

Tom J.F. Tillemans

Views from Tibet

Studies on Tibetan Buddhist Logic,
the Philosophy of the Middle,
and the Indigenous
Grammatico-Linguistic Tradition



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TOM J.F. TILLEMANS
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Tom J.F. Tillemans

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Dedicated to the memory of Jacques May (1927-2018),
teacher and friend

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A Practical Guide to the Pronunciation of Standard Tibetan

What follows is a *vade mecum* using common English equivalents to enable non-tibetanists to navigate adequately the transliterated Tibetan names and terminology in this book. For a more exact phonetic description of Standard Tibetan (*bod kyi spyi skad*), the language spoken around Lhasa, see Tournadre and Dorje 2003, 32-41. For simplicity, we will not take up the three tones of Lhasa Tibetan in any detail. The system of Tibetan transliteration that we have adopted is that of T.V. Wylie 1959.

- §1. The vowels, a, e, i, o, u, when they are not followed by consonants, are short and pronounced as follows:
- a: similar to a in English father.
 - e: similar to e in set.
 - i: similar to ee in free.
 - o: similar to o in so.
 - u: similar to u in sue.
- §2. When they are followed by the consonants d, n, l, or s, the vowels a, o and u are pronounced like counterparts with umlauts, respectively, ä, ö, ü. The consonant d leaves the preceding vowel short and is itself silent; l and s lengthen the vowel and are themselves silent; n is pronounced.
- §3. Tibetan consonants are generally pronounced as follows:
- k: completely unaspirated, similar to the English k in skip.
 - kh: aspirated, similar to a strongly pronounced c, as when one exclaims that something is utter claptrap.
 - g: similar to Tibetan k, but with a low tone vowel. When preceded by other consonants it is voiced, like g in gone.
 - ng: similar to the first ng in singalong.
 - c: completely unaspirated, similar to the ch in speech.
 - ch: aspirated, similar to a strongly pronounced ch in cheese.

- j: similar to Tibetan c, but with a low tone vowel. When preceded by other consonants it is voiced, like j in jab.
- ny: similar to n in newspaper as pronounced in British English.
- t: completely unaspirated, similar to the t in stag.
- th: aspirated, similar to a strongly pronounced t in tap.
- d: similar to Tibetan t, but with a low tone vowel. When preceded by other consonants it is voiced, like d in dab.
- n: similar to n in not.
- p: completely unaspirated, similar to p in spin.
- ph: aspirated, similar to a strongly pronounced p in pan.
- b: similar to Tibetan p, but with a low tone vowel. When preceded by other consonants it is voiced, like b in ball.
- m: similar to m in English, e.g., man.
- ts: completely unaspirated, similar to ts in treats.
- tsh: aspirated, similar to a strongly pronounced ts in tsar.
- dz: similar to Tibetan ts, but with a low tone vowel. When preceded by other consonants it is voiced, like ds in lads.
- wa: similar to w in want.
- zh: similar to sh in shop, but with a low tone vowel.
- z: similar to s in same, but with a low tone vowel.
- ‘: not pronounced.
- y: similar to y in yet.
- r: similar to r in read, slightly rolled.
- l: similar to l in led.
- sh: similar to sh in shop, but with a high tone vowel.
- s: similar to s in same, but with a high tone vowel.
- h: similar to h in hard.
- §4. g, d, b, m, ‘, r, l, s, br, and bs, when they precede another consonant, are not pronounced. Thus, for example, Tibetan sgo and mgo are homonyms and are pronounced like English go.
- §5. kl, gl, bl, rl, sl, brl, and bsl are all pronounced like Tibetan l. Thus, for example, blo and glo are homonyms and are pronounced like English lo. The combination zl, however, is the exception: it is pronounced d.
- §6. kr, skr, bskr, tr, pr, dpr, and spr are all pronounced like an unaspirated retroflex t, like the retroflex ṭ in Sanskrit. Thus, for example, skra is pronounced like Sanskrit ṭa.

- §7. khr, 'khr, mkhr, phr, and 'phr are all pronounced like an aspirated retroflex t, like the retroflex ṭh in Sanskrit. Thus, 'phro is pronounced like Sanskrit ṭho.
- §8. gr, dr, and br, unpreceded by other consonants, are pronounced like a low-toned ṭ, while dgr, bgr, mgr, 'gr, sgr, bsgr, 'dr, dbr, 'br, and sbr are pronounced like the retroflex ḍ in Sanskrit. The combinations sr and mr are the exceptions: sr is simply pronounced like s and mr is pronounced like m.
- §9. py, dpy, spy, by are unaspirated and pronounced like Tibetan c. 'by and sby are voiced and pronounced like Tibetan j. phy and 'phy are aspirated and pronounced like ch.
- §10. In the combinations ky, khy and gy, both letters are pronounced distinctly and normally. However, in dgy, bggy, brgy, mgy and 'gy the g is voiced and low tone. The combinations my, smy, and dmy are exceptional and are all pronounced like Tibetan ny.
- §11. The ten consonants g, ng, d, n, b, m, ' , r, l, s and the combinations gs, ngs, bs, and ms occur at the end of syllables; the s in gs is not pronounced but has the effect of lengthening the vowel. g is hardly pronounced but shortens the vowel. d, l, s are themselves silent. Vocalic changes a → ä, o → ö, u → ü and lengthening of vowels occur as described in §2.

Introduction

Tibetans had extraordinarily rich views on logic, on their own Tibetan language, and on Buddhist philosophy. It is hard to overemphasize how wide-ranging those views from Tibet were and how important they are to all who seek informed understanding of a culture that was, and in many respects still is, a premier intellectual force in the world. The studies in this book seek to capture some aspects. Most have been published previously in various journals, anthologies, proceedings, and *Festschriften*, not always of easy access. Some are quite recent publications and seek to represent the state of the art. Others date from now bygone times. I reprint them all here with the necessary revisions and updates, sometimes quite substantial. The last chapter is entirely new.

The word “view”—as well as its Tibetan and Sanskrit equivalents, *lta ba* and *dṛṣṭi/darśana*—can denote, on the one hand, an intellectual activity of examination, which is a process focused on some matter, and, on the other hand, the ideas and interpretations that result from that process. Much of Tibetan intellectual activity, no doubt, was focused strongly on matters Indian. Such was the case in their views on Buddhist logic and the Philosophy of the Middle (*dbu ma* = *madhyamaka*). There was also, however, a no less important focus on themes that were predominantly indigenous. We take up the long tradition of *Sum rtags* in which Tibetan language was viewed by Tibetans in indigenous grammatico-linguistic analyses that, in some very key aspects, had little to do with India at all. All those complex, evolving processes and the ideas that resulted at various stages need to be understood historically and in detail, and this is the primary aim of the present work. That said, I am also firmly convinced that resultant ideas are *not* to be reserved exclusively to purely historical disciplines. Tibetans’ ideas on Buddhist logic, Madhyamaka Buddhism, and their own language, when largely abstracted from the processes of their genesis, are of significance for comparative logic, philosophy, religion, and linguistics. One of the papers in the section on the Philosophy of the Middle is such an excursus into comparative philosophy. Below, in this introduction, I will also provide an example where Tibetan views may work surprisingly well in linguistics.

Some will bridle at the fact that a book such as this has more than one vantage point. To this I can only plead in favour of information, open-mindedness, and a generous dose of cosmopolitanism. The pursuit of well-informed, multiple perspectives and their intersections has often led, and continues to lead, to better thinking. That holds for cultural perspectives as well as those of different academic disciplines. The book is, thus, also a sincere attempt to counter currents in academia going in the direction of over-specialization, insularity, and rigid separation between disciplines such as Tibetology, Indology, Philosophy, and Linguistics. Understanding Tibetan views presupposes a relatively sophisticated indological understanding, and these papers therefore make frequent zigzags to Indian canonical texts, where possible in Sanskrit. Tibetologists often need to be indologists to do Tibet justice, and when they approach Tibet with indological skills, Tibet shows itself relevant to better understanding India. Finally, when Tibet takes its rightful place in properly informed discussions on logic, philosophy, and linguistics, we all benefit.

* * *

We turn to the studies themselves. The section on logic begins with an examination of the Tibetans' assimilation of Indian Buddhist logical thought, especially their understanding of, and innovations upon, Dharmakīrti's and Dignāga's ideas of a "good reason" (*saddhetu*), i.e., one that possesses the triple characterization (*trairūpya*). We then proceed to indigenous developments of a logic that, in important respects, shows significant originality. In the Tibetan *Collected Topics* (*bsdus grwa*) literature we find a quite new logical orientation, stripped of much of the Indian epistemology and metaphysics that had been considered crucially intertwined with logic. Much of the Dharmakīrtian stance, in effect, drops away, even if this new thinking on logic is often still couched in the terminology of the old.

At the end of the chapter on indigenous developments in logic, we take up a recurring theme that Tibetans dubbed "the difficult point of the [Indo-Tibetan Buddhist] *apoha* [philosophy of language]" (*gzhan sel gyi dka' gnad*), one that they insisted to be pervasive in Buddhist discussions of logic, language, and metaphysics. This difficult point, turning as it does on deep-seated semantic features of the Tibetan language, presents serious problems of translatability. I recognize, perhaps all too well, that

the general propriety of crossing borders—whether between conceptual and cultural schemes, epochs, languages or disciplines—is a live issue with varying stances.¹ And although I am a convinced advocate of free movement and intersecting perspectives, the devil can be in the details. Translatability is an important test. The difficult point may be one of those surprising, specific cases where border-crossings to the West are much more difficult than we might have previously imagined.

Turning now to the section on the Philosophy of the Middle (*madhyamaka*), chapter III consists in a translation of Se ra rje btsun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan's lesson (*rnam bzhag*) on the “neither one nor many” argument (*gcig du bral gyi gtan tshigs* = *ekānekaviyogahetu*) as found in Svātantrika texts by eighth century C.E. Indian authors such as Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, and Haribhadra. The key Tibetan step is to nuance that Indian argumentation as an attack on properties of oneness or manyness that would be “truly established” (*bden grub*), thus introducing a qualifier (*khyad par*) in the form of a “property to be refuted” (*dgag bya'i chos*) that one must understand for the Indian arguments to make sense. This is the usual dGe lugs pa way, stemming from Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357-1419), to introduce qualifying parameters in order to distinguish the notions under attack as those of metaphysical realist philosophers (*dnegos smra ba*) and not just simply the ordinary ideas of oneness and manyness *tout court*. A similar and related move is to see the argument as being a “reasoning which forces the limits [of what the opponent accepts]” (*phul mtshams kyi rigs pa*), namely, as Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1469-1546) puts it, that anything accepted *per impossible*

¹ Some sinologists and indologists alike argue, for example, that one should *not* attempt significant rapprochements but instead respect the fundamental *altérité* of major Asian cultures. Such is, for example, the position of the French sinologist François Jullien. For a critique of Jullien's idea of *altérité de la Chine*, see Billeter 2007. Anthony Flew (arguably rightly) saw philosophy as concerned with argument but then, in a disturbing mistake, said that most of what is termed *Eastern Philosophy* is unconcerned with argumentation, and thus justified that his book “draws no materials from any source east of Suez.” See Flew 1971, 36. Cf. Tillemans 1999, 188-189. Such parochial claims are now less frequent, or at the very least they are less forthright. Garfield 2015 makes the case in detail for engaging Buddhist philosophy in Western debates; see also Garfield and Van Norden 2016 on some ingenious and timely remedies for the continuing slants in Philosophy departments.

as truly existent would have to be what it is without any dependence whatsoever on anything else.²

If the first article introduces the position of Tsong kha pa and his dGe lugs pa followers, the second (chapter IV), written in French with Tōru Tomabechi, balances the dossier with a translation of a portion of “The History of Madhyamaka” (*dbu ma’i byung tshul*) composed by the famous (indeed notorious) rival of Tsong kha pa, gSer mdog Paṇ chen Śākya mchog ldan (1428-1507). This Sa skya pa thinker had a complex Philosophy of the Middle, shifting over the years from advocacy of Rang stong (all things being empty of themselves) to gZhan stong philosophy (the ultimate being empty of what is other than it). In general, the debate between Rang stong and gZhan stong is largely a Tibetan hermeneutical problem of how to integrate, into Madhyamaka, the Yogācāra philosophy’s emphasis on the mind and Buddha-nature, as well as Tantric ideas. It also figures significantly in Sa skya pa and bKa’ brgyud pa attempts to synthesize Madhyamaka with Indo-Tibetan Mahāmudrā views on the absolute nature of mind.³ Tsong kha pa and the dGe lugs pa, on the other hand, will have nothing to do with gZhan stong and will make no special or radically separate place for Tantra, Buddha-nature, etc. in their philosophical account of the ultimate truth (*don dam bden pa; paramārthasatya*). They are hardly usual Rang stong pas either, as they do not accept that things, like a vase, are literally empty of themselves. The point of Madhyamaka for them is not that a vase is without any type of vaseness but instead that it is empty of any *truly established* vase nature.

² See Tillemans 2016, 29 on the terms *‘phul mtshams*, *rigs pas ‘phul ba*, etc.

³ A partial bibliographical update. First, as a starting point on gZhan stong Madhyamaka in the Jo nang pa school, see Seyfort Ruegg 1963; see also Seyfort Ruegg 1988 on the bKa’ brgyud Madhyamaka. We now have a fuller picture of the intra-Tibetan debates on Madhyamaka philosophies in the Sa skya and bKa’ brgyud traditions, and their connection with Tibetan positions on Rang stong-gZhan stong and Mahāmudrā, thanks to Higgins and Draszczuk 2016 as well as R. Jackson 2019. Mathes 2015 documents late Indian antecedents for Madhyamaka-Mahāmudrā syntheses in the works of Maitrīpa. Mathes 2004 is a study of the differences in gZhan stong philosophy between Śākya mchog ldan and Dol po pa and is based on Jo nang Tāranātha’s text comparing these two thinkers. Śākya mchog ldan’s Yogācāra and Madhyamaka synthesis is investigated extensively in Komarovski 2011.

Tsong kha pa and his school are often characterized by Śākya mchog ldan, Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429-1489) and others as emphasizing a purely negative notion of the ultimate—i.e., the emptiness, or simple lack of anything truly established. The criticism is, quite arguably, not an unfair one. The dGe lugs pa did indeed draw upon such a Madhyamaka, with its version of ultimate truth as a simple, non-implicative negation (*med par dgag pa*; *prasajyapratishedha*), to interpret Tantra, Buddha-nature, and Mahāmudrā, and for the rest to relegate Yogācāra to the status of an inferior view, a type of metaphysical realism about the nature of mind. Śākya mchog ldan, by contrast, clearly saw Yogācāra, the Buddha-nature, and Tantra as indispensable parts of a positive account of the ultimate. Much of the argumentation in the translated extract is directed against key dGe lugs pa ideas concerning Madhyamaka use of logic and argumentation. I have reprinted the annotated translation here, with Dr. Tomabechi's kind permission, as a way to better understand the intra-Tibetan debates.

The third article (chapter V), “Tsong kha pa *et al.* on the Bhāviveka-Candrakīrti Debate,” looks in more detail at some of those same technical problems of Madhyamaka logic and argumentation, trying to unravel better Tsong kha pa's interpretation of the *Prasannapadā*'s famous sixth century debate between the Indian Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika subschools of Madhyamaka.⁴ The key Indian texts are naturally read to

⁴ The two terms are Sanskritizations of the important Tibetan terms *rang rgyud pa* and *thal 'gyur ba*. See Mimaki 1982, 53: “Tous les termes utiles pour classer les sous-écoles des Mādhyamika, tels que Sautrāntrika-mādhyamika, Yogācāra-mādhyamika, ‘Jig rten grags sde spyod pa’i dbu ma pa, Svātantrika et Prāsaṅgika, sont une invention des auteurs tibétains.” While *rang rgyud pa* (= *svātantrika*) does appear in a text originally written in Sanskrit, viz., the *Madhyamakāvatāraṭīkā* of the late eleventh century Kashmirian *pañḍita* Jayānanda, the term *thal 'gyur ba* (= **prāsaṅgika*) has not been found in Indian sources up until now and may well be the invention of the *Madhyamakāvatāra*'s translator Pa tshab Nyi ma grags (1055-1145), who collaborated on a translation with Jayānanda in Tibet. See Seyfort Ruegg 2000, 20, n. 38; 2006, 320-322; Yoshimizu 2020. The terms “Svātantrika” and “Prāsaṅgika” are so commonly used in discussions nowadays that it would be pedantic to insist upon asterisks. The fact remains that the explicit thematisation of these two distinct currents within Madhyamaka (apart from a few uses of the term *rang rgyud pa* by a Kashmirian émigré who had connections with 12th century Tibetans) and the labelling of several other subschools are indeed the achievements of Tibetans, who

say that Mādhyamikas themselves have no theses of their own, endorse no truth claims, and therefore *never* accept *any* of the contrapositions (*viparyaya*) of the absurd consequences (*prasaṅga*) that they derive from others' positions. Tsong kha pa, however, in what would later become known in the dGe lugs pa curriculum as the “lesson on consequences and contrapositions” (*thal bzlog gi rnam bzhang*), argues that it is only the specific consequence at stake in this particular debate that cannot be contraposed—most others can and should be. The no-thesis stance is thus not dependent upon blanket rejection of a familiar logical move.

The fourth article (chapter VI), “Mādhyamikas Playing Bad Hands,” looks at the Indian canonical sources for Buddhist refusals to make truth claims, even about customary matters, sources which suggest that for a Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika, like Candrakīrti, customary truth (*saṃvṛtisatya*) is only widespread error, the alethic equivalent of fool's gold. The Mādhyamikas, having no thesis, should only read customary truth off the surface and duplicate what the common man (or “the world”) recognizes (*lokaprasiddha*) about it. The combination of those Indian canonical themes probably contributed to frequent Tibetan positions—e.g., amongst the Jo nang pa or amongst the followers of sTag tshang lo tsā ba Shes rab rin chen (1405-?)—that customary things only “exist for mistaken minds” (*blo 'khrul ba'i ngor yod pa*), i.e., that they just wrongly seem to exist, and that there are no right answers or truth claims that one can endorse about them, as there are no sources of knowledge (*tshad ma* = *pramāṇa*) that have them as objects. Tsong kha pa and the dGe lugs pa, by contrast, adopted what I consider to be a philosophically more promising stance, one that recognized the need for strong normativity concerning truth: customary things are not just reduced to commonly accepted errors; there are *pramāṇas* and hence robustly right answers about them.⁵ Not surprisingly, such a position needs a quite different, and even strained, exegesis of the Candrakīrtian textual legacy, a type of creative misreading.

perspicaciously viewed major developments within the Indian Philosophy of the Middle. On the history and philosophical interest of the various Tibetan ways of distinguishing between these subschools, see Dreyfus and McClintock 2003; Vose 2009.

⁵ On the debate between the dGe lugs pa and the followers of sTag tshang lo tsā ba as to whether Mādhyamikas do, don't, should, or shouldn't accept *pramāṇas*, see the two volumes by The Yakherds 2021.

Systematic qualifications of the Madhyamaka arguments, technical points rehabilitating contraposition, and alternative exegeses of Indian *sūtra* sources go a long way towards what will become a full-fledged dGe lugs pa Philosophy of the Middle. Instead of a *generalized* abjuration of truth claims, the Madhyamaka now focuses predominantly on a distinction between a harmless, ordinary realism—more exactly, the acceptable part (*cha*) of an ordinary conception of truth and reality—and metaphysical realism, embracing the former and rejecting the latter. Harmless realism recognizes the normativity of truth claims and the need for justificatory arguments to support them. Metaphysical realism, by contrast, with its demands for intrinsic natures (*svabhāva*), turns out to be an incoherent and unnecessary attempt to ground the harmless.

As I have argued at length elsewhere (Tillemans 2016, chapters I and XII), such a nuanced Madhyamaka rejection of realism would be an important, subtle, and defensible no-thesis stance in contemporary thinking on metaphysics, even if it may well be considerably different from the philosophy of its major Indian ancestors. It is not the typical Prāsaṅgika error theory and refusal to endorse *any and all* truth claims. In short, this philosophy, which I have called “atypical Prāsaṅgika,” runs counter to a frequent and even very natural exegesis of Candrakīrti’s writings (see Tillemans 2016, 51f.). Independence from India may have been institutionally unavowable—and still is largely unavowable in Tibetan milieux—but it should not be seen as vitiating important thinking. Indeed, leaving aside its problematic connection with India, atypical Prāsaṅgika is in many respects a view that is easier to take seriously and build upon. Chapter VII, the final article in the section on Madhyamaka, argues, in effect, for the philosophical merits and exceptionalness of some of those features of the dGe lugs pa position in the larger context of appearance-reality dichotomies and two-truth theories in East-West philosophies. The comparison is with Wilfrid Sellars.

The various studies (chapters VIII-XII) in the section on the indigenous Tibetan grammatico-linguistic tradition of *Sum rtags* are a continuation of themes initially treated in a book by Derek Herforth and me, *Agents and Actions in Classical Tibetan* (AACT), i.e., Tillemans and Herforth 1989. In this section, I look at views that traditional Tibetan thinkers of various traditions had on their own language and use these views to take up issues that regularly arise in linguists’ discussions of ergative languages—

and Tibetan is such a language—viz., transitivity and use of active and passive voices.⁶

An aside to provide background is indispensable before we can continue with our résumé of the chapters. AACT took up the themes of transitivity and voice diathesis in the context of traditional *Sum rtags* discussions centered upon *śloka* (verse) twelve from the *rTags kyi 'jug pa*, a text traditionally attributed, along with the *Sum cu pa*, to the seventh century(?) grammarian Thon mi Sambhoṭa. I have long maintained, however, that an in-depth discussion of this verse, to be profitable, must invariably shift to the interpretations and debates on the *rTags kyi 'jug pa* by indigenous commentators, from the earliest writers in the fourteenth century to the numerous later grammarians writing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some of these interpretations, as we shall see, have considerable independent interest. In any case, one cannot bypass them and go straight to the root text. Nor do we know in any detail what the antecedent Indian influences upon Thon mi might have been, traditional hagiographical accounts just mentioning his studying different Indic scripts, as well as *Kātantra* and “many treatises,” with a South Indian Brahmin named “Li byin” (or sometimes *Lipikara) and a Paṇḍita Lha rig(s) pa'i seng ge.⁷ In sum, Thon mi himself was an obscure figure whose thought was conveyed in verses, the most important of which were probably as sibylline to his Tibetan commentators as they are to us.

⁶ See, e.g., Comrie 1978, 329: “Ergativity is a term used in traditional descriptive typological linguistics to refer to a system of nominal case-marking where the subject of an intransitive verb has the same morphological marker as a direct object, and a different morphological marker from the subject of a transitive verb.” Written Tibetan satisfies that description, as it generally marks the agent of a transitive verb with the *byed sgra* (agentive, ergative case ending) and does not mark the subject of an intransitive verb, nor the direct objects/patients of transitive verbs. In written Tibetan, subjects of intransitive verbs and direct objects generally take the absolutive case. Spoken Tibetan, on the other hand, has a much more complex use of the ergative: “the ‘ergative’ marker just isn’t always there when a good ergative marker ought to be ..., and sometimes is there when it shouldn’t be (DeLancey 2011, 12).” Spoken Tibetan relies, *inter alia*, on various pragmatic factors, with the ergative often being absent or optional where one would expect it in the written language. See, e.g., DeLancey 2011, Nagano 1987, Tournadre 1995, 1996, Zeisler 1994.

⁷ See Verhagen 2001, 323-326.

Here is the key verse that launched a host of different interpretations. Thon mi starts with an introductory question in *rTags kyi 'jug pa* verse eleven:

ci phyir 'jug par byed ce na //

“Why are [the five Tibetan prefixes, *b-*, *g-*, *d-*, *'a-*, *m-*] applied [to verbal and nominal forms]?”

He then answers via the four lines of verse twelve:

pho ni 'das dang gzhan bsgrub phyir //

ma ning gnyis ka da ltar ched //

mo ni bdag dang ma 'ongs phyir //

shin tu mo ni mnyam phyir ro //

“The masculine [prefix *b-*] is for establishing the past and other;
The neutral [prefixes *g-* and *d-*] are for both [self and other] [and] the present;⁸

The feminine [prefix *'a-*] is for self and the future;

The extremely feminine [prefix *m-*] is for [self, other, and the three tenses] all alike.”⁹

⁸ A frequent, rival interpretation, since Laufer 1898, is to read *gnyis ka* (both) as qualifying *ma ning* (neutral). Thus, we regularly get some version of the following translation: “The *two* neutral [prefixes *g-* and *d-*] are for the present”. See, e.g., Stoddard and Tournadre 1992, 191. This, however, does not accord with commentators like Si tu and his successors. Indeed, it renders the major commentators’ explanations incomprehensible. Vollmann 2008 is aware of the differences in translation, but still prefers to read *gnyis ka* as qualifying *ma ning*. Note that Bacot 1928, 81, on the other hand, was in accord with major commentators’ gloss of this verse. Those commentators regularly give examples of uses of *g-* and *d-* for both self and other, and for the present. See *gSer tog sum rtags*, translated in chapter XII, §32f. See also AACT p. 47, §15: *sngon 'jug gi ma ning ga dang da ni dngos po bdag gzhan gnyis dang dus da lta ba la 'jug pa gtso che ste /*. “As for the neuter prefixes *g-* and *d-*, they refer principally to *both*, i.e., to the entities, self and other, as well as to the present.”

⁹ The verse is numbered as 12 in AACT and numbered as 12-15 in Bacot 1928. I have outlined my reasons for my numbering in Tillemans 1994, 122. Note that the question in verse 11 and the four-line answer in verse 12 are parallel to what we find in the previous two verses. There, Bacot rightly took the question *ji ltar 'jug par byed ce na* as

From the fourteenth century on, this verse was taken up in detail by *rTags 'jug* commentators like dBus pa blo gsal Byang chub ye shes (first half of fourteenth century), Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429-1489), Zha lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po (1441-1527), Bra ti dge bshes Rin chen don grub (seventeenth century), rNam gling Paṇ chen dKon mchog chos grags (1648-1718), and many others. A turning point came with a great Tibetan proto-philologist Si tu Paṇ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699-1774), who polemicized against the accounts of his predecessors on the grammar of Tibetan verbs, finding them hopelessly confused on all that mattered. Later grammarians—such as Si tu Paṇ chen himself, as well as his successors, dNgul chu Dharmabhadra (1772-1851), A lag sha Ngag dbang bstan dar (1759-1840), A kya Yongs 'dzin dByangs can dga' ba'i blo gros (1740-1827), dByangs can Grub pa'i rdo rje (1809-1887), dKar

9 and the four-line answer as 10. Unfortunately, however, he did not preserve the clear parallel in the subsequent verse when he rightly numbered the question *ci phyir 'jug par byed ce na* as 11, but, for seemingly no reason, numbered the four-line answer as 12-15. There is indeed no reason to continue with Bacot's numbering here. See also the discussion of the numbering in Graf 2019, 442-446, who rejects Bacot, but proposes that we number everywhere (in both the *Sum cu pa* and *rTags kyi 'jug pa*) according to four-line verses, in keeping with the simplification proposed in Zeisler 2006, n. 2. This has the consequence that the initial question (*ci phyir 'jug par byed...*) and the first line (*pho ni 'das...*) end up as verse 11cd, while the other three lines become verse 12abc. The unity of the four-line verse is thus lost. Not only that, but the parallel structure with the previous verse is also lost: the question (*ji ltar 'jug par byed ...*) now is 10b and the four-line answer is split over 10cd and 11ab. I think that Alexander Graf's main argument for adopting four lines everywhere is that Si tu, in commenting upon fourteen lines that occur later, speaks of “three śloka and two pādas (*rkang pa*)” (Graf 2019, 444). Graf, in effect, generalizes upon this passage and Si tu's statement that the *Sum cu pa* contains thirty-three śloka. He argues that if we stick with four-line verses and subtract the homages, as Si tu himself suggests, then the thirty-three reduce to thirty. Graf thus arrives at the view that both the *Sum cu pa* and *rTags kyi 'jug pa* proceed in four-line verses everywhere and without exception. The consequence in the case of the *rTags kyi 'jug pa*, however, is that Graf's proposed numbering will have little or no connection with the sense. This is a major drawback. I prefer to continue to read *ji ltar 'jug par byed ce na* as 9, the four-line answer as 10, *ci phyir 'jug par byed ce na* as 11, and the four-line answer as 12. Müller-Witte 2009, Kapitel 5 (Der Vers 12 des *rTags 'jug*) does likewise. This solution is in keeping with commentators, keeps parallel structures intact, and preserves meaning.

lebs drung yig Pad ma rdo rje (born 1858), gSer tog Blo bzang tshul khri ms rgya mtsho (1845-1915) and others¹⁰—thus once again took up Thon mi’s infamous verse and revisited three key sets of terms. They are as follows:

- (1) *bdag* (“self”) and *gzhan* (“other”). The former term designates the agent (*byed pa po*), the instrument, as well as the agent’s doing (*byed pa’i las* = “act-qua-doing”). The latter term designates that which fulfills the semantic role of patient (or is, syntactically, the direct object), as well as the action done to that patient (*bya ba’i las* = “act-qua-thing-done”). Significantly, thus, the two acts are also grouped under self and other, respectively, by grammarians. They can be understood semantically in terms of active and passive voices, respectively.
- (2) *tha dad pa* (“differentiated”; “transitive”) and *tha mi dad pa* (“undifferentiated”; “intransitive”), the former being verbs like “cut” and “kill” that have an agent that is differentiated, i.e., substantially different, from the object/patient, and the latter being verbs like “fall” and “go” that do not have such a distinct agent. A common terminological alternative to *tha dad pa/tha mi dad pa* is thus “verbs that are directly connected with a distinct agent” (*byed pa po gzhan dang dngos su ‘brel ba’i las tshig*) and those that are not directly connected with a distinct agent (*byed pa po gzhan dang dngos su ma ‘brel ba’i las tshig*). The usual shorthand in dictionaries becomes *byed ‘brel las tshig* and *byed med las tshig*, verbs that do or do not have an agent.¹¹ The distinction, as will be argued in this book, is to be seen as a version of the transitive-intransitive contrast.

¹⁰ On the lives, works, and dates of these grammarians and many others, including major pre-Si tu grammarians as well as twentieth century figures, see Müller-Witte 2009, Kapitel 4, “Leben und Werk der Grammatiker.”

¹¹ These terms do not figure in Thon mi’s *rTags kyi ‘jug pa*. They are due to Si tu’s gloss (AACT 62, §1): *las gang zhig byed pa po gzhan dang dngos su ‘brel ba’i dbang du byas nas / byed pa po’i dngos po de nyid dang de’i byed pa dang bcas pa la ni bdag ces bya zhing / des bsgrub par bya ba’i yul gyi dngos po bya ba dang bcas pa la ni gzhan zhes bya’o //*. “Given some act directly related with a distinct agent (*byed pa po gzhan*) then that very entity (*dngos po*) which is the agent and its ‘doing’ (*de’i byed pa*) are termed ‘self.’ The entity which is the focus (*yul*) to be established by that [agent] as well as that thing which is to be done (*bya ba*) are termed ‘other.’” They figure regularly, in one form or another, in post-eighteenth century discussions of the verse. Note that this passage was hopelessly

- (3) the “three times” (*dus gsum*), or the three tenses (“past,” “present,” “future”). The usual way to interpret these temporal specifications in Thon mi’s verse—e.g., that of Si tu, gSer tog, Ngag dbang bstan dar, A kya Yongs ‘dzin and others—is that they were added to capture past, present, or future verb forms unclassifiable as either self or other, including intransitive verbs and forms that involve auxiliaries (*tshig grogs*) like *kyin*, *gyin*, *gin*, *yin*, ‘gyur, or *bzhin pa*. That exegesis, adopted in one way or another by virtually all post-Si tu grammarians, is presented as follows by gSer tog Blo bzang tshul khrims rgya mtsho:

“In this treatise [i.e., in śloka twelve of the *rTags kyi ‘jug pa*], [Thon mi] put forth a division into self and other in order to include words for agents (*byed pa po*) and focuses of action (*bya ba’i yul*). In that [self-other division] are present doing (*byed bzhin da lta ba*), future thing-done and doing (*bya ‘gyur dang byed ‘gyur ma ‘ongs pa*), and past accomplished thing-done (*bya ba byas zin ‘das pa*). To include what is not pervaded (*ma khyab pa*) by the divisions of self and other, he put forth the division in terms of the three times (*dus gsum gyi dbye ba mdzad pa*) [in śloka twelve of the *rTags kyi ‘jug pa*].”¹²

The passage echoes Si tu.¹³ As gSer tog’s commentary shows (See chapter XII, below, for a full translation), however, things become complex in

misunderstood by early tibetologists like Jacques Bacot and Jacques Durr. See Tillemans 1988 for a detailed critique of the ideas on *bdag*, *gzhan*, and Tibetan verbs in Bacot 1946 and Durr 1950. Finally, Müller-Witte 2009 gives a fascinating study of two twentieth century grammarians, i.e., dPa’ ris sangs rgyas (born 1931) and rDo rje gdong drug (born 1935), who understand the ideas about *bdag*, *gzhan*, and *tha dad-tha mi dad* very differently from Si tu *et al.* Indeed, dPa’ ris complains that the great scholars (*mkhas chen*) mostly went astray because of overestimating the ease with which they could describe the verb morphology of their mother-language; they thus underestimated the complexity of the linguistic data. See Müller-Witte 2009, 239 *et seq.* dPa’ ris sangs rgyas may well have a point, but we should be clear that *his* use of *bdag*, *gzhan*, etc. (as Müller-Witte recognizes) is a new use of the traditional concepts, developing instead a causative-resultative distinction that seems to have real relevance to the data.

¹² *gSer tog sum rtags*, translated in chapter XII, §18.

¹³ Cf. Si tu (AACT 62, §4): *des na ci phyir ‘jug gi gzchung ‘di ‘chad pa’i skabs su dus gsum gyi dbye bas bshad pa rnams ni / bdag gzhan gyi dbye bas ma khyab pa’i lhag ma rnams bsdu ba’i don du blta bar bya’o //*. “Therefore, when explaining the passage [i.e., in śloka

subsequent commentaries. Thon mi's specifications for the three tenses are interpreted as neither exhaustive nor exclusive. On the one hand, each line's tense specification ends up covering only the supposedly *important* forms. On the other, the self/other specifications often overlap with those for the tenses. The structure of the verse in terms of two sets of divisions becomes increasingly baroque.

Indeed, it needs to be recognized clearly that Thon mi's own choice of words in verse twelve posed persistent problems, both to traditional exegetes from the fifteenth to the twentieth century as well as to the first modern scholars, like Jacques Bacot 1928, 1946, who attempted to use Thon mi's grammar as a description of Tibetan verb morphology. Major Tibetan commentators over the centuries remained puzzled by the loose fit of the *rTags kyi 'jug pa*'s root verse with what they saw as actual Tibetan data. Thon mi's terms "past," "present," and "future" in the first three lines of the verse were therefore commented upon as capturing only the principal (*gtso bo*, *gtso che ba*) tenses conveyed by the respective prefixes *b-*, *g-/d-*, and *'a*, others having been somehow omitted as of lesser importance. Or it would be said that verb forms that weren't "explicitly taught" by Thon mi (*dngos su ma bstan*) in his specifications of tenses, were "obtained by the sense [of the verse]" (*don gyis thob pa*).¹⁴ Or sometimes, as in Si tu (see chapter XII, §42), grammarians proposed a significant textual variant, reading *da* ("present") rather than the conjunction *dang* ("and") in the third line so as to make Thon mi better accord with data—Bacot 1946, 66 did the same. In the end, however, it is the nineteenth century grammarian gSer tog who, after using the usual stratagems, has the merit of forthright realism. He, in effect, admits that the words of Thon mi's verse can not be taken as they stand and are not going to be explained away satisfactorily. He thus went so far as to propose a new, extensively rewritten verse twelve (see chapter XII, §48) that he thought would account for Si tu's and Ngag dbang bstan dar's counterexamples and thus better fit actual Tibetan

twelve of Thon mi's *rTags kyi 'jug pa*], 'Why are [the prefixes] applied?', we should understand that his specifications in terms of the three-fold temporal division are meant to include the remaining things (*lhag ma*) not pervaded by the self/other distinction."

¹⁴ Such commentarial tactics already occur occasionally in the *Sum rtags* of a prominent grammarian of the early period Zha lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po (1441-1527). They are frequent in gSer tog and A kya Yongs 'dzin.

data. It is progress in the linguistic description of Tibetan using traditional schemata. But it is a sobering conclusion to centuries of commentarial exegesis on a recalcitrant root text. Broad-ranging thought about self and other, thing-done, doing, and verb tenses, especially from Si tu on, produced important linguistic perspectives and insights. Quasi-religious hermeneutics seeking the exact authorial intent behind each word, and especially each omission, in a verse on something as secular as Tibetan verb morphology, unfortunately, did not.

Chapter VIII, “On *bdag*, *gzhan*, and the Supposed Active-passive Neutrality of Tibetan Verbs,” examines the arguments of some modern linguists and tibetologists who maintain that the Tibetan language is thoroughly voice-neutral and has no distinction between active and passive. I argue that what indigenous grammarians like Si tu Pañchen, A kya Yongs ‘dzin, A lag sha Ngag dbang bstan dar, and gSer tog say about *bdag* and *gzhan* tends to show the opposite to be true. Their contrast between act-qua-doing (*byed pa’i las*) and act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba’i las*) does have bearing on the question of voice diathesis in Tibetan.

Some linguists and tibetologists argue, too, that “transitivity” and “intransitivity” have little or no place in analyses of Tibetan. “Transitivity, Intransitivity, and *tha dad pa* Verbs in Traditional Tibetan Grammar”—chapter IX—argues, on the contrary, that the indigenous distinction between *tha dad pa* and *tha mi dad pa* does meaningfully capture a distinction between Tibetan transitive and intransitive verbs. I think that there is no good reason to continue abjuring terms like “transitivity” and “active-passive” in our description of Tibetan language.

Chapter X, “gSer tog Blo bzang tshul khriims rgya mtsho on Tibetan Verb Tenses,” looks at how an astute nineteenth century grammarian significantly disambiguates the terminology about Tibetan tenses that figures in indigenous grammatical discussions of *bdag*, *gzhan*, and the “three times” (*dus gsum*). Modern writers on Tibetan language have sometimes pointed out that future stems (*ma ‘ongs pa*) do not convey tense, *stricto sensu*, so much as modes like obligation or necessity. Thus, for example, Michael Hahn rightly saw that Tibetan emphasizes obligation through forms in ... *par bya* (e.g., *gcad par bya* “... is to be cut”) or through the simple future stem (e.g., *gcad do* “... will/should be cut”), while actions happening in a future time, *stricto sensu*, are expressed by periphrastic forms using ‘gyur, like *gcod par ‘gyur* (“... will cut”).

“Auch der sogenannte Futurstamm ist in Gegensatz zu seiner Bezeichnung kein Tempusstamm, sondern ein Modusstamm mit ne-
zessitativer Bedeutung. Er drückt aus, dass eine (noch nicht begonnene)
Verbalhandlung vollzogen werden muss. ...

[D]as reine Futur kann in Tibetischen nur periphrastisch ausgedrückt
werden.”¹⁵

It is noteworthy that at least one prominent, traditional Tibetan grammarian seems to have seen the need for a similar distinction and thus came up with notions of *dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa* (the temporally future, i.e., the future shown by the periphrastic form with 'gyur) and *bya las ma 'ongs pa* (future act-qua-thing-[to be]-done, such as *gcad par bya* or *gcad do*). The grammarian is gSer tog Blo bzang tshul khriims rgya mtsho. He then extrapolated to a distinction between the temporal values (i.e., *spyir dus gsum gyi 'jog tshul* “the way to classify the three times generally”) and the modal values (i.e., *bya byed las kyi dus gsum* “three times in terms of [the triad] actions, agents and objects”) of all the various verb forms to which Thon mi and his commentators refer. The insight is important if we are to make sense of Tibetan verbs.

