comprehension of objectivity, the reconciliation of the discrete and the continuous has been an insurmountable barrier to metaphysics as well as philosophy’s desire to attain the objectivity of science. Aristotle managed to brush Zeno’s aporia under the carpet, by naming it the potential infinite, only for it to reappear with the discovery of the calculus. Leibniz and Newton’s attempts to resolve the problem simply caused the potential infinite to return under the guises of the infinitesimal and the fluxion. Only with Cantor’s set theoretical definition of the continuum did it seem as if, albeit briefly, the problem had once and for all been solved. Employing arithmetic alone Cantor was able to demonstrate the actuality, rather than potentiality, of the mathematical continuum.

In this sense, not only is Bergson’s conception of continuity of value to any future metaphysics, the general reaction to it indicates both a resistance within thought to the possibility of change as well as precisely where, in contemporary philosophy, that change must take place. The primary transformation that philosophy must undertake if it is to embrace continuity as it is lived or encountered, is to abandon both its pretension to emulate and, as it is currently practiced, its actual subordination to, science. The simple reason for this, is that if philosophy is inseparable from life’s continuity, as continuity itself demands it must be, then philosophy must not so much embrace uncertainty but adapt itself in order to encounter and express thought’s immanence to life and change.

Moreover, as Bergson has demonstrated, our only access to that which takes place in the absolute continuity of lived time is the immediacy of our affective awareness. Our affections, it could be said, exist solely in the infinitive. In this sense, it is to affectivity that we must look in order to grasp the changing composition of the present and our relations with it.

Bergsonian duration is characteristic of life and consciousness, and is characterized by continuous change, which is also characteristic of life and consciousness. All time is unique; no instant of consciousness is ever exactly the same as any other instant, but all time is also

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 309.

characterized by interpenetration, which is the overlapping of current experience and memory. It is this overlapping that allows us to witness the phenomenon of change, because we can compare what we experience of reality currently with our memory of what we experienced at another instant.

From above, we could know that Bergson's thought intimately is related with the life as the absolute continuity of lived time. But we know that there is a hidden premise which there is something. In this time, we also could ask to Bergson, why do you think 'something is' rather 'anything is not'? Through the consideration of Zeno's arrow, he reveal the real time, duration, which is experienced in real life. This is very important and shows the triumph of thinking. Nonetheless, we should know that we miss the chance to meet new time 'Now'. We would show that we follow the Nāgārjuna's thought, and then we could make a chance to meet 'Now'.

### III. TIME FROM NĀGĀRJUNA WITH ZENO'S PARADOX

The concept of time is examined explicitly and implicitly throughout many, if not most, of the chapters of Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, which is reasonable considering that the discussion largely focuses on change, which Nāgārjuna says could not happen if there were an unchanging substance in phenomena. Examples of the topics considered in that text which refer at least indirectly to time include arising and ceasing; motion, or coming and going; becoming and destruction; beginning and ending; agent and action; conditions; cause and effect; and time itself.

Chapter 2: *Examination of Motion* has generally been interpreted to deny the existence of a substantial essence to motion that is independent of a moving object, and to deny that motion is a substantial property or attribute of a moving object. The ultimate nature of our existence is sunya, which describes the phenomenal appearances of our world and emptiness itself as dependently arisen, conventionally understood and without ultimate, inherent nature. While many analysts have pointed out the similarities between Nāgārjuna's analysis of motion and that of Zeno of Elea, they have all noted that Nāgārjuna went much further than Zeno, and had different ultimate purposes and conclusions. Here is Garfield's translation of verse 1 of Chapter 2:

What has been moved is not moving.

What has not been moved is not moving.

Apart from what has been moved and what has not been moved.

Movement cannot be conceived.<sup>8</sup>

Both Garfield and Siderits and O'Brien<sup>9</sup> interpret Nāgārjuna as considering a specific instant in time and distinguishing it from the past or the future. Here, what does "a specific instant" mean? It is very difficult notice that the instant always should coincide with the present unconsciously. At all events, from the point of view of the present moment, there is no motion 'currently in the past' nor is there any motion 'currently in the future'. One then asks if there is movement 'currently in this specific instant of the present'. Since the answer is determined to be no, the analysis can be applied to every moment to show that no motion is possible.

