TY-2026 · 27 — Tantrayukti Studies

एकान्तः

Without Exception: Universal Claims

डॉ. मन्था-श्रीनिवासुः · Dr. Mantha Srinivasu · 17 Nov 2026 · AŚ 15.1.57–58; Su. Utt. 65.23

Abstract

Ekānta, "one end only", is the device of the unqualified claim: a statement made without exception, often marked by the restrictive particle *eva*, "only, always". Kauṭilya defines it as "what applies in all cases", with a maxim from his chapter on the king's duties: "therefore he should make himself active." Suśruta defines it as "what is stated with restriction": "*trivṛt* purges, *madanaphala* makes one vomit" — always. Cakrapāṇi gives the same definition and adds an example from Caraka's classification of disease: "the endogenous disease arises from the bodily doṣas." The device is the counterpart of *anekānta* (TY-34), "what holds in some cases and not in others". This article distinguishes the two kinds of universality in the examples — a universal duty and a universal property — and relates the device to the logicians' analysis of restriction, by which pervasion is stated in the pervader "by exclusion of non-connection" and in the pervaded "by exclusion of connection with another". It answers three objections: that universal claims are always refuted by an exception, that ekānta conflicts with *apavarga*, and that the restrictive particle is ambiguous. It concludes that ekānta is the device by which a śāstra marks its firmest claims, and that its modern forms are the law of nature, the invariant property, the categorical rule and the definitional statement — each to be held only where the evidence for invariance exists.

Keywords: ekānta; anekānta; tantrayukti; universal claim; restriction; avadhāraṇa; eva; ayogavyavaccheda; anyayogavyavaccheda; invariance; law; prabhāva; trivṛt; madanaphala; Arthaśāstra; Suśruta; Caraka

1. प्रवेशः · Place in the lists

Ekānta is twenty-sixth in Kauṭilya's list, sixteenth in Suśruta's and sixteenth in Caraka's. In both medical lists it is followed immediately by *anekānta* (Caraka's *naikānta*), its opposite; Kauṭilya has no anekānta. The word, *eka-anta*, "one end", describes a claim that has only one outcome: it does not go one way here and another way there.

2. लक्षणानि · The definitions

> सर्वत्रायत्तमेकान्तः
>
> तस्मादुत्थानमात्मनः कुर्वीतेति
>
> "What applies in all cases is ekānta." — Example: "Therefore he should make himself active."
>
> Kauṭilya, *Arthaśāstra* 15.1.57–58

> (सर्वत्र) यदवधारणेनोच्यते स एकान्तः। यथा त्रिवृद्विरेचयति, मदनफलं वामयति (एव) ॥
>
> "What is stated (everywhere) with restriction is ekānta. For example: *trivṛt* purges, *madanaphala* makes one vomit (always)."
>
> Suśruta, *Uttaratantra* 65.23

> एकान्तो नाम यदवधारणेनोच्यते; यथा- निजः शरीरदोषोत्थः, त्रिवृद्विरेचयतीत्यादि।
>
> "Ekānta is what is stated with restriction. For example: the endogenous (disease) arises from the bodily doṣas; *trivṛt* purges; and so on."
>
> Cakrapāṇidatta, *Āyurvedadīpikā* on Caraka, *Siddhisthāna* 12.41–44

The words in parentheses in the Suśruta e-text — *sarvatra*, "everywhere", and *eva*, "always" — stand in parentheses in the e-text, marking them as editorial supplements.

3. लक्षणपरीक्षा · Testing the definitions

3.1 Two kinds of universality

Authority	Claim	Kind
Kauṭilya	"He should make himself active"	A **universal duty**: binding in all circumstances
Suśruta, Cakrapāṇi	"Trivṛt purges; madanaphala causes vomiting"	A **universal property**: the invariant action of a substance
Cakrapāṇi on Caraka	"The endogenous disease arises from the bodily doṣas"	A **definitional universal**: true of every member of a class by the class's definition

Kauṭilya's maxim opens his chapter on the king's daily duties, and is preceded by its reasons:

> राजानमुत्थितमनूत्तिष्ठन्ते भृत्याः ॥
> प्रमाद्यन्तमनुप्रमाद्यन्ति ॥
> कर्माणि चास्य भक्षयन्ति ॥
> द्विषद्भिश्चातिसंधीयते ।
> तस्मादुत्थानमात्मनः कुर्वीत ॥
>
> "When the king is active, his servants become active after him. When he is negligent, they are negligent after him, and they eat up his works; and he is overreached by his enemies. Therefore he should make himself active."
>
> Kauṭilya, *Arthaśāstra* 1.19.1–5

The conclusion admits no exception, because its reasons hold at all times: there is no circumstance in which the servants do not follow the king. Caraka's classification is ekānta of a different kind. He divides diseases into three:

> त्रयो रोगा इति निजागन्तुमानसाः । तत्र निजः शारीरदोषसमुत्थः,
> आगन्तुर्भूतविषवाय्वग्निसंप्रहारादिसमुत्थः, मानसः पुनरिष्टस्य लाभाल्लाभाचानिष्टस्योपजायते ॥
>
> "Diseases are three — endogenous, exogenous and mental. Of these, the endogenous arises from the bodily doṣas; the exogenous from spirits, poison, wind, fire, blows and the like; the mental arises from not obtaining what is desired and obtaining what is not desired."
>
> Caraka, *Sūtrasthāna* 11.45

"The endogenous arises from the bodily doṣas" is universal because it is the definition of the class: a disease that did not arise from the bodily doṣas would not be endogenous.

3.2 Suśruta's substances

Suśruta's example is drawn from pharmacology. *Trivṛt* (Operculina turpethum) is the standard purgative and *madanaphala* (Randia dumetorum) the standard emetic of Āyurveda. Their actions are stated without qualification because they belong to the specific nature (*prabhāva*) of the substances. The restriction (*avadhāraṇa*) does two things at once: it says that trivṛt always purges, and that its characteristic action is purgation rather than emesis. The second point is as important as the first: the physician who wants to induce vomiting reaches for madanaphala, not trivṛt.

3.3 The logic of restriction

The Naiyāyikas analysed the restrictive particle into kinds, and Vācaspati Miśra uses the analysis to state what pervasion and causation are:

> तस्माद्य थोभयाधीननिरूपणा व्याप्तिरयोगव्यवच्छेदेन व्यापके निरूप्यते व्याप्ये भाव एव व्यापकस्य नाभाव इति व्याप्ये पुनरन्ययोगव्यवच्छेदेन व्यापक एव भावो व्याप्यस्य नान्यत्रेति एवं कार्यकारणभावो ऽप्युभयाधीननिरूपणो ऽपि कारणे अयोगव्यवच्छेदेन निरूप्यते ।
>
> "Therefore pervasion, though its determination depends on both (terms), is determined in the pervader by exclusion of non-connection — in the pervaded there is only presence of the pervader, never absence — and in the pervaded, by exclusion of connection with another — the presence of the pervaded is only in the pervader, not elsewhere. In the same way the relation of cause and effect, though its determination depends on both, is determined in the cause by exclusion of non-connection."
>
> *Nyāyasūtra of Gautama* 3.2.14 (tatparya)

The two exclusions correspond to the two things Suśruta's restriction says. "Trivṛt *always* purges" is exclusion of non-connection (*ayoga-vyavaccheda*): there is no trivṛt without purgation. "It is trivṛt that purges (rather than causes vomiting)" is closer to exclusion of connection with another (*anya-yoga-*

vyavaccheda): its action is this and not that. Ekānta, in this analysis, is the device by which a śāstra states a relation of pervasion in the form of a sentence.