Chapter XI, “On the Assimilation of Indic Grammatical Literature into Indigenous Tibetan Scholarship,” looks at would-be Indic sources for terms like *bdag* and *gzhan*, arriving at a cautionary note. On difficult points such as later grammarians’ use of the term *dnegos po* (“entity”) and grammatical treatments of *bdag* and *gzhan* generally, the Tibetan discussions should not be understood principally by plumbing the depths of Indian Vyākaraṇa literature for potentially equivalent Sanskrit original terms—as has been done since Laufer 1898—but need to be seen in their own right as essentially indigenous developments. It has been, alas, a tempting *non-sequitur* to think that the fact that Tibetan thinkers had incontestable, historical debts to India (on everything from logic and Madhyamaka to tantra and grammar) implies that the most important

¹⁵ Hahn 1985, 63 and 64. Müller-Witte 2009 shows that Tibetan indigenous grammarians, over the last three centuries, were, in effect, divided on the issue of whether the present and future stems were purely modal or temporally oriented. A kya Yongs ‘dzin, for example, advances the former view in his commentary on Bra ti dge bshes, viz., that present and future stems are temporally neutral. See Müller-Witte 2009, 186 and n. 87. Si tu, however, maintains the temporal orientation.

and fruitful way to understand them is always, and first and foremost, to retrace their debt. In studying Tibetan works on case grammar, phonology, *mantras*, and etymologies, an indologically oriented methodology has produced results. When it comes to *Sum rtags* accounts of transitivity, voice, and tenses, however, it obscures much that is of interest and often leads us astray, away from diverse texts, originality, and complex Tibetan intellectual history to less than productive speculation.¹⁶

The last study, chapter XII, is an annotated translation of gSer tog's chapter on *bdag* and *gzhan*, providing source material for the previous chapters and further informed discussion. The chapter, like other commentaries on *bdag* and *gzhan*, is an exegesis of Thon mi's verse twelve and often tries to reconcile Thon mi's enigmatic omissions with linguistic empirical data. Nonetheless, in his sensitivity to that data and its implications, gSer tog is one of the most original and clear thinkers in the Si tu tradition. He gives us a reliable snapshot of controversies amongst his fellow grammarians, and his own ideas merit further study.¹⁷

* * *

There are several publications in the fields of Buddhist Studies, Logic, and Linguistics that are, in one way or another, particularly germane to themes treated in this book. I have mentioned those I consider important, or even indispensable, to understanding Tibetan Buddhist logic in notes to the first two studies. They present recent Asianist research, bibliographical information on Indian and Tibetan logic and epistemology, as well as, on a few occasions, information on promising research on modern logic that could be brought to bear more fully on Buddhist material. Let me mention here in this introduction some important developments that stand out concerning Madhyamaka and Tibetan grammatico-linguistic thought.

¹⁶ Some examples of less than useful speculation about Indian antecedents underlying Tibetan *bdag* and *gzhan* contexts are found in Miller 1991, 1992, and 1993, §10. See Tillemans 1994 for a reply. See also chapter XI below.

¹⁷ Cf. Müller-Witte 2009, 139: "Sein Kommentar zum *Sum rtags*, der „magische Schlüssel“ gilt als einer der Besten nach Si tu und weicht an einigen Stellen von ihm ab. Die Abhandlung ist innovativ, ausführlicher als die meisten anderen und hat den grossen Vorteil, dass gSer tog dort die Namen der Autoren nennt, deren Positionen er bespricht und tadelt."

It was not feasible to treat these adequately in notes to the chapters of the present book. We begin with Madhyamaka.

First of all, key Indian sources have become accessible in a way in which they hardly were before. We now have a very good translation and edition of the first chapter of Candrakīrti's *Prasannadā* by Anne MacDonald, i.e., MacDonald 2015. This publication makes it much easier to understand the major Indian text upon which Tsong kha pa and others rely in their exegesis of the Bhāviveka-Candrakīrti debate, and it is thus a major contribution towards clarity.

Secondly, with the work of David Seyfort Ruegg, there has been, in recent years, some controversy about what the absurd consequence (*prasaṅga*) and contraposition (*viparyaya*) were in this debate, or if there were really consequences and contrapositions at all. There are some new developments here that I should take up. The problems are philosophically substantial but couched in technical terms. This is not easy stuff, and we need to backtrack a bit.

Here's what one needs to know. Hopkins 1983, 491, and Tillemans 1992 and 2016, chapter V, gave the *reductio ad absurdum* reasoning, or absurd consequence (*prasaṅga*), that Bhāviveka discusses in his debate with Candrakīrti as follows:

“It would follow absurdly that things' production is pointless and without end because they are produced from themselves.”

This would yield the following contraposition (*viparyaya*):

“Things are not produced from themselves, because their production has a point and has an end.”

The Mādhyamika, according to Bhāviveka, would have to accept that contraposition as valid. The result would then be that he would have to accept that things are produced from something other than themselves; there would therefore be “a contradiction with [the Mādhyamika's own professed] philosophical tenets (*siddhāntavirodha*),” in that the negation of self-production would imply a positive thesis, i.e., production from other. A genuine Mādhyamika, on the other hand, right from the get-go in Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*, should supposedly accept no such positive implication when he says that things are not produced from themselves, from other things, from both or from neither. Thus, for

Bhāviveka, this consequence—originally given by Buddhapālita—is not an acceptable way for a genuine Mādhyamika to argue.

Going from a consequence to its contraposition is a generally accepted Buddhist logical move, known to Dignāga and extensively developed by Dharmakīrti and his logician successors.¹⁸ One can make the move from “it follows absurdly that *A* would be *B* because it is *C*” to “*A* is not *C*, because it is not *B*” when not-*B* is the case and *C* implies *B* (so that not-*B* implies not-*C*). (See chapter II, section 3 in this book for indigenous Tibetan developments.) This is close enough to the English sense of “contraposition” that we can use this word profitably. To be precise, however, *viparyaya* does mean more than what a modern logician usually means by “contraposition.” Whereas contraposition is just the conversion of a conditional sentence $P \rightarrow Q$ (if a proposition *P* is true then *Q* is true) into another conditional $\neg Q \rightarrow \neg P$ (if not-*Q* then not-*P*) (See, e.g., Copi 1982, 193f.), a *viparyaya* involves an additional feature, viz., that not-*Q* is indeed true. In short, *viparyaya* is, arguably, more like an inference by the rule of *modus tollens* rather than a mere contraposition of a conditional: one infers $\neg P$ from $(P \rightarrow Q)$ and $\neg Q$ (See Copi 1982, 324). Let us continue to allow ourselves the English term but with the appropriate dose of circumspection that it is only a partial fit.

As I try to bring out in Tillemans 1992 (included as chapter V in this book), Tsong kha pa recognized that there *is* an absurd consequence at stake in the debate but contested Bhāviveka’s formulation of that consequence and slipped in an all-important word “again” into his version. He thus chose to understand the consequence as:

“It would follow absurdly that things’ production *again* (*slar yang*) is pointless and without end because they are produced from themselves.”

In so doing, he thought that he guaranteed that there would *not* be a valid contraposition in the case of this *specific* consequence. A would-be contraposition would yield a reasoning that no Buddhist would ever accept as a proof (*sādhana*) of things not being produced from themselves, viz., “Things are not produced from themselves, because it is not so that their

¹⁸ On the account of *prasaṅgaviparyaya* in Dharmakīrti’s PV IV k.12 and in Manoranandin’s commentary, see Tillemans 2000, 21–24.

production *again* is pointless,” which, for him, would mean equivalently “Things are not produced from themselves, because their production *again* has a point.”

The move from the first formulation of the contraposition to the second might perhaps be contestable if one did not accept double negation elimination as universally applicable.¹⁹ In any case, Tsong kha pa wholeheartedly accepted such a logical law across the board, and therefore had no difficulties making precisely this move in his *rTsa she t̃ik chen* commentary on Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* (See chapter V, below). Moreover, he held that a *viparyaya* to be valid should be a proof of the truth of a proposition via a reason that possesses the triple characterization (*trairūpya*), one characteristic being that it is true that the reason qualifies the subject. The problem then is that, for a Buddhist, the qualification of the subject, or *pakṣadharmatva*, is not true: it is necessarily false that things’ production again has a point. In fact, for Buddhists who hold all entities to be momentary, it can never be so that the same things are produced again; the proposition that they can and must be is at most accepted by a Sāṃkhya opponent, who holds *satkāryavāda*, i.e., that effects exist latently at the time of their causes and are later made manifest, or *reproduced*. Tsong kha pa has, in effect, a usual Dharmakīrtian and Dignāgan notion of what a *prasaṅgaviparyaya* is. His point is only that no such *viparyaya* is possible *here* in the Mādhyamika’s debate with the Sāṃkhya opponent.

¹⁹ A Mādhyamika might conceivably argue that the reason “it is not the case that their production again is pointless” would not imply the affirmation that their production again does have a point. Oddly enough, however, Indian and Tibetan Mādhyamikas did not consider the applicability or non-applicability of *pratiṣedhadvayena prakṛtagamana* (*dgag pa gnyis kyis rnal ma go ba* “[the law that] one understands the main [proposition] by means of two negations”) to be a relevant issue here. Neither in the Indian version nor in Tibetan remakes of the *prasaṅga* and *prasaṅgaviparyaya* do we find Mādhyamikas rejecting the move from “it is not so that ... is pointless” to “it is so that ... has a point,” even though the applicability of double negation elimination is a hot-button issue elsewhere, i.e., in discussions on the tetralemma (*catuskoṭi*). Tsong kha pa accepted the law across the board; Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge did not—see chapter I, section §7 below and Tillemans 2016, chapter VII on double negation elimination in Madhyamaka.

So much for the Indo-Tibetan background. Now, David Seyfort Ruegg has argued in detail that there should be no question *at all* about Dignāgan or Dharmakīrtian contrapositions of consequences in this debate, because *viparyaya* for Candrakīrti and Bhāviveka is *not* to be understood in terms of the usual technical notion of Buddhist logic. Instead *viparyaya*, for these sixth century Indian Mādhyamikas, was a looser move along the lines of what he terms “implicative reversal.” As Seyfort Ruegg 2000, 253 put it:

“[Bhāviveka’s objection] apparently involves the idea not of contraposition but of implicative reversal, namely, that a negation of production from self would imply the affirmation of production from an other.”

In “Tsong kha pa *et al.* on the Bhāviveka-Candrakīrti Debate,” I argued that “implicative reversal” of a consequence does not follow any clear logical principle. It thus violates the principle of interpretative charity to introduce “implicative reversal” as a logical move, even if it might seem to accord with some explanations by Bhāviveka’s commentator Avalokitavrata. Philosophically, there is thus reason to think that “implicative reversal” is not part of the story here. However, it is not just bad logic alone that makes “implicative reversal” suspect: the text of the *Prasannapadā* does not bear it out. The clincher showing that Bhāviveka is thinking of a consequence and a contraposition in the normal, Buddhist, technical sense has been provided by Toshikazu Watanabe. Watanabe 2013 looked at consequences and contrapositions in Dignāga and then looked at the passages in *Prasannapadā* 36.11-37.2 dealing with Bhāviveka’s other criticisms of Buddhapālita’s arguments. He examined, in particular, the *prasaṅga* refuting any production from “other” (*paratra*), i.e., from causes that would be radically other than their effects. Here too, as Watanabe shows, Bhāviveka’s criticism of the *prasaṅgaviparyaya* as leading again to a contradiction with Madhyamaka philosophical tenets (*siddhāntavirodha*) presupposes a normal contraposition of the *prasaṅga*, one that Dignāga or a later logician would find fully familiar.

In effect, Bhāviveka’s absurd consequence in his arguments against production from “other” can be formulated as:

“It would follow absurdly that everything would arise from everything because things arise from things that are other than them.”

Given that no-one accepts it to be true that everything arises from everything, the contraposition he deduces is then:

“Things do not arise from things that are other than them, because it is not so that everything arises from everything.”

It is easy to see that the logical structure of this argument and its contraposition is the same as that of the earlier refutation of production from self. What one says about the one will hold for the other. While we may or may not accept Tsong kha pa’s reformulation of the first *prasaṅga*, we should not suppose with Seyfort Ruegg that *viparyaya* at this stage in the history of philosophy was something rather loose and informal, significantly different from contrapositions and *modus tollens* inferences. More likely is that neither for Dignāga, nor for Bhāviveka, nor for Candrakīrti, was there a dubious type of logical move along the lines of “implicative reversal.”

* * *

Turning to recent developments and ongoing controversies concerning indigenous Tibetan grammar, there are several people who have, in one way or another, argued that the notion of transitivity either cannot apply meaningfully to the Tibetan language at all, or (what is a more modest claim) that the grammarians’ own *tha dad pa-tha mi dad pa* (literally “differentiated-undifferentiated”) contrast is not to be seen as capturing a distinction between transitive and intransitive. We will take up the latter claim. Thus, Ralf Vollmann, relying on the late Roland Bielmeier’s views, says:

“[T]he Tibetan concept of *⟨tha dad pa⟩* ‘differentiative’ or *⟨byed ‘brel⟩* (AG-connected) does not simply translate the modern syntactic concept of transitivity. Instead, it seems to refer to the degree of control of the agent over the action. Therefore, Western scholars nowadays prefer the terminology ‘controllable verb’ (CTRL, c) and ‘not-controllable verb’ (NOCTRL, nc).”²⁰

²⁰ Vollmann 2008, 348.

The idea that the grammarians' distinction between *tha dad* / *tha mi dad* is a matter of control, intention, or volition, rather than transitivity may be, in part at least, due to a not infrequent and quite questionable Tibetan classification of verbs like *mtshong ba* "see," *go ba* "hear," *shes pa* "know," and the like as *tha mi dad pa*. Verbs like *mtshong ba*, *go ba*, and *shes pa* express a process with two participants. In other words, they are "biactantial"—i.e., have an agent with ergative marking and an object/patient—and thus would naturally seem good candidates for being transitive verbs. And yet *mtshong ba*, *go ba*, and *shes pa* are classified in dictionaries like the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* of Zhang Yisun *et al.* as *tha mi dad pa*. It might thus be thought that *tha dad pa* and *tha mi dad pa* verbs are not, respectively, transitive and intransitive but just express voluntary and involuntary actions. Seeing, hearing, and knowing are involuntary, or unintentional, states that happen to a person as a result of previous efforts in looking, listening, and studying. And, indeed, some important textbooks on Tibetan do translate *tha dad pa* as "intentional" and *tha mi dad pa* as "unintentional," including *mtshong ba* and the like in a list of verbs of that latter sort.²¹ I would reply that we need to look at that classification of *mtshong ba*, etc., in some detail as it shows itself to be a rather frequent *idée reçue* with little to recommend it. Verbs like *mtshong ba*, *go ba*, and *shes pa* are best not regarded as *tha mi dad pa*.

True, there were some sophisticated Tibetan thinkers who held that *mtshong ba* and the like were *tha mi dad pa*. A famous twentieth century Tibetan grammarian rDo rje rgyal po (1913-1993) went to considerable length to explain how *shes pa* "know," etc. were verbs that constituted a special category (*nang gses*) of *tha mi dad pa*. The anomaly is that the example statement he gave, viz., *khos rgya yig shes kyi yod pa red* "He knows written Chinese," had an object (*rgya yig* "written Chinese"), as well as an agent (*khos* "he") in the ergative case (*byed sgra*), all the while having a supposedly *tha mi dad pa* verb. Indeed, rDo rje rgyal po granted explicitly that "what is to be established (*bsgrub bya*) and [the agent] that establishes (*sgrub byed*)" were genuinely different (*tha dad*) here. Nonetheless, he included *shes pa* in the *tha mi dad pa* category because "know" is "an undifferentiated [verb] where the result of a previous action is established (*bya ba sngon du song ba'i 'bras bu grub pa'i bya*

²¹ See, e.g., Thonden 1984, Vol. 1, 224f.

byed tha mi dad pa).²² In other words, “to know” captures the resultant undifferentiated state of a previously differentiated action, i.e., studying. (One can, *mutatis mutandis*, do a similar pairing between “looking”-“seeing,” and “listening”-“hearing.”) Once the learning process has been accomplished and someone has mastered written Chinese (*khong du chud zin pa'i gnas skabs su*), knower and known are supposedly no longer different (*bya byed tha mi dad pa'i cha nas*), and that is why, according to rDo rje rgyal po, one says “know” (*shes zer ba*) rather than “has studied” (*bslabs zhes mi zer*).

This is hard to follow, unnecessarily so. Does the central idea simply come down to the purely subjective phenomenon that mastery of something generally abolishes the felt sense of distance from it, so that a student who finally achieves mastery of Chinese characters is no longer struggling with something she *feels* foreign to her? Quite possibly.²³ In any case, such a subjective phenomenon of felt unity with the object does not seem to override the morphosyntactic factors in favor of treating knowing, etc. as *tha dad pa*, notably, the persistence of ergative marking in the sentences about knowing, seeing, and hearing just as in sentences about studying, looking, and listening. In the sentence *khos rgya yig shes kyi yod pa red*

²² rDo rje rgyal po 1992, 222: *bsgrub bya dang sgrub byed tha dad yin la / sgrub par byed pa'i bya ba sngon du song ba'i 'bras bu grub pa'i bya byed tha mi dad pa ni / dper na khos rgya yig shes kyi yod pa red ces pa lta bu brjod pa'i tshe na shes zhes pa de bya tshig yin zhing / shes bya dang shes byed yang tha dad yin pas thog mar bslabs yod kyang / khong du chud zin pa'i gnas skabs su bya byed tha mi dad pa'i cha nas shes zer ba las bslabs zhes mi zer / yang bskyar bshad na / shes zhes pa de bya tshig yin zhing / bsgrub bya (shes par bya rgyu) dang sgrub byed (shes par byed mkhan) tha dad yin la / sgrub par byed pa'i (shes par byed pa'i) bya ba sngon du song ba'i 'bras bu grub pa'i (shes pa'i) bya byed tha mi dad pa yin pa lta bu'o //.*

²³ Cf. Müller-Witte 2009, 226 on rDo rje rgyal po's view and its influence: “Das Studierte und der Student sind aber im Moment des Verstehens hier ‘eins geworden’; es gibt keinen Unterschied mehr zwischen ihnen und der Sachverhalt ist daher intransitiv (*tha mi dad pa*). Dies erklärt, warum solche Verben im *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* also intransitiv verzeichnet sind, zumal rDo rje rgyal po einer seiner Autoren ist.” As Müller-Witte mentioned, rDo rje rgyal po is indeed listed as an author—more precisely, the “junior chief editor” (*rtsom sgrig pa gtso bo gzhon pa*)—of the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*. This may be a relevant factor in the dictionary's promotion of *mthong ba*, *shes pa* and *go ba* as intransitive.

we have a manifestly biactantial verb with the agent (*khos*) marked in the ergative. These are typically the features of *tha dad pa* verbs.

Fortunately, however, there is no unanimity about the classification of these verbs within the indigenous tradition. Another reliable Tibetan-Tibetan dictionary, the *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs* of Blo mthun bSam gtan *et al.*, classifies *mtshong ba*, *go ba*, and *shes pa* as *byed* ‘*brel las tshig* = *tha dad pa*. And a grammarian like sKal bzang ‘gyur med also takes these verbs as *tha dad pa*. I would propose the following: it makes much better sense to follow the *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs* and thus reject the classification in *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*. In that case, *mtshong ba*, *go ba*, *shes pa*, etc. can be treated as the biactantial transitives they appear to be, albeit ones where the action is involuntary. And, to boot, we don’t have to go into any scholastic intricacies to explain how a verb with an ergative-marked agent would nonetheless fall under traditional grammar’s notion of a verb *without* a distinct agent (*byed med las tshig* = *tha mi dad pa*). The gain in simplicity is considerable.

Voluntary-involuntary does, however, play a significant role. Indeed, in AACT, 27f. it was suggested that while the voluntary-involuntary opposition does *not* match with the *tha dad pa*-*tha mi dad pa* schema of transitivity, it can and should complement it.²⁴ Such seems also to have been sKal bzang ‘gyur med’s idea in introducing the distinction *rang dbang can* (autonomous = voluntary) and *gzhan dbang can* (dependent = involuntary). As he puts it in defining *rang dbang can*:

“Whether [the verb] is one where the object and agent are different (*tha dad*) or not (*mi dad*), when the agent who effectuates the action can of his own accord direct that action, this type [of verb] is an ‘autonomous verb’ (*rang dbang can gyi bya tshig*).”²⁵

²⁴ Cf. Hill 2004, 85-86: “Beaucoup d’auteurs ont combiné l’actance et la volition sous la rubrique ‘transitivité’—le premier est essentiellement une question de syntaxe, et le second de sémantique. ... Ainsi, analyser le verbe dans ces seules catégories [transitif et intransitif] est une simplification brute.”

²⁵ sKal bzang ‘gyur med 1981, 365: *bya byed tha dad dang mi dad gang yang rung / bya ba sgrub mkhan byed pa pos rang dbang gi sgo nas bya ba’i kha lo sgyur thub pa de rigs ni rang dbang can gyi bya tshig yin /*. My translation.

The first clause of the definition of a “dependent verb” remains the same, i.e., “whether the verb is one where the object and agent are different or not.” The rest of the definition specifies that the action is not directed by the agent’s own will but rather through some other causes and conditions. What is clear in both definitions is that there are cases of *tha dad* that are involuntary and cases of *tha mi dad* that are voluntary. In effect, we have the following dual-axis schema:

	Voluntary	Involuntary
tha dad	gsod pa “to kill”	mthong ba “to see”
tha mi dad	‘gro ba “to go”	na ba “to be sick”

Note that the voluntary-involuntary contrast is not a purely semantic matter in Tibetan but has morphosyntactic consequences, as does *tha dad-tha mi dad*. I refer the reader to the Appendix in AACT (p. 27f.) for a discussion of the further advantages to such a dual-axis approach in accounting for Tibetan morphosyntactic phenomena.

Of course, one can rightly say that the Tibetan transitivity is not along the lines of the usual model of an action being carried over to an object/patient marked in the accusative case. But rejecting transitive-intransitive outright as applicable to a language unless it is nominative-accusative would look like blatant overkill: indigenous Tibetan grammarians seem to me to present interesting and important ideas on features of transitivity in an ergative language, one that works quite differently from the nominative-accusative type.²⁶ I doubt that there would be data compelling

²⁶ Cf. Hill 2010, xii: “The terminology of ‘transitive’ and ‘intransitive’ is not appropriate to the description of Tibetan grammar... Transitivity is classically defined in reference to the accusative case, a category which has no meaning in Tibetan.” There are other such arguments against using the word “transitivity.” Stoddard and Tournadre 1992, 246 argue that Tibetans classify verbs whose object is not in the absolutive case (i.e., unmarked) as *tha mi dad pa*, while some should in fact be seen as transitive. Hence, so much the worse for seeing *tha dad-tha mi dad pa* in terms of transitivity. In short, Stoddard and Tournadre invoke verbs like ‘gro ba “go” that take a destination marked with the *la* particle and are traditionally termed *tha mi dad pa*, and then they generalize to say that Tibetan verbs that behave in this way are *tha mi dad pa*. In fact, this generalization

us to say that those grammarians are talking about something radically separate from transitivity unless we somehow based ourselves on dubious evidence, like the classifications of verbs such as *mthong ba* as *tha mi dad pa* in one prestigious dictionary or in *certain*—but not all—Tibetan grammarians’ accounts of these types of verbs. As we have seen, the value of that data should be contested.

For the purposes of this introduction, at least, enough has been said of the arguments *against* “Tibetan transitivity.” We’ll turn the tables and look briefly at some ways to *save* the idea and take it seriously. One way is what I proposed in chapter IX, i.e., adopt a transitive-intransitive continuum, following Hopper and Thompson 1980, so that voluntary, involuntary, and many other criteria serve to determine gradations of higher or lower transitivity. The Hopper-Thompson account fleshed out the usual conception of a transitive verb as having a valence greater than one and involving an action that extends, or passes over, from an agent to an object/patient affecting it in varying degrees.

I now think, however, that the Hopper-Thompson account of a process passing from agent to an object/patient, sophisticated as it may be, only represents part of the complex story about transitivity in different languages. There are, in effect, two perspectives, two ways of

is not right. See chapter IX below. A verb like *gzigs* “see” “look” does take objects marked with a *la don* but should be taken as *tha dad pa*, especially when understood as “look (at).” Note too that a grammarian like A lag sha Ngag dbang bstan dar uses the ubiquitous woodcutter example *shing gcod pa*, but on occasion formulates it with a *la don*, as when he describes the “act of cutting” as (p. 185) *shing la sta re(s) rgyag bzhin pa’i gcod pa’i las* “The act of cutting consisting in the [woodcutter] striking the wood with an axe.” The case of ‘*gro ba*’ is thus a special one where the verb is indeed *tha mi dad pa*, not simply because of the presence of the *la don* after the destination (e.g., *lha sa la ‘gro ba*), but because the destination is not a genuine patient/object of the action—‘*gro ba*’ has no object distinct from the agent, the goer. There are, no doubt, numerous examples where *la* is added to the object/patient of a clearly transitive verb. See Zeisler 2006 for uses of *shing la gcod pa*, *rkyag pa la zo* (“Eat shit!”), *sha la za zhing khrag la ‘thung ba* (“to eat meat and drink blood”), etc., which Zeisler hypothesizes to involve a partitive sense. Sometimes (as in *g.yag la zhon pa*) the addition of *la* can be seen to perform a pragmatic function of highlighting – “it is a yak that he rode,” or “He rode a yak [not a horse.]” See Tournadre 1995, 272. Be that as it may, in these cases the presence of *la* does not seem to have any bearing on whether the verb is transitive or not. Cf., e.g., Spanish where the presence or absence of an *a* preposition in sentences need not,

interpreting the situation expressed by a clause. We can focus on: (1) whether or not the process extends, or carries over, from the agent to an object, or (2) whether or not the process is instigated by a distinct, external agent. The bold follow-up here is to say that the merit and interest of indigenous Tibetan grammarians' theories is that they develop precisely this second perspective, and that it is one that is genuinely important for a fuller conception of transitivity in linguistics. That is the view of Randy J. LaPolla, František Kratochvíl, and Alexander Coupe in their joint article "On Transitivity", i.e., LaPolla *et al.* 2011. Relying on the account of traditional Tibetan grammatical conceptions in AACT, they argue that there is a "Tibetan view of transitivity" that differs from the usual Western conception but is nonetheless a needed complement to it.

"We can see that the Tibetan view takes a different perspective from the Western view: in the traditional Western view a transitive differs from an intransitive in having a second argument that the action passes over to, while in the Tibetan view a transitive clause differs from an intransitive one in having a second argument representing an external agency" (LaPolla *et al.* 2011, 478-479).

To get an idea of what is at stake, take the following pairs of English sentences:

"The lion chased the tourist."

"The lion ran."

"The lion chased the tourist."

"The tourist ran."

The usual transitive/intransitive perspective is in terms of $\pm extension$ of a process to a patient/object (e.g., "The lion chased the tourist" versus "The lion ran"). The ergative/non-ergative perspective, by contrast, is in terms of $\pm agency$ of a process on something or someone (e.g., "The

in itself, have any significant consequences for transitivity, either, but may just vary for other reasons like the animacy of the object: *Veo árboles en la ciudad vieja de Montevideo* ("I see trees in the old town of Montevideo") versus *Veo a Maira* ("I see Maira").

lion chased the tourist” versus “The tourist ran [spontaneously]”).²⁷ Both models—perspectives, or interpretations of meaning—are features of a single system of transitivity in English. Taking the first perspective, where one focuses on a process and its extension from agent to an object/patient, a sentence like *The lion chased the tourist* is put in relation with *The lion ran*, in that the lion’s running either extends to the other actant (transitive *The lion chased the tourist*), or does not so extend (intransitive *The lion ran*). On the second perspective, where one focuses on the instigation of the process rather than its extension, *The lion chased the tourist* is related with *The tourist ran*. Either the tourist’s running was instigated by an external agent (*The lion chased the tourist*) or it was simply self-motivated (*The tourist ran*).

For LaPolla *et al.*, Tibetan grammarians develop the ergative/non-ergative perspective. I think that these linguists are right: the Tibetan grammarians’ version of a transitivity/intransitivity contrast in terms of *tha dad /tha mi dad pa*—or what is the same, *byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba yin min* (“the action being related or not with a distinct agent”)—clearly focuses on the instigation of the process by an external agent and not on its extension from the agent to an object. The stock examples of transitivity and intransitivity are phrased in terms of \pm agency of the process, i.e., the same contrast that we see between “The lion chased the tourist” versus “The tourist ran [spontaneously].” In the favorite Tibetan example of transitivity, viz., “Woodcutters split/cut wood” (*shing mkhan gyis shing gcod do*), the grammarians’ point is indeed that the wood’s splitting is instigated by an external agent; it is not a splitting (*‘chad pa*) that simply happens to the wood by itself. The other example ubiquitous in the literature is alchemists transforming (*sgyur, bsgyur*) iron into gold versus the iron naturally (*rang gi ngang gis*) changing (*‘gyur*) into gold. Tibetan shows transitivity in the former case by marking the agents—i.e., the alchemist (*sgyur ba po*) and the alchemical elixir (*gser ‘gyur rtsi*)—in the ergative (*byed sgra*) and using the transitive verb *sgyur, bsgyur* (“change,” “transform”). In the latter case there is no marked agent and the

²⁷ This is clearly an intentional departure from the more limited and usual use of the term “ergative”—as in Comrie 1978 or Dixon 1994—to analyze and classify languages (i.e., ergative versus accusative languages) on the basis of their morphosyntactic coding of subjects, objects/patients, and agents.

verb is the intransitive ‘gyur, gyur (“change”). Those alchemical examples, and others, are taken up by major Tibetan grammarians. On the other hand, from what I have seen in this literature, Tibetan grammarians place no theoretical weight on whether or not an agent’s action simply *has* an object and carries over to it. (This is interestingly in contrast to traditional Sanskrit grammar, where transitive verbs *are* said to be *sakarmaka*, those that “have an object,” and intransitives are *akarmaka*, “without object.”) I think Tibetan grammarians may well have been onto something important: the ergative perspective turning on \pm *agency* is considerably more important in the Tibetan language than the perspective turning on \pm *extension*.

In my earlier paper on transitivity (included here as chapter IX), I had addressed an objection of Stoddard and Tournadre to the effect that the indigenous Tibetan classification of verbs does *not* have to do with transitivity—their point was that actions having or not having distinct agents (*byed pa po gzhan*), or, what is the same, actions with or without distinct agents and objects/patients (*tha dad pa/tha mi dad pa*), and other such contrasts are predominantly semantic in nature, rather than belonging to syntax and coding. It is true that even a cursory glance at Tibetan grammatical texts (see chapter XII below) reveals the emphasis they place on semantics. A follower of Michael Halliday’s *Functional Grammar* will, however, unabashedly see the semantic emphasis as a plus, rather than a minus. Indeed, the Hallidayan systemic view of grammar that LaPolla *et al.* invoke is that lexico-grammar is driven by semantic principles. Thus, the ergative/non-ergative perspective reflects a semantic concern: *Is the action caused/instigated by an outside actor or is it self-engendered?* If one generally embraces strongly semantic accounts of transitivity, as do Halliday and LaPolla *et al.*, then the relevance of Tibetan indigenous grammatical writing to contemporary linguistics increases remarkably. It then becomes possible to come up with a “Tibetan view of transitivity,” as do LaPolla *et al.*, that goes well beyond the matters of coding and morphosyntax in certain specific languages or typologies of languages, and works profitably as part of a more general approach to languages.²⁸

²⁸ Interestingly enough, however, LaPolla *et al.* argue, invoking Davidse, that the difference of models in one and the same language is not *just* a purely semantic matter but represents clause types that exhibit different syntactic features.

LaPolla *et al.*, in effect, are attempting in linguistics what cross-cultural thinkers like Arindam Chakrabarti, Jay Garfield, Mark Siderits, Graham Priest, Jonardon Ganeri, and others, including the late Asianist-philosopher Wilhelm Halbfass, have tried to do in philosophy, i.e., an East-West collaborative approach that expands horizons. This is also sometimes termed “fusion thinking,” although I would prefer “cosmopolitan thinking,” as fusion of differing histories, contexts, and views is arguably not a recommendable goal. In any case, the intersection of perspectives that we find in “On Transitivity” is quite stunning:

“Halliday’s conceptualisation, which incorporates both the traditional Western view of transitivity and something like the traditional Tibetan view of transitivity into one system, is an improvement over the other mono-construction approaches, as recognizing the distinct construction types within a single language helps to properly characterise and explain the ambitransitive uses of verbs and the differences between the two construction types pointed out by Davide” (LaPolla *et al.* 2011, 481).

We will have to leave the rest to the linguists themselves. My point in this introduction is essentially methodological: we will profit from wider conceptions here. It is much more promising and creative to embrace Tibetan transitivity, with its particularities, and thus expand the analysis, rather than to debate more narrowly about (mis)translations of Tibetan grammatical terms or whether “transitive” to be meaningful must be reserved to a traditional Indo-European conception. Good cross-border thinking relies on conceptual bridges. This is a case where a bridge looks eminently possible.

* * *

A few final remarks and acknowledgments. The section on Tibetan Buddhist logic, in its shorter, first incarnation composed in 2014, was destined for the logicians and historians of logic involved in an interdisciplinary project of Johan van Benthem and others on logical thinking in China. That first version is still to appear in Springer Verlag’s *Handbook of Logical Thought in China*, edited by Liu Fenrong, Jeremy Seligman, and Zhai Jincheng. At the time Shōryū Katsura read the piece carefully and pointed out quite a number of philological improvements. Jeremy Seligman and Koji Tanaka

gave some helpful remarks on logical issues. While the relatively simple, formal tools used should pose no problem for logicians and philosophers, navigating transcribed Tibetan is a notoriously off-putting task for the non-tibetanist.²⁹ Phonetic simplifications are inadequate if one wishes to anchor philosophical analyses to original languages, as I think we need to do if we are to avoid superficiality and low-level error. There is, then, no easy way out and no way around some investment of time to learn a foreign pronunciation acceptably. In the *Handbook* I tried to give the diligent, non-tibetanist philosopher a fighting chance by providing a practical guide to the pronunciation of Lhasa Tibetan. A referee rightly advised me to place that same *vade mecum* at the start of the present book. May it be of use!

In updating my previous articles on Tibetan grammatico-linguistic thought, I became better acquainted with the 2009 doctoral thesis of Frank Müller-Witte, *Handlungsrichtung im Tibetischen*, which argues in detail for both a transitivity/intransitivity distinction in Tibetan and a predominantly semantic distinction of active and passive voice. His survey of virtually all major Tibetan grammarians' views on *bdag* ("self") and *gzhan* ("other") from the fourteenth to the twentieth century shows just how relevant the indigenous writings are towards better understanding the actual Tibetan data concerning active-passive diathesis and verb morphology. The quality of some previous work on such issues in *Sum rtags* had been checkered. This work is significant.

As the studies in the present volume span some decades of work, the list of people that have been in one way or another involved along the road is, alas, much too great to give in detail. Many have helped me by hearing me out, pointing out unclarties, and offering information and advice at steps along the way. The footnotes and bibliography will have to suffice to show who you are. I thank you for years of stimulating exchange. The Fonds de Boer of the University of Lausanne graciously covered a significant portion of the publication expenses.

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²⁹ I'm told facetiously that it makes them go blind. I can only hope that this is not true. Non-tibetanists seeking only to get a very rough idea of the pronunciation of an isolated word or phrase can use the Tibetan-phonetics convertor on the internet site of the Tibetan and Himalayan Library: www.thlib.org/reference/transliteration/phconverter.php.

Details on previous and closely related publications are as follows:

A significantly smaller, unrevised version of chapters I and II has been in press for several years in *A Handbook of Logical Thought in China*, edited by Liu Fenrong, Jeremy Seligman, Zhai Jincheng. Berlin: Springer Verlag. It is to be published in English, as well as in Chinese translation.

Chapter III appeared as “Two Tibetan Texts on the ‘Neither One nor Many’ Argument for *śūnyatā*” in the *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 12, 1984: 357-388.

Chapter IV appeared as “Le *dBu ma*’i *byuñ tshul* de Śākya mchog ldan” in *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* (Bern, Switzerland), 49.4, 1995: 891-918 (co-authored with Tōru Tomabechi).

Chapter V appeared as “Tsong kha pa *et al.* on the Bhāvaviveka-Candrakīrti Debate” in *Tibetan Studies*, Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, NARITA 1989. [Monograph Series, Occasional Papers 2]. Naritashin Shinshōji, Narita, 1992: 315-326.

Chapter VI appeared as “Mādhyamikas Playing Bad Hands: The Case of Customary Truth” in the *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 47.4, 2019: 635-644.

Chapter VII is a significantly expanded version of an article in *Wilfrid Sellars and Buddhist Philosophy: Freedom from Foundations*, edited by Jay L. Garfield. Routledge Studies in American Philosophy. New York: Routledge Press, 2019: 80-96. The initial article was published under the title “Deflating the Two Images and the Two Truths. Bons baisers du Tibet.”

Chapter VIII appeared as “On *bdag*, *gzhan*, and the Supposed Active-Passive Neutrality of Tibetan Verbs” in *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ. Papers Dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*, edited by Birgit Kellner, Helmut Krasser, Horst Lasic, Michael Torsten Much, and Helmut Tauscher. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien, 2007, part 2: 887-902.

Chapter IX appeared as “Transitivity, Intransitivity, and *tha dad pa* Verbs in Traditional Tibetan Grammar” in *Pacific World Journal* (Berkeley) series 3, no. 9, 2007: 49-62. [Special issue: Essays Celebrating the Twentieth Anniversary of the Numata Chair in Buddhist Studies at the University of Calgary, edited by Leslie Kawamura and Sarah Haynes].

Chapter X appeared as “gSer tog Blo bzang tshul khrims rgya mtsho on Tibetan Verbs” in E. Steinkellner (ed.), *Tibetan History and Language. Studies dedicated to Uray Géza on his seventieth birthday*. WSTB 26. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1991: 487-496. The original article has been substantially revised.

Chapter XI appeared as “On the Assimilation of Indic Grammatical Literature into Indigenous Tibetan Scholarship” in *Asiatische Studien/ Études Asiatiques* (Bern, Switzerland) 57.1, 2003: 213-235.

Chapter XII is new.

A note on the transliteration of the Tibetan ‘a: this letter is transliterated with an apostrophe that opens to the right when it occurs as a prefix (*sngon* ‘jug) and to the left when it is a suffix (*rjes* ‘jug).

Chapter X appeared as “gSer tog Blo bzang tshul khrims rgya mtsho on Tibetan Verbs” in E. Steinkellner (ed.), *Tibetan History and Language. Studies dedicated to Uray Géza on his seventieth birthday*. WSTB 26. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1991: 487-496. The original article has been substantially revised.

Chapter XI appeared as “On the Assimilation of Indic Grammatical Literature into Indigenous Tibetan Scholarship” in *Asiatische Studien/ Études Asiatiques* (Bern, Switzerland) 57.1, 2003: 213-235.

Chapter XII is new.

TIBETAN DEVELOPMENTS
IN BUDDHIST LOGIC

I. The Reception of Indian Logic in Tibet¹

1. Introduction

Tibetan monastic centers of learning had a culture of scholasticism comparable in many ways to that of the great universities of the Middle Ages in emphasizing logic, metaphysics, commentarial exegesis, scriptural authority, and linguistic analysis. The disputational approach of a twelfth century Parisian philosopher like Abelard, for example, who sought knowledge via *quaestio*, *disputatio*, *sic et non*, *quodlibet*, and *auctoritas*, finds convincing Tibetan parallels in the dialectical pedagogy and polemics of the Sa skya pa and dGe lugs pa schools. More generally, both cultures had comparable heroes: whether a medieval *philosophus* or a Tibetan *mtshan nyid pa* (“one versed in dialectics”), intellectuals were revered for their subtlety in philosophical and religious analyses, rhetorical skills, charisma and self-confidence, quick-wittedness in debate, and, last but not least, for insights on issues of logic and rationality.²

¹ In what follows I will refer the reader to already published material where possible and keep the quoted passages of Sanskrit and Tibetan to a minimum, especially if they have been discussed or translated elsewhere. There is also little point in citing numerous original sources for more or less the same idea or formulation—one or two will usually suffice, with more burdening the reader unnecessarily. On the other hand, I provide several references to articles and background material to provide a basic reading list. References to work on Dharmakīrti and Indian logic are a kind of tip of the iceberg; they are designed to give some direction to the non-specialist. Whatever the originality of the Tibetan contribution, it is hardly possible to take up Tibetan Tshad ma purely on its own and without a reliable working understanding of Dharmakīrti.