That is, if motion exists, there must be sometime at which it exists. Nāgārjuna in this opening verse considers the past and the future. This makes good sense. Because motion requires a change of position, and a change of position must occur over time. But the present has no interval which has the time width to force an expression. So if motion were to exist, it would have to exist either in the past or in the future. But a thing that has moved only in the past is not now moving. Nor is a thing yet to be moved. One might, of course, suggest that there is a simple tense fallacy here—that things that were moving in the past were then in motion, that things that will move in the future will then be in motion. But this would be problematic. For that would mean that all motion would be in the past or in the future, and this could be said at any time. So there would be no time at which it would be true of anything that it is in motion.<sup>10</sup>

Zeno presented four different paradoxes that result if we look carefully at the detailed characteristics of motion in four different ways, and therefore sought to show that no metaphysical foundation for motion could be devised. His conclusion, consistent with his teacher Parmenides, is that nothing truly changes, leaving us with an unchanging, monistic

8 Garfield, Jay, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā Translation and Commentary*, Oxford University Press, 1995. There have been many translations, but they each present the same basic argument.

9 Siderits, Mark and O'Brien, J. Dervin "Zeno and Nāgārjuna on Motion" *Philosophy East and West*, 26, (1976), 281-299.

10 Garfield, 126.

‘being’. Nāgārjuna, on the other hand, examined the details of motion and moving objects and found that they were both empty. Zeno seems to be denying the obvious inferences of our empirical observation of movement, while Nāgārjuna shows that our empirical observation of movement demonstrates that movement is a relational and dependent process, and is indeed possible because of the non-existence of any unchanging, inherent essence of ‘being’.

Both Zeno and Nāgārjuna examine the details of motion to determine—in one interpretation of its meaning or another—that it doesn’t exist. In particular, verse 1 corresponds to Zeno’s Arrow that denies motion at an instant during the flight of the arrow, and verses 12 and 13 address the moment at the beginning—or just before the beginning—of the arrow’s flight. Regardless of context, purposes and conclusions, each analysis of the motion of the object provided by the Arrow and by these verses presents a complex problem for our concepts of space, time and motion.

In order to find that no movement occurs, Zeno’s moving arrow is subjected to analysis of the physical and metaphysical details of its motion. In order to find that movement is a relational and dependent process, Nāgārjuna’s moving object is subjected to the same kind of analysis. Modern philosophers place the moving arrow within the metaphysical framework of differential calculus within a densely continuous manifold of space and time, yet there is no assurance that time is indeed characterized in this way. Therefore, one nagging problem remains to assure that these paradoxes will continue to deserve our attention: the phenomenological thesis of James and Whitehead and the cinematographic view of Bergson suggest that our experience of time is discrete: snapshots separated by finite-duration gaps without observation that do not, therefore, make up a manifold of densely continuous time.

Siderits and O’Brien ascribe to the same view within their classification and analysis of continuity or discreteness of space and time. The model which is under scrutiny here is that which takes both time and space to be continuous, that is, infinitely divisible. The argument focuses explicitly on infinitely divisible space, but infinitely divisible time must be taken as a suppressed premise if the argument is to succeed. Suppose a point moving along a line a-c such that at time (t) the point is at b which is placed between a and c.

We may then ask, where does this motion take place? Now clearly present motion is not taking place in the segment already traversed, a-b. Equally clearly, however, present motion is not taking place in the segment not yet traversed, b-c. Thus the going is not occurring in either the gone-to or in the not-yet-gone-to. But for any (t), the length of the

line is exhausted by (a-b) + (b-c). That is, apart from the gone-to and the not-yet-gone-to, there is no place where present-being-gone-to occurs. Therefore nowhere is present motion taking place.<sup>11</sup>

Nāgārjuna strikes down a metaphysical system that supports a motion that is an inherent property or a substantial essence of the moving object yet independent of it, thus supporting the doctrine of *emptiness*. Emptiness cannot reasonably be considered to be a metaphysical system of its own. Emptiness ultimately means that genuine reality is empty of any conceptual fabrication that could attempt to describe what it is.

Nāgārjuna’s purpose is to show that no metaphysical foundations for motion can be established. Yet emptiness is also concerned in particular with denial of the extreme metaphysical positions of substantialism and nihilism. Therefore when Nāgārjuna said like this, we may reveal out and experience hidden premise which there is something while thinking:

Whatever is dependently arisen is  
Unceasing, unborn,  
Unannihilated, not permanent,  
Not coming, not going,  
Without distinction, without identity,  
And free from conceptual construction.<sup>12</sup>

Nāgārjuna’s premise is related with the instant to think what the emptiness is. In this paper, we completely concentrate on this instant only. Therefore, when we experience the emptiness through the Nāgārjuna’s arguments, what could we name this instant which we mention “a specific instant” above? Through the ultimate of thought with Nāgārjuna, we may have chance to meet “a specific instant” as named ‘Now’. In terminology of Buddhim, ‘Now’ is the same to ksana (刹那, moment).