4. पूर्वपक्षः खण्डनं मण्डनं च · Objections and replies

4.1 Is every universal claim not refuted by an exception?

> ननु "त्रिवृद्विरेचयति" इति सर्वत्र न सिध्यति — क्रूरकोष्ठे, अल्पमात्रायां, जीर्णायां वा त्रिवृति विरेको न भवेत्। एकः अपि व्यभिचारः एकान्तं बाधते। अतः एकान्तः शास्त्रे अयुक्तः इति चेत्, न। एकान्तः द्रव्यस्य स्वभावं वदति, न सर्वेषु उपाधिषु फलम्। त्रिवृतः कर्म विरेचनम् — यत्र मात्राकोष्ठादयः उपाधयः अनुकूलाः, तत्र अवश्यं विरेचयति; यत्र प्रतिकूलाः, तत्र न तस्याः स्वभावस्य बाधः, किन्तु उपाधेः। अग्निः दहति इति एकान्तः, आर्द्रे काष्ठे मन्दं दहति इति न तस्य बाधः। अतः एकान्तः "अन्येषु समानेषु" इति अनुक्तम् उपाधिं सहते। व्यभिचारः तदा भवति यदा अनुकूलेषु अपि उपाधिषु कर्म न दृश्यते।
>
> **Objection:** "trivṛt purges" does not hold everywhere — in a patient with a hard bowel, in too small a dose, or with stale trivṛt, there may be no purgation. A single deviation overturns a universal claim. So ekānta is out of place in a śāstra. **Reply:** No. Ekānta states the nature of the substance, not its outcome under every condition. The action of trivṛt is purgation: where the conditions — dose, bowel and so on — are favourable, it purges without fail; where they are unfavourable, it is not the nature of trivṛt that fails but the conditions. "Fire burns" is ekānta; that it burns slowly in wet wood does not refute it. So ekānta tolerates the unstated condition "other things being equal". There is deviation only when the action fails under favourable conditions.
>
> Śaṅkā–samādhāna composed for this article.

4.2 Does ekānta not conflict with apavarga?

> ननु एकान्तः "सर्वत्रायत्तम्" — अपवादरहितः। अपवर्गः तु "अभिव्याप्यापकर्षणम्" — अपवादः। यदि शास्त्रे अपवर्गः युक्तिः, तर्हि कः नियमः एकान्तः? सर्वे नियमाः सापवादाः इति चेत्, न। अपवर्गः विधिनिषेधयोः भवति — "विषोपसृष्टाः अस्वेद्याः, अन्यत्र कीटविषात्" — यत्र नियमस्य हेतुः क्वचित् न वर्तते। एकान्तः तु यत्र हेतुः सर्वत्र वर्तते — राज्ञः उत्थानस्य हेतुः राज्यस्य तदायत्तत्वं, तत् सर्वदा; निजरोगस्य दोषसमुत्थत्वं लक्षणात् एव। अतः एकान्तः अपवर्गस्य अभावः न आकस्मिकः, किन्तु हेतोः सार्वत्रिकत्वात्। अपवर्गः हेतोः सीमां, एकान्तः हेतोः व्याप्तिं दर्शयति।
>
> **Objection:** ekānta is "what applies in all cases" — without exception. Apavarga is "withdrawal after pervading" — an exception. If apavarga is a device of the śāstra, which rule is without exception? All rules have exceptions. **Reply:** No. Apavarga occurs in injunctions and prohibitions where the reason of the rule fails somewhere — "those affected by poison are not to be sudated,

except in insect poison". Ekānta is where the reason holds everywhere: the reason for the king's activity is that the kingdom depends on it, and that is always so; that endogenous disease arises from the doṣas follows from the definition. So the absence of exception in ekānta is not accidental but follows from the universality of the reason. Apavarga shows the limit of a reason; ekānta its full extent.

Śaṅkā–samādhāna composed for this article.

4.3 Is the restrictive particle not ambiguous?

ननु "एव"कारः त्रिधा व्याख्यायते — अयोगव्यवच्छेदः, अन्ययोगव्यवच्छेदः, अत्यन्तायोगव्यवच्छेदः। "त्रिवृद्विरेचयत्येव" इति किं "सर्वदा विरेचयति", उत "त्रिवृत् एव विरेचयति, न अन्यत्", उत "कदाचित् विरेचयति एव"? अनिश्चितार्थः एकान्तः कथं शास्त्रस्य प्रमाणम् इति चेत्, न। एवकारस्य अर्थः तस्य स्थानेन प्रकरणेन च नियम्यते। "त्रिवृद्विरेचयत्येव" इति क्रियापदेन सह एवकारः अयोगव्यवच्छेदं बोधयति — विरेचनाभावः न। "त्रिवृदेव विरेचयति" इति तु अन्ययोगव्यवच्छेदं — अन्यत् द्रव्यं न — यत् असत्यं स्यात्, अतः न तथा प्रयुज्यते। शास्त्रकाराः यथार्थं स्थानं चिन्वन्ति। अतः एकान्तस्य अर्थः न अनिश्चितः, किन्तु पदस्थानेन नियतः।