² See Le Goff 2000 on the approach and character of twelfth and thirteenth century European intellectuals like Abelard and Siger of Brabant; Sère 2020 for the roles of *auctoritas*, *quaestio*, *sic et non*, etc. in medieval debate; Samuels 2020 for comparison of Tibetan debate with *disputatio*.

What, then, do people mean by “Tibetan Buddhist logic,” or by the more or less equally common phrase “Tibetan Buddhist epistemology,” and what connection do these widely used designations have with other subjects studied traditionally by Tibetan Buddhists? The underlying Tibetan term is *tshad ma*. It conserves the etymological sense of the Sanskrit original *pramāṇa*, viz., a “standard” or “measure”; *tshad* renders the Sanskrit verbal root MĀ, “to measure,” with the Tibetan *ma* capturing the Sanskrit *ana* suffix and showing a means, source, or instrument. In philosophical Sanskrit, *pramāṇa* is the technical term for a source of knowledge, a reliable means to a correct new understanding. The Tibetan term *tshad ma*, of course, has that technical sense, but it also takes on a more general sense of the “theory of sources of knowledge” or, more broadly, a discipline of study and the literature pertaining to it. In what follows, we’ll use the terms “Pramāṇa” and “Tshad ma” (capitalized and without italics) to designate the Indian and Tibetan theoretical disciplines, respectively, and their literature, even if the use of the term to designate a *discipline* is admittedly not as clearly present in the Sanskrit as it is in Tibetan.³

Modern writers also regularly use the term “Buddhist epistemology” to capture the use of the words *tshad ma/pramāṇa* in the general sense of a theoretical discipline concerning sources of knowledge.⁴ It is, however, perhaps somewhat less clear why people speak of logic. Part of what looks

³ Many modern writers also speak of *Pramāṇa* as a *school* of Indian thought, which is also a relatively harmless liberty taken; curiously enough, this very influential movement of philosophy in India had no specific name in Sanskrit. In Tibetan, however, the situation is fortunately different: we can speak of *tshad ma'i lugs* “the Tshad ma tradition” or, as in traditional Tibetan doxographic literature (*grub mtha*’), we can designate the school as *rigs pa rjes su ‘brang pa’i mdo sde pa* “Sautrāntikas who follow reasoning,” or *rigs pa rjes su ‘brang pa’i sems tsam pa* “Yogācāras who follow reasoning,” reflecting the fact that Dignāga’s and Dharmakīrti’s stance on idealism and the existence of the external world was complex and nuanced, with external objects and atomic matter often provisionally accepted, only to be denied in the final analysis. On Dharmakīrti’s arguments for idealism as contrasted with those of Vasubandhu, see Kellner 2017.

⁴ The term “epistemology” should, however, be understood in the context of a Buddhist system of thought and not simply in terms of well-known Western senses. Buddhist *Pramāṇa* is, for example, certainly not a Kantian type of *Erkenntnistheorie* involving the synthetic *a priori* investigations of structures of thought, nor is it simply a “naturalized epistemology” (à la W.V. Quine and others) based on empirical psychological research of a natural

recognizably like logic is the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist “science of reasons” (*hetuvidyā* = *gtan tshigs rig pa*), a so-called “minor Buddhist science,” and the related genre of indigenous Tibetan texts known as *rtags rigs* “the varieties of reasons”—in them one finds discussions of good and bad reasons, fallacies, implication, and consequences. However, Tshad ma certainly is not limited to what we find in *hetuvidyā* or *rtags rigs* manuals. It also includes the extensive discussions of philosophy of logic that we find typically in works or chapters on “inference” (*rjes su dpag pa* = *anumāna*), one of the two sources of knowledge, along with perception. There are also rules on proper and improper ways to dispute. In short, besides the “science of reasons,” Tshad ma encompasses prescriptive accounts of how to reason publicly, philosophical accounts of how logical reasoning proceeds, and even some ontological issues of what must exist for that reasoning to be grounded in reality.

Perception, metaphysics, and even philosophy of mind were also to be included in the general subject of Tshad ma—with more or less complex connections with epistemology—just as for Indians they were also regularly taken up in *Pramāṇa* literature. And so were doctrinal matters of Buddhism. Indeed, many traditional Tibetans and Indians saw Tshad ma as essentially destined for Buddhist religious purposes rather than as a secular discipline of logic, epistemology, or philosophy of logic and language; its *raison d’être* was thus to provide proofs of Buddhist doctrine, like rebirth, omniscience, the four noble truths, compassion, no-self, etc., the culmination of *Pramāṇa* being in effect *pramāṇasiddhi*, the proof of the Buddha’s superiority to other teachers and his being a standard and reliable source in spiritual matters. The demarcation between broadly religious and philosophical approaches to Buddhism has, of course, been an enormous subject of conversation, not only in modern Buddhist Studies but also in the past in Tibet. Suffice it to say here that Tibetan Tshad ma, when viewed religiously, would need a very different treatment from what we are offering, and that a secular orientation to Tshad ma/*Pramāṇa* is not only legitimate in modern scholarship but was also to quite a degree present in traditional Tibet. A disclaimer is thus in order from the outset: we will largely leave aside the extensively discussed issues of perception,

phenomenon, nor is it a type of sociology and history of knowledge production as we find often emphasized, *inter alia*, in the francophone world under the term *épistémologie*.

metaphysics, and philosophy of mind as well as Tshad ma-inspired approaches to Buddhist religious doctrine and scripture.⁵

Tibetan Tshad ma, and indeed Tibetan Buddhist philosophical literature generally, has often been regarded as a prolongation, a supplement, or a kind of fine tuning of India, or even a pedagogical aid to Indian developments. Indeed, one of the finest scholars of both India and Tibet, David Seyfort Ruegg, has rightly maintained that Tibetans were in many respects indological scholars *avant la lettre*, making important and necessary contributions to our own historical understanding of Indian Buddhist thought.⁶ That said, although one certainly needs to know Indian thought well to understand Tibetan thought, it is odd to focus on Tibet *only* or *principally* as a way to understand India. For a wide-ranging scholar like Seyfort Ruegg the interest of ties to India certainly does not detract from the value and interest of ideas that were indigenously Tibetan and that perhaps had few or only obscure sources in India. Unfortunately, however, this type of open position was for quite some time preceded by a more closed orientation that was much less defensible, namely, that Tibetan Buddhist philosophical literature was of interest essentially in so far as it reflected or even copied Indian thought. Such a view was even promoted by quite a number of Tibetans themselves for perhaps understandable reasons of religious authority, India long being considered in Tibet the “Land of the Nobles” (*phags yul* = *āryadeśa*) and the repository of what is authentic in Buddhism. It is somewhat unfortunate, however, that a similar attitude to things Indian was for long a working premise of much modern Buddhist Studies. Arguably, the originality of indigenous developments in areas like

⁵ For Buddhist epistemologists’ religious philosophy, see e.g., Steinkellner 1982, McClintock 2010, Eltschinger 2014 and 2020, Eltschinger and Ratié 2013, Pecchia 2015. Tibetans regularly took the word *pramāṇa* in the homage verse of Dignāga’s *Pramāṇasamuccaya* to refer to a *tshad ma’i skyes bu* “a person who is a standard,” or “an authoritative person.” They emphasized the second chapter of *Pramāṇavārttika* (i.e., *Pramāṇasiddhi*) as the elaboration of a proof that the Buddha is such a person. The goal of epistemology and logic is thus conceived as the proof of *pramāṇa* in this extended sense. See Steinkellner 1983, Tillemans 1993; see Silk 2002 for possible Indian antecedents for the term *tshad ma’i skyes bu*.

⁶ Seyfort Ruegg 1981, viii: “... Tibetan scholars developed remarkable philological and interpretative methods that could well justify us in regarding them as Indologists *avant la lettre*.”

logic and epistemology have still, to a large degree, been underestimated and underexplored.

Indeed, when it comes to Tshad ma, in spite of the great respect that we should have for Indian writers like Dharmakīrti (seventh, or possibly sixth, century C.E.)⁷ and the Tibetan exegesis of his philosophy, there were also important Tibetan works that exhibited a high degree of originality and were only tenuously related to India. As we shall try to show, this genre of literature made some important conceptual distinctions concerning logic, significantly moving away from Indian preoccupations with themes in epistemology and metaphysics. By remaining centered on the consequences of various acceptances—be they true or not—these indigenous thinkers increasingly replaced concern with how things actually were in reality with a typical logician’s focus on what followed from what.

There are thus two sorts of Tshad ma literature in Tibet that will concern us in this study:

- (a) Tibetan exegetical works closely based on Indian texts; these are largely commentaries, summaries, or independent analytical treatises whose primary purpose is clarification of Indian texts and argumentation. Examples are the Tibetan commentaries on Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavārttika* and *Pramāṇavinīścaya* by various authors, as well as works, like Sa skya Paṇḍita’s *Tshad ma rigs gter* or dGe ‘dun grub pa’s *Tshad ma rigs rgyan*, that provide an introduction to, and interpretation of, Indian Pramāṇa.
- (b) Indigenous Tibetan works on epistemology and logic that involve, to a large degree, Tibetan concepts, debate procedures, and argumentation that are unfindable in Indian texts or, in some important cases, even radically counter to Indian positions. The best examples are the so-called “Collected Topics” (*bsdus grwa*), of which the earliest text is the *Rwa stod bsdus grwa* of ‘Jam dbyangs mChog lha ‘od zer (1429-1500).

In what follows, we will consecrate a chapter to each of these two sorts of Tibetan literature, in order to bring out the dual character—i.e., the Indian-based and the indigenous—of the Tibetan contribution to Buddhist

⁷ See n. 11 below.

logic and the philosophy of logic. It should be borne in mind that our emphasis is philosophical: apart from the necessary historical background and important historico-philological discussions, many other complicated questions concerning connections between Tibetan thinkers or the origins of ideas and terms can not be pursued here. For more on such matters the reader is referred elsewhere.⁸

2. Four periods

We begin with a whistle-stop tour of the terrain. Following van der Kuijp 1989 and Hugon 2015, let us speak of four periods in the history of Buddhist logic and epistemology in Tibet,⁹ starting with the initial diffusion (*snga dar*) of Buddhism in Tibet, from the seventh century C.E. on, and continuing to the present day.

- (a) An ancient period, until very early ninth century C.E., or pre-Glang dar ma, during which some smaller Indian Pramāṇa works of Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, Vinītadeva, Śubhagupta, Kamalaśīla, Arcaṭa, and Dharmottara were translated.¹⁰

⁸ See van der Kuijp 1983 and 1989 for the history of Tshad ma in the pre-classical and classical periods of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries. See also Hugon 2008, 2015; D. Jackson 1987; Perdue 1992, 2014; Tillemans 1998, 1999; Dreyfus 1997, 1999; Onoda 1992, 1996.

⁹ The fourfold schema (coming from van der Kuijp 1989) is used in Pascale Hugon's synoptic article on Tibetan epistemology and philosophy of language in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, i.e., Hugon 2015.

¹⁰ The *lDan dkar ma* / *lHan dkar ma* catalogue of the beginning of the ninth century (824 C.E. if we follow Zuihō Yamaguchi) mentions, *inter alia*, the *Ālambanaparīkṣā* of Dignāga (no.705), the *Nyāyabindu* (697), *Hetubindu* (702), *Sambandhaparīkṣā* (704), and *Samtānāntarasiddhi* (708) of Dharmakīrti, four commentaries on Dharmakīrti and Dignāga by Vinītadeva, four short works by Śubhagupta, the *Hetubinduṭīkā* (703) by Arcaṭa, Kamalaśīla's short text on the opposing positions in the *Nyāyabindu* (i.e., the *Nyāyabindupūrvapakṣasamākṣepa* 700, 701), and Dharmottara's *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* (698) and text on reincarnation, *Paralokasiddhi* (715). See Lalou 1953 and especially Frauwallner 1957 for this list. We should also mention that a scheme of four types of reasoning (*yukti*), as found in the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* and other texts, was known in this period and was commented upon in texts like the *bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma* attributed to the eighth century king Khri srong lde btsan. See Steinkellner 1989, 241 *et seq.*

- (b) A pre-classical period from the beginning of the so-called “second diffusion” (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism in the tenth century up to about the thirteenth century, during which the emphasis was on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* of the pivotal Indian Buddhist thinker Dharmakīrti.¹¹ The text was translated and was the object of several influential indigenous Tibetan commentaries. The period is marked by the work of Ngog lo tsā ba Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109), who translated the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* and wrote commentaries upon it. It also saw the so-called “Epistemological Summaries” or “Summaries of Pramāṇa” (*tshad ma bsdus pa*) of the school of Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109–1169) of the bKa’ gdams pa monastery of gSang phu sne’u thog.¹² These texts, as their name implies, were summaries or compilations of Indian thought but actually also inject a substantial dose of original interpretation, possibly in part because of the relatively incomplete access to Indian material at that time.
- (c) The classical period of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It begins with Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1182–1251), the very significant figure in the consolidation of Tibetan and Mongol power in the south of Tibet, and himself a first-rate scholar of Indian texts in

¹¹ On Dharmakīrti, his life, oeuvre, and philosophical positions, see Steinkellner 1998, Eltschinger 2010, Tillemans 2020. For a synopsis of the translations, editions, and studies of the works of Dharmakīrti and his commentators, see Steinkellner and Much 1995. Summaries of the contents of Dharmakīrti’s seven works are found in Potter 2017. The dates of Dharmakīrti remain controversial, although there is a slowly growing shift among scholars to accept that he lived in the latter half of the sixth century C.E. instead of the seventh century. See Frauwallner 1961 for the main arguments for fixing Dharmakīrti’s dates as circa 600–660; Krasser 2012 relies heavily on connections between Dharmakīrti, Bhāvivēka, and Kumāṛila to push the dates of Dharmakīrti’s activity back to the mid-sixth century C.E. Here are a few of the many works giving philosophical and historical treatments of Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and the Indian school of Buddhist logic: Stcherbatsky 1930–32; Frauwallner 1932, 1933, 1954; Kajiyama 1966; Hattori 1968; Steinkellner 1971; Mimaki 1976; Dunne 2004; Paul 2005; Siderits 2007; Siderits, Tillemans, Chakrabarti 2011; Eltschinger and Ratié 2013; Kellner 2017. For the current state of the art in Dharmakīrtian studies, see Kellner *et al.* 2020.

¹² On gSang phu sne’u thog and its role in the history of Tibetan logic and epistemology, see van der Kuip 1983, Onoda 1992, the introduction to Dreyfus 1994, Hugon and Stoltz 2019.

Sanskrit. During this period, Dharmakīrti's largest and most important work, the *Pramāṇavārttika*, is finally well translated into Tibetan¹³ and becomes the focus of indigenous commentaries. A major delegation of Indian monks—led by the Kashmiri scholar Śākyaśrībhadrā (?–1225)—visits Tibet and closely collaborates with Sa skya Paṇḍita.¹⁴ This can be said to be the most Indian-oriented period, and probably even the period that was most reliably informed on Indian Pramāṇa literature in Sanskrit.

- (d) A post-classical period that begins in the fifteenth century and is characterized by debate between traditions of the pre-classical and classical periods. In particular, we find competing developments based on the earlier Phya pa and bKa' gdams pa traditions, on the one hand, and the Sa skya schools, on the other, i.e., the so-called Phya-traditions (*phyā lugs*) and Sa-traditions (*sa lugs*), respectively.¹⁵ The bKa' gdams pa and Phya-traditions evolved to become the dGa' ldan pa or dGe lugs pa, and would count such luminaries as Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419) and his principal disciples, rGyal tshab rje Dar ma rin chen (1364–1432) and mKhas grub rje dGe legs dpal bzang po (1385–1438). Two of the most important figures of the Sa-traditions were Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489) and gSer mdog Paṇchen Śākya mchog ldan (1428–1508). We should also mention that it is in this post-classical period that we find the so-called “Collected Topics” (*bsdus grwa*) literature, which presents a sophisticated Tibetan logic with only rather tenuous connections with India. This indigenous Tibetan logic will be taken up in detail in the second chapter of this study.

¹³ There had been an early, and no doubt unsatisfactory, translation of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika* by rMa lo tsā ba dGe ba'i blo gros (1044–1089); rNgog blo ldan shes rab translated Devendrabuddhi's *Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā*, but it was no doubt Sa skya Paṇḍita himself who was largely responsible for the definitive Tibetan translation of *Pramāṇavārttika* that figures in the Tibetan Buddhist canon.

¹⁴ The delegation was comprised of several *paṇḍitas* besides Śākyaśrī himself; amongst them Vibhūticandra and Dānaśīla also played an important role in translation and exegesis of Indian Pramāṇa literature.

¹⁵ For a detailed comparison of Sa lugs and Phya lugs positions on various subjects of Pramāṇa philosophy, see Dreyfus 1997.

3. *Indian sources for Tibetan Tshad ma*

As we can see from the above periodization, Tibetan theorizing about Indian logic and epistemology began in earnest in the tenth and eleventh centuries in the pre-classical period. While the initial diffusion of the Dharma, from the seventh century to the mid-ninth, saw first attempts at translating Indian *Pramāṇa* texts, it was from about the eleventh until the fifteenth centuries that there was genuine assimilation and competent translation of the major Indian Buddhist works. The *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, *Pramāṇavārttika*, and other works of Dharmakīrti and his school were well translated and understood by Tibetan writers and formed the main Indian textual basis for Tibetan exegesis on Indian Buddhist logic and epistemology.

By contrast, the works of Dignāga (c. 480 - c. 540 C.E.) never played a role comparable to those of Dharmakīrti. Dignāga's major opus, the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, although certainly *said* to be the founding text for Tshad ma, was actually of relatively little influence in Tibet. While there were a number of indigenous commentaries over the centuries, from that of bCom ldan rigs pa'i ral gri (1227-1305) to that of Mi pham 'Jam dbyangs nam rgyal rgya mtsho (1846-1912),¹⁶ the abysmally low quality of *Pramāṇasamuccaya*'s two Tibetan translations no doubt impeded in-depth study and understanding of this text in its own right. Dharmakīrti's interpretation of Dignāga predominated instead. Indeed, Dignāga's logic and epistemology were essentially understood via quotations and commentary in other texts, notably in the works of Dharmakīrti and the Dharmakīrtian commentator on *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, Jinendrabuddhi. The specific features in Dignāga's philosophy that set it apart from that of Dharmakīrti were largely obscured. As for Dignāga's *Nyāyamukha*, it does not seem

¹⁶ Van der Kuijp and McKeown 2013, xcvi list ten, including commentaries by rGyal tshab Dar ma rin chen, Rong ston Shes bya kun rig, and sTag tshang lo tsā ba Shes rab rin chen. We also have a *Tshad ma'i de kho na nyid bsdu pa*, attributed to the great rNying ma pa scholar Klong chen rab 'byams pa (1308-1364), that purportedly is an epitome/summary of the essentials of Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya*. The text is apparently to be situated in the tradition of rNgog lo tsā ba and Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge. See van der Kuijp 2003.

to have been studied or translated in Tibet. Instead Tibetans studied a related text, the *Nyāyapraveśa* of Śaṅkarasvāmin and often confused the *Nyāyamukha* with the *Nyāyapraveśa*, understandably because the Tibetan title of the *Nyāyapraveśa*, viz., *Rigs sgo*, was easily wrongly taken to designate the *Nyāyamukha* instead.¹⁷

The main Tibetan orientation in Tshad ma was thus significantly different from that of the indigenous Chinese school of Xuanzang and Kuiji, in that the latter *did* focus on Dignāgan positions in their own right and fundamentally untouched by Dharmakīrti, whose works were untranslated in Chinese. For the Tibetans, by contrast, Dharmakīrti *was* well translated and his influence eclipsed that of the largely inaccessible Dignāgan literature. It is important to note, too, that although much of the in-depth Tibetan assimilation of logic and epistemology dates from the eleventh century on, the highly technical later Indian logical literature of that period was *not* the primary inspiration for Tibet. The Indian sources inspiring Tibetan study were essentially the works of Dharmakīrti and the seventh and eighth century commentators, Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi, who commented quite closely upon the wording and syntax of Dharmakīrti's works in their *Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā* and *Pramāṇavārttikaṭīkā*, respectively. Prajñākara Gupta (eighth century C.E.) was well known, and his voluminous *Pramāṇavārttikālaṃkāra* was the source of some of the more philosophically sophisticated developments, as well as applications of Pramāṇa to Buddhist religious ends. We also find the later Kashmiri Brahmin writer Śaṅkaranandana (ca. 940/50–1020/30) playing a significant role as a commentator on *Pramāṇavārttika* and as a philosopher of language, perhaps one of the promulgators of a moderate realism about universals.¹⁸ It is telling that in indigenous commentaries on *Pramāṇavārttika*—for example the *rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed* of rGyal tshab rje and other such commentaries—Tibetan

¹⁷ Cf. Harbsmeier 1998, 361: “In Sung times (+960 to +1279) the Chinese version of the *Nyāyapraveśa* was translated into Tibetan. The Tibetans mistook the book to be Dignāga's famous *Nyāyamukha* of which they had heard, and the same happened to another Sanskrit version which they translated into Tibetan around the +13th century.” For an English translation of the *Nyāyapraveśa*, see Tachikawa 1971. For translations of the *Nyāyamukha*, see Tucci 1930, Katsura 1977, 1978, 1979, 1981.

¹⁸ The dates for Śaṅkaranandana are those of Krasser 2002; on this key thinker see Krasser 2002, Eltschinger 2015. On later Kashmiri Buddhists, see Naudou 1968.

authors quite regularly contrast the positions of *Lha dbang blo* and *Śākya'i blo* (Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi), *rGyan mkhan po* (“the author of the [Vārttik]ālaṃkāra,” i.e., Prajñākaragupta), *Bram ze chen po* (“the big brahmin,” i.e., Śāṅkaranandana), and *Chos mchog* (Dharmottara), the latter being an eighth century thinker who did not write a commentary on *Pramāṇavārttika* but instead wrote influential commentaries on Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavinīścaya* and *Nyāyabindu*. The regular contrasts between these four or five positions show that, on significant themes, the works of Dharmakīrtian commentators and their different interpretative traditions were well understood.

Very important, too, are the works of Śāntarakṣita and his disciple Kamalaśīla, no doubt because of the presence of these scholars in Tibet in the eighth century and the founding of the first Tibetan monastery at bSam yas in the Brahmaputra Valley. Indeed, it is difficult to overestimate the influence of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla on Tibetan Buddhism, be it in Madhyamaka, Buddhist doctrine, or Pramāṇa—Śāntarakṣita’s *Tattvasaṃgraha* and Kamalaśīla’s *Pañjikā* thereupon were thus influential texts in Pramāṇa. By contrast, later Indian logicians of the tenth to twelfth centuries such as Jñānaśrīmitra (floruit 975-1025), Ratnakīrti, and Mokṣākaragupta, who had technically sophisticated debates with the Brahmanical schools of the time, were of negligible influence in Tibet. While the *Pramāṇavārttika* and *Tattvasaṃgraha* debates with the Brahmanical schools were studied and understood, important texts of the tenth to twelfth century Indian Buddhist literature dealing with the specific later developments on logical problems arising in refuting permanence, God, etc., were often only of marginal influence—many works that had considerable influence in Indian Buddhism were simply never translated into Tibetan.¹⁹ So, although there were some exceptions to this marginalization—bits and pieces of later Indian Pramāṇa positions that somehow came to be assimilated into intra-Tibetan debates²⁰—the

¹⁹ The many works of Jñānaśrīmitra, for example, were not translated, with the exception of his *Kāryakāraṇabhāvasiddhi* (D. 4258). Two of the best resources for later Indian Buddhist-Brahmanical debates remain Kajiyama 1966 and Mimaki 1976. See also the translation of Jñānaśrīmitra’s *Apohaprakaraṇa* in McCrea and Patil 2010.

²⁰ For example, some elements in the debates on “internal pervasion” or “intrinsic implication” (*antarvyāpti* = *nang gi khyab pa*)—i.e., those concerning the dispensability

impact of the later Indian literature was little, one of the reasons probably being that the works of the post-eighth century *non-Buddhist* authors figuring heavily in Buddhist-Brahmanical debates—principally Jain, Nyāya, and Mīmāṃsaka—were not adequately understood in Tibet or even known at all. For example, in texts like Jñānaśrīmitra's *Apohaprakaraṇa*, the argumentation is largely directed against Naiyāyikas like Trilocana, Bhāsarvajña, and Vācaspatiśiśra, who were, as far as I can tell at least, unknown in Tibet. The contextless logico-metaphysical debates on Pramāṇa, if anyone in Tibet ever looked at them in their dense Sanskrit, must have seemed particularly confusing.

In sum, Tibetan debates, innovations, and fine tunings on Indian Pramāṇa philosophy concern essentially the period from Dharmakīrti to the ninth century, with Dignāga's thought little understood in its own right, and the thought of the very late Indian thinkers playing little role at all. Many of the Tibetan commentarial developments, it should be said, were more or less learning experiences, rather complicated stages in the Tibetan discovery and assimilation of Indian philosophical literature. Others, however, are of genuine philosophical interest. We will look in some detail at the most important of these developments concerning logic. After that, we will move on to Tibetan positions on crucial semantic issues in Dharmakīrti and then finally to Tshad ma-related issues concerning negation operators and parameterization in the wider context of Indian tetralemma argumentation.

4. *The triply characterized logical reason (trirūpahetu) in Tibet*

The key concept in the Indian Buddhist “science of reasons” (*hetuvidyā*) is the notion of a good logical reason (*saddhetu*), and the criteria for a reason's being good, viz., the three characteristics. It hardly needs saying that good reasons and their triple characterization (*trairūpya*) is a subject of major importance in Indian Buddhist Pramāṇa—it figures in

of examples and the reformulation of key notions like “similar instances” (*sapakṣa* = *mtshun phyogs*)—were taken over in Tibetan philosophies. Thus, we do find a certain importance for the *Antarvyāptisamarthana* of Ratnākaraśānti (c. 1000 C.E.). See section 6 below. Works of Jetāri (floruit 940-980), a teacher of Atiśa, also had a certain impact, especially in promoting the interpretation of Dharmakīrti as a Mādhyamika; they are also occasionally cited in indigenous *rTags rigs* literature.

the opening verse of *Pramāṇavārttika* and in other works of Dharmakīrti and Dignāga. What did Tibetans do with this idea? Did they understand it properly and further develop it in any interesting directions? Let's begin with presentations of the three characteristics in Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and in a representative nineteenth century work by Yong 'dzin Phur bu lcog Byams pa tshul khirms rgya mtsho (1825-1901), a dGe lugs pa *rTags rigs* that was regularly used in Lhasa's Se ra monastery. A comparison of the three gives a snapshot of how things evolved and what typical Tibetan contributions were.

Here, first, is Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* II.5:

anumeye 'tha tattulye sadbhāvo nāstitāsati /.²¹

"[A good reason] is present in the inferendum [i.e., in the subject] and in what is similar to it, and is absent in what is not [similar to it]."

Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu* II.5 then reads:

trairūpyam punar liṅgasyānumeye sattvam eva sapakṣaiva sattvam asapakṣe cāsattvam eva niścitam /.

tshul gsum pa nyid kyi rtags ni / rjes su dpag par bya ba la yod pa nyid dang / mthun pa'i phyogs nyid la yod pa dang / mi mthun pa'i phyogs la med pa nyid du nges pa'o //.²²

"The triple characterization of a [good] reason is as follows. It is ascertained (*niścita*) that: (1) [the reason] is only present [i.e., and never absent] in the inferendum [i.e., in the subject]; (2) [the reason] is present in only the similar instances (*sapakṣa*) [i.e., and not in the dissimilar instances, too]; (3) [the reason] is only absent [i.e., and never present] in the dissimilar instances (*asapakṣa* = *vipakṣa*)."

The *rTags rigs* of Yongs 'dzin Phur bu lcog then gives a fully elaborated version of the three characteristics:²³

²¹ Sanskrit in Randle 1926, 7.

²² Sanskrit ed. Malvania 1955, 91. Tibetan in D. 231a-b; ed. La Vallée Poussin 1913, 3; ed. T. Jinpa 2015, 389.

²³ For the Tibetan text, see Onoda 1981, 23-24. Lest it be wondered whether these are typical formulations in dGe lugs pa *rTags rigs* literature, it is clear that they are. The

de sgrub kyi shes 'dod chos can skyon med kyi steng du 'god tshul dang mthun par yod pa nyid du tshad mas nges pa / de sgrub kyi phyogs chos kyi mtshan nyid /.

“The definition of the *pakṣadharmā* [i.e., the fact that the reason qualifies the subject] for proving *P* is as follows: [the reason] is ascertained by means of a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) to be only present, in accordance with the appropriate way of stating [the verb *yin* or *yod*], in the faultless subject of inquiry when one is proving *P*.”

de sgrub kyi mthun phyogs kho na la 'god tshul dang mthun par yod pa nyid du tshad mas nges pa de / de sgrub kyi rjes khyab kyi mtshan nyid /.

“The definition of the *anvayavyāpti* [i.e., the positive pervasion]²⁴ for proving *P* is as follows: [the reason] is ascertained by means of a source

rTags rigs of the great dGe lugs pa scholar ‘Jam dbyangs bzhad pa Ngag dbang brtson ‘grus (1648-1722), for example, has pretty much exactly the same definitions; see the definitions on f. 13a *et seq.* Sa skya pa *rTags rigs* texts, like that of Glo bo mkhan chen bSod nams lhun grub (1456-1532), are based on the *Rigs gter* of Sa skya Paṇḍita and differ from the dGe lugs in their formulation of the second and third characteristics. See Hugon 2002, 62-66, 138-139.

²⁴ The term *anvaya* (lit. “going after”) derives from Indian grammatical literature (*vyākaraṇa*) where it has the sense of “co-presence,” while *vyatireka* has the sense of “co-absence.” They are typically applied as an inductive method to words and referents to determine what word refers to what thing. See Katsura 1983, 541: “In Indian philosophy *anvaya* and *vyatireka* jointly make up a sort of method of induction. They may be formulated as follows: ‘When *x* occurs, *y* occurs (*anvaya*), and when *x* is absent, *y* is absent (*vyatireka*).’” It then evolves to a logical usage such that it means the co-presence of the property to be proved *G* and the reason *F* in an example (*dr̥ṣṭānta*), and the co-absence of *G* and *F* in example entities. Pervasion (*vyāpti*) is the fact that the reason *F* implies the property to be proved *G*. Thus, ordinarily, to say that a reason *F* is pervaded by a property to be proved *G* unpacks as a universally quantified material implication, For all *x*, if *Fx* then *Gx*, i.e., $(x)(Fx \rightarrow Gx)$. A more literal translation of *anvayavyāpti* and *vyatirekavyāpti* would thus be, respectively, “pervasion as co-presence” and “pervasion as co-absence,” the point being that the first pervasion shows a generalized co-presence of *F* and *G* in entities and the second a generalized co-absence, i.e., $(x)(Fx \rightarrow Gx)$ and $(x)(\neg Gx \rightarrow \neg Fx)$, respectively. A less exact, but shorter, translation is “positive pervasion” and “negative pervasion.” See Oberhammer *et al.* 1991, s.v. *anvaya*, for the evolution of the two terms from a grammatical to a logical usage. Finally, as we will bring

of knowledge to be present, in accordance with the appropriate way of stating [the verb *yin* or *yod*], in only the similar instances for proving *P*.”

de sgrub kyi dngos kyi bsgrub bya'i chos kyi don ldog dang 'brel stobs kyis de sgrub kyi mi mthun phyogs la 'god tshul dang mthun par med pa nyid du tshad mas nges pa / de sgrub kyi ldog khyab kyi mtshan nyid /.

“The definition of the *vyatirekavyāpti* [i.e., the negative pervasion] for proving *P* is as follows: on account of its necessary connection with the concept that is the actual property being proved, [the reason] is ascertained by means of a source of knowledge to be only absent, in accordance with the appropriate way of stating [the verb *yin* or *yod*], in the dissimilar instances for proving *P*.”

The first thing one notices is that the definitions obviously become longer and more complicated over time. Dignāga is the most concise, while at the other extreme Yongs 'dzin Phur bu lcog includes so many provisos as to virtually defy English translation. Here are some of the things that catch one's eye in reading a Tibetan like Phur bu lcog in comparison with his Indian predecessors. Some are philosophical innovations; others are essentially dependent on, and account for, linguistic features of the Tibetan language.

de sgrub. We begin with the first words of the definition of the *pakṣadharmā(tva)* in Yongs 'dzin Phur bu lcog, i.e., *de sgrub kyi* (“for proving *P*”). Although many of Phur bu lcog's definitions, as we shall see, are amplifications of Dharmakīrtian ideas, we see an innovation in his introduction of a propositional variable, literally “that” (*de*) in Tibetan, which I am rendering by *P*. This is a difference vis-à-vis Indian Buddhist texts on the *trairūpya*, where no such variable figures. Indian texts do admittedly use *tad* (“that”) on occasion in other philosophical contexts more or less like a variable standing for a property or entity (as, for example in a phrase like *tatkāryatā* “being an effect of that,” “being an effect of *x*”), but Tibetans seem to recognize that a fully fledged propositional variable is needed in a general theory of reasons.

out in section 6, there are competing Indo-Tibetan exegeses of the *anvayavyāpti* and *vyatirekavyāpti* in the triple characterization: the logically simplest scenario indeed unpacks as $(x)(Fx \rightarrow Gx)$ and $(x)(\neg Gx \rightarrow \neg Fx)$, but the more complex scenario demands some additional provisos in the antecedent of the conditional.

shes 'dod chos can skyon med. The proviso in Yongs 'dzin Phur bu lcog that the first characteristic must be established on the basis of a “faultless subject of enquiry” (*shes 'dod chos can skyon med*) is a way of bringing out Dharmakīrti's idea, in the second chapter of the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* and other texts, that the opponent must have the appropriate “desire to know” (*jijñāsā*) whether the proposition to be proved is true or not.²⁵ In the Indian texts we find the term *jijñāsītadharmin*, literally, “the subject about which one desires to know,” “the subject of enquiry.” However, the idea is much more precisely formulated by Tibetans. Yongs 'dzin Phur bu lcog in his *rTags rigs* explains that it must be possible for the opponent to know that the reason qualifies the subject and yet still reasonably doubt whether the proposition to be proved is true.²⁶ This obviously rules out circular proofs along the lines of “*A* is *B*, because it is *B*” and various other forms of question begging. As well, it rules out cases where the debate falls flat because the opponent simply does not have the required doubt at all. More sophisticatedly, in Tibet it leads to debates concerning what could be called problems of “epistemic priority,” e.g., arguments that can be challenged because understanding the fact that the reason qualifies the subject would already somehow presuppose understanding the truth of the proposition to be proved. Tibetans elaborate upon this in considerable detail and in ways that are not present in Dharmakīrti, employing a technical term *go dka' sla* “[relative] ease or difficulty of understanding.” For example, it is argued that when one invokes a definiendum (*mtshon bya = lakṣya*) to prove a defining characteristic (*mtshan nyid = lakṣaṇa*) the former is more difficult to understand (*go dka' ba*) in that it presupposes the understanding of the latter, and that therefore the subject will not be a faultless subject of enquiry—this in turn means that the first characteristic will fail.

²⁵ See *Pramāṇaviniścaya* II, ed. Steinkellner 1973, 30. Both *Sa skya pa* and *dGe lugs pa* incorporate this term *shes 'dod chos can = jijñāsītadharmin* into their definitions of the first characteristic. See, e.g., Go rams pa's *Rigs gter gyi don gsal bar byed pa*, *Sa skya bka' 'bum* Vol. 11, f. 96b5-6 and Yongs 'dzin Phur bu lcog's *rTags rigs*, ed. Onoda 1981, 17. See Tillemans 1999, 108, n. 15.

²⁶ See Tillemans 1999, 108, n. 15 for the passage.