11 Siderits and O’Brien, 289.

12 Garfield, 2.

#### IV. NEW TIME 'NOW'

If we trap both the language and the logic, we could experience the reflection of time not real time, namely we could experience time which is 'retrospective' after the starting of time. Therefore everything comes out from illusion by thought of the reflection of time. Certainly, we should distinguish it with Bergson's retrospection which is related with the spatialization of time.

In this paper, we notice that various Bergson's terminologies, even duration and intuition, have the aspect of retrospection. Therefore the duration of Bergson has the premise that there is something which we could not express. When we have met this premise during thinking, we would call this as the limit of thought. Of course, with intuition, Bergson directly absorbs into the 'Zeno's time'. But as soon as we would ask the question 'why there is something instead of nothing', what was worse, we always see the change and diversity of quality in universe for just instant of intuition.

Nāgārjuna might also notice this point in Bergson's duration which does not consist of similar parts, as one side of sunya. But we should not neglect the other side of sunya which is nothingness. Here, we point out both laymen and scholars' misunderstanding with nothingness. They think the world is changing and ultimately nothing. But we know that we could not neglect the real life in real world. Bergson said that nothingness is more than wholeness, because after we think the wholeness, then we could say the opposite of wholeness.

We would not discuss the detailed comparison between duration and sunya<sup>13</sup>, instead we would focus on the confrontation of the limit of thought during thinking both duration and sunya. We have interest in this moment which we are thinking both duration and sunya. In this time, we may urge to think that the time has passed even though time doesn't count. When we notice that the time has passed even though time doesn't count, we could experience at 'Now'.

Bergson's time flows consistently and always makes new. In this paper, we do not interest in this time anymore, instead we would focus on the moment that we say 'time flows consistently and always makes new'. Through following the Zeno's paradoxes, we must notice the underlying premise as "first we put something on white note or our brain, and then we

cut the line in that". What does this mean? How could we reveal the underlying premise, and experience the new time 'Now'. For this, we have good example below. This is the Master Woon-Moon's (Yun-Men, 雲門, 864~849) famous Kong-an, *Mount Sumeru*.<sup>14</sup>

A student asked Venerable Master Woon-Moon, *When this student didn't raise any thought, was there a sin or not?* Master Woon-Moon said, *Mount Sumeru!*

After this case, we could think like this. "When thought arises, sin also arises. If no thought arises, there should be no kind of sin or error. Why did Master Woon-Moon say the sin, that is error, is as big as Mount Sumeru? Why did he say, *Mount Sumeru?*"

At the instant of question and introspection, we experience the 'Now'. This time indicates the instant both before naming duration and at just time of intuition. Although we fall into the wholeness of the world, we should know the time has passed already. Regardless of Zeno's argument by many philosophers, we experience the 'Now' with Zeno's paradoxes. We may wonder why many philosophers, old and now, could not notice 'Now'. Because, they think 'why there is something instead of nothing'. But someone may criticize "To save the 'Now', you sacrifice the time which have past, present and future", and then "where is the world?" Before answering this question, we ask ourselves "why do we think 'something is' rather 'anything is not'". First of all, if we know everything comes out illusion by thought of the reflection of time, then in this moment, we could not think anything like "where the world is?" and "who am I?" etc. In this point, we already arrive at the limit of thought.

This question makes reverse our attitude to nothingness and something. If we think nothing in everything, we also think everything in nothing. Therefore it is not important to answer to this question. Rather it is more important to examine the instant of the act to question. And also the instant to ask a question to ourselves, it is the new time 'Now'. Zeno's paradoxes and both Bergson and Nāgārjuna's thoughts make us experience the 'Now' as soon as we confront the limit of thought.

<sup>13</sup> In this paper, we only concentrate on the new time 'Now'. The comparison of Bergson's duration with Nāgārjuna's sunya, namely the way how we understand duration through sunya and vice versa, is discussed in another paper.

<sup>14</sup> Myo-Bong, Recorded and Translated by Sōn Master Myo-Bong, 1987, *Gateway to PATRIARCHAL SŌN, Venerable Master Hye-Am's Dharma Talks*, Western Sōn Academy, United States of America, 129.



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