Objection: the particle *eva* is explained in three ways — exclusion of non-connection, exclusion of connection with another, exclusion of absolute non-connection. Does "trivṛt purges *eva*" mean "always purges", or "only trivṛt purges, nothing else", or "does sometimes purge"? How can an ekānta of uncertain meaning be authoritative? **Reply:** No. The sense of *eva* is fixed by its position and context. Attached to the verb — "trivṛt *purges* eva" — it conveys exclusion of non-connection: there is no failure to purge. Attached to the subject — "*trivṛt* eva purges" — it would convey exclusion of connection with another: no other substance purges — which would be false, and so it is not used that way. Authors choose the right position. The sense of ekānta is not uncertain but fixed by the position of the word.

Śaṅkā–samādhāna composed for this article.

5. सिद्धान्तः · The settled view

यस्य हेतुः सर्वत्र वर्तते — कर्तव्यतायाः, द्रव्यस्वभावस्य, लक्षणस्य वा — तस्य अर्थस्य अवधारणेन, यथास्थानम् एवकारेण, अन्येषु समानेषु, अपवादरहितं वचनं, सः एकान्तः।

"Ekānta is a statement without exception, made with restriction — the particle *eva* placed where it belongs — about a matter whose reason holds everywhere, whether a duty, the nature of a substance or a definition, other things being equal."

Definition composed for this article.

The definition grounds the absence of exception in the universality of the reason (answering the conflict with apavarga), admits the clause "other things being equal" (answering the objection from deviation), and ties the restrictive particle to its position (answering the charge of ambiguity).

6. आधुनिकसंवादः · The modern counterpart

Classical form	Modern counterpart
Kauṭilya: a duty without exception	Categorical rules and non-derogable duties (in ethics codes, "always obtain informed consent")
Suśruta: the invariant action of a substance	The **pharmacological class effect**; laws of nature stated "ceteris paribus"
Caraka: true by definition	Definitional (analytic) statements in a classification
Restriction by *eva*; pervasion	The logic of universal quantification; necessary and sufficient conditions
Ekānta beside anekānta	The distinction between robust findings and context-dependent ones

Scientific writing distinguishes, or should distinguish, between claims that hold invariantly and claims that hold under conditions. Ekānta and anekānta are the classical names for the two, and the tantrayukti lists place them side by side so that the reader always knows which is being made.

7. प्रयोगाः · Uses

7.1 In research

Before stating a finding without qualification, ask whether its reason holds everywhere. If it does, state it firmly and say why; if not, state it as anekānta. Check that your universal claims are of the right kind — a duty, an invariant property, a definition — and that the evidence suits the kind.

7.2 In teaching

Give students a list of statements from a śāstra and ask them to mark each as ekānta or anekānta, and to explain the reason for the mark. Then ask them to find one ekānta that might fail and to state the condition under which it would.

7.3 In daily life

Some principles should be held without exception — honesty, care for the vulnerable; many others depend on circumstances. Knowing which is which, as Kauṭilya knew that the king must always be active, is a large part of practical wisdom.

8. अभ्यासः · Exercise

1. Find three statements in Caraka or Suśruta made with *eva*. Classify the sense of each *eva* by the three kinds of exclusion.
2. Take one universal claim from your field. State its reason and test whether the reason holds everywhere.
3. Read Kauṭilya's chapter on the king's duties (AŚ 1.19) and explain why "he should make himself active" is stated without exception.

9. उपसंहारः · Conclusion

Ekānta is the claim without exception. Kauṭilya states a universal duty, Suśruta the invariant actions of a purgative and an emetic, Caraka a definition of a class of disease; the logicians' analysis of restriction shows that each states a pervasion. A universal claim is not refuted by failures under unfavourable conditions; it does not conflict with apavarga, because it is made only where the reason holds everywhere; and its restrictive particle is fixed in sense by its position. Its partner, anekānta, is the subject of TY-34.

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