'god tshul dang mthun pa. The proviso “in accordance with the appropriate way of stating [the verb *yin* or *yod*]” (*'god tshul dang mthun par*), which is present in each characteristic’s definition, is a somewhat longwinded formula designed to account for the fact that Tibetan (like modern Chinese *shi* 是 and *you* 有) distinguishes between a simple copula, *yin*, and an existential verb, *yod*. Being “in accordance ...” is a way to say that if the verb is *yin* in the argument, it must remain *yin* when one is assessing the three characteristics. Similarly for *yod*. These two verbs, and the resulting possibilities for confusion between them, are not reflected in Sanskrit verbs like *asti* and *bhavati*. They are of course important in Sino-Tibetan languages, and hence it became important to provide for them in transposing the Indian *trairūpya* schema into Tibetan. Thus, for example, where Sanskrit uses a nominative (*parvataḥ* “mountain”) and a substantive with the *mant* suffix (“having...”) to express “having fire” (*vahnimān*) in the stock reasoning *parvato vahnimān dhumāt* (“The mountain has fire, because of [its] smoke”), the Tibetan has to use an oblique case marker *la* plus the verb *yod* (*du ldan gyi la la me yod te du ba yod pa'i phyir*; literally “On the smokey pass there exists fire, because there is smoke”). Equally, where Sanskrit uses the genitive case and the abstraction suffix *tva* or *tā* but no copula (e.g., *śabdasyānityatvaṃ kṛtakatvāt* “Sound has impermanence, because of its being a product”), the Tibetan is obliged to proceed differently with a copula *yin*.

nyid. Tibetan has two ways of expressing the Sanskrit particle *eva* (“only”) that is so important in the Indian *trairūpya*. In Tibetan canonical translations we typically find *kho na* being used for *eva*, but often, as in the case of the translation of the *Nyāyabindu* passage (see above), *nyid* is used instead. In indigenous works, too, *nyid* is used widely. The use of *nyid* here creates some problems, for the particle is ambiguous in Tibetan, often rendering Sanskrit abstraction suffixes *tva* or *tā* (as in *stong pa nyid* = *śūnyatā* “emptiness” or *sngon po nyid* = *nīlatva* “blueness”) and also *eva*.²⁷ The *rTags rigs* definitions under scrutiny compound the

²⁷ See e.g., Blo mthun bSam gtan *et al.*, *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs s.v. nyid*: 1. *ngo bo'am gshi ka'i ming ste ... 4. tsam dang kho na'i don te ...* (1. a noun for an essence or character... 4. in the sense of “mere” or “only” (*kho na*).) The *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (Zanghan da cidian ed. by Zhang Yisun *et al.*) entry for *nyid* explains its use as *kho na*.

difficulties because they use both *nyid* and *kho na*: thus *yod pa nyid* renders *Nyāyabindu*'s *sattvam eva* in the first definition, *mthun phyogs kho na la* renders *Nyāyabindu*'s *sapakṣa eva* (*mthun phyogs nyid la*) in the second, *yod pa nyid* then renders *sattvam* in the second, and *med pa nyid* renders *asattvam eva* in the third. While the use of *nyid* in *rTags rigs* accurately reflects the canonical translation's use of *nyid* to render *eva* in the first and third definitions, it seems, however, that dGe lugs pa *rTags rigs* texts came to add an additional *nyid* in the second definition because of the *tva* in *sattva*. There was, then, obviously some confusion because of the double sense of *nyid*. In the *anvayavyāpti* definition dGe lugs pa authors confusedly use *nyid* after *yod pa*, while in the usual Dharmakīrtian second definition *sattva* is *not* followed by *eva* at all, nor is there a *nyid* here in the canonical translation of the passage. The potential for going astray is relatively serious. If, *par malheur*, one happened to take this *yod pa nyid* as expressing *sattvam eva*, instead of just *sattvam*, the *anvayavyāpti* definition would become quite wrong; indeed Dharmakīrtians in India and Tibet explicitly argue against putting *eva* (*nyid*, *kho na*) there after *sattva* in the second definition.²⁸

²⁸ In all fairness, I don't know whether Tibetan exegetes actually *did* go astray in this way because of the unnecessary *nyid*. In any case, the logical problem would be that a good reason for proving impermanence, like "arisen from effort" (*prayatnānantarīyakatva* = *rtsol ba las byung ba*), would end up not satisfying the second characteristic. While "arisen from effort" would be present in *only* the similar instances, i.e., impermanent things, it would not be *only* present in the similar instances. The problem in placing *eva* after *sattvam* in the second definition, i.e., reading "only present in ..." rather than "present in only ..." would be that one would wrongly demand that the similar instances be pervaded by the reason, i.e., for all *x*: if *x* is a similar instance then *x* has the property of the reason. There are impermanent things, like naturally occurring phenomena unproduced by man, in which the reason is not present. In other words, while it is so that for all *x*: if *x* is arisen from effort then *x* is impermanent, it is *not* so that for all *x*: if *x* is impermanent then *x* arises from effort. See Dharmottara, *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* ad II. 5 (ed. Malvania 94): *sattvagrahaṇāt pūrvāvadhāraṇavacanena sapakṣāvyāpīsattākasyāpi prayatnānantarīyakasya hetutvaṃ kathitam / paścād avadhāraṇe tv ayam arthaḥ syāt sapakṣe sattvam eva yasya sa hetur iti prayatnānantarīyakatvaṃ na hetuḥ syāt*. "With the restricting expression [only = *eva*] placed before the word 'present' (*sattva*), then things that are present [in similar instances] but do not pervade the similar instances, such as 'arisen from effort,' are also asserted to be [good] reasons. If, however, the restriction [*eva*] is after [*sattva*], then the meaning would [wrongly] become the

That said, if this and other indigenous formulations may have sometimes had problems with an ambiguous *nyid*, the uses of *eva* in the *trairūpya* and in Indian grammarians' analyses of Sanskrit syntax were certainly understood in Tibet. Those uses were taken up by Dharmakīrti *in extenso* in texts such as *Pramāṇavārttika* IV k. 190-192; two of the three are particularly important in the context of the *trairūpya*. Notably, the "elimination of non-possession" (*ayogavyavaccheda* = *mi ldan rnam gcod*) and "elimination of possession of something else" (*anyayogavyavaccheda* = *gzhan ldan rnam gcod*), conveyed by different placings of *eva* ("only") in the first and second definitions, respectively, serve as ways to convey different uses of universal quantification.²⁹ These uses of *eva* in the *trairūpya* are regularly discussed in Tibetan literature. They form a kind of recurring "lesson" in indigenous *Pramāṇavārttika* commentaries and in some *rTags rigs* texts. Tibetans were, for example, aware of the detailed and rigorous discussion in Dharmottara's *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* ad II k. 5 of the logical consequences of right and wrong placements of *eva* in the *trairūpya*.³⁰ The understanding of the logical aspects of quantification in the *trairūpya*, thus, does not differ from that of Dharmakīrti, even if the vacillation between *nyid* and *kho na* and the double duty of *nyid* suggests some nagging philological difficulties in handling the Indian material.

5. The goodness and badness of reasons for Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and Tibetans

So much for specific details and philological issues in the formulations of the three characteristics. What can we say about the more philosophical aspects concerning logical reasons in Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and in Tibetans like Phur bu ldog? Modern writers on Indian and Tibetan logic frequently speak of reasons being "valid" or "invalid," which unfortunately tends to lead to a bout of conceptual chaos in rendering the Indian term *saddhetu* or the equivalent Tibetan terms *gtan tshigs yang dag* and *rtags yang dag*. I have regularly argued that the triply characterized reason, a *saddhetu*, is

following: A [good] logical reason is one that is only present in the similar instances. Then 'arisen from effort' would not be a [good] reason [for proving impermanence]."

²⁹ These two uses of *eva* and their connection with pervasion are taken up below. See n. 40. For a translation and discussion of *Pramāṇavārttika* IV.190-192, see Kajiyama 1973.

³⁰ See, e.g., Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan's *rNam 'grel spyi don* folio 58 *et seq.*

not to be viewed as a reason that is simply formally valid, as if a reason P being a *saddhetu* for Q were no more than a matter of $P \models Q$, viz., that Q was a *logical* consequence of P , in virtue of the form of the statements and independent of content.³¹ Let's instead just speak of a *saddhetu* as a "good reason" and a *hetvābhāsa* (*gtan tshigs ltar snang*, literally "pseudo-reason") as a "bad reason." Here are some general comparative observations about what that goodness is for Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and a Tibetan like Phur bu lcog.

First of all, factual content, and not just logical form, matters to a reason's goodness for these three logicians—India and Tibet are no different on that score. If we, for the moment, slightly deform things by taking the three characteristics as showing, *inter alia*, premises in an argument (rather than criteria for evaluating a reason), then the question of the truth of the premises is crucial, and not just the formal validity of the inference: this is part of what is involved in Dharmakīrti and *rTags rigs* saying that the three characteristics must be "ascertained" or "ascertained by a *pramāṇa*"—if a proposition is ascertained by a source of knowledge it is true.³² Though Dignāga does not state "ascertained," still for him, too, reasoning from truths to other truths is essential. To put things in other terms, in India and Tibet soundness (arguments that do have true premises and entail a true conclusion) is much more emphasized than validity (arguments where the premises, if true, would entail a true conclusion).

Second, while the actual truth of the premises as well as the entailment of the conclusion are important, this certainly isn't all there is to goodness. Providing an account of what type of reason is a good one also involves considerations of epistemic priority, the makeup of the opponent's belief set, the opponent's receptivity to certain arguments, and his doubts. Thus the triple characterization, with its provisions concerning "ascertainment," "faultless subjects of enquiry," "proper opponents," and the like, also takes up essentially epistemic, and even rhetorical, matters: what can one rationally doubt when one believes or knows such and such a proposition

³¹ See Tillemans 2008.

³² Tibetan definitions of the three characteristics often specify who is doing the ascertaining. It is supposedly a "proper opponent" (*phyi rgol yang dag*), i.e., a type of ideal rational individual. The term seems to be a Tibetan development, although certainly not in contradiction with Indian ideas. See Nemoto 2013.

to be true? What type of reason will, or should, succeed in changing beliefs and for which kind of person? Indian Pramāṇa specialists treated these matters as largely implicit in their *trairūpya* definitions; Tibetan Tshad ma makes them quite explicit.

Here is a sample of the type of epistemically oriented discussions that arise. First, as mentioned earlier, for a reason to be a good one, the opponent must have the requisite doubt as to whether the proposition being debated is true. Indeed, the fact that a particular opponent already believes or knows the truth of the proposition being debated means that the reason will be categorized as faulty *for him* given his belief set, even though it may generally be a good one for opponents. Thus, reasons are good relative to opponents and their belief set; often the opponent is understood to be the *ideal* rational individual; sometimes one delves into the belief sets of particular (less than ideal) individuals. Second, as a good reason is one that can rationally persuade opponents to revise their beliefs, it must be couched in terminology and concepts to which the opponent is receptive; if, for example, the reason or subject are not ones that the opponent can acknowledge in his philosophy, then the argument will not be persuasive at all to him and will not change his beliefs. Another requirement: the opponent must still be able to rationally doubt the proposition's truth even though she has ascertained that the subject is qualified by the reason and has even ascertained that the reason is pervaded by the property. For example, a reason like "being audible" is not a good one for proving that sound is impermanent, because audibility is coextensive with sound: in that case it would be impossible to know that all audible things are impermanent and yet continue to doubt rationally whether sound is impermanent. "Audibility" (*mnyan bya (nyid) = śrāvaṇatva*) is considered here to be "a reason that is uncertain because of being overly exclusive" (*thun mong ma yin pa'i ma nges pa'i gtan tshigs = asādhāraṇānaikāntikahetu*): there is an extensive analysis of this type of reason, in epistemic terms, in the dGe lugs pas' *rTags rigs* texts and in their commentaries on *Pramāṇavārttika*.³³

To represent these epistemic aspects of the triple characterization adequately it seems that we would need to change course significantly from the way modern writers have typically used elementary logic tools to elucidate Buddhist ideas. Instead of using simple, first order predicate

³³ See Tillemans 1999, chapter V.

calculus—as I have done—to elucidate the triple characterization, we may well need to see it as fully involving a type of logic of belief revision. This cannot be attempted here in anything but general themes for reflection. In any case, while determining what follows formally from what, or determining which statements are true, would be important in revising beliefs, they only represent part of the story. The larger problem being investigated by Indians and Tibetans is the *rational process* whereby an opponent's existing belief states—a set of propositions some of which are *epistemically entrenched*, while others can be more or less doubted—meet new added information (a fact presented as a reason) and then change into new belief states. Up until now, the Indo-Tibetan *trairūpya* has been studied by and large as a fragment of formal thinking, with epistemic aspects seemingly more or less inessential *add-ons*.³⁴ Seeing the *trairūpya* as a fragment of a logic of belief revision would integrate those epistemic and rhetorical aspects that have hitherto been deemed secondary or have even been selectively disregarded.³⁵

Third, there is a significant metaphysical dimension to the Dharmakīrtian and Tibetan idea of a good reason. This is the requirement that there be a “necessary connection” (*sambandha*, *pratibandha*), i.e., a naturally existent, real connection (*svabhāvapratibandha*) of either causality (*tadutpatti*) or same nature (*tādātmya*) between the reason and the property to be proved (*sādhya*dharmā). It is supposedly in virtue of this connection that the debater can be *certain* that the pervasion holds. Thus, the metaphysical requirement is also implicit in the *Nyāyabindu*'s use of the proviso *niścita* (ascertained/assured). Yongs 'dzin Phur bu lcog is more explicit in that he clearly specifies, in the third definition, that this ascertainment is by means of a source of knowledge (*tshad ma* = *pramāṇa*) grounded by a necessary connection (*'brel ba* = *sambandha*).

That requirement, i.e., grounding of logical reasoning in necessary connections between terms, comes straight from Dharmakīrti but is *not*

³⁴ See, e.g., Chi 1969 or the articles of J.F. Staal on Indian logic, e.g., Staal 1962.

³⁵ This would, however, need an in-depth discussion that is best left to others. There is an extensive modern literature on the logic of belief revision, the seminal article being Alchourrón, Gärdenfors and Makinson 1985, the so-called “AGM theory.” For more recent developments and alternatives to AGM, see van Benthem 2007; see Hansson 2011 for a survey of logics of belief revision.

present in Dignāga's works. The natures (*svabhāva*) and their connections—to which a logician is ontologically committed as real facts—are what ensures the second and third characteristics, i.e., the pervasion. It is thus *the* ontological precondition for certainty (*niścaya*, *niścita*) and guarantees, in some sense, that the pervasion *must* hold, and not that it simply does hold *as far as we can see*. Another Dharmakīrtian way to put it is that the existence of real facts and the relevant connections between them ensures that the reason “operates due to real entities” (*vastubalapravṛtta*); reasoning is thus not an arbitrary process of freewheeling thought and language. It is no exaggeration to say that Dharmakīrti's demands for certainty, necessary connections, and grounding in reality are among his main positions in the Buddhist philosophy of logic.³⁶

6. Certainty, formal matters, and the *dGe lugs*–*Sa skya* debate on similar instances

Let it be granted that, besides logical or formal considerations, there are many *other aspects*—rhetorical, epistemic, factual, metaphysical—involved in the goodness of a reason, in both Indian and Tibetan philosophies of logic. Nonetheless, what can be said about the *implication* of the conclusion from the reason when the triple characteristic is satisfied and the reason is thus good? Is the truth of the conclusion guaranteed

³⁶ “Ascertainment,” “necessary connections,” reasons “operating due to real entities,” etc. are, for Dharmakīrti, the way to counter the position of Īśvarasena, the commentator on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* who supposedly held that one could establish the general implication, i.e., pervasion, by simply not seeing any counterexamples (*adarśanamātra*). On Īśvarasena's positions, see Steinkellner 1966 and 1988, 1438 *et seq.* and n. 47. Note that Dignāga, in the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* passage quoted above, and especially according to the interpretation by his commentator Īśvarasena, does not have the idea of “ascertainment,” nor of “necessary connections” or reasons “operating due to real entities.” Although Dharmakīrti criticized Īśvarasena and *adarśanamātra* repeatedly, it is actually quite plausible that Īśvarasena got Dignāga pretty much right. Dharmakīrti, as is usual for an intelligent traditional author, disguised his own originality. There is an extensive literature on necessary connections/natural connections (*svabhāvapratibandha*) and their grounding of reasoning in Buddhist logic. The classic point of departure is Steinkellner 1971. See Steinkellner 1988 for the close connection with the idea of “ascertainment.” See Steinkellner 2015 on whether Dharmakīrti fell victim to the perennial difficulties of justifying induction.

by formal considerations when the three characteristics are established (and the premises are thus true), or is it at best fallibly established to be true in, let's say, normal situations? One way of interpreting Dignāga was indeed that the three characteristics were thought to be fallible in this way. We can see that the much-maligned Īśvarasena, who supposedly wrote a commentary on the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, was quite aware that satisfaction of the triple characteristic would generally establish truth of the conclusion though there were some exceptional cases where it would not. Hence, he added three supplementary characteristics to rule out such abnormal cases.³⁷ If we adopt the official Dharmakīrtian line about certainty (*niścaya*), however, then fallible truths are not enough; truth of the conclusion should be guaranteed.

Indeed, there are several passages in the *Pramāṇavārttika*, notably chapter I.15, that clearly show that Dharmakīrti *thought* that Dignāga himself used or intended to use the term *niścaya/niścita* in order to eliminate, *inter alia*, “deviant reasons” (*vyabhicāra*), i.e., those that did not guarantee the truth of the conclusion because the pervasion was not rigorously established.³⁸ The emphasis on certainty is so strong an imperative that Tibetan monastic textbook (*yig cha*) writers, like e.g., Se ra rje btsun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1478-1546), regularly also back-read Dharmakīrti's position onto Dignāga's texts, and argued that *niścaya/*

³⁷ A good reason for Īśvarasena, as we see from the discussion in Dharmakīrti's *Hetubindu* and many Tibetan Tshad ma commentaries, was thus one that had all six characteristics (*ṣaḍlakṣaṇahetu*); while satisfaction of the usual three was a necessary condition for goodness, it was not sufficient. The extra characteristics to be added besides the usual three are: *abādhitaviśayatva* ([the reason's] not having as its object a [property] that is invalidated [by direct perception]), *vivakṣitaikasamkhyatva* (the fact that [the reason's] singularity is intended), *jñātatva* (the fact that [the reason] is known). For the *Hetubindu* sources, see Steinkellner 1967, Vol. 2, 70f. See Tillemans 1999, 53-55 for a summary of what we know about Īśvarasena and other (considerably more obscure) commentators on Dignāga—we also seem to have an Indian *Nyāyamukha* commentator known only as Mang po len pa'i bu (conjectured to be *Bāhuleya by Shigeaki Watanabe). It seems that Dharmapāla may well have written such a commentary, too.

³⁸ *Pramāṇavārttika* I.15: *hetos triṣv api rūpeṣu niścayas tena varṇitah / asiddhaviparītārthavyabhicārivipakṣatah* //. “He [Dignāga] specified “certainty” in the three characteristics of the reason, too, in order to rule out non-established [reasons], [reasons that prove] the opposite proposition and deviant [reasons].”

niścita was actually present in the passage from the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* II.5 quoted above. That, however, is just not so: it is not there in the Sanskrit of that verse of *Pramāṇasamuccaya* nor in Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti*. Dharmakīrti added it in a kind of borderline plagiarism of that key *Pramāṇasamuccaya* passage in his *Pramāṇaviniścaya* so that he could better accommodate his own ideas about the needs for grounding of logical reasoning and the certainty ensured by natural connections (*svabhāvavpratibandha*). Ever since the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, Dharmakīrtian commentators such as Arcaṭa and Durvekamiśra, and notably Tibetans, have been doing a back-reading of Dignāga to say that it was there all along.³⁹ In fact, there is no convincing evidence that Dignāga was concerned with the grounding and metaphysical foundations of logic. The back-reading did not fit him easily at all.

Besides the Tibetan debates on the presence or absence of the “word *niścita*” (*nges pa'i tshig* = *niścitagrahaṇa*), however, there are other considerations that have a bearing on the question of the conclusion's truth being guaranteed. There are formal considerations. If we go back to the passages from Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and Phur bu lcog, truth conservation depends upon how one takes the terms “similar instances” (*sapakṣa*) and “dissimilar instances” (*vipakṣa/asapakṣa*). This question is not explicitly discussed in India, but it is the subject of a significant debate between dGe lugs pa (and their gSang phu predecessors, the followers of Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge), on the one hand, and Sa skya pa on the other. Let us now look at the details of that dGe lugs-Sa skya debate. It is a debate that starts in the classical period with Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Tshad ma rigs gter* criticizing Phya pa and the gSang phu thinkers; it is then prolonged in the post-classical period in the writings of Go rams pa bSod nams Seng ge and those of dGe lugs pa writers like Se ra rje btsun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, the former defending Sa skya Paṇḍita and the latter defending his opponents.

If we go back to Dharmakīrti's definitions of the three characteristics as given in *Nyāyabindu* II.5 (translated above), the reason is known to

³⁹ *Pramāṇaviniścaya* II.9: *anumeye 'tha tattulye sadbhāvo nāstitāsatī / niścita ... //*. See Steinkellner 1988, 1433 *et seq.* Page 1437, sums it up: “This definition makes literal use of Dignāga's famous definition... but it is not a quotation. It can be taken as Dignāga's, but it is not his, strictly speaking. ...[I]t is the final definition given by Dharmakīrti, but it looks as if it were composed by Dignāga.”

be only present (i.e., never absent) in the subject, or *pakṣa*, the reason is known to be present in only similar instances (*sapakṣa*), and the reason is known to be wholly absent from dissimilar instances (*vipakṣa*). Let us, for the sake of convenience, represent a typical argument in Sanskrit or Tibetan as having the general form *A* is *B* because it is *C*. In that case, to put it very approximatively, the first characteristic ensures that all *A*'s are *C*'s, while the remaining two conditions are designed to ensure that all *C*'s are *B*'s, all three of them enabling us to infer that all *A*'s are *B*'s.⁴⁰

However, an important controversy arises concerning the terms *sapakṣa* and *vipakṣa* in the second and third characteristics. Looking at Sa skya Paṇḍita's major work *Tshad ma rigs gter* and the dGe lugs *rTags rigs* literature, we see that there was a significant divergence on the issue of what Indians meant by "similar" and "dissimilar." Indeed these texts develop two scenarios, what I have called "the orthodox scenario," according to which similar and dissimilar instances excluded the subject (*dharmin*) and thus did not exhaust the whole universe of things about which we might reason, and the "unorthodox scenario," according to which the subject was included amongst the similar or dissimilar instances, respectively, these two exhausting the universe and admitting no third

⁴⁰ It has often been pointed that in each of the three characteristics there is an implicit universal quantification that is expressed by one of the three uses of the word "only" (*eva*) as developed by Sanskrit grammarians. See Kajiyama 1973, Gillon and Hayes 1982, Katsura 1986. Thus, for example, in Dharmakīrti's *pakṣadharmatva* definition the term *eva* (only) (Tib. *nyid* or *kho na*) is to be understood in the sense of *ayogavyavaccheda* (elimination of non-possession). This, as in the case of the other important use of *eva*, viz., *anyayogavyavaccheda* (elimination of possession of something else), can be fairly easily rendered in terms of a universally quantified material implication. Thus the *ayogavyavaccheda* use of *eva* between *S*[ādhyadharma] and *R*[eason], as in "R is only present (and never absent) in S" can be rendered by: $(x) (Sx \rightarrow Rx)$. The *anyayogavyavaccheda* use of *eva* between *S* and *R*, as in "R is present in only S (and is thus not present in non-S's)," can be rendered as: $(x) (Rx \rightarrow Sx)$. The direction of the material implication is now reversed. The first use of *eva*, i.e., *ayogavyavaccheda*, figures in the *pakṣadharmatva*. The second use of *eva*, viz., *anyayogavyavaccheda*, figures in the *anvayavyāpti*. See Kajiyama 1973 and Tillemans 2000, 64 n.226 for the usual grammatical examples of the two types of elimination, "Caitra is an archer" (= Caitra is only an archer and not a non-archer) and "It is Pārtha [alone] who is the archer" (= Pārtha is the only archer amongst the Pāṇḍava brothers; no-one else is a real archer).

alternative.⁴¹ In brief, the orthodox scenario leads to a tripartite division of the universe into (1) the set of similar instances, $\{x: Bx \ \& \ \neg Ax\}$, i.e., the set of all those things x that have the property B but not A . (2) the set of dissimilar instances, $\{x: \neg Bx \ \& \ \neg Ax\}$, i.e., all those things x that do not have B and do not have A . (3) the set of things that are the subject, i.e., $\{x: Ax\}$. The unorthodox scenario in effect is an advocacy of bipartition: there is no third alternative apart from the similar and the dissimilar instances; the similar instances are simply $\{x: Bx\}$ and the dissimilar instances are $\{x: \neg Bx\}$.

Now, whereas the orthodox scenario is plausibly ascribed to Dignāga,⁴² the unorthodox scenario is especially what we find in later Indian texts of the so-called “intrinsic pervasion” (*antarvyāpti*) school, such as the *Antarvyāptisamarthana* of the tenth century thinker Ratnākaraśānti.⁴³ The opponents of Sa skya Paṇḍita were characterized in his *Tshad marigs gter* as followers of *antarvyāpti* (*nang gi khyab pa*). This seems to have been on the mark, for we can see that the dGe lugs pa and Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge indeed do use Ratnākaraśānti’s definitions of similar and dissimilar instances, and that they are exponents of the unorthodox scenario (although they do *not* endorse the key tenet of *Antarvyāptivāda* that examples are dispensable when arguing with intelligent people).⁴⁴ An interesting question—which, alas, I cannot take up here but have discussed elsewhere—is how we should situate Dharmakīrti.⁴⁵ In any case, whether rightly or wrongly, the Sa skya pa interpret him (and Dignāga) as following the orthodox scenario, and the dGe lugs take him (and Dignāga) as following the unorthodox.

The problems for the orthodox scenario are formal. Here is what those formal issues look like. Let C be the reason, A the subject property and B the property to be proved. For simplicity, let us simply take the term A as a general term—if we want to take it as a particular that adaptation

⁴¹ Tillemans 1999, chapter V. See Katsura 2005 for analysis of what Dignāga himself meant by *pakṣa*, *sapakṣa*, *vipakṣa/asapakṣa*.

⁴² See Katsura 2005 for the actual Dignāgan sources.

⁴³ See Kajiyama 1999 for a translation of this work. See Kajiyama 1958, Mimaki 1976, Bhattacharya 1986 and Tillemans 2004 on *antarvyāptivāda*. On Ratnākaraśānti’s dates and chronological relation to Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti, see Mimaki 1992.

⁴⁴ See Tillemans 1999, chapter V, “On *sapakṣa*.” See Hugon 2008, Vol. 1. 278-279.

⁴⁵ See Tillemans 2004.

can be made. The two scenarios can be best differentiated by formulating the second characteristic along the lines of “all *C*’s *apart from those that are A* are *B*’s” and “all *C*’s are *B*’s” respectively. The difference applies *mutatis mutandis* to the third characteristic. We represent the universal quantifier “For all *x*: ...” by “(x) (...)” and material implication (“if ... then ...”) by “ \rightarrow .” Here then are the two scenarios concerning the triple characterization:

(a) Orthodox

$$(x) (Ax \rightarrow Cx)$$

$$(x) ((Cx \ \& \ \neg Ax) \rightarrow Bx)$$

$$(x) (\neg Bx \ \& \ \neg Ax) \rightarrow \neg Cx)$$

(b) Unorthodox

$$(x) (Ax \rightarrow Cx)$$

$$(x) (Cx \rightarrow Bx)$$

$$(x) (\neg Bx \rightarrow \neg Cx)$$

It is clear that on scenario (a), the conclusion $(x) (Ax \rightarrow Bx)$ does not follow from the three statements,⁴⁶ whereas on scenario (b) it uncontroversially does. We could say that the three statements in (a), if true, might provide some fallible grounds for thinking that the conclusion is true but that there is nonetheless no guarantee that it *is* true. This is because $(x) (Ax \rightarrow Bx)$ is not formally implied; it cannot be derived from the other three statements. At most, the move to the conclusion would be a defeasible inference, one that would be tentative and might be retracted once further information became available. In (b), however, the truth of the conclusion would be guaranteed as the statement is formally implied and easily derivable; there is thus no possibility of the inference subsequently being revised because of new

⁴⁶ E.g., take the property *A* as “being an odd positive integer,” for *B* take “being divisible without remainder by 2,” and for *C* “being a natural number.” Buddhist pseudo-mathematicians might then argue that all odd positive integers are divisible without remainder by 2 because they are natural numbers. They could claim that the reason satisfies the triple characteristic taken in the orthodox manner. However, they would be going from true premises to a false conclusion. While it is true that all odd positive integers are natural numbers and true that all natural numbers apart from the odd positive integers are divisible by 2, it is obviously not true that all odd positive integers are divisible without remainder by 2.

information. That difference with regard to defeasibility is also sometimes spoken of as a difference between non-monotonic and monotonic logics, or, less precisely, between inductive and deductive logics.⁴⁷

If we accepted (b) as capturing the *trairūpya*, there would be no problem in seeing a good reason as guaranteeing truth of the conclusion. And for the dGe lugs pa there is indeed no problem with this. The Sa skya pa, however, had some major exegetical conundrums.⁴⁸ On the one hand, it seems to be so, as the debate shows, that similar instances and dissimilar instances for Dignāga were easily and naturally interpreted along the lines of (a). At least it is demonstrable that some very competent logicians in seventh century India *did* interpret Dignāga's logic in this way. When, for example, the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang used Dignāga's logic of triply characterized reasons to frame a tortuous proof of idealism, his proof is *only* intelligible, as Franco 2005 convincingly shows, if we take similar and dissimilar instances in the orthodox fashion, i.e., as excluding the subject.⁴⁹ It seems clear that the logic on which the argument was based was not an idiosyncratic invention of Xuanzang himself nor a purely Chinese development; it reflected a going Indian interpretation of Dignāga.

Nonetheless, there are problems in saying that for Dignāga *herself*, the satisfaction of the triply characterized reason, as in (a), could have provided only a *fallible* justification for the claiming the conclusion to be true, or that Dignāgan logic is therefore non-monotonic/inductive, while Dharmakīrti's logic is monotonic/deductive.⁵⁰ I now think that

⁴⁷ See Strasser and Antonelli 2014: "The term 'non-monotonic logic' ... covers a family of formal frameworks devised to capture and represent *defeasible inference*, i.e., that kind of inference in which reasoners draw conclusions tentatively, reserving the right to retract them in the light of further information. Examples are numerous, reaching from inductive generalizations to abduction to inferences on the basis of expert opinion, etc. We find defeasible inferences in everyday reasoning, in expert reasoning (e.g., medical diagnosis), and in scientific reasoning."

⁴⁸ Tillemans 2005, "The Slow Death of the *Trairūpya* in Buddhist Logic: A propos of Sa skya Paṇḍita."

⁴⁹ Oetke 1994, 17-73 also argues for taking Dignāga in this orthodox way.

⁵⁰ See Oetke 1996 for an interpretation of Dignāga's logic as non-monotonic and *not* involving guaranteed truth conservation. In Tillemans 2004 I adopted the Sa skya viewpoint on Dignāga, seeing him as adhering to tripartitionism and hence to a more inductive logic that allowed for defeasibility.

unfortunately one cannot be so categorical in this fashion about Dignāga, even if we probably can continue to use those terms to characterize the logic of Dharmakīrti and his successors.

My reluctance is for the following two reasons. First of all, some later Sa skya pa Rigs gter ba writers such as Glo bo mkhan chen Bsod nams lhun grub (1456-1532) were aware of the problem that Dignāga seemed to advocate a tripartite universe, but that it would come with the unacceptable price that a triply characterized reason did not entail its conclusion. They thus made a distinction between similar instances taken epistemically, or subjectively (*blo ngor gnas pa'i mthun phyogs*), and similar instances as they are in reality, or objectively (*don la gnas pa'i mthun phyogs*). To take the sound-impermanent example, the first is the set of all things that the debaters *know* to be impermanent. Since they wonder whether sound is in fact impermanent, sound is excluded from those known impermanent entities. The second is what is really so, irrespective of what debaters may think; thus, in this sense, sound is actually included amongst the similar instances because it is an impermanent thing. In short, the orthodox account would focus on epistemology and epistemic processes of how people reason, whereas the unorthodox account would better capture the logical aspects of what follows from what.

Secondly, it is now clear, thanks to the detailed study of Shōryū Katsura 2005 on Dignāga's use of the terms *pakṣa*, *sapakṣa*, and *asapakṣa/vipakṣa*, that Dignāga himself tried to distinguish both the epistemic/subjective and the logical/objective perspectives in his use of the key terms. It seems then that the diagnosis by Glo bo mkhan chen of two senses is on the mark and helpful in understanding Dignāga.⁵¹ As Katsura 2005, 124 hypothesizes, while Dignāga's subjective interpretation of "similar instances" was captured by the orthodox tripartite division of the Rigs gter ba, the objective bipartite division that he also accepted may have contributed

⁵¹ The dGe lugs pa 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa, on the other hand, distinguished between "similar instances" taken etymologically (*mthun phyogs la sgra bshad du 'jug pa*) and "similar instances" properly speaking. The former were those things *similar* (*samāna*) to the subject, sound, in being impermanent, like vases and so forth. But sound cannot be said to be similar to itself in being impermanent and thus is not a similar instance taken in the etymological fashion. See Tillemans 1999, chapter V. Sa skya Paṇḍita and his Rigs gter ba followers have this semantic argument too, but it is the epistemic considerations that carry more weight for them.

to the unorthodox bipartite division promulgated by Dharmakīrti, the Antaryāptivādins, and the dGe lugs pa. In that case, the modern researcher wondering whether Dignāga's own *trairūpya* promoted non-monotonic or monotonic logic, or one that was inductive or deductive, etc., would have to content herself with the somewhat unsatisfying (but historically right) answer that the *trairūpya* for Dignāga was a mixture of *both*—it all depended on whether you read the terse formulae about similar and dissimilar instances from the logical or epistemic perspectives.

That being said, Sa skya Paṇḍita (Sa paṇ) no doubt emphasized the epistemic perspective and thus the orthodox reading of the Indian *trairūpya*'s talk about similar and dissimilar instances.⁵² That is how he talks in *Rigs gter* about *pakṣa*, *sapakṣa*, and *vipakṣa* and that is how he and the Rigs gter ba were read by their dGe lugs pa adversaries, such as Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan.⁵³ The problem for the Sa skya pa was, however, that he, like Phya pa and the dGe lugs pa, demanded guaranteed truth conservation of the conclusion—it had to follow formally from true premises. This was the Dharmakīrtian stance, and both sides in the Tibetan debate adhered to it. Not surprisingly, then, given that Sa paṇ must have been sensitive to the formal problems of entailment in the tripartite universe, he chose a very different exegetical route to specify the logical and objective aspects of a triply characterized reason more precisely. The Indian *trairūpya* was drastically revamped and no longer formulated in terms of presence in similar instances and absence in dissimilar instances at all. Instead, he and his Sa skya pa followers reformulated the second and third characteristics to be simply that the property to be proved must be implied by the reason and that the reason must be absent when the property is. This is an unconvincing rewrite of the attested canonical formulations of the Indian Buddhist *trairūpya*—it is part of the “slow death” of the Indian *trairūpya* in Tibet—but shows, if more evidence were ever needed,

⁵² See Hugon 2008, Vol. 1, 291-296. And if we wish, we could say that on Sa paṇ's reading of Dignāga, the *trairūpya*'s talk of similar and dissimilar instances did lead to a non-monotonic logic. The caveat, of course, is that Dignāga's own thinking seems to have been a bit more elusive than Sa paṇ might have thought.

⁵³ For a French translation of the section of *Rigs gter* chapter X that contains the relevant passages on *pakṣa*, *sapakṣa*, and *vipakṣa*, see Hugon 2008, Vol. 2. For Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan's depiction of the Rigs gter ba position in his *rNam 'grel spyi don*, see Tillemans 1999, 97-99.

just how uneasy the inherited Indian position was for Tibetans.⁵⁴ In Sa paṅ's eyes, the price to be paid to save the *trairūpya* as a definition of a good reason that entailed the conclusion was that he had to make a clean sweep of the old Indian definition. He had to relegate talk of similar and dissimilar instances to epistemology and then do logic with a new version that simply dispensed with them.

7. Deviant logic? The tetralemma and the law of double negation elimination in Tibetan Madhyamaka

It is frequently wondered whether the formal structures in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism represent a type of radically different logic, or “deviant logic,” one that does not respect fundamental theorems of classical Western logic.⁵⁵ Whereas the *trairūpya*, in India and in Tibet, clearly does not suggest any such deviance, the argumentation concerning the tetralemma (*catuṣkoṭi*) might. The tetralemma is found in numerous texts of the so-called school of the “Philosophy of the Middle” (*madhyamaka* = *dbu ma*),⁵⁶ and although it is not used by the major figures in Indian Pramāṇa literature, Tibetans tended to synthesize Madhyamaka and Pramāṇa so that what they held about one tradition affected, in varying degrees, what they held about the other.

Here is how the recurring schema of four alternatives, or the tetralemma, is presented in verse 21 of chapter XIV of Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka*:

*sad asat sad asac ceti sadasan neti ca kramah / eṣa prayojyo vidvadbhir
ekatvādiṣu nityaśah /.*

“Existent, nonexistent, both existent and nonexistent, neither existent nor nonexistent, that is the successive method that the learned should always use with regard to oneness and other such [theses].”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ See Tillemans 2005, Hugon 2008, 291 *et seq.* for the details of the Sa skya paṅ's solution and exegetical strategies.

⁵⁵ The term “deviant logic” is that of Susan Haack. A logic *L1* is deviant relative to *L2*, if *L1* has the same formulae and logical vocabulary as *L2* but nevertheless does not have the same set of theorems as *L2*. For our purposes we will take *L2* as classical logic. See Haack 1974, chapter I.

⁵⁶ See Seyfort Ruegg 2010, 37–112.

⁵⁷ Text in Seyfort Ruegg 2010, 49.

The Philosophy of the Middle, starting with the second or third century C.E. thinkers Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, regularly uses this schema, or a partial version of it, to dismiss all philosophical theses (*pakṣa*, *pratijñā* = *phyogs*, *dam bca'*) and thus arrive at a quietist stance of “no more discursive proliferations” (*niṣprapañca* = *spros bral*)—a Mādhyamika thinker supposedly negates all four lemmas, and this with regard to any philosophical position presented. In short, we are supposed to negate any assertion of being, non-being, both, and neither, including oneness, not-oneness, both, neither, and every other such proposition in its four alternatives. Granted the last two lemmas are frequently left out and one often speaks simply of negating the first two, i.e., “existence” and “nonexistence,” with all other attributes in philosophical debates negated *mutatis mutandis*. And this twofold negation yields the famous middle way (*madhyamā pratipad* = *dbu ma'i lam*). Things do not stop at the first two negations, however. Lest it be thought that “neither existent nor nonexistent” is the final view on how things are in reality, this lemma is negated too. How that path to thesislessness is to be interpreted and practiced is a major theme in Tibetan Buddhism.⁵⁸

Now, *prima facie* at least, the fourfold negation of the lemmas of “existence/being,” “nonexistence/non-being,” “both,” and “neither” would seem to result in a *very* deviant Buddhist logic. To put things in terms of propositional calculus, the four negations would seem to yield the conjunction of the following four statements:

- (a) $\neg P$
- (b) $\neg \neg P$
- (c) $\neg(P \ \& \ \neg P)$
- (d) $\neg(\neg P \ \& \ \neg \neg P)$ ⁵⁹

⁵⁸ For the basics of the Madhyamaka use of the tetralemma in its philosophy of emptiness (*śūnyavāda*), see Seyfort Ruegg 2010, chapter III; see also Tillemans 1999, chapter IX. For a philosophical analysis of Madhyamaka thesislessness and quietism, see the introduction and chapter XII in Tillemans 2016. For the question of acceptance of the law of non-contradiction, see chapters III and IV.

⁵⁹ *d* is presented as a negation of a conjunction, but it could also be taken as a negation of a negated disjunction. In short, the last negative proposition, (e.g., not neither existent nor nonexistent) could also be reformulated by De Morgan's laws as $\neg(P \vee \neg P)$.

Notably, the law of non-contradiction seems to be violated if we apply the law of double negation elimination to (b) (i.e., $\neg \neg P$) and then adjoin (a) (i.e., $\neg P$) to the result of that elimination. We end up simply with $\neg P \ \& \ P$, a contradiction. It doesn't stop there: adjoining (c) to $P \ \& \ \neg P$ would yield $(P \ \& \ \neg P) \ \& \ \neg(P \ \& \ \neg P)$. And so on it goes. That specter of deviance did not go unnoticed in Tibet, where, as in India (at least from about the fifth century C.E. on), there were strict, explicit prohibitions against contradiction (*virodha* = 'gal ba). Indo-Tibetan Buddhist logicians spoke of propositions that were “mutually contradictory” (*parasparaviruddha* = *phan tshun spangs* 'gal), and if one asserted such a “mutual contradiction” it was a point of defeat (*nigrahassthāna* = *tshar gcod kyi gnas*).⁶⁰

Two moves suggest themselves to enable Buddhists to avoid contradiction in the fourfold Madhyamaka reasoning. First, they could reinterpret the negation operator so that the law of double negation elimination would not apply in these discussions. Negation here would be a kind of “mere denial” without any implied positive assertion, so that $\neg \neg P$ would not imply P ; the adjoined negations would remain mere denials and would not yield any positive assertion of P that could be adjoined with $\neg P$. The second move is to add parameters to the various propositions so that the appearance of contradiction is dissipated.

Both these moves were present to varying degrees in Indian Madhyamaka discussions. The first move to interpret tetalemma-style

⁶⁰ To take an example from Indian Madhyamaka, Nāgārjuna, in *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XXV.14 gives what looks like a clear version of that prohibition against asserting the adjunction of P and $\neg P$: *bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇa ubhayaṃ katham / na tayoṛ ekatrāstitvam ālokatamasor yathā* //. “How could both non-being and being pertain to *nirvāṇa*? Just like light and darkness, both are not present in one place.” Even more explicit in banning such “mutual contradiction” is Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* commentary on this verse: *bhāvābhāvayor api parasparaviruddhayor ekaṭra nirvāṇe nāsti sambhava iti // bhaved abhāvo bhāvaś ca nirvāṇa ubhayaṃ katham / naiva bhaved ity abhiprāyaḥ* /. “For being and non-being, too, there is no possibility for the two mutually contradictory things (*parasparaviruddha*) to be present in one place—that is, in *nirvāṇa*. Thus ‘how could both nonbeing and being pertain to *nirvāṇa*?’ The point is they could not at all.” The argument is situated in the context of the fourfold negation of the tetalemma (*catuskoṭi*), where an opponent suggests that *nirvāṇa* both is and is not; in short, the opponent asserts the adjunction of “is” and “is not.” Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti reply that such an adjunction is not possible. See Tillemans 2016, 74-75.

negation as “mere denial” (*pratiṣedhamātra* = *dgag pa tsam*) dates from the sixth century Mādhyamika Bhāviveka’s appropriation of two types of negation in Indian logic, viz., implicative (*paryudāsa*) and non-implicative (*prasajya*), the latter being a negation that does not imply any positive phenomenon (*vidhi*). The second move is not given a developed theoretical treatment in India but figures, at least implicitly, in Indian Madhyamaka uses of qualifiers like *svabhāvena* (by its intrinsic nature), *paramārthatas* (ultimately), *satyatas* (truly, really), and other terms that are understood equivalently.

Both moves stimulated significant debate and philosophical reflection in Tibet.⁶¹ In particular, we find major figures of the dGe lugs and Sa skya traditions arguing as to precisely how we should interpret the “mere denial” sort of negation and whether or not it obeys the law of double negation elimination. For the Sa skya pa it does not obey the law of double negation elimination, whereas for the dGe lugs pa it most certainly does.

We also find debates between these two traditions about whether the statements of the tetralemma should be explicitly parameterized. The dGe lugs pa have a sophisticated position where they maintain that instead of understanding, say, the first lemma as “... exists,” it should be understood as “... exists by its intrinsic nature” (*rang bzhin gyis*) or “... exists ultimately” (*don dam par*), “... exists truly (*bden par*),” etc., These qualifiers can be represented with a term of art, the operator “REALLY.”⁶² Thus, (a) and (b) would become, respectively:

(e) \neg REALLY P

(f) \neg REALLY \neg P

⁶¹ See Tillemans 2016, chapter VII for the debate between the Sa skya pa Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429-1489) and the dGe lugs pa mKhas grub rje (1385-1438) on double negation elimination in the tetralemma. In what follows, when I speak of the dGe lugs–Sa skya debate, I am referring primarily to the clash of views between these two Madhyamaka traditions as found in Go rams pa’s *lTa ba’i shan byed*, mKhas grub rje’s *sTong thun chen mo* and Tsong kha pa’s *rTsa she ſik chen*. See *op. cit.* chapter VII for the textual material. I also take up, in that publication, the serious misunderstanding of the fourth lemma as “not both ...” rather than “neither ... nor ...”. Both sides made that mistake and it often rendered their versions of the fourth negation confused. On the dGe lugs pa and Sa skya pa positions on parameterization, see *op. cit.* chapters III and IV.

⁶² “REALLY” was used in this way in Priest, Siderits, Tillemans 2011.

There would be no contradiction in asserting both (e) and (f) to arrive at a middle way where P may be true but “REALLY P ” is not true and “REALLY $\neg P$ ” is not true either. Double negation elimination need not be rejected, because there is no threat at all that REALLY P will follow from \neg REALLY $\neg P$. Indeed, the philosophical upshot of the tetralemma negations would just be that no statement or its negation is ever true when prefixed with the REALLY operator.⁶³

The dGe lugs pa Madhyamaka-style negation of qualified statements is thus a frontal attack on metaphysical realism and ontology, but it does not exclude accepting and arguing for the truth of unqualified statements. One can, in effect, claim the truth of “The world is round,” “Enlightened people exist,” or “There are no three positive integers a , b , and c that satisfy the equation $a^n + b^n = c^n$ for any integer value of n greater than two.” Such truths may sometimes be obvious and sometimes profound and elusive, but for those statements to be true one need not, and indeed cannot, claim the truth of “It is REALLY so that the world is round,” “It is REALLY so that there are no three positive integers, etc.” The Sa skya pa, on the other hand, maintains that the statements in the tetralemma should not be parameterized at all. Given that the goal of the Madhyamaka, for them, is a completely irenic state where one makes no truth claims whatsoever, qualification would run counter to that goal, for if the tetralemma’s statements were qualified one could still claim a proposition P to be true and argue strenuously for it—as did the dGe lugs pa—and hence be irremediably lost in “discursive proliferations.”

The key technical term in this dGe lugs pa-Sa skya pa argument is *dgag pa gnyis kyis rnal ma go ba*, literally “understanding the main [proposition] by means of two negations.” It is not difficult to see that this is indeed a law of double negation elimination. The term is found in early *Pramāṇaviniścaya* commentaries, such as that of rNgog lo tsā ba Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109), and also figures regularly in Tsong kha pa’s Madhyamaka texts, such as his commentary on the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, his *rTsa she ṭik chen*. It is not itself an original Tibetan idea, but can be traced back to Indian

⁶³ This, however, takes on significance and is not just a refutation of a “straw man,” because, according to Madhyamaka, philosophers (and even the common man) are supposedly wrongly attracted to a type of metaphysical realism that conceives of things as established by their intrinsic natures, ultimately, etc.

Buddhist logic, the Sanskrit original *pratiṣedhadvayena prakṛtagamana* being found in the third chapter of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya*.⁶⁴ There are also Indian uses of the same or equivalent terms in non-Buddhist texts—like Kumāṛila's *Ślokaṁvārttika Nirālambanavāda* 125, which uses *pratiṣedhadvayāt vidhir eva* ("The positive does indeed come from the double negation")—as well as in Indian Madhyamaka texts such as Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 4.5ab, and especially Bhāviveka's *Prajñāpradīpa* (D. 80a7) and Avalokitavṛata's *Prajñāpradīpaṭīkā* (D. 180b3). But although double negation elimination does seem to be invoked on relatively rare occasions in those Indian Madhyamaka commentaries, it is not at all clear whether the Mādhyamika himself endorses it as a *universally applicable logical law*, or whether he restricts it to implicative negations, or just uses it in certain situations as a rhetorical stratagem that is recognized by the opponent.

The interest of the Tibetan debate is that it takes up this very issue, one that was philosophically crucially important but was still probably quite unclear in India. In sum, for the Sa skya pa, the rejection of double negation elimination is *essential* to the Madhyamaka goal of thesislessness; logic admits of exceptional rejections of some classical theorems; a Mādhyamika supposedly makes "mere denials" but never makes any positive truth claims; parameterization does no work here and is in fact an obstacle. For the dGe lugs pa, by contrast, parameterization is the key; the issue of double negation elimination is irrelevant; the logical features of the tetralemma and non-implicative negation are thus taken to be unexceptionably classical. Tibetan positions on these issues thus concern the most basic matters of Madhyamaka quietism.

8. Semantic issues: Indians and Tibetans on referential opacity and intensional entities

As a final subject in our exposé on Tibetan developments of Indian Pramāṇa debates, we turn to an important logico-semantic issue connected with Dignāga and Dharmakīrti's *apoha* (exclusion) theory of meaning. This semantic problem, similar to Western debates concerning substitution of

⁶⁴ See PVin III, in edition of Hugon and Tomabeche 2011, 120.10-11: *asapakṣa eva nāstīti cāsya sapakṣe 'stitocyate / pratiṣedhadvayena prakṛtagamanāt /*.

identicals for identicals in opaque contexts, was regarded as crucial for logic, both in India and Tibet, because it was thought that failure to find an acceptable solution threatened the possibility of logical reasoning across the board. In short, Dharmakīrti and Tibetans characterized the semantic solutions as necessary conditions for the legitimacy of one of the Buddhist sources of knowledge, inference (*anumāna*). Here are the Indian basics and the Tibetan developments.

Buddhist logicians knew well that pervasion (*vyāpti* = *khyab pa*) between two terms *F* and *G* sometimes holds in only one direction, as in the case of “being a tree” and “being a *śiṃśapā* tree”—all *śiṃśapās* are trees, but obviously not all trees are *śiṃśapās*—and that sometimes pervasion is bidirectional. The former case is analysable as a universally quantified material implication, i.e., a conditional like *for all x: if x is a śiṃśapā then x is a tree*, while the latter case, termed “equal pervasion” (*samavyāpti* = *khyab mnyam*), is, in effect, analysable as a universally quantified biconditional, *for all x: x is F if and only if x is G*. In India, and in Tibet, semantic problems then arise in cases of a bidirectional pervasion, like that between impermanence (*anityatva* = *mi rtag pa nyid*) and being causally produced (*kṛtakatva* = *byas pa nyid*), where in effect (adopting the above analysis) we have a true biconditional, *for all x: x is impermanent if and only if x is causally produced*. Tibetans will then say that given this bidirectional pervasion, the terms are therefore coextensive. Indeed, Tibetans regularly use the technical term *don gcig* (literally: same objects) for this extensional identity of *F* and *G* and speak of “eight types of pervasions” (*khyab pa sgo brgyad*) holding between *F* and *G* when they are the “same objects”: (1-2) a bidirectional pervasion using the copula “is” (*yin*); (3-4) its two contrapositions; (5-6) a bidirectional pervasion using the existential verb *yod* (“There is...”); (7-8) its two contrapositions.⁶⁵

When there is extensional identity between *F* and *G*, a problem of substitutivity then arises. It can be unpacked in the following manner with the use of a few familiar notions and principles. Although the extension of terms may be the same (e.g., the set of impermanent particulars = the set of causally produced particulars), still in some contexts substitutivity of

⁶⁵ The Sanskrit *ekārtha* is not so technically precise and is often used simply to mean “same meaning.” See the quotation from Dharmakīrti’s *Svavṛtti* below in section 8 and n. 68.

one term for the other would seem to lead to an invalid inference where the premises are true but the conclusion is not. To bring this out, take the following tempting, but invalid, inference:

- (a) Being a product is a good reason for proving that sound is impermanent
- (b) Being a product is coextensive with being impermanent (i.e., for all x: x is impermanent if and only if x is a causal product)
- (c) Therefore (by substitutivity of identicals for identicals), being impermanent is a good reason for proving that sound is impermanent.

We would seem to go from two true premises to a false conclusion, for Buddhists are explicit on the point that the conclusion is false. (Indeed, arguing that something is so because it is simply so is *not* giving a good reason, neither for Buddhists nor for most people in the world!) Buddhists, however, as we saw in discussing the definitions of the triple characteristic, would phrase the problem in terms of the *jijñāsā/shes* ‘*dod*, “desire to know” becoming impossible: it is impossible to know that sound is impermanent and still want to know whether sound is impermanent; the *pakṣadharmatva* would thus fail, because once one understood the reason as qualifying the subject, that subject would not be a *jijñāsītadharmin/shes* ‘*dod chos can*, i.e., a subject about which one wishes to know whether it is qualified by the property to be proved. And yet we would also seem to be using an acceptable principle of substitutivity of identicals for identicals *salva veritate*, i.e., with no change in the truth value of the proposition in which such substitution occurs. What went wrong? Is Leibniz’s famous law of substitutivity of identicals *salva veritate* not recognized? Or, if it is—and in fact it is recognized by Buddhists, in that they themselves take coextensiveness of “being a product” and “being impermanent” as being a form of identity and licencing substitution of the property terms in many contexts—then why does it not apply here?

Dharmakīrti, in *Pramāṇavārttika* I verse 40 *et seq.* and his own commentary (*svavṛtti*) diagnosed the problem as one of bidirectional pervasions (i.e., coextensive concepts) seeming to force us to accept *pratijñārthaikakadeśahetu* “reasons that are one part of the thesis-proposition” (e.g., when one says “sound is impermanent, because it is impermanent,” then the reason “being impermanent” is also a part of what is being proved). He saw this undesirable consequence as one of the main challenges to logical thought being a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), for unless one can somehow rule out the problematic substitutions in what I

have called the “tempting inference,” we would seem to have to accept as good a huge number of singularly uninformative circular reasons.

The issue is indeed a recognizably familiar one in formal semantics and in philosophy of logic and language: substitutivity in referentially opaque contexts, such as propositional attitudes and modal contexts (see Tillemans 1986). One might know who Kim Philby was but not know who was the leader of the infamous Cambridge Five spies. Though it is so objectively that Kim Philby = the leader of the Cambridge Five spies, the reference of the two terms is opaque in typical belief contexts, in that using “the leader of the Cambridge Five spies” instead of “Kim Philby,” or vice versa, may well yield a false sentence. Likewise, talk of good reasons being ones where the debater has a desire to know *P* but not an equivalent *P** that is different from *P* only in substituting a new term for identical entities, is indeed an opaque context. To analyze what goes wrong in the tempting inference, Dharmakīrti, in effect, made a usual move by distinguishing between types of identities: “being impermanent” and “being produced” are extensionally identical, but somehow not intensionally so. He speaks of the expressions making us understand differences and individualities; the concepts—more literally, in his *apohavāda* jargon, the “exclusions” or “isolates” (*vyāvṛtti* = *ldog pa*)—are different. The point is that, in the opaque context, substitution could only be made between terms for identical concepts and not between terms that just happen to refer to the same entities in the world.

In fact, though, it could be objected that the usual idea of an intensional identity (one that is understood to hold between properties *F* and *G* when the biconditional *for all x: x is F if and only if x is G* is true in all possible worlds)⁶⁶ will not get us very far out of the woods, as being impermanent and being produced *are* arguably identical in that way. And it would thus seem that if *that* was what conceptual identity was about for a Buddhist epistemologist it should have *been* possible to make the substitution in the opaque contexts under discussion. Dharmakīrti’s idea of concepts *F* and *G* being identical thus demands a much stronger criterion than the necessary truth of the biconditional *for all x: x is F if and only if x is G*. If that latter necessary truth is the criterion for identity between *F* and *G*, when taken as intensions, then we would seem to be forced to accept “ultra-intensional” entities where the identity criterion would have to be even stronger.

⁶⁶ See, e.g., Carnap 1956, chapter I, “The method of extension and intension.”

In dGe lugs pa commentaries to verse 40 and in the Tibetan *Collected Topics* (*bsdus grwa*) literature, probably indebted to the Phyra-tradition, we find the makings of an idea of “conceptual identity/difference” (*ldog pa gcig/tha dad*) such that to each meaningful subject or predicate term in a language there is a different concept—synonyms (*ming gi rnam grangs*), for example, will still express different concepts (*ldog pa tha dad*). Thus, for example, we find a telling passage from Yongs ‘dzin Phur bu lcog, which I will translate in full:

“An opponent says that *real entity*, *impermanent*, *product*, and *composite*, as they are simply a group of synonyms, are all identical (*gcig*). Analogously, *knowable thing* (*shes bya*), *existent* (*yod pa*), *established basis* (*gzhi grub*) and *discriminable entity* (*gzhal bya*) are also identical. Just as, for example, the Incomparable Son of Śuddhodana, the Omniscient One of the Solar Line, and the Omniscient Sugar Cane One [are identical]. [We reply:] This is incorrect, because the Son of Śuddhodana, the One of the Solar Line, and the Sugar Cane One are all different (*tha dad*). If [you say that the reason is] not established, we affirm that it does follow [that the Son of Śuddhodana, etc. are different], because it is possible that one might ascertain, with a source of knowledge, to which basis one applies the words “One of the Solar Line” and “Sugar Cane One,” even though one does not ascertain, with a source of knowledge, to what one applies the words “Son of Śuddhodana.” Therefore, although the basis [i.e., the actual person] for applying the names “Son of Śuddhodana,” “One of the Solar Line,” and “Sugar Cane One” is identical, they [i.e., the Son of Śuddhodana, etc.] are not identical; if they were identical, they would have to be identical both in name and meaning.”⁶⁷

There are use-mention problems here but the idea is still understandable: the fact that the names differ for the same actual person, i.e., Buddha Śākyamuni, allows us to say that Son of Śuddhodana, One of the Solar

⁶⁷ This passage from Yongs ‘dzin *bsdus grwa chung* (12b) is discussed extensively in Tillemans 1986, 211–213. See *ibid.* n. 19 for the Tibetan. I have italicized “impermanent,” “composite,” etc. to alert the reader to the fact that these terms cannot easily be rendered into correct English. Such translational problems are taken up in detail in the last section of the next chapter.

Line, etc. are themselves different (*tha dad*). The same type of difference holds between being impermanent and being produced. In short, following the dGe lugs pa text cited above, the substitution in the problematic inference would be blocked by saying that being impermanent and being produced are not actually identical after all, but are somehow different.

Now, it will be said that it is quite counterintuitive that synonyms would nonetheless express different concepts. As Stoltz 2008 points out, there were also some Tibetans, including even Phya pa himself, who said that terms like *shing* and *ljon pa* (two words translatable as “tree”) expressed the *same* concept (*ldog pa gcig*). In that sense, there was no complete unanimity amongst Tibetans, and some seemed to have adopted a more common-sensical position that two different words *could* express one concept. But, oddly enough, that seemingly common-sense truism that two words sometimes express one concept would probably go astray as a close reading of Dharmakīrti’s own text. Although the precise terminology of *ldog pa gcig/tha dad* may be new, the idea of one difference (*bheda*), or one meaning (*artha*), being expressed by one and only one word *is* certainly present in Dharmakīrti’s *Svavṛtti* to verse 40-42:

“So, though there is no difference in their intrinsic natures, still the individuality (*viśeṣa*), the difference (*bheda*), which is understood through its respective specification, i.e., a name, cannot be made understood through another. Thus, all the words do not have the same meaning (*artha*). And, therefore, it is not so that the reason is a part of the thesis-proposition (*pratijñārthaikadeśa*).”⁶⁸

Indeed, Dharmakīrti’s proposed solution to the problem of substitutivity in opaque contexts would not work *at all* if the two expressions like “being impermanent” and “being produced” had the same meaning. It’s disturbing but true: the extreme position in dGe lugs pa Tshad ma textbooks got Dharmakīrti essentially right about a principle of “one word, one meaning.”

⁶⁸ See *Pramāṇavārttikasvavṛtti* ed. Gnoli 25, lines 24-26: *tasmāt svabhāvābhede 'pi yena yena dharminā* nāmnā yo viśeṣo bhedaḥ pratīyate na sa śakyo 'nyena pratyāyayitum iti naikārthāḥ sarvaśabdāḥ / tan na pratijñārthaikadeśo hetur iti /*. *Gnoli: *dharmēṇa*. We follow Karṇakagomin’s reading *dharminā*, which he glosses (ed. R. Sāṅkṛtyāyana 120) as *asya vivaraṇam* “its specification.”

But where would this talk of conceptual identity and difference leave us philosophically? It might well seem to lead to far too many strange entities, a new separate entity for each word. The Sa skya pas were indeed loath to tolerate any such mysteriously subsistent entities and considered the Phya pa position concerning concepts as an aberration. For the Sa skya pas, concepts, universals, and the like were not objects (*yul* = *viṣaya*) at all. The only objects for them, were impermanent, causally efficacious, entities, the particulars (*rang mtshan* = *svalakṣaṇa*) of Dharmakīrti—the rest, be they perceptual illusions or concepts, were just cases of mistaken cognition (*'khrul shes*).⁶⁹ Thus, Sa skya Paṇḍita (in the first chapter of his *Tshad ma rigs gter*) emphasized that concepts were only *façons de parler* for different states of mind.⁷⁰ States of mind are fully existent and could be individuated so that a thought (i.e., the mental state or episode) that *A* is *F* would not be the same as a thought that *A* is *G*, even if the predicate terms *F* and *G* were synonymous. Precisely how those thoughts would be individuated does, however, remain to be seen. Indeed, whether Sa paṇ's approach would offer a satisfactory way out of Dharmakīrti's conundrum with referential opacity, or whether ultra-intensions will come in again via the back door to explain how thoughts do in fact differ, has to remain open here.

⁶⁹ See Kapstein 2000, 89-97 and Stoltz 2006 for Sa paṇ's arguments in the first chapter of *Tshad ma rigs gter*.

⁷⁰ See *Rigs gter rang 'grel*, chapter I (ed. Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs, Vol. 2, 66-67): *'khrul shes gnyis la yul med cing // rang rig gis ni myong ba'i phyir // shes pa nyid yin de yang ni // med pa 'dzin phyir 'khrul shes yin // yul du byas na gnod pa can gyi tshad ma yod pas skra shad dang don spyi snang ba ni shes pa 'khrul pa nyid yin te ... /*. "The two sorts of mistaken cognition [i.e., mistaken perceptions and all conceptual thoughts] have no objects. Because the [illusions] are experienced through [the mind's] reflexive cognition [of its own states], they are simply consciousness. And because the [consciousness] apprehends something nonexistent it is a mistaken cognition. There are sources of knowledge that would refute [you] if you accepted [illusions] as objects, and therefore the [hallucinated] hairs and the concepts (*don spyi*) that appear are just mistaken cognition." The term *don spyi* is regularly used in Tibetan texts ever since Phya pa to mean "concepts," although in India it has a rather different and much more limited use. See Tillemans 1999, 234, n. 15, on the weird evolution of this term.

9. A theme for further investigation: Meinong in Tibet?

In the final analysis, the debate on the logico-semantic problem of substitutivity in opaque contexts seems to turn on one's commitment to ontology and metaphysics, and notably one's adherence to the strongly nominalistic orientation of Dharmakīrti. The dGe lugs pa-Phya pa traditions, as their adversaries rightly depicted them, did indeed claim that the entities in question, the *ldog pa* or "concepts," weren't actually real entities (*ngos po* = *bhāva*, *vastu*) at all, but just objects created by thought and language, or in other words, customarily existent things (*kun rdzob bden pa* = *saṃvṛtisatya*). Indeed, for them, objects (*yul* = *viśaya*) could be really existent particulars or merely customarily existent universals, permanent things and concepts. And the later dGe lugs pa would even flirt with completely nonexistent things (like rabbits' horns) being a type of quasi-object, although not an object (*yul*) properly speaking.⁷¹

The upshot of tolerating everything as an object is a position that might win favor with someone like the nineteenth century Austrian philosopher Alexius Meinong (1852-1920), who accepted objects that existed really as well as those that were nonexistent but merely subsisted. Ontologists naturally balk at such a seemingly baroque account of what there is, as they attach importance to parsimony, thus avoiding unnecessary entities, as well as to the abjuration of double talk—i.e., talk "which would repudiate an ontology while simultaneously enjoying its benefits" (Quine 1960, 242). I think the Sa skya pas, like Dharmakīrti, accepted that principle of parsimony, distrusting dGe lugs-Phya lugs profligacy and

⁷¹ In the opening paragraphs of *sDe bdun la 'jug pa'i sgo don gnyer yid kyi mun sel*, sometimes attributed to Tsong kha pa, we find the typical dGe lugs-Phya lugs position that being an object and being a knowable thing (*shes bya*) are coextensive (*don gcig*) and that objects are of two sorts: permanent and impermanent. In the *bsdus grwa* literature, dGe lugs pa regularly speak of nonexistent things (like horns on rabbits' heads) as being "objects of a type of grasping by a conceptual cognition that apprehends them" (*rang 'dzin rtog pa'i 'dzin stangs kyi yul*). See, e.g., *Yongs 'dzin blo rigs* (ed. Kelsang and Onoda) f.4b, line 5: *de chos can [= ri bong rwa chos can] rang 'dzin rtog pa'i 'dzin stangs kyi yul yin par thal / bdag med yin pa'i phyir /*. "Take that [i.e., the rabbit's horn] as the subject; it follows [correctly] that it is an object of a type of grasping by a conceptual cognition that apprehends it, because it is something lacking any [real] identity." The reason here, i.e., being something lacking a real identity, is a shorthand for any and every thing, be it existent or nonexistent—*yod med gang rung yin pa*.

their seeming double talk about things that didn't fully exist but were objects, nonetheless.⁷² The Sa skya pas, in short, reasoned in a predictable fashion, as the ontologists they were, and followed the nominalism of Dharmakīrti, allowing as objects only those things to which they were univocally committed in a pared down ontology.

On the other hand, for better or for worse, the dGe lugs pa and Phya lugs were not unlike Meinong in that they maintained that every mental state had an object, but not necessarily a fully real one—mental states are intentional and directed to things that may or may not be real, be they particulars, concepts, or even completely nonexistent things like barren women's children. The question then arises whether the dGe lugs pa-Phya pa followers, or Meinong for that matter, were guilty of multiplying entities unnecessarily, as their critics suggest. As Dreyfus 1997 shows, it is clear that the dGe lugs pa were far less nominalistically inclined than their Sa skya pa counterparts: they allowed real universals as well as commonsense objects extended both in space and in time, thus radically reinterpreting the Dharmakīrtian insistence on momentary extensionless particulars; as we shall see in the next chapter, they had no compunctions about taking pervasion (and hence quantification) as ranging over all really existent, customarily existent, or completely nonexistent things.

Here is my own take on this debate: the dGe lugs pa were simply not much bothered by ontological scruples in their talk of objects but were up to something else. They remained closer to description instead of radical revision. Now, undeniably, we do think of things that are unreal and predicate properties of them, and so it is relatively easy to think that a *phenomenological* description of ordinary thought and language should simply allow for such objects and not try to explain them away. Meinong sought that type of phenomenological account and so did the dGe lugs pa. Of course, an ontologist would retort that an account in which unreal things are objects is *only* phenomenology and that a metaphysically acceptable account would have to analyze them otherwise. But it looks like the dGe lugs pa followers were not bitten by that bug. They saw little of the imperative to paraphrase or analyze the surface level

⁷² See also Kapstein 2000, 95-97, which develops the analogies with the Western debate between Bertrand Russell and Meinong, seeing the Sa skya pas as having a similar negative purpose as Russell in banishing subsistent objects from their ontologies.

phenomenological description away in favor of some radically revisionist, deeper, metaphysical position. The lesson that they seem to promote is that lightweight (non-metaphysical) talk of objects is harmless; nonexistent objects are harmless, have little to do with ontology, and hence need no Quinean or Sa skya pa overkill.

II. Indigenous Tibetan Logic: *Collected Topics* and the Logic of Consequences

1. *Introduction, history, and texts*

As we had mentioned in section 1 of the previous chapter, the post-classical period in Tibetan Buddhist epistemology and logic includes a notable development of an indigenous Tibetan logic. It is considerably less of a copy or even interpretation of India than are the theory of good reasons and the related discussions in Tibetan commentaries on *Pramāṇavārttika* and *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, and it has little to do with the Dharmakīrtian prescriptive rules of *vāda* (“debate”) as set forth in the *Vādanyāya*. It figures especially in the *bsdus grwa* literature—what we have been calling “Collected Topics”—from the fifteenth century on.

In fact, the Tibetan term *bsdus grwa* is not an easy one to translate. Shunzō Onoda gives what may be the most thorough explanation, taking it as probably *bsdus pa slob pa'i sde tshan gyi grwa* “the schools or classes in which [primary students] learn *bsdus pa* or summarized topics [of logic or dialectics];” he then quotes a later etymological explanation according to which the word *bsdus grwa* meant “the class where many arguments are summarized together” (*rigs pa'i rnam grangs du ma phyogs gcig tu bsdus pa'i grwa*).¹ In short, while the term *grwa* clearly refers to the first classes in the monastic curriculum, it is less clear what *bsdus pa* refers to, especially because it might well suggest the *tshad ma'i bsdus pa* of Phya pa Chos kyi Seng ge (1109-1169), the so-called “Epistemological Summaries” of the pre-classical period. A translation of the term *bsdus grwa* as “Collected Topics” or “The Class (*grwa*) of Collected Topics (*bsdus pa*),” however, emphasizes the fact that *bsdus grwa* is a collection of various topics in the form of “lessons” (*rnam bzhas*) ranging from

¹ Onoda 1996, 187.

colours, ontology, concepts, and causality to consequences (*prasaṅga*) and the “exclusion theory of semantics” (*apohavāda*).²

What, though, are we to make of the connection between *Collected Topics* and the earlier *Epistemological Summaries* (*tshad ma'i bsdus pa*), either those of Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge himself or of the many other writers associated with Phya pa's monastery of gSang phu sne'u thog located south of Lhasa? It is well-known that Klong rdol bla ma (1719-1794), in his *Tshad ma rnam 'grel sogs gtan tshigs rig pa las byung ba'i ming gi rnam grangs*, spoke of eighteen lessons by Phya pa, most of which have the same titles as those of *Collected Topics*.³ This fuelled speculation that *bsdus grwa* must be the direct successor to Phya pa's *Tshad ma'i bsdus pa*, or even that Phya pa's *Tshad ma yid kyi mun sel* is itself a *bsdus grwa* or the original *bsdus grwa*.⁴

Now, it is no doubt true that there was strong influence from the *Epistemological Summaries*. That said, the origins of *bsdus grwa* are probably multiple. There were several other writers of such *Summaries* besides Phya pa. rGya dmar ba Byang chub grags (fl. c. 1095-1135), who was a teacher of Phya pa, supposedly wrote more than one *tshad ma'i bsdus pa*⁵—the many other *bsdus pa* authors include figures like Chu mig pa Seng ge dpal (thirteenth century) and the author of the (extant) *Tshad bsdus*, which is attributed to Klong chen Rab 'byams pa (1308-1364) but

² For the lessons, see Onoda 1992, 60-65 and 1996, 189-191. Note that what we are taking as *bsdus grwa* is what Onoda 1996 terms *bsdus grwa* in a “narrow sense.” One also sometimes includes *rtags rigs* and *blo rigs* texts, using the term *bsdus grwa* in a wider sense to include Dharmakīrtian *trairūpya* theory and basic epistemic categories as found in the sevenfold epistemic division (*blo rigs bdun du dbye ba*), as well the Abhidharma's classification of minds (*sems = citta*) and mental factors (*sems byung = caitta*). However, when we speak here of “*bsdus grwa* logic,” we are not generally discussing those primers on Dharmakīrtian philosophy of logic, epistemic categories, or the Abhidharma.

³ See Onoda, 1992, 60 & 1996, 191.

⁴ See Hugon and Stoltz 2019, 63-64, n. 59 on the not infrequent confusions concerning Phya pa's *Tshad ma yid kyi mun sel*. For work on Phya pa's logic of consequences as evidenced in his rediscovered *Tshad ma yid kyi mun sel*, see Hugon 2013, 2011. More generally, for Phya pa's formulation of the influential sevenfold classification of cognition (*blo rigs bdun du dbye ba*), see van der Kuip 1978 as well as Hugon and Stoltz 2019; on other aspects of Phya pa's philosophy, see van der Kuip 1983, chapter II; for the numerous Sa lugs-Phya lugs debates on epistemology and ontology, see Dreyfus 1997.

⁵ Onoda 1996, 191.

may rather have been composed around Phya pa's time or soon after.⁶ A reasonable hypothesis would seem to be that much of *bsdus grwa* did not come directly from Phya pa but reflected shared, thematized discussions, especially those that took place in the colleges of gSang phu sne'u thog. Various dGe lugs pa/dGa' ldan pa and Sa skya pa scholars interacted there (the monastery was divided roughly half and half into dGe lugs and Sa skya colleges) discussing the *Epistemological Summaries* with what must have been a significant level of commonality. Although the Sa skya pa *Tshad ma rigs gter* tradition is known to have engaged in vigorous arguments against the *Summaries* of the Phya pa-tradition, especially from the fifteenth century on with g.Yag ston seng ge dpal (1348-1414), earlier Sa skya pa were often very sympathetic to them. The *bsdus pa* and *rigs gter* traditions thus regularly interweave.⁷ Conspicuously, too, many of the definitions (*mtshan nyid*) and divisions (*dbye ba*) typical of the lessons of *Collected Topics* are found in the *sDe bdun la 'jug pa'i sgo don gnyer yid kyi mun sel*, often attributed to Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357-1419), who, on his study tour of various monasteries (*grwa skor*), spent time in gSang phu and gSang phu ba affiliates.⁸ In sum, instead of overweighting the direct role of Phya pa, as has been done, I think that *bsdus grwa* is best viewed as a digest that records the thinking of diverse gSang phu intellectuals over three centuries.⁹

⁶ Hugon and Stoltz 2019, 47-51; see van der Kuijp 2003 on the *Tshad bsdus*.

⁷ See Dreyfus 1994, 5-11. Although the Sa skya tradition engaged in very vigorous polemics against the *Summaries* of the Phya-tradition, there also seems to have been a type of Sa skya pa *Summary*, the *bsDus pa rigs sgrub* of 'U yug pa Rigs pa'i seng ge (?-1253), who was the major student of Sa skya Paṇḍita. On the *Summaries* of 'U yug pa, rGya dmar ba, Chu mig pa and several others, see D. Jackson 1987, 128-131, van der Kuijp 1989, 17.

⁸ Onoda 1992, 14.

⁹ Up until the late 1990's the works of Phya pa were unavailable, both to Tibetan and Western scholarship. They were already classified as rare (*dkon po*) in a nineteenth century Tibetan catalogue. (This is the *dPe rgyun dkon pa 'ga' zhig gi tho yig* of A khu Shes rab rgya mtsho; included in Part 3, pp. 503-601 of Lokesh Chandra 1963.) Fragments were cited, and claims were made by Tibetan authors—in the case of Sa-tradition authors this was generally for polemical purposes. Now that we are finally gaining access to a number of Phya pa's own texts, it turns out that they have less in common with *Collected Topics* than some of us, myself included (and perhaps many Tibetans), had imagined.

Significantly, it is now *not* clear that the *thal-phyir* logic of consequences (“it follows that ... because ...”), which Stcherbatsky had attributed to Phya pa as its probable inventor,¹⁰ did actually come from Phya pa himself.¹¹ Its precise origins are still obscure. Hugon 2008a shows how important argumentation by analogy was in Phya pa—if the opponent affirms *P*, then *Q* should be true too, because they are similar (*mtshungs pa*). The debate would increase in complexity when it is replied that they are not similar (*mi mtshungs*) and that some other proposition *R* would be similar, etc., etc. This relentless tit-for-tat style of argumentation seems to have been a preferred tactic of Phya pa in debate, seemingly more so than the *bsdus grwa* style *thal-phyir* reasoning.

The earliest *Collected Topics* is the *Rwa stod bsdus grwa* of the gSang phu abbot ‘Jam dbyangs mChog lha ‘od zer (1429-1500). Several other authors subsequently took up the genre. ‘Jam dbyangs bzhad pa (1648-1722), of Bla brang monastery, wrote a small *Collected Topics* in verse, and four other works concerned, in one way or another, with subjects in *bsdus grwa*. There are works of varying size and affiliated with different dGe lugs pa monastic colleges—e.g., the *Collected Topics* of bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis (1678-1738), representing the tradition of Bla brang, or those of Yongs ‘dzin Phur bu lcog Byams pa tshul khriims rgya mtsho, representing especially Se ra.¹²

Collected Topics has been predominantly dGe lugs pa but not exclusively so. The Sa skya pa monastery of Nalendra, founded in ‘Phan yul in 1436, patterned its curriculum after gSang phu, and in more recent centuries seems to have adopted the *Rwa stod bsdus grwa*. And there is said to be a seventeenth century Sa skya pa *bsdus grwa*, the *Chos rnam rgyal gi bsdus grwa*, a copy of which is preserved in the Library of Tibetan

¹⁰ Stcherbatsky 1932, Vol. 1, 55, 58.

¹¹ I myself long tended to attribute it to Phya pa. See Tillemans 1999, 117.

¹² bSe (Sras) Ngag dbang bkra shis was a student of ‘Jam dbyangs bzhad pa and was also an abbot of Bla brang bKra shis ‘khyil monastery in present-day Gansu. Few of these texts have been studied in publications by contemporary scholars. Essential, however, are the many Japanese articles of Shunzō Onoda and the English study summarizing their results, Onoda 1992 and 1996. See also Sierksma 1964, Liberman 2004, Goldberg 1985a, 1985b, Dreyfus 2003, Perdue 1976, 2014, and Tillemans 1999. For handy access to Onoda 1996, see the site of the Tibetan and Himalayan Library, <http://www.thlib.org/encyclopedias/literary/genres/genres-book.php#!book=/studies-in-genres/b10/dn1/>

works and Archives in Dharamsala, India.¹³ I would hypothesize that this is likely to be the (otherwise unavailable) *bTsan po bsdus grwa* of gSer khang pa Dam chos nam rgyal, a later abbot of Rwa stod college of gSang phu; *bTsan po bsdus grwa* may well have constituted an important bridge between the Rwa stod tradition and that of ‘Jam dbyangs bzhad pa, as it was written on the request of one of the latter’s teachers.¹⁴

Collected Topics continue to be studied and even composed in the Tibetan cultural community, both in the Tibetan Autonomous Region and the diaspora. Indeed, debate is still widely practiced as a study technique in the dGe lugs curriculum. One of the most extraordinary recent records of actual Tibetan debates and sophisms is the “Mnemonic Notes on *Collected Topics*” (*bsdus grwa brjed tho*) composed in Tibetan by the twentieth century Mongolian abbot of sGo mang college of Drepung monastery, the late dGe bshes Ngag dbang nyi ma. *Collected Topics* is regularly studied in Dharamsala in the dGe lugs pa “School of Dialectics” (*mtshan nyid slob grwa*) and in Sarnath at the Central University for Tibetan Studies, as well as in some modern Sa skya pa institutions. In short, *Collected Topics* and its logic are alive and well in communities both within and outside Tibet. The examples I give below of reasonings from *Collected Topics* come essentially from *Yongs ‘dzin bsdus grwa*, *bSe bsdus grwa*, *Rwa stod bsdus grwa*, and *bsDus grwa brjed tho*, though sometimes considerably simplified. I also rely on some personal experience and observation of debate in the dGe lugs pa school.¹⁵

¹³ Onoda, 1996, 195.

¹⁴ See Onoda, 1996, 192-193; Hugon and Stoltz, 2019, 63, n. 58

¹⁵ A little personal note. I, like Shunzō Onoda, Stephen Batchelor, and other foreign students, had the very good fortune to study *bsdus grwa* and related Tshad ma texts in Switzerland with a number of teachers in the 1970’s and early 80’s, principally dGe bshes rTa mgrin rab brtan (Geshé Rabten), dGe bshes bKa’ dbyangs, and the Mongolian/Buryat dGe bshes Ngag dbang nyi ma, *inter alia*. Georges Dreyfus was also—and still is—a huge source of insider information on dGe lugs texts and debates. Debaters subscribe, in varying degrees, to a Tibetan proverb *mtshun na mkhas pa min* (“Only fools agree.” More literally, “If you agree, you’re not learned.”). Indeed, while most teachers aimed at having their students arrive at a kind of *determinatio* of the right answer, others were more playful deconstructionists and seemed to aim at doubt and the inquisitive spirit. Ngag dbang nyi ma was particularly impressive to me in this respect: he would debate both sides of any question calling his hapless pupil back (*rgya’u ‘dir shog*.

Finally, what does it mean to say that *Collected Topics* are “indigenously Tibetan,” “original,” or even “un-Indian?” The matter is somewhat complicated by the fact that the dGe lugs pa/dGa’ ldan pa regularly back-read the positions of *Collected Topics* onto Indian Pramāṇa texts; the originality of the dGe lugs/Phya ideas is thus often disguised or downplayed. Nonetheless, *Collected Topics* offers interesting and important developments that, as we shall see, are *not* found in India and need to be seen in their own rights. These indigenous developments often depend upon features of the Tibetan language that are significantly different from those of Sanskrit. They also reflect a different direction in logic. As we shall see in sections §§4-5 below, the debate logic of *Collected Topics* is much less oriented towards metaphysical and epistemological issues than is its would-be Indian ancestor, i.e., the Dharmakīrtian theory of Pramāṇa, to which *bsdus grwa* is somewhat misleadingly said to be the “magical key” (*‘phrul gyi lde’u mig*).

2. *The rules of the game*

Let us take up the recurring feature and probably major contribution of *Collected Topics*: the *thal-phyir* debate logic, i.e., the logic of consequences, or what Stcherbatsky called the “logic of sequence and reason.” As we have seen, the triple characterization—the key structure of Indian Buddhist logic—was fraught with problems of interpretation. Indeed, in fourteenth or fifteenth century dGe lugs pa philosophical texts, and certainly in the logic of the *Collected Topics*, the triple characterization became marginalized and figured relatively little in the working logic used

“Hey beard, come here!”) relentlessly, sometimes till exhaustion, at which point the dGe bshes would exclaim *da the tshom za* “Now you have the doubt.” The contrast between debate as a religious pedagogical tool, akin to memorization, and debate as inquiry, or even deconstruction, is brought out in fascinating autobiographical detail in Dreyfus 2003, chapter XII; Dreyfus contrasts a “right answer,” or religious, approach like that of Geshé Rabten with the emphasis on freewheeling inquiry of his teacher Gen Nyi ma (not the same individual as the Mongolian Ngag dbang nyi ma). See also Liberman 2004 for an ethnomethodological analysis of the practice of debate in the dGe lugs pa; Liberman 2008 on the role of sophistry in debate. My initial discovery of *Collected Topics* was in Dharamsala, India, with dGe bshes bKra shis dbang rgyal in the early 1970’s.

in discussions of philosophical issues.¹⁶ What takes its place is a tightly rule-guided game between opponents and proponents: a game of debate in the technical sense of game theory, one that has strategies, moves, winning and losing, and also recurring, embedded formal structures. The actual debates as found in *Collected Topics* or other texts using this debate logic had comparatively little role for the “truth-establishing” triply characterized reason and instead remained centered on the legitimacy of moves from one acceptance to another. Indeed, issues of truth and objective reality seem to have played a lesser (or at least very different) role than in the Indian texts or Tibetan Tshad ma literature dependent upon them. Questions of how things are in fact (or *really* are, etc.), or how they are irrespective of the moves sanctioned by the game, look out of place, almost as though one worried whether the bishop, in chess, *really* did move diagonally and was not just legitimately thought or said to do so.¹⁷

Debates in *Collected Topics* proceed from one acceptance (*khas len* = *abhyupagama*) to another via a regulated series of “consequences” (*thal gyur* = *prasaṅga*) and “replies” (*lan* = *parihāra*). A consequence is simply defined as *thal ngag su bkod pa* “what is presented as a statement that something follows [from something else],” or to put it conditionally, that “something would follow [from something else] (*thal ngag*).” The consequence, in short, need only state what *would* follow from what the opponent accepts, or what the opponent would have to consistently accept

¹⁶ More specifically, the novelty of the new debate logic can be seen in the relative unimportance it attaches to the use of the *sgrub ngag*, “statement of a proof,” which *does* involve a triply characterized reason establishing a true conclusion. The *sgrub ngag* (= *sādhanaṅkāya*) was, in later Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, a two membered reasoning along the lines of: “Whatever is produced is impermanent, like a vase. Now, sound is produced.” The conclusion “Sound is impermanent” is implied but not stated. The *sgrub ngag* may possibly have been used in some Tibetan debates in the eleventh to fifteenth centuries but figures very little in actual debates centered on *Collected Topics* or even in dGe lugs pa monastic textbooks (*vig cha*). It is, in effect, a holdover from the Dharmakīrtian *trairūpya* and inferences for others (*parārthānumāna*), playing only a comparatively minor role in actual Tibetan debates from at least the fifteenth century on. For Dharmakīrti’s development of a two-membered *parārthānumāna*, see Tillemans 2000, 30-32 and 36.

¹⁷ Cf. Tillemans 1999, 120, Krabbe 1982, 126-7 on debate logics and the difference between a debate approach and an ontological approach to logic.

given his or her position. Generally, the form common to all consequences in this indigenous Tibetan debate logic is:

“Take *A* as the subject (*chos can*); it follows (*thal*) that it is *B*, because (*phyir*) it is *C*.”

Such is the style of reasoning that was, and still is, used in the context of dGe lugs pa (and some Sa skya pa) monastic debates in Tibetan Buddhism, both in actual oral debates and in written records of them. It is the staple fare of *Collected Topics* and is then applied to the five major Indian texts (*poṭi lnga*) of the dGe lugs curriculum¹⁸ as well as to the commentaries and monastic textbooks (*yig cha*) upon them.

The contrast with the triply characterized reason is striking. While the latter, requires, *inter alia*, that *A* actually be qualified by *C*, and that all *C*'s be *B*'s—this is the requirement that the characteristics be “established/ascertained by *pramāṇas*”—a consequence's goodness (*thal 'gyur yang dag*) need not turn on key statements actually being true, but only on them being accepted by the opponent. Goodness is largely dependent on what is “established by positions” (*khas len pas grub pa* = **abhyupagamasiddha*) rather than on “establishment by *pramāṇas* (*tshad mas grub pa*),” as in the case of triply characterized reasons. More specifically, the consequence is a good one if the opponent cannot consistently maintain what she accepts and still reply (*lan 'debs mi nus pa*) in one of the three permitted manners.

- (a) *'dod* (= *iṣṭaḥ*). I agree that *A* is *B*.
- (b) *rtaḡs ma grub* (= *liṅgam asiddham*). The reason is not established. That is to say, in effect, I maintain that *A* is not *C*.
- (c) *khyab pa ma byung/ma khyab* (= *na vyāptiḥ*). The pervasion does not hold. That is to say, I maintain that it is not so that all *C*'s are *B*'s.¹⁹

¹⁸ The five texts are those of logic and epistemology (principally *Pramāṇavārttika* of Dharmakīrti), *Prajñāpāramitā* (i.e., *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* of Maitreya), *Madhyamaka* (i.e., *Madhyamakāvatāra* of Candrakīrti), *Vinaya* (i.e., *Vinayasūtra* of Guṇaprabha), and *Abhidharma* (i.e., *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasubandhu).

¹⁹ Sa skya Paṇḍita, in his *mKhas pa la 'jug pa'i sgo*, speaks of the position of “Tibetans” (*bod rnams*) that there are three ways and three ways only to reply to a consequence (*thal 'gyur la lan gsum*); he thus seems to attribute this position to Phya pa himself or Phya pa's followers in gSang phu sne'u thog. See Onoda 1992, 87 and 112, n. 35. Sa paṇ

Note that the latter two replies do not allow for an opponent being simply skeptical or in want of some further persuasive argumentation. If the opponent says that the reason is not established, this is interpreted to mean that she has the belief that the reason actually does *not* qualify the subject. It is similar for the pervasion. In short, the replies *rtaḡs ma grub* and *khyab pa ma byung* allow the proponent to infer that her opponent believes the opposite proposition, and then argue accordingly against that belief by presenting further consequences.

Also, an opponent's inability to reply (within a quite short time!) is not accepted as just slowness or prudence; it is, *de facto*, an admission that the consequence tells against one of the positions she holds, and it thus allows the proponent to reiterate the argument to probe which position the opponent will agree to abandon. If the opponent simply remains mute, she loses the debate. On the other hand, if the opponent *does* reply in one of the three permissible ways, then the debate will continue, and the proponent will have to argue to show that those replies lead to other consequences. This process continues until the opponent can not consistently reply and, on probing, will have to give up something: this is then a partial victory for the proponent who can then backtrack using that concession to bring about other consequences further undermining the opponent's position. Typically, the concession will become the reason in the new consequences. The debate will then proceed in this fashion until the opponent is forced to give up her "root position" (*rtsa ba'i dam bca'* = **mūlapratijñā*), i.e., the fundamental proposition that started the debate. At this point, of course, the proponent can claim complete victory and the debate ends.²⁰

split "no pervasion" into two, i.e., (a) the reason was "contradictory" (*'gal ba*) because it implied the opposite of the property and (2) the reason was "uncertain" (*ma nges pa*) because it neither implied the property nor its opposite. See Onoda 1992, 87-90. This is clearly borrowing from the Indian *hetuvidyā* classifications of bad reasons (*hetvābhāsa*) and transposing them onto consequences in debate logic. Indeed, Sa paṇ's goal here seems simply to discredit the Phya lugs as un-Indian. However, his quibble seems hardly a serious contribution to the discussion on logic. It is of no importance to the key idea of good consequences being those where the opponent cannot consistently reply, for it changes nothing whether the debater could have used one general term "no pervasion" or two varieties of "no pervasion." For other debates between the Sa lugs and Phya lugs on classifications of consequences, see Onoda 1992, 71-86.

²⁰ The proponent will punctuate her victory, by clapping her hands three times while say-

So much for the moves found abundantly in the texts. There are also moves and strategies that rarely figure in the texts but are often used in actual *Collected Topics* debates. One of them is to say *chos can skyon can* (“Faulty subject!”) when the subject term involves a double meaning or other trick. When a pervasion might normally hold but is taken in a deliberately ambiguous way or involves a patently sophistical special case, the reply can be ‘*dir ma khyab*’ “There would be no pervasion in *this* case!”²¹

A reply that is particularly ingenious—and worth exploring in some detail, as it seems to be largely unknown to Western tibetologists—goes by the exotic name “Knowable thing and crushed garlic!” (*shes bya sgog rdzog*). It does figure once in *Yongs ‘dzin bsdus grwa chung*,²² but without any explanation, as it is the kind of orally learned reply competent debaters know and use as a kind of shorthand for claiming that an argument commits a particular type of fallacy.²³ The reply *shes bya sgog rdzog* meant that one

ing *rtsa ba’i dam bca’ mtshar, mtshar, mtshar*—roughly translated as, “Shame, Shame, Shame for your root position, or “Your root position is finished, finished, finished,” if we understood the homophonic *tshar* instead of *mtshar*. The audience may also take up this clapping and even jeer loudly at the opponent.

²¹ For example, it is common to debate about the pervasion in the reasoning, “On the smoky hill, there is fire because there is smoke,” viz., “where there is smoke there is fire.” Smart, beginning debaters will then say that in the cigarette smoker’s mouth there must (absurdly) be fire because there is smoke. To this the reply is “There would be no pervasion in this case!” (‘*dir ma khyab*’), the point being that the place is too precisely specified: there is fire somewhere relatively near the smoke but not in the smoker’s mouth.

²² F. 25a ed. S. Onoda and T. Kelsang.

²³ We also find the phrase *shes bya sgog gtun ma* (“Knowable thing and garlic [ground by] pestle and mortar!”) being used—a search of the Buddhist Digital Resource Center site (www.tbrc.org) reveals that it occurs six times in the Tibetan texts in this collection. It figures, for example, in the *Thal ‘gyur gyi ‘phreng ba ngag gi dbang po’i rdo rje* of gSer mdog pañchen Śākyā mchog ldan (1428-1507), where this Sa skyā pa replies to an argument by saying “Moreover, this proof of pervasion is refuted by the reasoning concerning knowable thing(s) and garlic [ground by] pestle and mortar” (*gzhan yang khyab sgrub de shes bya sgog gtun ma’i rigs pas sun dbyung ba’i phyir /*). The search also reveals the variant *shes bya sgog rdung gi rigs pa* (“the reasoning concerning knowable thing(s) and mashed garlic”) in a text of the dGe lugs pa scholar Blo bzang dpal ldan (1881-1944). Finally, the term does occur in the *sGom sde tshig mdzod chen mo* (i.e., sGom sde lha ram pa 2013) but not in other dictionaries, to my knowledge at least. On p. 2798 we find the following: *shes bya sgog rdzog khyab log sgrog pa’i don*

thought an opponent's reasoning committed the same fallacy as in the following faulty argument:

shes bya chos can / khyod rdzog pa [or rdzog rgyu] yin par thal / sgog pa khyod yin pa gang zhig sgog pa rdzog pa [or rdzog rgyu] yin pa'i phyir /.

"Take as the subject *knowable thing*. It follows [absurdly] that it is crushed [or crushable], because garlic is one and garlic is crushed [i.e., crushable]."

Or a little less exactly:

"Take as the subject, *knowable thing*; it follows that it is crushable, because garlic is a knowable thing and garlic is crushable."

The debater knows that the reply to this reasoning must be: "There is no pervasion" (*khyab pa ma byung*), for obviously it is not so that when garlic is an instance of *x* and garlic is crushable then *x* itself must be crushable. If there were such an implication, you would have to agree that *knowable thing* itself is crushable.

Here, then, is the structure of the fallacious arguments that *shes bya sgog rdzog* supposedly encapsulates: *A* is *B*, because an instance of *A* is *B*. This is, in fact, an understandable and genuine fallacy, one that uncritical people, unfortunately, tend to commit quite frequently. For example:

"Humankind is evil, because the serial-killer Son of Sam is human and Son of Sam is evil."

Indeed, to put it another way, *shes bya sgog rdzog* is a common Tibetan way to claim that the opponent is pursuing bad inductive reasoning. True, the debate can continue to determine whether the opponent's reasoning really

yin / dper na shes bya rdzog rgyu yod par thal / sgog pa rdzog rgyu yod pa gang zhig sgog pa shes bya yin pa'i phyir zhes pa'i thal ba 'phen pa lta bu la shes bya sgog rdzog zer /. "'Knowable thing and crushed garlic' means that one proclaims the pervasion is wrong. For example, when the consequence is implied that it would follow [absurdly] that *knowable thing* would be crushable, because garlic is crushable and garlic is a knowable thing, then one says 'Knowable thing and crushed garlic!'"

is a case of bad inductive reasoning, as alleged. But what is striking for our purposes is that the usual Dharmakīrtian *metaphysical* and *epistemological* arguments in favour of natural connections (*svabhāvapratibandha*) existing in the real world and hence *against* establishing generalizations by merely not seeing a counterexample (*adarśanamātra*), will play no role whatsoever. In effect, those metaphysical and epistemological issues (“What exists in reality? What do we know?”) are either ignored or reformulated in terms of rule-guided moves, or set pieces, as when one claims *shes bya sgog rdzog*.²⁴ But questions about grounding for pervasions in reality are not germane, as such questions would in effect make a debater step back and appeal to what is so outside the debate, instead of following the rules wherever they take her. What there really is outside, or underlying, the rule-guided activity of debate seems to be largely irrelevant: Tibetan debate logic is a kind of formalism.

3. *Two sorts of consequences*

Consequences, in *Collected Topics*, are sometimes, but certainly not always, recognizable Indo-Tibetan forms of *reductio ad absurdum*, in which the consequence *B* follows from the reason *C* that the opponent accepts, but is in contradiction with the other positions of the opponent. Sometimes, but not always, the truth of the opposite proposition is then derived by an application of contraposition.

Thus, for example, suppose that a non-Buddhist Mīmāṃsaka, or someone like him, holds that sound/a word (*śabda* = *sgra*) is permanent, that it is produced from causes and conditions, but also accepts that whatever is produced is impermanent. To this individual, the Buddhist can give the following consequence:

(1) *sgra chos can / ma byas pa yin par thal / rtag pa yin pa'i phyir /*.

“Sound, the subject; it would follow that it is unproduced [from causes and conditions], because it is permanent.”

²⁴ I personally recall that when I was studying *bsdus grwa*, *shes bya sgog rdzog* was very often invoked. It was a potent “Gotcha!” move.

The Mīmāṃsaka opponent is then faced with a situation where each permitted reply entails abandoning a statement in which he himself believes, and so he cannot reply leaving all his Mīmāṃsaka philosophy intact. In that sense (1) is a “good consequence” for him.

In Tibet, as in India, one also speaks of a so-called “contraposition of the consequence” (*thal bzlog = prasaṅgaviparyaya*). The contraposition of the consequence in (1) provides a “proof” (*sgrub byed = sādhana*) as follows:

(2) *sgra chos can mi rtag pa yin te byas pa yin pa'i phyir /*.

“Sound, the subject, it is impermanent, because it is produced [from causes and conditions].”

The reason of the consequence in (1) is negated and becomes the property to be proved in (2); the property in (1) is negated and becomes the reason in (2). Crucially, in (2) the reason is indeed supposed to satisfy the three characteristics, so that the goodness of *that* reason is not just a matter of acceptance but of establishment via *pramāṇas*. That is why (2) is considered to be a *proof* and not just itself another consequence.

The type of consequences as exemplified by (1) are said to be “consequences that imply a proof” (*sgrub byed 'phen pa'i thal 'gyur*). What does “imply” (*'phen pa = *kṣipta*) mean here? This is clearly not just simple prediction that actual opponents will, *as a matter of fact*, come to understand and accept a proof after hearing a consequence showing a contradiction in their positions. In fact, in (1) we seem to be dealing with a type of *ideal* rational individual, a “proper opponent” (*phyi rgol yang dag*), who *knows* with a *pramāṇa* that sound is produced (or to put it more traditionally, he has a *pramāṇa* that refutes that sound is not produced) and knows that all products are impermanent; yet he still mistakenly believes that sound is permanent. In that case, this opponent will arrive at (2). In short, to say that a proof is “implied” presupposes that certain statements are not just accepted but are in fact known to be true, i.e., “established by *pramāṇas*” (*tshad mas grub pa*). Of course, the ideal individual who would know all these truths and still have the required mistaken belief is no doubt rare, but arguably that is not the point. The explanations in Indo-Tibetan *Pramāṇa* texts about consequences that imply proofs are best seen as normative discourse about what follows from what and about what moves rational people should make; it is not simply anthropology or sociology about how some or most people actually do think.

In India, many significant thinkers, such as Dharmakīrti and Bhāviveka, insisted that *prasaṅga* by itself is incomplete to establish truth and that there must be an implied proof, sometimes termed a *svatantrahetu* (*rang rgyud kyi gtan tshigs*) or “autonomous logical reason,” i.e., one that, as in the above example, satisfies the triple characteristic and is thus duly established by *pramāṇas*. It seems unclear to what degree this was a purely theoretical requirement, i.e., that the proof *can* be derived by a rational individual, and to what degree Indian debaters actually did make the contrapositions and arrive at proofs. In any case, in Tibetan *Collected Topics*, consequences are *in fact* rarely contraposed to yield proofs.

Some consequences *could*, of course, be contraposed by an ideal debater to yield a proof and triply characterized reason, although they simply were not. Others, however, *could not* be contraposed even ideally. Sometimes these are known as simply “refuting consequences” (*sun ‘byin pa’i thal ‘gyur* = **dūṣaṇaprasaṅga*), where a contradiction is derived from an ensemble of propositions, but where there *can* be no use of contraposition to arrive at a proof like in (2). For example:

(3) *sgra chos can / rtag pa yin par thal / mig shes kyi gzung bya yin pa’i phyir /*.

“Take sound as the subject; it follows that it would be permanent, because it is apprehended by visual consciousness.”

If (3) were contraposed, we would get the following bad reasoning:

(4) *sgra chos can / mig shes kyi gzung bya ma yin te / mi rtag pa yin pa’i phyir /*.

“Take sound as the subject; it is not apprehended by the visual consciousness, because it is impermanent.”

This is obviously not a triply characterized reason, because the pervasion does not hold. On the other hand, (3) can serve to discredit the debater’s position by deriving a proposition in contradiction with the ensemble of his beliefs and thus placing him in a position where he cannot consistently reply in one of the three manners. In that sense, he is refuted. Nonetheless, if he arrives at (4) he clearly has not ascertained the truth on the basis of a

good reason where the various characteristics were ascertained. At most, he was just lucky to arrive at a truth by means of a bad reason.²⁵

The “refuting consequence” is thus one type of consequence that does not imply a proof (*sgrub byed mi ‘phen pa’i thal ‘gyur*). It is not a *proof* of a specific statement by *reductio ad absurdum*, as in (1) and (2) or in famous Western uses of *reductio*, like the indirect proof of the irrationality of the square root of two. Although it can derive a consequence that is absurd for the opponent and proponent, it is being used as a sort of demolition of the adversary’s whole position: if it proves anything at all, at most, it proves that the conjunction of the propositions accepted by an opponent is not true. A natural interpretation of the logic of Candrakīrti was that he used such a type of *reductio ab absurdum* to refute the opponent’s position, i.e., he merely demonstrated that the *ensemble* of the opponent’s propositions was false, by its own internal inconsistency, but did not himself claim any individual propositions to be true or false and did not accept any derivation of *prasaṅgaviparyaya*.²⁶ This style of consequence was known by Phya pa, rNog lo tsā ba and other early writers on Tshad ma. It is part of what I have called “typical Prāsaṅgika” philosophy (Tillemans 2016, 51f.) It is, however, of relatively little importance in *Collected Topics*. Moreover, the dGe lugs pa do *not* characterize Candrakīrti’s logic in this way, either. While the dGe lugs pa recognize that some *other* Indo-Tibetan Mādhyamikas interpreted Candrakīrti as making no truth claims and only refuting opponents’ views, their own exegesis of his Prāsaṅgika philosophy is much more complicated and does allow that Candrakīrti made specific truth claims on many issues.²⁷

In fact, in *bsdus grwa* logic the vast majority of consequences that do not imply proofs are not like (3). Moreover, they seem to be distinctively unlike what we find in *any* Indian uses of *prasaṅga*. They are *not* an

²⁵ The usual technical term for believing in a truth on the basis of a reason like (4) is *rgyu mtshan ma nges pa’i yid dpyod* “a true presumption where the reason is uncertain.”

²⁶ See Tillemans 2016, chapter V. There it is described as “method B” in *reductio ad absurdum* reasoning. On Phya pa’s use of this refuting consequence, see Hugon 2013. It can be argued whether a merely refuting consequence should be called a “*reductio ad absurdum*” at all given that it is not an indirect proof. This is perhaps largely a matter of terminological choice. I have argued in Tillemans 2016 that both in the West and in India method B was a well attested type of reasoning from absurdity.

²⁷ See chapter V of this volume for Tsong kha pa’s view on Candrakīrti’s *prasaṅga* method.

indirect proof by *reductio ad absurdum* as in (1) nor are they a type of *reductio ad absurdum* qua demolition as in (3). Rather, the implied statement preceding *thal* will typically be thought to be true by Buddhists, even established by a *pramāṇa*, and thus not an absurdity at all from the point of view of the Buddhist proponent.²⁸

Here is the stock example. (Again the opponent is a Mīmāṃsaka-like thinker who believes that sound is produced, that all products are impermanent, but who does not accept that sound is impermanent):

(5) *sgra chos can / mi rtag pa yin par thal / byas pa yin pa'i phyir /*.

“Sound, the subject; it follows that it is impermanent, because it is produced.”

Our first reaction is probably going to be that this looks suspiciously like the stock example of a triply characterized reason. Of course, if we compare the second type of consequence with triply characterized reasons, the acceptance that the reason is established (i.e., that $(x) (Ax \rightarrow Cx)$) corresponds roughly to the *pakṣadharmatva* of the triply characterized reason. Similarly, the acceptance of the pervasion (i.e., $(x) (Cx \rightarrow Bx)$) corresponds to the second and third characteristics (i.e., *anvayavyāpti* and *vyatirekavyāpti*). However, a main difference is that the reason statement and pervasion statement need not be *known* to be true, only accepted or thought to be so by the opponent. The reason in this *prasāṅga* is thus not assessed by the same criteria of goodness as for a triply characterized reason. The consequence is, as usual, good if the opponent cannot make one of the three permissible replies while remaining consistent with his other acceptances. Truth, and reality, *pramāṇas*, and so forth are, strictly speaking, not crucial here.

²⁸ This type of consequence is, as far as I can see, a purely Tibetan invention, or if there were any cases of it in India, they are not clearly documented or discussed in the scholastic literature.

**4. *Why use consequences rather than triply characterized reasons?*
*The problem of nonexistent subject terms and āśrayāsiddha***

What difference would it make for Tibetan debaters to use a consequence like (5) rather than a corresponding triply characterized reason? First and foremost, and contrary to what the first characteristic of the *trairūpya* demands, the subject in a “consequence that does not imply a proof” need not exist at all, as it need not be established by a *pramāṇa*—we find numerous good consequences in *Collected Topics* that have as their subject a rabbit’s horn or a barren woman’s child. In Indian logic, by and large, it is a requirement that knowledge and good reasons be about existent things. And, not surprisingly, this is a requirement too in the context of triply characterized reasons. When subject terms do not exist, the reason incurs the fallacy of a “non-established locus” (*gzhi ma grub pa* = *āśrayāsiddha*)—the problem led to numerous philosophical debates between Indian Buddhists and Naiyāyikas. We will not, however, go into these issues in India nor into their extremely elaborate Tibetan developments; they have been taken up in some detail elsewhere.²⁹

Of course, the underlying intuition behind the Indian fallacy of *āśrayāsiddha*—viz., that an argument typically goes wrong when there is subject failure—is quite sound and is amply recognized East and West. One can make relevant comparisons with Western debates on Russell’s theory of descriptions, and on the question as to whether a nonexistent subject leads to the falsity of the statement, or instead to a presupposition failure, such as when a debate on Santa Claus’ would-be North Pole citizenship becomes moot when it is understood that there is no Santa Claus at all. In Indian Buddhist logic, the emphasis is undoubtedly on presupposition failure: arguments generally cease when the subject is shown to be nonexistent. A reason’s possession of the triple characterization presupposes that the subject be “commonly recognized by both parties” (*ubhayaprasiddha*); this requirement figures prominently in the works of Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and those of their Svātantrika-Mādhyamika followers, such as Bhāviveka, Śāntarakṣita, Kamalaśīla, *et al.*³⁰ As Dharmakīrti expresses it, if there *is* a

²⁹ See, for example, Tillemans and Lopez 1998, reprinted in Tillemans 1999.

³⁰ On the Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika debate, see Dreyfus and McClintock 2003. See also chapter V in Tillemans 2016.

debate about such and such a property, then *ipso facto* it is understood that the subject is commonly recognized.³¹

Interesting Indian examples of the problem of subject failure were the debates about the existence of pseudo-entities such as God (*īśvara*) or the Sāṃkhyas' Primordial Nature (*prakṛti*). The obvious conundrum is that such a debate would seem to be "short circuited" by the fallacy of *āśrayāsiddha* if the debate actually succeeded in proving the subject's nonexistence. Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and others devoted great efforts to avoiding such self-refutation.³² They would argue that the real subject was

³¹ See, e.g., *Pramāṇavārttika* IV.77: *vicāraprastūter eva prasiddhaḥ siddha āśrayaḥ / svecchākālpitabhedeṣu padārtheṣv avivādataḥ* // "Since there is actually an undertaking of an investigation [as to whether the property to be proved (*sādhya*) is present or not in the subject], then the locus (*āśraya*) is established as commonly recognized (*prasiddha*); for there would be no debate about things whose particularities are [just] imagined according to one's wishes." See Tillemans 2000, 108-109. Note, however, that this requirement for *ubhayaprasiddha* as it figures in k. 77 and elsewhere in *Pramāṇa* literature does not seem to be *simply* a *de facto* mutual agreement between the parties but also involves a normative aspect: not only is there a consensus that the subject exists, but people are, in some sense, right in having such a consensus. It looks like, for Dharmakīrti and many Tibetans, a highly religious society's consensus on the existence of God, for example, would not suffice to make God a genuinely commonly recognized entity. If that is right, the precondition for debate would actually be twofold: (1) consensus amongst the parties on the subject's existence; (2) the subject being in fact established by a *pramāṇa*.

³² In Tibet this problem of potential "short circuiting," or self refutation, in the case of nonexistent subjects was well known. Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan gives an amusing illustration of the exegetical predicaments that would arise if one could *not* use good reasons to prove anything about nonexistent things. *rNam 'grel spyi don* 78a: *mkhas pa kha cig / gzhi ma grub chos can du bzung ba'i bsgrub rtags yang dag yod de / skyes bu 'di chos can / sdug bsngal ba yin te / ri bong rwas phug pa'i phyir / zhes bkod pa'i tshe ri bong gi rwas phug pa chos can / skyes bu sdug bsngal bar bsgrub pa'i gtan tshigs ltar snang yin te / de sgrub kyi rtags su bkod pa gang zhig / de sgrub kyi phyogs chos ma yin pa'i phyir zhes bkod pa'i tshe / de sgrub kyi rtags su bkod pa gang zhig / de sgrub kyi phyogs chos ma yin pa de / ri bong rwas phug pa skyes bu sdug bsngal bar bsgrub pa'i rtags ltar snang du bsgrub pa'i rtags yang dag yin pa'i phyir /*. "A learned opponent might argue that there are good probative reasons for which an unestablished locus is stated as the subject. This is because of the following. Suppose someone says, 'Take as the subject, the man over here. He is suffering; because he has been gored by a rabbit's horn,' then one could argue, 'Take as the subject being gored by a rabbit's

not God, but the concept of God; or they would argue that nonexistence, being a non-implicative negation (*prasajyapratishedha*), a mere denial of entityhood, does not presuppose any existent real entity as subject. But while there is considerable ingenuity here, it has to be said that such debates are not easily pursued within the framework of the triply characterized reason. The later Indian scholastic writers, and Tibetans too, thus had to do some of their most subtle *apoha* philosophy of language to preserve the requirement that the subject exist.³³

Consequences show much greater flexibility than the triply characterized reason in that their goodness usually only demands that the opponent *thinks* that the subject exists. Thus, a proponent's personal conviction that the subject is not actually established by a *pramāṇa* may well have no impact on the debate: there is no strict need for mutual consensus, nor for establishment by a *pramāṇa*. The advantage that consequences have over triply characterized reasons, then, is that they allow debates about properties that have no existence-implication and thus can be predicated of nonexistent subjects. It becomes unproblematic, for example, for Buddhists to argue that a creator God does not exist: no talk of subsistent concepts, the theory of *apoha*, or purely non-implicative negation is needed. There is no need to worry that debates become moot when the presupposition of the subject's existence fails.

In many cases, *neither the opponent nor the proponent* thinks that the subject exists, but nonetheless it is quite possible to argue about its properties via a consequence. In the Tibetan *Collected Topics* we see that, in effect, some properties imply that the subject exists, but others do not.

horn; it is a bad reason for proving that the man is suffering, because it is given as a reason for proving that [he is suffering] and it is one that is not a property of the subject (*pakṣadharmā*) [i.e., being gored by a rabbit's horn is not property of the man]. When one says that, then 'being given as a reason and not being a property of the subject' is a good reason for proving that being gored by a rabbit's horn is a bad reason for proving that the man is suffering."

³³ Many of them did this by arguing that subjects like God, etc. at least *subsist* as concepts and are thus not completely nonexistent but not fully fledged existent entities in the external world, either. In short, they borrowed from their theory of concepts, their *apohavāda*, replacing God, etc., with double negative conceptual stand-ins, having no actualizations in the world. See Tillemans 1999, chapters VIII and XI; see also chapter III in this volume.

Let's borrow a term from Nino Cocchiarella 1968, and call these existence-implicating-properties "E-attributes" for short. For example, if one is arguing about a rabbit's horn being sharp, then sharpness, being an E-attribute, would necessitate that the rabbit's horn exists; a property like "being something expressed by the words that mention it" (*rang zhes brjod pa'i sgra'i brjod bya*), however, does not necessitate existence. In the case of E-attributes, statements are considered to be false when such an attribute is asserted of subjects that are nonexistent. However, *Collected Topics* has numerous reasonings concerning properties that are not E-attributes, and in those cases the statements may well be accepted to be true, in spite of the commonly recognized nonexistence of the subject. Thus, for example, if we have an argument about whether every item, existent or nonexistent, is expressed by words, then all existent and nonexistent things—including nonexistent but possible things, like a rabbit's horn, and even impossible items like a barren woman's child—can be the subjects without any danger of *āśrayāsiddha* or the debate rhetorically collapsing. None of this is easily handled with a triply characterized reason.

5. Pervasion in the Tibetan debate logic and in Dharmakīrti

As we saw earlier, the pervasion (all *C*'s are *B*'s) in Dharmakīrtian logic had to be grounded by a type of necessary relationship, i.e., a so-called natural connection (*svabhāvapratibandha*) between the terms *C* and *B*. Ontology is at the heart of the triply characterized reason. The Tibetan *bsdus grwa* logic of consequences, on the other hand, had a much simpler account of pervasion, that of a debate logic in which ontology played little role. Indeed, that debate logic probably would have made Dharmakīrti wince, as it comes uncomfortably close to Īśvarasena's *adarśanamātra* (merely not seeing a counterexample) method of establishing pervasion. Here are the details.

One of the rules of this debate logic is that if an opponent challenges a pervasion, by saying *khyab pa ma byung* "the pervasion doesn't hold," the proponent can say, "Give me a counterexample!" (*ma khyab pa'i mu zhog*), and if that counterexample is not forthcoming in a reasonable time, the proponent has the right to say that the pervasion does in fact hold. Necessary connections and ontological considerations play little role. What counts is not so much whether there *are* in fact or could be counterexamples, but what one can show in a relatively limited time. This

might seem to unpack as close to the accursed *adarśanamātra* method in that one asserts pervasion so long as the adversary hasn't (speedily) come up with a counterexample. But it could also be argued in defence of the Tibetans, that Dharmakīrti, in introducing grounding, raised the bar far too high and unnecessarily complicated a rather clear and easy matter of logic. *Collected Topics* elaborated the truth conditions for a universally quantified material implication, viz., that there is no x such that Cx and *not* Bx , but without the Dharmakīrtian epistemology and metaphysics that tended to obscure a purely logical account.

In short, Tibetan debate logic seems to have made a separation between the logical question of what pervasion *is* (viz., absence of counterexamples), the ontological question of what in reality grounds it (viz., natural connections), and the epistemological issue of what we need to know (viz., an example that instantiates both the reason and the property to be proved) if we are to be able to understand that there is a pervasion. These three issues need to be separated by clear thinkers and it is arguably no mean achievement to do so in the context of Buddhist logic.

6. Other formal aspects of the logic of consequences: quantification and variables

While consequences function in a context of debate with various permitted moves, there are clearly also significant formal features that can be extracted. In effect, the establishment of the reason and the pervasion means that the opponent accepts $(x) (Ax \rightarrow Cx)$ as well as $(x) (Cx \rightarrow Bx)$. The step to having to accept $(x)(Ax \rightarrow Bx)$ is uncontroversial: an opponent would be considered irrational and disqualified from the debate if he persisted in rejecting that uncontroversial formal implication.

What about the use of variables and quantification? The language used in Tibetan debate is a technical form of Tibetan, in which we find an extensive use of pronouns in a manner that is analogous to the use of variables in an artificial language. The parallel between pronouns and variables is to be seen, for example, in the Tibetan debate idiom's use of *khyod*, which ordinarily means "you" but is used technically here to stand for all types of items: anything from inanimate things to animals and other sentient beings, to even nonexistent things. It is used here much in the same way as English third person pronouns. The phrase *khyod khyod dang gcig yin*, literally "you are identical with you," thus can also be rendered

as “it is identical with itself,” or better, simply, “ x is identical with x .” Another variable-like word is *chos de* “that phenomenon,” typically used when *khyod* is already present and a second variable is needed, as in *khyod chos de'i rgyu yin*, literally, “you are the cause of that phenomenon,” but more accurately (though less literally), “ x is the cause of y .” When only one variable is at stake, *khyod* is optional and is often omitted. It is not optional when two variables are needed to express, say, a dyadic relation. For example, one can say:

(6) *sgra chos can, khyod mi rtag pa yin par thal...*

“Sound, the subject, it follows that you (*khyod*) are impermanent...”

Or simply:

(7) *sgra chos can, mi rtag pa yin par thal ...*

“Sound, the subject, it follows that it is impermanent...”

What work does specifying “the subject” (*chos can* = *dharmin*) do in the Tibetan logic of consequences? In other words, why use the rather long-winded “sound, the subject, it follows that you are impermanent,” thus setting the subject apart, rather than just simply saying “It follows that sound is impermanent”? It is, I would argue, a special type of quantification, what we can term, following J.A. Faris, “singular quantification.”³⁴ To see this more clearly, let us take an example of a reasoning with *khyod* being used as a variable.

(8) *bum pa chos can khyod khyod dang gcig yin par thal khyod yod pa'i phyir*

“The vase, the subject, it follows that you are identical to yourself, because you exist.”

Or:

“The vase, the subject, it follows that x is identical to x , because x exists.”

³⁴ See Faris 1968.

Note that if the opponent replies, “there is no pervasion” (*khyab pa ma byung*), the pervasion in question can be expressed as:

(9) *khyod yod pa yin na khyod khyod dang gcig yin pas khyab /.*

“If you exist then you are pervaded by being identical with yourself.”

Or:

“If x exists then x is pervaded by being identical with x .”

We can express (8) as a universally quantified material implication with x (*khyod*) functioning in a straightforward way as a variable bound by a universal quantifier that ranges over all items, existent or nonexistent. The quantification, in short, is without existential import so that “for all x ” means “for all existent or nonexistent items” and “for some x ” means “for some existent or nonexistent item.”³⁵ “Exists” will then be taken as a predicate and represented by “E!” As we see in (9), existence of x implies identity of x with itself. Thus, (9) is easily rendered in symbols where pervasion is a universal quantifier “for all x ” (without existential import) binding the variable x ; existence (*yod pa*) is simply treated as a predicate:

(x) (if $E!x$ then $x = x$)

“Subject” (*chos can*) also shows a type of quantifier binding the variable x (*khyod*). To see this, let’s back up and progressively reformulate a few English sentences:

Ollie loves Nicaragua.

Ollie is such that he loves Nicaragua.

Ollie, he is such that he loves Nicaragua.

We can see that the pronoun “he” in the last statement also works as a variable and that “Ollie,” in indicating the pronoun’s antecedent, is in effect binding that variable. Following Faris 1968, the *singular quantification* in this statement could be formalized as:

³⁵ See, e.g., Routley 1966.

(Ollie x) (x loves Nicaragua).

Read: “Of Ollie as x , it is so that x loves Nicaragua.”

This type of quantifier for singular statements can be integrated, as Faris shows, into the fabric of first order logic without any special problems. Granted, for the writers of a usual basic Western logic textbook, it might well be considered cumbersome and arguably wouldn’t do much that individual constants don’t already do. However, if we now turn to the Tibetan *Collected Topics*, it does have a significant role there. Sentence (8) becomes:

(the vase x) ($x = x$ because $E!x$)

Or:

(the vase x) (if $E!x$ then $x = x$)

Read: “Of the vase as x , if x exists then x is identical to x .”

Clearly the *khyod* or x in the statements (9) and in (8) are variables: what changes is only the quantifier; it changes from a universal quantifier to a singular quantifier. “Pervasion” (*khyab pa*) translates as a universal quantifier that binds the variable *khyod* or x ; “the subject” (*chos can*) translates as a singular quantifier binding the same variable.

7. The logic of consequences used like a logic of propositions

Interestingly, the correctness of paraphrasing or translating sentences in *Collected Topics* with singular or universal quantifiers is further corroborated by the fact that this quantification can also be redundant and fail to bind variables. Redundant quantification is a possibility in first order predicate calculus—one could have a well-formed formula like:

(x) (if Mickey loves Minnie, then Donald loves Melania).

But redundant quantification is usually of practically little interest. Not so in Tibet. Consider the following:

(10) *sgra mi rtag pa yin na sgra byas pa yin pas khyab /*.

“If sound is impermanent, then sound is pervaded by being a product.”

Or:

(x) (if sound is impermanent, then sound is a product)

And:

(11) *shes bya chos can sgra mi rtag pa yin par thal sgra byas pa yin pa'i phyir /.*

“Take *knowable thing* as the subject; it follows that sound is impermanent, because sound is a product.”

Or, in the singular quantification idiom:

(*knowable thing* x) (sound is impermanent, because sound is a product)

Or, in other words:

(*knowable thing* x) (if sound is a product then sound is impermanent)

In all of these statements, the quantification is redundant simply because there are no pronouns, i.e., variables, for it to bind. Tibetan debaters express this idea of a redundant subject/singular quantifier as a *chos can nus med*, i.e., a powerless subject, an ineffectual subject. These powerless subjects enable Tibetans to keep the form and wording of a typical consequence but do something more like propositional logic than predicate calculus. In fact, they had no separate means to reason about propositions, but adapted the trappings of their logic of consequences to this purpose. We saw earlier that a pervasion such as $(x)(Cx \rightarrow Bx)$ is true if and only if there is no x such that Cx and not Bx . Now, imagine a pervasion like $(x)(P \rightarrow Q)$ with a redundant universal quantifier. Here again the pervasion will be true if and only if there is no x such that P and not Q . The basic move, in debate terms, remains the same in both cases: the proponent says *ma khyab pa'i mu zhog*, “Give me a counterexample!” And when that counterexample is not forthcoming in a reasonable time, it is presumed to be nonexistent, and the statement is thus accepted as true, at least for the purposes of the debate. If, as in (10), both P and Q are true propositions with no pronouns/variables, then clearly no genuine counterexample can be given. In this fashion, Tibetan *Collected Topics*, in effect, allows for implications, negation, contraposition, and the like between complete propositions.

This somewhat roundabout logic of propositions is what Tibetan commentators will use in reformulating many reasonings in Indian texts, often using *shes bya chos can* “knowable thing *x*” as a powerless subject familiar to those who are versed in debate. A typical example of such a text is the dGe lugs pa word-commentary (*tshig 'grel*) written by dGe 'dun grub pa (1391-1474) on *Madhyamakāvatāra*, where Candrakīrti's first five chapters, concerning Buddhist ethics and religion, are often paraphrased in the form of reasonings having *shes bya chos can* followed by two complete propositions.³⁶ This type of paraphrase was partly for mnemonic and pedagogical purposes. It also, no doubt, provided some seeming argumentative rigor to what were largely faith-based assertions of the Buddhist religion.

8. Several types of pervasions and their interrelationships

Collected Topics elaborate logical relationships between propositions by introducing several different sorts of pervasion and then showing that a consequence in which a pervasion of, say, sort *S* holds must also be a consequence of which, say, sort *T* holds. The *rjes 'gro ldog khyab* lesson, in which these relationships are investigated, is, in spite of its name, significantly different from the usual Indian discussions of *anvayavyāpti* and *vyatirekavyāpti* and may well stem from Phya pa himself.³⁷ Thus, for example, in the usual sound-impermanent-product consequence in (5), the “main pervasion by co-presence” (*rjes khyab rnal ma*) is the familiar:

(x) (if *x* is a product then *x* is impermanent)

³⁶ I.e., his *dBu ma la 'jug pa'i bstan bcos kyi dgongs pa rab tu gsal ba'i me long*. Included in the *Collected Works of the First Dalai Lama dGe 'dun grub pa*, Vol. 3. Reproduced from prints from 'Bras spungs dga' ldan pho brang conserved in the library of the Venerable Dar mdo Rin po che of Kalimpong, India. Gangtok, Sikkim, 1981. Available at tbrc.org/#!/rid=W759.

³⁷ See Onoda 1983, 437. In these sorts of discussions about pervasions, *Collected Topics* regularly presents the *prasaṅga* without any subject (*chos can*), i.e., a so-called *rtags gsal dang bcas pa'i i thal 'gyur*, a “consequence that [only] has a reason (*rtags*) and the implied property (*gsal ba*),” as in *rtag pa yin par thal mtshon bya yin pa'i phyir* “It follows that *x* is permanent, because *x* can be defined.” See *Yongs 'dzin bsdu grwa 'bring* (ed. Kelsang and Onoda), f. 25b *et seq.*

The main pervasion by co-absence (*ldog khyab rnal ma*) is:

(x) (if x is not impermanent then x is not a product)

The first type pervasion is recognized to hold if and only if the second type of pervasion holds, whatever be the terms for the antecedent or the consequent.

There are other pervasions too, most seemingly unknown in the Indian literature. For example, *bsdus grwa* speaks of the “downward pervasion” (*thur khyab*), where the property to be proved is pervaded by the reason, and the “opposite pervasion” (*‘gal khyab*), where the reason is pervaded by the negation of the property to be proved. Indeed, there are usually said to be eight such pervasions, four main (*khyab pa rnal ma bzhi*) and four negated (*khyab pa phyin ci log bzhi*); the former are those where the terms are taken as they are and not negated; the latter are those where the antecedent is left as is but the consequent is negated. If we again take *C* as the reason and *B* as the property to be proved in the consequence, then the usual “eight doors of pervasion of a consequence” (*thal ‘gyur khyab pa sgo brgyad*), as explained in *Yongs ‘dzin bsdus grwa* or *bSe bsdus grwa*,³⁸ can be represented as follows:

The main pervasion by co-presence (*rjes khyab rnal ma*): (x)(Cx → Bx)

The main pervasion by co-absence (*ldog khyab rnal ma*):

(x)(¬Bx → ¬Cx)

The main downward pervasion (*thur khyab rnal ma*): (x)(Bx → Cx)

The main opposite pervasion (*‘gal khyab rnal ma*): (x)(Cx → ¬Bx)

The negated pervasion by co-presence (*rjes khyab phyin ci log*):

(x)(Cx → ¬Bx)

The negated pervasion by co-absence (*ldog khyab phyin ci log*):

(x)(¬Bx → ¬¬Cx)

The negated downward pervasion (*thur khyab phyin ci log*):

(x)(Bx → ¬Cx)

³⁸ See *Yongs ‘dzin bsdus grwa bring* (ed. Kelsang and Onoda) folio 25b *et seq.*, *bSe bsdus grwa* 233 *et seq.*

The negated opposite pervasion (‘*gal khyab phyin ci log*):
 $(x)(Cx \rightarrow \neg \neg Bx)$

As Onoda 1992, 99-100 points out, ‘Jam dbyangs bzhad pa (1648-1772) added a third group to these two, with the somewhat mysterious name *kha bub* or *kha sbub* “face down,” “upended,” “upside down,” which we could perhaps render as “inverted.”³⁹ If we take the usual four pervasions, their inverted versions negate both the antecedent and the consequent in the corresponding main pervasions. Thus:

The inverted pervasion by co-presence (*rjes khyab kha bub*):
 $(x)(\neg Cx \rightarrow \neg Bx)$

The inverted pervasion by co-absence (*ldog khyab kha bub*):
 $(x)(\neg \neg Bx \rightarrow \neg \neg Cx)$

The inverted downward pervasion (*thur khyab kha bub*):
 $(x)(\neg Bx \rightarrow \neg Cx)$

The inverted opposite pervasion (‘*gal khyab kha bub*) :
 $(x)(\neg Cx \rightarrow \neg \neg Bx)$

A recurrent exercise in *bsdus grwa* is to see which ones are equivalent and which are exclusive. This is formulated in terms of debates about consequences that satisfy various numbers of pervasions. Thus, for example, it can be argued that any consequence in which the main pervasion by co-presence is satisfied is also one where the negated opposite pervasion will be satisfied. (N.B. the law of double negation elimination is recognized!) Or it can be debated whether there are consequences that satisfy such and such a number of pervasions. For our purposes, we cannot enter into the details here.⁴⁰ Suffice it to say that these are fairly sophisticated twelfth century exercises in formal relations between propositions—the relations hold completely independently of the propositional content. Nothing along the line of these twelve pervasions seems to be found in Indian *Pramāṇa*.

³⁹ Cf. Blo mthun bSam gtan *et al.* 1979 (*Dag yig bsar bsgrigs*) s.v. *kha sbub*: *mdun nam kha sa ngos la gtad pa'i don te, dkar yol kha sbub, byis pa kha sbub tu nyal lta bu* /. “It has the meaning of something turned on its front or on its face, as for example a cup that is upended/turned face down, or a child sleeping face down.”

⁴⁰ Onoda 1992, 100-106 goes into the details.

The only formal discussion in Indian Pramāṇa that might be comparable would be the nine types of reasons in Dignāga's *Hetucakra*.⁴¹

9. *Ex falso sequitur quodlibet*

A crucial feature of classical material implication, like “If *P* then *Q*,” is that the truth conditions are specified so that the whole implication is false only if *P* is true and *Q* is false—on any other assignment of truth-values to *P* and to *Q*, the material implication is true. The result is, of course, that the falsity of *P* guarantees the truth of “If *P* then *Q*.” In other words, the falsity of the antecedent is a sufficient condition for the truth of the whole conditional, i.e., the material implication. *Collected Topics* explicitly recognizes that when the so-called *khyab bya* (= *vyāpya*, i.e., property that is pervaded) has no instances, then the whole pervasion (*khyab pa* = *vyāpti*) will be established—in less literal terms, the falsity of the antecedent in the implication will imply the truth of the whole conditional.

Moreover, *Collected Topics* lucidly and explicitly recognizes that when the antecedent (i.e., the pervaded, *khyab bya* = *vyāpya*) is false, or more exactly instanceless, the pervasion will hold *whatever the consequent* (i.e., the pervader, *khyab byed* = *vyāpaka*) *may be*. This is a logical principle that mirrors the Medieval logician's maxim that *ex falso sequitur quodlibet* (whatever you wish follows from a falsity). It is even slightly eerie how well the Latin *sequitur quodlibet* (whatever you wish follows) corresponds to the Tibetan phrase used in these contexts, viz., *gang dren dren yin pas khyab* (“*x* is pervaded by whatever you might think of”). Thus, for example:

(12) *ri bong rwa yin na gang dren dren yin pas khyab /*.

“If something is a rabbit's horn it is pervaded by whatever you might think of.”

Thus, e.g., it is true that:

(13) *ri bong rwa yin na ru bal skra yin pas khyab /*.

“If something is a rabbit's horn then it is pervaded by being the hairs of a turtle.”

⁴¹ See Chi 1969.

Or:

(x) (if x is a rabbit's horn, then x is the hair of a turtle).

Once again, in debate terms, if the truth of (13) is challenged, then the command is always *ma khyab pa'i mu zhog*, "Give me a counterexample!" That counterexample will not be forthcoming simply because there is no rabbit's horn, or in other words, because the property that is pervaded (*khyab bya*) has no instances. The fact that the pervaded (*khyab bya* = *vyāpya*) is always instanceless ensures that the pervasion will be established whatever the pervader (*khyab byed* = *vyāpaka*) might be.

To my knowledge, there is no recognition of *ex falso sequitur quodlibet* in Indian Buddhist logic, probably because, in philosophies like that of Dharmakīrti, the pervasion needed existent terms that would bear a natural connection (*svabhāvapratibandha*) in reality. A pervasion also needs examples (*drṣṭānta*), on the basis of which it could be *understood* to hold through a source of knowledge—the metaphysical and epistemological orientation is preponderant. In Tibetan debate logic texts, by contrast, talk of *ex falso sequitur quodlibet* occurs quite frequently, probably because these Tibetans dealt essentially with the logical features of material implication and left the rest of the Dharmakīrtian baggage aside.

10. Modal logic? No thank you

A question naturally comes up when someone is first confronted with statements like (12) and (13), viz., is there any awareness of modal distinctions in *bsdus grwa*, or, for that matter, in Tshad ma or Indian Buddhist Pramāṇa? The confusion is probably exacerbated by the fact that it is very frequent, in modern Buddhist Studies discussions of Indian and Tibetan thinkers, to speak of "necessity," "necessary connections," etc., especially when discussing the natural connections (*svabhāvapratibandha*) underlying pervasion in Dharmakīrti's logic. The temptation is, thus, great to think that pervasion between *C* and *B* would unpack in terms of modal logic's necessity operator, i.e., $N(x)(Cx \rightarrow Bx)$ "Necessarily, for all *x*, if *x* is *C* then *x* is *B*."

Ex falso sequitur quodlibet is differentiated, in Medieval logic, between cases of contingent and necessary falsity. And indeed, the falsity of the antecedent in (12) and (13) is not a necessary falsity (i.e., in all possible worlds)—a modal logician would be quick to point out that many exotic

possible worlds are populated by horned rabbits, hairy turtles, and the like. Here then is a more precise formulation of the issue at hand: would a modal logician's differentiation between possibility and necessity explain any distinctions that Indo-Tibetan logicians themselves make? I think that the answer is "No."

Let us look at how contingent nonexistence and necessary nonexistence are handled. First, of course, nothing stops a Tibetan from changing a statement like (12) about horned rabbits to a statement in which the pervaded term (*khyab bya*) is not just instanceless but contradictory:

(14) *mo gsham gyi bu yin na gang dren dren yin pas khyab /*.

"If someone were a barren woman's son, he would be pervaded by being anything one can think of."

Indeed, there are several Indo-Tibetan stock examples of nonexistent things, of which we would say that some happen to be nonexistent and others must necessarily be nonexistent—we would say that the rabbit's horn (*śaśaviṣāṇa* = *ri bong rwa*) is a case of the former and that the barren woman's son (*vandhyāputra* = *mo gsham gyi bu*) is a case of the latter. Strikingly, however, that difference between contingent and necessary nonexistence, so important to a modal logician, does not seem to have been considered significant at all and, in any case, is not explicitly discussed in *Collected Topics* and Tshad ma generally. There simply seems to be no interest in, or even awareness of, modal logical distinctions in Tibetan *Collected Topics*, or in other Tibetan Tshad ma literature. Also, to be slightly more provocative, it looks like there is no Indian Buddhist modal logic, either. While Indo-Tibetan Buddhists would, if pushed, I suppose, recognize that the rabbit's horn *could* somehow have existed, or could be a feature of a fantastic imaginary world, that possibility is hardly germane in their logic: truth and falsity, existence and nonexistence are of this world alone.

It might perhaps be thought that the rabbit's horn we imagine would nonetheless be said by Tibetans to be a rabbit's horn and that some of those horns might even be sharp in the appropriate possible worlds!⁴² If that were so, then the modern writer on a quest for modal logic in Tshad

⁴² On reasoning about being gored by a rabbit's horn (*ri bong rwas phug pa*), see n. 32.

ma could claim that predication and truth are not just of this world for *bsdus grwa* adepts. But no: being a horn, whether of a rabbit or of a deer, and being sharp are existence implying properties, E-attributes. Thus, an imagined horn is not a horn at all, nor is it sharp, because it does not exist. The point, of course, is that it does not exist in this world, the only world with which *bsdus grwa* logicians have any truck.

Turning to Indian Pramāṇa, even when terms *C* and *B* have a so-called natural connection (*svabhāvapratibandha*) of causality or “same nature,” that is best interpreted to mean that *C* and *B* are instantiated in this world, and that one can be *sure* that in this world there are no *C*’s that are not *B*’s. It does not seem to be the modal version that there are no *C*’s that are not *B*’s in any possible world.⁴³ As we saw earlier in discussing consequences and *āśrayāsiddha*, Tibetan *bsdus grwa* logicians certainly had very few problems in reasoning about nonexistent things—fewer problems than their Indian Buddhist counterparts—but that does not mean that they were at ease with modal notions or existence in possible worlds. On this both Indian and Tibetan Pramāṇa specialists would agree: when things are existent or nonexistent, they are so in the real world. The real world is certainly strange, with its trichiliocosms of universe systems, but existence or nonexistence anywhere “else” would be seen as incomprehensible.

11. *Semantic problems: count nouns, mass nouns, and translatability*

I close on a larger matter for reflection: what are the prospects for *engagement* with Tibetan thinking about logic? What are the prospects for engagement with Tibetans on philosophical issues of common interest when their discussions of the issues are couched in the concepts and formal structures of *bsdus grwa*? Formal structures in *bsdus grwa* logic are quite clear and can be readily explained; as we have tried to show, they can be translated into philosophical English and analyzed, sometimes with the aid of symbolic logic. There is, if one is careful, little risk that one is creating distortions or misunderstandings by using Western notions to explain them or by translating relevant passages into a Western language.

Semantical issues, by contrast, are often obscure. Discussions of them in Tibetan resist translation, and engagement with Tibetan philosophy is

⁴³ See Tillemans 2020, section 1.4.

thus not easy when these semantical issues come to the fore. I would argue strongly that the problem is not due to an *inherent* incommensurability of Tibetan with English or European languages, or due to some sort of generalized thesis of linguistic relativism à la Benjamin Lee Whorf. It is, rather, a problem of the intelligibility of many Tibetan philosophical debates when sophisticated and clear-headed Tibetan thinkers exploit possibilities offered by their language that are hardly offered by most European languages. More precisely, the difficulty is in the *philosophical* uses of Tibetan count and mass nouns and the odd questions of interpretation that arise. Those difficulties are acute in indigenous Tibetan Buddhist texts on Tshad ma, especially those of the dGe lugs school, and in the many other sorts of Tibetan philosophical texts that in one way or another rely on them.⁴⁴

We begin with some general considerations. The difference between count nouns and mass nouns is usually first approached as a difference in word classes recognizable in terms of syntax: the former are words like “table” that can take numerals, vary in singular and plural, be qualified by adjectives like “many,” and have other such morphosyntactic tags, while the latter are words like “water” that don’t take numerals, don’t vary in grammatical number, take adjectives like “much,” etc., etc. Some of us might like to think that there is a semantic and even corresponding ontological distinction. It might be thought that words that refer to things have clear boundaries of individuation while those that refer to stuffs don’t have such boundaries—this too is supposedly captured by count-mass noun distinctions.

None of these criteria, even in their more sophisticated elaborations, seem to be watertight across languages. Precision falters for many reasons. Some Asian languages, like Chinese and Tibetan, arguably, have count-mass distinctions but without many of the usual morphosyntactic tags. As for the thing-stuff distinction, it even becomes problematic with common English mass nouns like “furniture,” where obviously each piece of furniture is a thing and not an amorphous stuff like water. And crucially the idea of neat word classes in one language or across languages fails. In many languages there are uses of nouns as count or mass in different

⁴⁴ What follows is a modified version of Tillemans 2015, a paper published in Arindam Chakrabarti and Ralph Weber (eds.), *Comparative Philosophy without Borders*.

contexts (“Waiter, three coffees please!” “Coffee spilt all over her new carpet.” “She heard several loud sounds.” “Sound is everywhere.”). In some languages, like Chinese, any noun can be used as a mass noun (see Robins 2000), while in other languages specific nouns may not exhibit that same variability of use at all. Finally, what is count in one language may be mass in another (the French count noun “bagage” has a corresponding English mass noun “luggage”), so that clear classes across languages prove to be impossible. Probably the most adequate approach for our purposes is a semantic one turning on uses and functions rather than word classes: nouns are used as count nouns in a specific language when they divide their reference into distinguishable and countable objects; they are used as mass nouns when they do not.

Are mass and count noun distinctions in source languages important when one translates Buddhist texts into English? Let me begin with a commonly cited position that I think is *not* an answer to that question for translators of Sino-Tibetan languages. This is the view that there simply is no distinction at all between mass and count nouns in these Asian languages and that there are hence only the “impositions” of translators—the formulation is that of the philosopher W.V. Quine 1968 in his work on indeterminacy of translation and ontological relativity.⁴⁵ Indeed, Quine had famously suggested that Chinese and Japanese were arbitrary in precisely this way. He made much of the fact that classifiers (= Chinese *liang ci* 量詞) are used with all common nouns and that it is therefor impossible to decide whether a phrase like *yi tou niu* 一頭牛 should be translated as “one cow” or “one head of cattle” (cf. Quine 1968, 191-193). As he said bluntly: “Between the two accounts of Japanese [*scilicet* Chinese] classifiers there is no question of right and wrong” (Quine 1968, 193).

This is hard to defend as a description of actual language usage. Sinologists muster ample textual data that show that there are mass and count nouns in Chinese. They may have differences on how that mass-count distinction unpacks in particular periods, whether it needs to be

⁴⁵ Quine 1960 is the classic source for the thesis of indeterminacy of translation—viz., that there could be mutually incompatible, but equally adequate, translations of nouns in a source language—which has probably made more of a splash in sinological circles than in Tibetan studies. Hansen 1983, 140-141, 188, for example, mentions it approvingly in connection with his mass-noun hypothesis for Chinese. Cf. also Harbsmeier 1998, 311.

supplemented, whether mass nouns predominate, etc., but the very applicability of a mass versus count noun distinction to Chinese or Japanese is hardly in question.⁴⁶ The obscurity of some classifiers is not generalizable to all uses of nouns. First, in modern Chinese, as Lisa Lai-Shen Cheng and Rint Sybesma 1998 have carefully shown relying on data of grammatical and ungrammatical sentences, we *can* make a difference between count-classifiers and mass-classifiers, or massifiers. For example, *ge* (unit) works differently from *wan* (bowl) in that it names a unit of measure, whereas *wan* creates one; this in turn is reflected in data concerning the grammatical acceptability of the uses of *de* (of), adjectival phrases, demonstratives, and other phenomena. Quine and others made the mistake of seeing the absence of marking such as singularity and plurality in the nouns as particularly important and treated classifiers as equal in deciding count-mass status. Well, they aren't equal. It is with the types of classifiers-massifiers and related syntactic and grammatical data that we can empirically distinguish between noun phrases that refer, or are used to refer, to discrete, countable units and those that don't. Moreover, in modern Chinese, there is evidence that children learn the difference between sortal and mensural classifiers and that this difference in types of classifiers more or less mirrors the count-mass distinction.⁴⁷

Classifiers are often not used in classical Chinese. But *yi niu* 一牛 (one cow) seems, rather uncontroversially, a count noun usage. In short, taking a straightforward linguistic perspective, one could say that *you niu* 有牛 (literally, "There exists *cow*") is a mass noun usage of "cow" and *yi niu* 一牛 (one cow) is a count noun. Such a version of mass and count noun usage is not just restricted to Chinese. It is largely mirrored in Tibetan. Although Tibetan does not use classifiers, neither in the modern nor in the classical language, it is fair to say that *ba lang yod* ("Cow exists." "There

⁴⁶ See, for example, Robins 2000 and Fraser 2007. Harbsmeier 1998, 313-321 divides Chinese nouns into count, mass, and generic and gives rules for when they are to be taken in one or in another fashion. Note too that the strong mass-noun hypothesis for Chinese in Hansen 1983, if right, would have to be taken as opposed to Quine 1968, as it would maintain that Chinese *is* a mass-noun language that does talk of mass stuffs, i.e., horsey stuffs, rabbit stuffs, and the like. In fact, I think, Cheng and Sybesma 1998 would also show that it is not right either. For the data on classifiers in four varieties of Chinese, see Cheng and Sybesma 2005.

⁴⁷ See Li and Cheung (2016).

exists *cow*.”) is a mass noun usage and *ba lang gcig* (one cow) is a count noun usage, and so on in general for common nouns in Tibetan, be it *rta* (horse), *khang pa* (house), *mi* (people), *mo ta* (car), and so forth. We will return to parallels between Tibetan and Chinese in more detail later.

Interestingly enough, however, Quine didn’t adopt a straightforward linguistic perspective about speakers’ usage of nouns in Asian languages. Instead, he seductively combined the linguistic/philological problems in describing usage of nouns in particular languages with the philosophical issues that arise in interpreting a type of deep reference in *any* language. His philosophical point was that we cannot *really* determine the *sorts of entities people talk about* (in Chinese or any other language) among equivalent possibilities, be it individual oxen versus heads of cattle, particular instances of properties versus distributions of a stuff or fusion (horses versus discontinuous distributions of horsey stuff or the fusion of all horses) or even mathematical expressions versus their corresponding Gödel numbers. The type of entities really referred to, or in other terms “the inherent ontology of the language,” is inscrutable. Now, this is a different issue from the question as to whether a given language just simply has count and mass noun usage that pick out discrete individuals or not. One could very well say that there are determinate answers about the existence of mass and count nouns in many languages and that *yi niu*, *ba lang gcig*, and the like are naturally and rightly translated as “one cow,” but also say that the sort of entities the mass or count nouns *really* refer to remains indeterminate and inscrutable. In other words, it is the *ontology* of the language, the real reference, that remains inscrutable. Indeed, *that*, as we shall see, is a point of view one can defend using an argument from Donald Davidson, not just with regard to Asian languages like Chinese and Tibetan, but across the board.

Let us grant that there are count nouns and mass nouns in Sino-Tibetan languages and that reading a Tibetan or Chinese sentence as having mass or count nouns is not just an arbitrary imposition of the European translator. Let us also grant that Sino-Tibetan languages use mass nouns much much more frequently than European languages do, but that European translators are generally unfazed and adopt strategies of reformulation. (We’ll see the details of these strategies below.) That much should be a non-issue. What *is*, however, a genuine issue for translators and philosophers is whether there are, at least sometimes, uses of mass nouns in the Asian source languages that *preclude* any adequate translation or reformulation in a

European language. Are there such uses that are more than quirks and that a translator of Buddhist texts fundamentally cannot translate, reformulate, nor perhaps even satisfactorily paraphrase? In what follows, I'll frame the problems largely in terms of translation into English, but one can, no doubt, make the same arguments for other European languages.

Nowhere, in my opinion, is *that* issue of translatability more urgent than in the indigenous Tibetan Buddhist literature of *bsdus grwa* (Collected Topics). In what follows, we will look at the details and the antecedents in Tsong kha pa and rGyal tshab rje for the translational problems found in *bsdus grwa*.⁴⁸ And *bsdus grwa* semantic problems don't just remain in *bsdus grwa* texts: as argued in Tillemans 1999, they spread to indigenous commentaries on Pramāṇa, Abhidharma, and Madhyamaka that use *bsdus grwa* notions; they make various philosophical debates notoriously hard to translate into acceptable English. The issue of intelligibility is thus a larger one: it is *not* just the issue of understanding and engaging with the corpus of books that bear the title *bsdus grwa*.

What are these seemingly intractable semantic issues? Puns and equivocations in Tibetan—and *Collected Topics* is certainly rich with them—are *not* intractable issues, nor are the many syntactic tricks in *Collected Topics* that involve plays on Tibetan grammatical cases, such as the genitive used in relative clauses. Unpacking puns and exposing syntactic sleight of hand may be more or less laborious, but in the end, there is nothing that cannot be rendered adequately. The problems that interest us turn on a peculiar use of mass nouns. These semantic issues will be my focus here as they pose problems for which we have no solution now nor in the easily foreseeable future. They are very different from the many *bsdus grwa* brainteasers that turn on double meanings and devious syntax.

The problem is the following. Subject terms (*chos can*) in Tibetan *Collected Topics* arguments, like *vase* (*bum pa*), *tree* (*shing*), *knowable thing* (*shes bya*), *non-red* (*dmar po ma yin pa*), *good reason* (*rtags yang dag*), and many others are often not translatable by the count nouns they would seem to require in a Western target language—"a vase," "some/

⁴⁸ Note that our discussion builds upon and to some degree presupposes Tillemans 1999, chapter X, "On the so-called Difficult Point of the Apoha Theory." Many of the supporting explanations and detailed translations from Tibetan works can be found there and will not be repeated here.

all vases,” “this vase,” “some/all/a/the good reason,” “some/all/a/one/the knowable thing,” “some/all/a/one non-red thing,” and so on. Such count noun translations would not preserve truth. Two examples will have to suffice. Here and in what follows I’ve put the grammatically problematic English terms in italics:

(15) “*Non-red (dmar po ma yin pa)* is permanent, because there are common bases between *permanent* and it (*khyod dang rtag pa’i gzhi mthun yod pa’i phyir*).”

Comment: The same example can be constructed with *knowable thing*, *good reason*, and many other entities; the reason is a usual one in *bsdus grwa* to prove that something is permanent. The point of “*Y* having a common basis with *X*” is that there are cases of *Y* which are also cases of *X*. There are non-red things that are permanent, such as, for example, space (*nam mkha’ = ākāśa*).⁴⁹

(16) “*Defining characteristic (mtshan nyid = lakṣaṇa)* [of anything] is not a defining characteristic (*mtshan nyid mtshan nyid ma yin*), because it has a defining characteristic and is thus a definiendum (*mtshon bya = lakṣya*).”⁵⁰

Comment: *Defining characteristic* itself is defined as *what satisfies the three criteria for a substantial property (rdzas yod chos gsum tshang ba)* and is thus itself something that can be defined, i.e., a *mtshon bya*.

Here, in more detail, is the problem in translating (15) and (16) if we use available English renderings involving “all,” “some,” “a,” and “the/this.”

⁴⁹ See e.g., *bsDus grwa brjed tho*, p. 5: *dmar po ma yin pa chos can / rtag pa yin par thal / khyod dang rtag pa’i gzhi mthun yod pa’i phyir* /. “Take *non-red* as the subject; it follows that it is permanent, because there is a common basis between *permanent* and it.” Cf. *Rwa stod bsdus grwa* p. 116: *ma byas pa chos can / der thal / rtag pa yin na / khyod dang rtag pa’i gzhi mthun yod pa’i phyir* /. “Take *non-produced* as the subject; it follows that there is a common basis between permanent and it, because if anything is permanent, then there is a common basis between it and *permanent*.”

⁵⁰ See e.g., *Yongs ‘dzin bsdus grwa (chung)* f. 9b: *ngos po’i mtshan nyid chos can / mtshan nyid ma yin par thal / mtshon bya yin pa’i phyir* /. “Take *defining characteristic of entity* as the subject; it follows that it is not a defining characteristic, because it is a definiendum [i.e., something to be defined].”

Sentences like (15) will be false in the philosophy of *Collected Topics* when *dmār po ma yin pa* or *shes bya* are rendered as “all non-red things” or “all knowable things,” just as (16) is also false if one renders *mtshan nyid* as “all defining characteristics.” A sentence like (15) becomes trivially true if we render *dmār po ma yin pa* or *shes bya* as “some non-red things,” “some knowable things,” “a non-red/knowable thing,” and it is perhaps true when rendered as “the or this non-red/knowable thing.” In fact, in *Collected Topics*, (15) is *not* a trivial truth or just a possible truth: it is held *to be* true, but non-obvious and needing justification—hence the reason about common bases.

What is more dramatic for translation than (15) is (16): it becomes false if *mtshan nyid* is taken as “some” or “all” defining characteristics or even “a/the/this defining characteristic.” These renderings would all be false, because *Collected Topics* holds that every defining characteristic is indeed a defining characteristic: to say that some, all, or the/a, defining characteristics are not defining characteristics would lead to howls of derision—it would be said to be absurd (*ha cang thal* = *atiprasaṅga*) because of being a flat-out contradiction.⁵¹ If we use a generic “the” we get no further, as “the defining characteristic is not a defining characteristic” remains false, and indeed it is not at all clear that the generic knowable thing would be permanent for an adept of *bsdus grwa*.

Finally, one cannot say that subject terms in Tibetan are actually veiled uses of an abstract term, as if we should simply translate *bum pa* by “vaseness” and *shes bya* by “knowable thingness,” much as if it were the Tibetan *bum pa nyid* and *shes bya nyid* (= the Sanskrit *ghaṭatva* and *jñeyatva*). It is a cliché in Tibetan philosophical texts to say “Vase is bulbous, splay-bottomed, and able to perform the function of carrying water” (*bum pa lto ldir zhabs zhum chu skyor kyi don byed nus pa yin*): vaseness, as an abstract entity or a property, is obviously not able to carry water, and is thus *not* what is being talked about. One can come up with many other such examples to show that terms do not designate such abstract entities.⁵²

⁵¹ Let there be no mistake: *Collected Topics*, and Tibetan Tshad ma texts in general, do not accept true contradictions. The “difficult point” cases that we are discussing are not suggestive of dialetheism.

⁵² For example, when it is repeatedly said in *bsdus grwa* that *entity itself* (*dnegos po*) is a non-associated conditioned thing (*ldan min ‘du byed* = *viprayuktasamkāra*), one is *not*

What is left as a plausible English translation? The problem in (15) and (16) and in other such cases is that they seem to need some sort of a mass noun rendering, along the lines of “knowable thing,” “defining characteristic,” “vase,” “good reason,” etc., if our translation of the Tibetan argument is both to preserve truth and not fall into triviality. But, of course, “vase,” “good reason,” “knowable thing” and the like are not used as mass nouns in English, French, Dutch, etc., i.e., they don’t behave like “snow,” “water,” and the like. “Vase” does divide its reference into readily distinguishable and countable objects. It would usually be considered a solecism in English to speak of *vase* (or French *cruche*, Dutch *vaas*, etc.) or *knowable thing* as being found here, here and here—one naturally understands the sentence “Vases are found in the museum,” but not “*Vase* is found in the museum”—and it makes no sense to speak of a collection of *vase* or a set of *knowable thing*, although a collection of vases and a set of knowable things are, of course, perfectly fine. The result: we are, so it seems, forced to translate many philosophical passages in a way we fundamentally don’t understand in our own languages, and there is no easy unpacking in English that would preserve the rationality, and hence comprehensibility, of the Tibetan philosophical discussion.

Tibetans themselves were aware that the meaning of *bum pa* (vase) was not the same as the meaning of *bum pa ‘ga’ zhiḡ* (some vases), *bum pa thams cad* (all vases), *bum pa ‘di* (this vase), *bum pa zhiḡ* (a vase), etc. They saw that difference as applying *mutatis mutandis* to “good reason” (*rtaḡs yang dag*) versus “a/some/all good reasons” and numerous other terms, and they thought that it was an important difference with philosophical consequences. Indeed, it was emphasized by a figure no less than Tsong kha pa (1357-1419) himself, in his *Tshad ma’i brjed byang chen mo*, that although something may be true of *X* itself, e.g., *reason*, *positive phenomenon*, *universal*, etc., it need not be true of all *x*’s (all reasons, universals, etc.). Tsong kha pa says that when we get

asserting that a quasi-Platonic entityness (*dnḡos po nyid*) is a conditioned thing, as *that* would be permanent, while any conditioned thing is impermanent. Note that the term *viprayuktasaṃskāra* is in the *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasubandhu but what the dGe lugs pa do with it is not. The dGe lugs pa are asserting that *entity itself* is neither a material nor a conscious thing but is nonetheless a real entity (*dnḡos po*). Hence, it belongs to the third category, *viprayuktasaṃskāra*.

this subtlety wrong, it is a major obstacle (*gegs*) due to which the rest of our thinking goes astray—he applies his diagnosis across the board to metaphysics, philosophy of logic, and philosophy of language.⁵³ The problem supposedly arises when we fail to reconcile two key propositions in Buddhist nominalism:

“[The obstacle] is precisely to grasp as contradictory the pair [of propositions] that *object of thought* (*rtog pa'i yul*) is not a particular and that particulars are [nonetheless] objects of thought.”⁵⁴

ICang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717-1786) elaborates upon Tsong kha pa's solution:

“Now, the reason behind this is that there would be no contradiction [in the fact] that the property *per se* (*rang ldog*, Skt. **svavyāvṛtti*), *actual object of thought*, is not a particular, but that particulars are actual objects of thought.”⁵⁵

On Tsong kha pa's diagnosis, then, people supposedly fail to understand the nominalist perspective because they cannot see the compatibility

⁵³ See Tillemans 1999, 214-215.

⁵⁴ *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo* (Tashilhunpo edition of *Collected Works*, Vol. *pha*) f. 19a = p. 188: *rtog pa'i yul rang mtshan ma yin pa dang rang mtshan rtog pa'i yul yin pa gnyis 'gal bar 'dzin pa nyid yin no* /. For the full passage, see Tillemans 1999, 231, n. 12. An astute reader will notice that I have translated *rang mtshan rtog pa'i yul yin pa* as “particulars are [nonetheless] objects of thought,” and might well claim that to be consistent my translation should be “*particular* is [nonetheless] an object of thought.” Fair enough, one could have that, strictly speaking. But the reason I have translated *rang mtshan* here as “particulars” rather than *particular* is that it is one of those many occurrences that lend themselves to easy reformulation. See the discussion below about reformulating Chinese and Tibetan mass nouns. The sentence *rtog pa'i yul rang mtshan ma yin pa*, “*object of thought* is not a particular,” however, does not lend itself to that kind of reformulation at all. As the passage from ICang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje brings out, *rtog pa'i yul* here has to be understood in the sense of *rtog pa'i yul gyi rang ldog* “the property *per se*, *object of thought*.”

⁵⁵ *ICang skya grub mtha'* p. 71 ed. rDo rje rgyal po: *de'i rgyu mtshan yang rtog pa'i dngos yul gyi rang ldog rang mtshan ma yin kyang rang mtshan rtog pa'i dngos yul du 'gyur ba mi 'gal bas ...* /.

between the fact that *object of thought* itself is a fictional creation, and hence not a real particular (*rang mtshan* = *svalakṣaṇa*), and the fact that there are objects of thought that are particulars (e.g., vases, tables, chairs, etc. are real particulars and also objects of thought simply in that we do think about them). His solution is that we need to be able to properly differentiate *object of thought per se* (i.e., *X* itself) and objects of thought (i.e., the individual *x*'s)—while the former is a fictional universal, the latter need not be fictions at all.

His disciple rGyal tshab rje (1364-1432), in one of the most commonly used dGe lugs pa *Pramāṇavārttika* commentaries, *rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed*, called this *X* versus *x*'s differentiation, somewhat bombastically, the “supreme main point that is difficult to understand in this philosophical tradition [i.e., Buddhist logic]” (*gzhung lugs 'di'i rtogs dka' ba'i gnad gyi gtso bo dam pa*), in short, the hard point in the Buddhist's philosophy of language and logic.⁵⁶ It becomes a recurring dGe lugs pa position, one which is regularly invoked in key arguments by textbook writers such as Paṇ chen bSod nams grags pa (1478-1554), Se ra rje btsun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1469-1546), lCang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje, and others, and is known as the “main point that is difficult to understand in the *anyāpoha* [theory of language]” (*gzhan sel gyi rtogs dka' ba'i gnad kyi gtso bo*).⁵⁷ It is also what lies behind the *bsdus grwa* arguments that we see represented by (15) and (16). In other terms, (15) and (16) are the tip of an iceberg. Underneath the surface of *bsdus grwa* eristics lies a great deal of Tibetan philosophy of language.

Where does this “difficult point” leave us as translators? The supposed difference between talking of *X* itself (*vase*, *reason*, *object of thought*, etc.) and talk of *x*'s (*vases*, *reasons*, *objects of thought*, etc.) was no minor matter for these thinkers. *Like it or not, it is, for dGe lugs pas, essential to understanding their philosophy.* If Tsong kha pa and rGyal tshab rje are right and we do have to talk of *X* itself as opposed to *x*'s, or if we simply want to translate their theories, we would have to translate solecistically to render their philosophical thinking in English.

⁵⁶ *rNam 'gel thar lam gsal byed* vol 1., p. 76 translated in Tillemans 1999, 232-234, n. 4.

⁵⁷ See Tillemans 1999, 230, n. 10 for the use of this phrase by Paṇ chen bSod nams grags pa and Se ra rje btsun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan. On *apoha*, see Siderits, Tillemans, Chakrabarti (eds.), 2011.

Now, at this point, it might well be replied that this philosophical thinking and writing in Tibetan about *X* itself versus *x*'s is indeed unintelligible to us; the conclusion to draw is not that it is interesting, but that it is just better confined to the scrap-heap of bad philosophy. Tibetan writers' uses of terms in the sense of *X* itself, so it might be argued, are confused and would regularly need disambiguation to be explained away. If we are to avoid unintelligibility in English, a term like *bum pa* (vase) or *shes bya* (knowable thing) would sometimes have to be interpreted to refer to some or all individual things, sometimes to an abstract universal property, like vaseness, or knowable thinghood, or perhaps even the generic vase, but never to the mysterious *vase itself* or *knowable thing itself*.

However, that proposed disambiguation of troublesome contexts would be extremely inelegant and complex, necessitating *ad hoc* decisions for many arguments: it is generally simpler, and hence desirable, to find a univocal semantics where possible, even if that is not a ready semantics of a Western language. Worse, it is a type of uncharity to maintain that because such and such a semantics in a language leads to problems when "translating up" into a prestigious language, it *must* be wrong and hence demand complex disambiguation, as if it were simply a muddle. In any case, many very intelligent Tibetan traditional scholars do not feel that talk of *X* itself is problematic at all. In explaining *Collected Topics*, they will often insist that the subject terms (*chos can*) in most debates refer to "vase itself" (*bum pa kho rang*), "knowable thing itself" (*shes bya kho rang*), or "defining characteristic itself" (*mtshan nyid kho rang*), or equivalently they will use the terms *bum pa rang ldog*, *shes bya rang ldog*, *mtshan nyid rang ldog* ("vase, the property *per se*," etc.).⁵⁸ What is striking is that *bum kho rang/rang ldog*, etc. are felt to be univocal and perfectly clear, needing no disambiguation in terms of vaseness and vases. In my vivid personal experience of learning *Collected Topics*, my teachers

⁵⁸ See Hugon 2008, 45, 326-329 *et seq.* on the Phya pa school's development of the notion of *rang ldog*, a property *per se*. Often it doesn't matter much that one refers to *X* itself, as there is no significant contrast with *x*'s: the predicate will unproblematically apply to both the property *per se* and its loci (*gzhi ldog*). Thus, for example, in *bum pa mi rtag pa yin* "vase is impermanent," impermanence does apply to *vase* itself and the various vases. dGe lugs pa do recognize that in certain debates a subject term may refer only to the individual loci or bases, but these are relatively rare.

felt frequent puzzlement and even exasperation that something so obvious would be so inexplicably difficult to their (seemingly intelligent) foreign student. It may well be their linguistic intuitions deserved greater weight than my nagging feeling that something was going wrong in Tibetan and needed the disambiguation that a European could supposedly provide.⁵⁹

Would a parallel with Chinese be of help in understanding the problematic Tibetan uses of mass nouns? The specific Tibetan debates in *Collected Topics* are not, as far as I can see, of Chinese ancestry, with the quite possible exception of a Tibetan version of the white horse argument (see Appendix). Could one perhaps get some support from common syntactic and semantic features of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages? In Tibetan, as in Chinese, mass and count are not rigid word classes but more like functions of words. There is no clear *inherent or essential feature* of the Tibetan language that fixes nouns as mass nouns by word class; there are uses of nouns as mass nouns and uses as count nouns—one says *sgra mi rtag pa yin pa* (“Sound is impermanent”), but also *sgra gnyis thos pa* (“She heard two sounds”). Moreover, Tibetan is like Chinese in that all nouns, including “horse” (Tib. *rta*, Chin. *ma* 馬), “person” (Tib. *mi*, Chin. *ren* 人), and the like, can be used as mass nouns and even are so used frequently. To take an unphilosophical and very simple example, just as in modern Chinese, it is normal in colloquial Tibetan to say, literally, “In Lhasa, *car* exists. In Lhasa *car* is many” (*lha sa la mo ta yod; lha sa la mo ta mang po* (‘*dug/yod*) = Chin. *zai la sa you che* 在拉薩有車; *zai la sa che duo* 在拉薩車多). It is thus not surprising that the possibilities of using Tibetan nouns as mass nouns are much greater than in English, French, and other European languages and that nouns like *bum pa* can easily be mass nouns while the English noun *vase*, French *cruche*, or Dutch *vaas* can not.

Is *that* all there is to the translational issues in Tibetan philosophical writing turning on uses of mass nouns, i.e., the so-called “difficult point”? No. The translational problems in the “difficult point” go beyond the fact

⁵⁹ Cf. Bellos 2011, 212-213: “[T]he feeling that a difficult foreign text makes real and proper sense only when it’s been put into the language we prefer to use for thinking hard thoughts can easily ambush an otherwise sensible mind. ... [W]e should always resist the false conclusion that the target language—whatever language it is—is “better” at expressing this or that kind of thought.”

that Tibetan, like Chinese, regularly uses mass nouns that we would not countenance as mass nouns in an English translation. Reformulation of those Tibetan or Chinese mass nouns as English count nouns is usually banal and yields English sentences *salva veritate*, i.e., with no change in truth value—Tibetan *mo ʈa mang po* and Chinese *che duo* 車多 (Car [is] many) are rendered as “There are many cars” routinely and unproblematically.⁶⁰ I would see this as support for a position with regard to Tibetan like that of Chris Fraser 2007 with regard to Chinese, viz., that usage of mass nouns or count nouns has no implications about what kind of entities people are *really* speaking about. Indeed, one could well deflate much Tibetan similarly. Most uses of mass nouns—e.g., in colloquial speech, in history texts, in opera and epics, in Marxist or Buddhist tracts, cookbooks, or what have you—would not have *any* implications for whether one is speaking of particulars, manifestations of universals, distributions of fusions, and other such ontologies. There would be no semantic and metaphysical issues at stake in such cases, only verbal usage.⁶¹ To supplement Fraser a bit, we could say that there certainly are mass and count nouns, but that their reference to metaphysical types of entities like particulars, instantiations of universals, distributions of fusion entities, etc. remains inscrutable. The would-be *inherent ontology* of the language in question is not only unknowable but immaterial to its statements being true or false.

The argument is that of Donald Davidson. Here is how it goes.⁶² Inscrutability of reference comes down to an important point in formal semantics that there is always a permutation function Φ that maps one reference scheme for a language onto another scheme, so that when, on the first scheme, a name refers to an object x , then on the second it refers

⁶⁰ The same points naturally hold for translating Japanese into English, e.g., *Lhasa ni jidōsha wa aru*, *Lhasa ni jidōsha wa ōi*.

⁶¹ This line of thought should also be applied to demystify claims about other languages too. Whorf, for example, focused on phenomena from North American Indigenous languages, such as interestingly different aspects, different tense systems, specialized vocabulary, and uses of verbs where European languages would use nouns. The linguistic data was supposedly evidence of a deeper (and murkier) fact that a language and culture “conceals a metaphysics,” or a distinct “structure of the universe” (Whorf 1956, 58). See also n. 68 below for Sapir and Whorf’s ideas on linguistic incommensurability and relativity.

⁶² See Davidson 1984, 229-230.

to $\Phi(x)$ and when a predicate F refers to the x 's of which it is true that x is F , then on the second scheme F will refer to the x 's of which it is true that $\Phi(x)$ is F . If we grant, as I think we surely must, that every particular rabbit is an instance of rabbitness and is a distribution of the rabbit fusion entity, and that the converse implications all hold so that every distribution is an instance and an individual, etc., etc., then there is a permutation function allowing us to go unproblematically between the three interpretations of rabbit-talk. It is not only easily shown that " a is a rabbit" is true if and only if a is a rabbit, but that " a is a rabbit" is true if and only if a is an instance of rabbitness. And so on for rabbit fusions. The truth conditions become equivalent and there is only one fact of the matter needed for the sentences to be true. Whether that fact is a 's being an instance of rabbitness, a distribution of the rabbit fusion, or being a particular, individual rabbit, is inscrutable and immaterial to truth. The same holds, *mutatis mutandis*, for tables, people, buddhas, and so on.

Davidsonian arguments about inscrutability of reference, if right, put paid to a myriad of modern views about inherent metaphysics of languages and ways of thinking supposedly peculiar to their speakers alone.⁶³ That said, the specific problem of understanding *bsdus grwa* and the "difficult point" is very different from the usual grand scale discussion about inherent semantics. It is certainly not resolved by simply saying that statements about facts that we understand are interpretable indifferently, *salva veritate*, in terms of several sorts of entities, so that we could, for example, just as well be talking about distributions of the rabbit fusion (or instantiations of an abstract entity rabbithood) being furry instead of individual rabbits being furry. Rather, the point in bringing up (15) and (16), as we saw, is that we don't understand why these particular kinds of Tibetan statements and their English translations *are* supposedly true; we don't adequately understand the facts the Tibetan theoreticians are talking about *at all* when they talk about *vase* itself or *knowable thing* itself, nor the reasons why they assert what they do of them.

⁶³ Not only does it put paid to such hypotheses famously formulated about North American Indigenous languages, it would also seem to undermine the strong versions of the mass-noun hypothesis for Chinese that we find in Hansen 1983, according to which the Chinese language itself is said to have a stuff-semantics, rather than a semantics of universals and instantiations.

Usual translational strategies to come up with reformulations in English *salva veritate* are thus simply not available here. More specifically, we are confronted with a dilemma. On the one hand, when the reformulations of (15) and (16) are in proper, clear English, they do not conserve truth value, but, on the other hand, if we seek to conserve truth value, we are forced into using a badly obscure English, so odd that certain terms are in italics and scare-quotes, suggesting unintelligibility. This is a problem of the philosophical implications of the Tibetan “difficult point.” They leave (15) and (16) with specific problems of intelligibility and translatability that more ordinary Tibetan does not have.

This dGe lugs theoretical position on Tibetan subject terms was important in Tibetan theorizing about language, but not surprisingly it was also contested by many non-dGe lugs thinkers. Sa skya pa thinkers like Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1182-1251), Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429-1489), and gSer mdog Paṇ chen Śākya mchog ldan (1428-1507) were oriented more towards a more Indian Buddhist semantics where words either had to refer to real individual things, i.e., particulars (*rang mtshan* = *svalakṣaṇa*), or to fictional universals (*spyi mtshan* = *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*), with no middle ground of a universal that would also be a real thing (*spyi dngos po ba*). They were thus often very skeptical about interpretations of their own language in accordance with the “difficult point.” Talk of *X* itself along the lines of the “difficult point” theorists would, so they thought, lead to a kind of realism about universal properties. *Vase, tree*, and the like would be full-fledged universals present in several particulars, but also fully real as they would possess the ability to perform functions (*don byed nus pa* = *arthakriyāsāmarthya*). That intra-Tibetan debate took on major importance in contrasting dGe lugs pa/gSang phu versus Sa skya pa Tibetan approaches to the problem of universals and philosophy of language. Go rams pa polemically insisted that dGe lugs-gSang phu talk of “mere tree” (*shing tsam*) as being a real universal (*spyi dngos po ba*) present in particulars was just “verbal obfuscation” (*tshig gi sgrib g.yog*) and an invention of “the snowy Tibetans” (*bod gangs can pa*).⁶⁴ The main motivation of these Sa skya thinkers was not so much the mere usage of terms like *tree* (*shing*)— they used those ordinary Tibetan terms too—but

⁶⁴ See Tillemans 1999, 212 et seq., and 229-230, n. 6.

the un-Indian aspect of accepting *tree* or *tree itself* as a real universal somehow to be contrasted with trees.

Were Go rams pa and others fair to the dGe lugs? They thought, probably rightly in many respects, that the dGe lugs-Phya pa semantic theories and especially the resultant metaphysics were out of step with mainstream Indian Buddhist nominalist positions such as those that one would find in Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, and they cited *Pramāṇavārttika* commentators like Śākyabuddhi to show that Buddhists should *never* accept universals. Georges Dreyfus and I, in a number of separate publications, have taken up the theories of *spyi dngos po ba* (real universals) in Tibetan thought and the slim Indian antecedents for this theory that might be found in tenth to twelfth century Kashmiri philosophers like Śaṅkaranandana and perhaps Bhavyarāja (= sKal ldan rgyal po).⁶⁵ It is certainly arguable that the *spyi dngos po ba* that the dGe lugs pa accepted was not *simply* the universal of non-Buddhist schools and that it would thus be unfair to accuse the dGe lugs pa of wholesale betrayal of Buddhist nominalism. Instead, *vase* is a concrete real entity able to perform functions like carrying water, and it is of the same substance (*rdzas gcig = ekadravya*) as the particulars; it is not a universal vaseness (*ghaṭatva*) that is separate from particulars and inherent (*samaveta*) in them, along the lines of the non-Buddhist Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school or, for that matter, Platonism.

So far, perhaps, so good. Some might wish to say that although Tibetan in fact has no inherent semantics (for Davidsonian reasons), what these Tibetan dGe lugs pa writers are doing is reading their language *as if* it had a semantics of discontinuously distributed fusions—i.e., entities composed by adding all the world's snow to make a sum and then (why not?) adding the world's rabbits or horses, or what have you, to make their respective sums.⁶⁶ dGe lugs pa would, in sum, be theorizing about their own language as involving distributed stuff rather than individual things.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ See Dreyfus 1992 and 1997, chapter IX, 171 *et seq.*, Tillemans 1999, 212-220, Tillemans 1984, 64-65, n. 5.

⁶⁶ See Nicholas 2013, section 2, on mereological sums as reference for mass expressions.

⁶⁷ It might be thought that they are theorizing about their language much in the same way as some Western researchers have viewed Chinese. Cf. Hansen 1983, 35: “[T]he question, ‘Of what is *ma* “horse” the name?’ has a natural answer: the mereological set of horses. ‘Horse-stuff’ is thus an object (substance or thing-kind) scattered in space-time.”

Would such a stuff-semantics, after all, help explain and rationalize the “difficult point” distinctions that are promoted by dGe lugs pa philosophers? Let’s give it a run for the money. As we argued earlier, there is no reason to think that it is somehow inherent to Tibetan language generally or that the mere extensive use of mass nouns makes it necessary. But nor would reading the dGe lugs pa ideas about Tibetan in this way help much to rationalize what we find in the texts. While stuff-semantics may seem possible for horses, rabbits, and vases, it becomes increasingly weird for knowable things and good reasons. Even if we could learn to live with reason-stuffs or reason-fusions distributed here, here, and here, the big problem remains: we would still somehow have to learn to argue convincingly in English why the non-red fusion *itself* and knowable thing fusion *itself* and finally, the good reason fusion *itself*, would supposedly have properties that they do and that their distributions quite often don’t. It is hard to see that saying the dGe lugs pa (rightly or wrongly) apply a stuff-semantics to Tibetan would make that any clearer at all. The difficult point remains difficult.

Let me conclude on a nuanced note, taking some distance from the usual discussions about translation and translatability that one finds in analytic philosophy post W.V. Quine and Donald Davidson. As should be clear, I subscribe to much of the Quine-Davidson position on the inscrutability of reference. I am thus certainly *not* advocating a strong thesis—one usually attributed to Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf—to the effect that a language has its own inherent ontology and is incommensurable with some or all other languages.⁶⁸ I do *not* think that Sino-Tibetan languages have an inherent ontology because of such languages’ extensive use of mass nouns.

⁶⁸ Cf. Sapir 1949, 159: “It would be possible to go on indefinitely with such examples of incommensurable analyses of experience in different languages. The upshot of it all would be to make very real to us a kind of relativity that is generally hidden from us by our naive acceptance of fixed habits of speech as guides to an objective understanding of the nature of experience. This is the relativity of concepts or, as it might be called, the relativity of the form of thought.” Cf. Whorf 1956, 214: “[I]t means that no individual is free to describe nature with absolute impartiality but is constrained to certain modes of interpretation even while he thinks himself most free. The person most nearly free in such respects would be a linguist familiar with very many widely different linguistic systems. As yet no linguist is in any such position. We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical

However, I *do* think that philosophical Tibetan as used and interpreted by many indigenous authors presents important problems of translatability because of *their* understandings of Tibetan mass nouns. The authors I am speaking of represent the school of Buddhism that has been dominant in Tibet since the fifteenth century. When they think the difficult point is key to understanding philosophy of language, that is, in a sense, the official Tibetan line. There is a significant problem in translating their writings and the Tshad ma-based philosophy of their school; there is hence a problem in translating a lot of quite influential Tibetan philosophy *tout court*.

Some might well say that large scale untranslatability is an incoherent notion. And indeed it is often repeated, since Donald Davidson's article "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," that a culture that did not share with us a common endorsement of a very large number of truths would be thoroughly unintelligible to us—even its difference and foreignness, and for that matter, whether it has a language, would be obscure.⁶⁹ However, a Davidsonian *a priori* argument against untranslatability would be overkill in the case at hand. It is clear we do share a very great number of truths with Tibetans and that understanding Tibetan culture is not the type of (supposedly) radically foreign encounter Davidson criticizes as unintelligible. We may not understand all the whys and wherefores of utterances in difficult point debates, but we easily know that they are utterances and indeed know quite a lot about them, just as we do about Tibetan medical and pharmacological terms that are often untranslatable in the present state of our scientific terminology.

The Davidsonian arguments are best seen as directed against a strong thesis: untranslatability *in principle*, due to inherent features in languages that imply a conceptual scheme incommensurable with that of the translator.⁷⁰ It is this *necessary, essential, or inherent* untranslatability of languages, and the resultant relativity of truth to a language's inherent conceptual scheme, that inspired Whorf and thoroughly repelled Davidson. Indeed, essential untranslatability may well fall under the Davidsonian

evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, or can in some way be calibrated." On the linguistic relativity hypothesis from Franz Boas, Sapir and Whorf, to psycholinguistics, see Lucy 1992.

⁶⁹ See Davidson 1984, chapter XIII, and Malpas 1989.

⁷⁰ See Malpas 1989, 248-249.

critique. It is, however, not the untranslatability I am claiming for the difficult point.

Nor is the untranslatability in philosophical Tibetan a purely practical matter, so that meaningfully translating the difficult point distinctions would be a problem cleared up with new discoveries and supplementary information. No doubt there is often *de facto*, or practical, untranslatability given a current state of knowledge—the language of the Indus Valley civilization, the Minoan Linear A, and Egyptian hieroglyphics before J.F. Champollion come to mind. We can well imagine what further information we would need to have to be able to translate. What we can say in the case at hand, however, is that we see no way out of the translational problems of the difficult point given the current requirements of English. I suspect that “Tibet hands” who study *bsdus grwa* and related dGe lugs pa thinking in depth will continue to develop a somewhat divided mind, learn how to reason about certain subjects in Tibetan persuasively to Tibetans, be able to explain that reasoning in a relatively sophisticated manner in Tibetan, but be unable to translate and explain it satisfactorily in English. One could, of course, fantasize that on the very odd chance that future analytic philosophers came to prize *Collected Topics*, legitimized English mass noun usage of *vase*, *knowable thing*, etc., and regularly argued about such things, the untranslatability that I have been discussing might even largely disappear. Ways of speaking and thinking do, of course, end up *de facto* supplanted with others due to facts of history or societal changes. Nonetheless, it is quite obscure to us how this particular evolution would happen *rationally* given the broad outlines of our ways of speaking in most Western languages, for it seems that we don’t have a clue as to what it would be like now, or in a foreseeable future, to pursue the Tibetan-style structured and predictable metaphysical debates on the properties of *vase itself*, *knowable thing*, or *good reason itself*. We simply can’t imagine why or in what circumstances statements like “*Knowable thing* is permanent” would be true. If at some point further down the road we came to feel we could participate in East-West debates about such things, the disruption in thinking would have had to be enormous; it would probably have been a type of rupture, not a reasoned evolution.

More generally, we seem to have to recognize that what is a typically debatable philosophical question in one language, with elaborate answers, and often commonly recognized rational decision procedures to determine whether those answers are good or bad, may be hardly discussable in the

other. That does not entail the grand scale thesis that truth differs between Tibetan and English, or varies between the Himalayas, Switzerland, and the West coast of Canada. More reasonable is the following sober, humble conclusion: the implications of “difficult point” philosophy are not evidence for the linguistic relativity of truth, they show rather that some promising, rigorous, philosophy is—and will remain—so obscure in translation that the issue of its truth will hardly arise outside its own broad linguistic sphere. In short, some highly developed Tibetan philosophy won’t translate well enough into major European languages for the truth or falsity of its statements to be meaningfully thought about in those languages. That is *enough* untranslatability to be significant.

To go one step further, if that is right, then there are consequences for comparative philosophy and logic, in that there are at least some important areas where, as far as I can see, we cannot cross borders of language and cultures with impunity and philosophize together with clear mutual understanding. In sum, a philosopher who wants to cross borders needs to know where they are and how serious they are. They probably aren’t as much like Whorf, Sapir, and some anthropologists or asianists imagined them, and don’t turn on the metaphysics of *whole* languages or grand scale views on the linguistic relativity of truth and structures of the universe; nor does the existence of these borders entail that *whole* cultures remain exotically inaccessible and alien. (Exaggerating the importance of borders is, unfortunately, the all too frequent stuff of professional asianists and popular conceptions alike). Indeed, these two chapters, if successful, should show that much of Tibetan philosophical culture is in fact quite accessible to cross-cultural philosophy and not exotic at all. But they should *also* show that we *can* legitimately talk about borders concerning a sizable chunk of the intellectual production of a specific culture. We need to look at borders with a well-informed, laser-like vision, and case by case. They can be serious indeed.

Appendix: Chinese influence?

Might the debates in *Collected Topics* have Chinese origins? While at least one Indian Pramāṇa text was translated into Tibetan from Chinese—the *Nyāyapraveśa* from the translation of Xuanzang⁷¹—there are no logic commentaries that I know of by Chinese authors that made their way into Tibetan and influenced Tshad ma. We do find an important commentary on the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* by a student of Xuanzang, Yuan ce 圓測. It was translated into Tibetan and had a significant influence in Tibet, often being discussed by writers like Tsong kha pa.⁷² However, this is not a work on logic and Tshad ma: it is a work on hermeneutics and the interpretation of the three cycles of Buddhist teaching.

There is, however, a “white horse” argument found in the Tibetan *Collected Topics* literature that seems like the strongest candidate for Chinese influence and origins. The debate is very well known amongst people educated in the dGe lugs pa curriculum, for whom it is typically taken as showing an important Buddhist point, the unfindability of entities under analysis, the impossibility that any macroscopic entity can be localized or identified with one or more of its constituent *dharmas/tropes*. Here is a representative version as found in *Yongs ‘dzin bsdus grwa*:

“A certain [debater] might say: A white conch, the subject; it follows that it would be a color, because it is white. If [his opponent says that the reason] is not established [i.e., that a white conch is not white], [then the debater could argue to him as follows:] Take that [white conch as] subject; it follows that it would be [white], because it is a white conch. If [this debater] says that, then [one should force upon him the opposing pervasion (‘*gal khyab*) [i.e., that if something is a white conch, it is pervaded by not being white] as follows: Well then, for him, take a white horse, the subject; it follows that it would be white, because it is a white horse. The pervasion would be the same [i.e., in the first case the debater had argued that all white conches are pervaded by being white and in the second case he similarly should argue that all white horses are pervaded by being white]. But [actually] he cannot agree [that a white horse is white], because it is [in fact] not

⁷¹ Tōhoku Catalogue 4208.

⁷² See Steinkellner 1989, 233-235.

matter (*bem po = jaḍa*). Why? Because it is a living personality (*gang zag = pudgala*). Why? Because it is a horse.”⁷³

How would this compare with famous debate of Gong Sun long 公孫龍 (325-250 B.C.E.) that concludes *bai ma fei ma ke* 白馬非馬可 (One can say that *white horse* is not [a] horse)?⁷⁴ The differences are considerable. The first and most obvious thing to note is that the conclusions are not the same: *Collected Topics* seeks to show that *white horse* is not white and not that *white horse* is not a horse! Second, while the debate does not figure in Indian Buddhist sources, as far as I can see, the underlying reasoning relies on Abhidharma metaphysics rather than indigenous non-Buddhist Chinese ideas. The point of the white horse not being white is that the white horse cannot be identified with one of the many tropes that constitute it. Indo-Tibetan Abhidharma maintains that a macroscopic entity is always a composite of *dharmas*, i.e., what would nowadays be termed quality-particulars or tropes.⁷⁵ In short, a horse, or any other living being, cannot be identified with its shape, its colour, its weight, its mental features, or any other material or mental trope. On the other hand, the debate in the *Gong sun long zi* 公孫龍子, if I understand it, does not turn on Abhidharmic trope metaphysics and the resultant impossibility to identify an entity with one of its constituent tropes, but rather, to take

⁷³ *kha cig na re / chos dung dkar po chos can / kha dog yin par thal / dkar po yin pa'i phyir / ma grub na / de chos can / der thal / chos dung dkar po yin pa'i phyir na / 'gal khyab la 'bud / 'o na kho rang la / rta dkar po chos can / dkar po yin par thal / rta dkar po yin pa'i phyir / khyab pa 'grig / 'dod mi nus te / bem po ma yin pa'i phyir te / gang zag yin pa'i phyir te / rta yin pa'i phyir /*. (Yongs 'dzin bsduḡ grwa chung ed. Kelsang and Onoda, f. 4a).

⁷⁴ On this debate, see Harbsmeier 1998, 298 *et seq.*

⁷⁵ Tropes are particular occurrences of being brown, being heavy, being square, etc. Charles Goodman and others have made a persuasive case that the elements of reality—the *dharmas*, for Ābhidharmika Buddhists—are indeed tropes, i.e., properties that are abstract simples but are particulars rather than universals—a blueness, a heat, or a hardness specific to one place-time and not common to several. On tropes and the varieties of trope theories, see the entry by Anna-Sofia Maurin in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*—<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/tropes/>. Goodman 2004 develops a trope theory of the *dharma* in the *Abhidharmakośa*. See also Ganeri 2001, 101–2. Trope theories seem applicable in the case of Dharmakīrti and Dignāga, too; see Tillemans 2020, section 1.4.

Chad Hansen's analysis, on issues of interpretation of Chinese compound terms like "white horse" (*bai ma* 白馬), i.e., either as a sum of all white and horse entities, or as a product, the entity that is both a horse and white. The white horse not being a horse is assertable if (for philosophical reasons about language) we say that "white horse" is to be taken along the lines of "ox horse" (*niu ma* 牛馬), i.e., as a sum, rather than along the lines of a product like "hard white" (*jian bai* 堅白). However, the Confucian semantical principle, the Rectification of Names, precludes that one and the same thing should be referred to by two different words and hence rules out the product reading of "white horse."⁷⁶

The white horse argument is not findable, as far as I can see, in Indian discussions—it is not an Abhidharma debate in India. I would tentatively submit that what may have happened is that the white horse debate in *Collected Topics* is derived from the Chinese, but that in any case, if it is so derived, it changed significantly, philosophically speaking, in its use in Tibet. Note that there are other discussions in *Collected Topics* that are thoroughly un-Indian and somewhat suggestive of Chinese views on language. For example, *Collected Topics* has a whole "lesson" (*rnam bzhang*) concerning *X* being or not being an instance of *X*,⁷⁷ and there are also discussions about products (impermanent sound) and sums (pillar vase) that do and don't, respectively, admit "instances" (*yin pa srid pa/ yin pa mi srid pa*).⁷⁸ The contents of these discussions do not seem to be due to Indian sources (although some terms have Indian antecedents), so that one might look to Chinese sources for their origins, or one might well say that these are original Tibetan developments. A minimalist hypothesis: there is no "smoking gun" clearly establishing *specific* Chinese origins of debates in *Collected Topics*.

⁷⁶ Hansen 1983.

⁷⁷ This is the *rdzas ldog gi rnam bzhang* "The lesson on substances and properties (lit. 'exclusions'; *ldog pa* = Skt. *vyāvṛtti*).” See Goldberg 1985a, 1985b.

⁷⁸ *Yongs 'dzin bsdus grwa chung* f. 4b *et seq.*, *gzhi grub kyi rnam bzhang* "the lesson on real bases [i.e., ontology].”

FORAYS INTO THE PHILOSOPHY
OF THE MIDDLE

III. Two Tibetan Texts on the “Neither One nor Many” Argument for *śūnyatā*

The present article is my third in a series on the Buddhist argument that entities are empty (*stong pa; śūnya*) of intrinsic nature (*rang bzhin; svabhāva*) because they are neither individuals (i.e., “ones”) nor many different things.¹ The reason (*gtan tshigs; hetu*; or equivalently, *rtags; liṅga*) on which this argument depends, that is to say, “being neither one nor many,” or more literally, “being free from one(ness) and many(ness),” comes to be known in Indian and Tibetan literature as the “neither one nor many” reason (*gcig du bral gyi gtan tshigs; ekānekaviyogahetu*).

Now, undeniably, the basic theme of this style of argumentation was used in its broad outlines by diverse branches of Buddhist philosophy and for a variety of purposes: Vasubandhu, Dharmakīrti, and Prajñākaragupta, to take a few of the many possible examples, used it to show the impossibility of such notions as universals and partless atoms; Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti used it to analyze the relationship between the self (*bdag; ātman*) and the aggregates (*phung po; skandha*) and, in general, to reduce to absurdity the part-whole relationship.² But, although Mādhyamika and

¹ The first article was a paper presented in 1981 at the Csoma de Kőrös symposium in Velm, Austria, and appeared in 1983 in the *Proceedings of the Csoma de Kőrös Symposium*, in the series *Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde*, Tillemans 1983. The second article, i.e., Tillemans 1982, appeared in *Études de lettres* of the University of Lausanne.

² For Vasubandhu’s refutation of partless atoms, see the *Viṃśatikā*, in particular, *kārikā* 12. For the arguments against the Nyāya universal (*sāmānya*), which is held to be a unity inherent in many particulars, see Prajñākaragupta’s *Pramāṇavārttikabhāṣya* ad *Pramāṇavārttika* IV k. 12 (p. 478-482 *Sāmānyanirāsaḥ* in Sāṅkṛtyāyana’s edition). Cf. also the *Pramāṇavārttikavṛtti* of Manorathanandin p. 367: . . . *yathā sāmānyasya paropagatānekavṛttiivād anekatvam āpādyate* /. (“ . . . just as it would follow that a universal is a multitude, because the other accepts that it is present in a multitude [of particulars]”). A good example of the Prāsaṅgika’s use of this type of argumentation is

non-Mādhyamika alike used this argument in one form or another,³ it finds an especially sophisticated development in the *Svātantrika-Mādhyamika philosopher Śāntarakṣita, who employed it as the central idea around which he structured his influential text, the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*.

In Tibet, a considerable indigenous literature grew up around Śāntarakṣita's *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*. Some works, such as the *dBu ma rgyan gyi rnam bshad* of the rNying ma pa scholar Mi pham rgya mtsho (1846-1912) and the *dBu ma rgyan gyi brjed byang* of rGyal tshab rje (1364-1432), commented directly on Śāntarakṣita's text, but others, in particular the dGe lugs pa monastic textbooks (*yig cha*), combined Śāntarakṣita's exposition of the "neither one nor many" argument with their commentary on the homage (*mchod brjod*) of Maitreya-nātha's *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*.⁴

the "sevenfold reasoning" (*rnam bdun gyi rigs pa*) found in Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI, verses 150-161. This argument, which analyses the relationship between a cart and its parts, is an elaboration on Nāgārjuna's fivefold argument (*rnam lnga'i rigs pa*) found in the *Madhyamakakārikās*.

³ In Tillemans 1983, I distinguished monadic and dyadic forms of the argument. For example, "... is one," or "... is many," are monadic predicates, whereas "... is one with..." or "... is different from ..." express dyadic relations. Among the examples cited in note 2, those from Prajñākaragupta and Manorathanandin represent monadic uses of the argument, while Candrakīrti and Nāgārjuna are using a dyadic form. Śāntarakṣita's presentation of the argument is phrased in the monadic form, but he and Kamalaśīla frequently alternate between the two different forms.

⁴ The background problem that the Tibetans are seeking to resolve is how to rationally justify believing in the existence of the three omnisciences (*thams cad mkhyen pa gsum; tisraḥ sarvajñatāḥ*) spoken about in the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*'s homage. These three aspects of the *prajñāpāramitā* ("perfection of wisdom") have, as their respective objects, the bases (*gzhi; vastu*) (i.e., entities, but particularly, persons), the *śrāvaka*, *pratyeka*, and *bodhisattva* paths (*lam; mārga*), and all phenomena or all aspects (*rnam pa; ākāra*). Thus they are termed the "knowledge of the bases" (*gzhi shes; vastujñāna*), the "knowledge of the paths" (*lam shes; mārgajñāna*), and the "knowledge of all aspects" (*rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa; sarvākārajñatā*). Cf. Se ra chos kyi rgyal mtshan's *Don bdun cu* p. 16-17 in the edition of S. Onoda.

The Tibetan commentator's answer to this problem is to say that by using the "neither one nor many" argument one arrives at the conclusion that the objects of these omnisciences are all empty of true existence (*bden par yod pa*) and true production (*bden par skye ba*). At that point, when one is rationally convinced of this emptiness, one is justified to believe that there can be a consciousness that directly realizes this emptiness. Cf. Tsong kha pa's *Legs bshad gser phreng* T. Vol. tsa p. 49-50, rGyal tshab rje's *rNam*

As an Indian precedent for situating the “neither one nor many” argument in the context of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*’s homage, these textbooks would cite certain passages from Haribhadra’s commentary, *Sphuṭārthā*.⁵

In my first two articles, I compared certain aspects in the Indian and Tibetan treatments of the argument, and I introduced the important themes present in the texts translated below. I had originally thought to include, in the second article, a translation of these Tibetan texts, which together give a representative sample of the dGe lugs pa discussion of the argument. But this proved to be impossible, and a third article was thus necessary.

Of the texts in question, the first, a “lesson on the ‘neither one nor many’ argument” (*gcig du bral gyi rnam bzhag*) is a chapter from Se ra rje btsun pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan’s (1469-1546) commentary on the first chapter of the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, i.e., the *sKabs dang po’i spyi don*. It presents the dGe lugs pa interpretation of the argument and its Indian textual backing. The second, an excerpt from Tsong kha pa’s (1357-1419) *dBu ma rgyan gyi zin bris*, deals with the logical fallacy of *āśrayāsiddhahetu* (“a reason whose locus is not established”; *gzhi ma grub pa’i gtan tshigs*), a technical problem often associated with the “neither one nor many” argument. The difficulty arises as soon as one seeks to use the argument to prove that pseudo-entities such as the Self (*ātman*), the Primordial Nature (*prakṛti*), *Īśvara*, etc.—in short, the various speculative fictions of the non-Buddhist

bshad snying po’i rgyan f. llb-12a, and the *sKabs dang po’i spyi don* f. 20b-21b. Note in passing that the latter work follows very closely *rNam bshad snying po’i rgyan*.

⁵ *Abhisamayālaṃkāravṛtti* of Haribhadra, Bibliotheca Indo-Tibetica edition, p. 4, P. 94a 2-4: *chos kyi rjes su ‘brang ba rnams kyang gcig dang du ma’i ngo bo nyid dang bral ba’i phyir zhes bya ba la sogs pa’i tshad mas gzhi dang lam dang rnam pa sbye ba med par yongs su shes pa tshigs su bcad pa’i don gyi mtshan nyid kyi yum la gnod pa ma mthong nas shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid gsum gyi bdag nyid tshul gsum pa can / sangs rgyas la sogs pa bskrun par mdzad pa ni gdon mi za bar srid pa nyid do zhes nges par gzung ste / de la rab tu dang ba bskyed par byed pa nyid do /*. “Moreover, followers of the *Dharma*, by means of *pramāṇas* such as [those based on the reason] ‘because of being neither of the nature of oneness nor manyness,’ perceive no [possible] refutation of the Mother [*prajñāpāramitā*] characterized by the *kārikā* [i.e., the homage], that is to say, the realization that the bases, paths, and aspects are not produced. Thereupon, they arrive at the certainty that the *prajñāpāramitā*, which has the threefold nature of the triple omnisciences, is most definitely able to lead to buddhahood, etc. And thus, they are greatly inspired by this [*prajñāpāramitā*].” Tsong kha pa, rGyal tshab rje, and Chos kyi rgyal mtshan cite this passage.

schools—are in fact nonexistent. How is one to avoid that all successful nonexistence proofs become self-refuting, if one agrees that the loci, or subjects (*chos can; dharmin*) of valid proofs must in some sense exist? It is a question that has elicited much discussion from Western scholars, and perhaps Tsong kha pa's text will be useful here as it concisely presents certain important ideas of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, as well as Kamalaśīla's basic approach to the problem in his work, the *Madhyamakāloka*.⁶

Finally, a word on the editions I have used. The chapter from the *sKabs dang po'i spyi don* forms a small part of the voluminous collection of textbooks composed by Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan that have been reprinted at Se ra byes monastery in Bylakuppe, Mysore, India. This reprint is completely identical with the text included in the United States Library of Congress Collection of Tibetan Literature in Microfiche. (Microfiche R-1021 in *Tibetan Religious Works: PL 480 SFC Collections*, published by the Institute for the Advanced Studies of World Religions, Stony Brook, New York). According to the information given by E. Gene Smith on the microfiche itself, it would seem that the blocks were made in Buksa (*sBag sa*), Bengal during the 1960's. At any rate, for our purposes, we shall simply speak of the "New Se ra" edition. We have also consulted the "Old Se ra" edition, which is probably a late nineteenth century or early twentieth century reprint of Chos kyi rgyal mtshan's works (*Tokyo University Catalogue* No. 21; *Tōhoku Catalogue* 6815 A).

The excerpt from *dBu ma rgyan gyi zin bris* is based on a comparison between the text found in the supplement to the Peking edition of the Tibetan canon (*bstan 'gyur* Vol. 153), an edition of unknown origin published by the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, Varanasi, India and finally the bKra shis lhun po ("Tashilhunpo") edition of Tsong kha pa's *Collected Works*, kept in Klu 'khyil monastery's library (Ladakh) and recently reprinted in Delhi by Ngag dbang dge legs bde mo.⁷ As well, *lCang skya grub mtha'*, the extensive work on philosophical systems (*grub*

⁶ Cf. Tillemans 1982 for an explanation of these various ideas.

⁷ I might also mention an edition of Tsong kha pa's *Collected Works* that was recently published in Delhi by Lama Gurudeva. However, this edition, like that of the Peking *bstan 'gyur* supplement, was printed at dGa' ldang phun tshogs gling (Lha sa zhol press) and states on its title page "reproduced from the 1897 Lha sa old zhol (dGa' ldang phun tshogs gling) blocks."

mtha'; *siddhānta*) composed by lCang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717-1786), reproduces verbatim approximately two thirds of the excerpt in question; this has also proved to be very useful, in spite of the fact that it was not possible to determine the source of the edition used by lCang skya himself.

Here then are the abbreviations to be used: New = the New Se ra edition; Old = the Old Se ra edition; P = the Peking *bstan* 'gyur and supplement; T = the Tashilhunpo edition of Tsong kha pa's *Collected Works* (reprinted in Delhi); S = the Sarnath text; lCang = *lCang skya grub mtha'*.

Translation of a chapter of the sKabs dang po'i spyi don

[N. 24a6] Our own position: I. Recognizing the property to be refuted (*dgag bya'i chos*; *pratiṣedhyadharma*) by the reason that the teacher [Haribhadra] propounds:⁸ II. Explanation, involving other loci, of the reasonings that refute this [property].

I. [24a7] “Something established by virtue of its particular mode of being, [and] not brought about because of appearing to mind (*blo*)”—this is the property to be refuted by the reasons that analyze the ultimate. For, if the person and the aggregates were to exist in such a way, then they would have to withstand logical reasonings that analyze the ultimate [status of entities], and they would have to be perceived during the meditative equipoise (*mnyam bzhag*; *samāhita*) of the *Āryas* (“Noble Ones”).⁹

⁸ According to Tibetan *grub mtha'* texts, Haribhadra was a member of the same school as Śāntarakṣita: *rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma rang rgyud pa* (**Yogācāra-Mādhyamika-Svātantrika*). In texts such as Tsong kha pa's *dBu ma dgongs pa rab gsal* (p. 129-136, ed. Sarnath) and lCang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje's *Grub mtha'* (p. 371-377, ed. Sarnath), the Svātantrika's understanding of what constitutes “true existence,” or the “property to be refuted” (*dgag bya'i chos*), is explained in considerable detail, and is contrasted with the Prāsaṅgika counterpart. We see in these works that the “property to be refuted” as specified on 24a7 of the *sKabs dang po'i spyi don* is said to be common to all Svātantrikas, be they of the Svātantrika-Mādhyamika or Yogācāra-Mādhyamika tradition.

⁹ The *Ārya bodhisattvas*, when meditating on *śūnyatā*—that is, the simple lack of any truly existent entities—are said to directly perceive the ultimate truth, or the absolute (*de kho na nyid*; *tattva*, i.e., “reality”). Mādhyamikas maintain that if anything existed ultimately, the *Āryas* would have to perceive it at this time, and conversely, anything perceived at this time would have to be ultimate.

[24b1] An analogy: Take the case of a magician making pebbles and pieces of wood appear to be horses and elephants. Now suppose that when the pebbles, pieces of wood, etc. appeared in this way, these same [appearances] were not brought about by a deceived mind but were so established from the side (*ngos nas*) of the pebbles, pieces of wood, etc. Then, as these [appearances] would be the result (*lag rjes*) of the antecedent like-moments (*rigs 'dra snga ma*) making up the [pebbles, etc., it would follow absurdly that] people whose eyes were not affected [by the magician's spells] should also see [these "horses" and "elephants"].¹⁰

[24b2] Furthermore, in this vein, the *Satyadvayavibhaṅga* [of Jñānagarbha] states:

"Since [customary truth's] nature is [simply] just as it appears, one does not subject it to analysis. If the yogi [however] does analyze it, then he will commit [the fault of speaking about a] different matter (*don gzhan; arthāntara*) and will hence be refuted."¹¹

[24b3] Moreover, it [i.e., the property to be refuted] is as stated above, because "an existence brought about because of appearing to the mind" is the meaning of "customary existence." For, [Kamalaśīla's] *Madhyamakāloka* states:

¹⁰ The analogy is that the appearances represent customary truth, but that the tendency to grasp them as being independent of the mind is like "grasping at true existence" (*bden 'dzin*). Cf. *dBu ma dgongs pa rab gsal*, ed. Sarnath, p. 132 et passim.

¹¹ *Kārikā* 21. Here the text differs from that found in the *sDe dge* edition of the *Satyadvayavibhaṅga*: *ji ltar rang bzhin* ngo bo'i phyir // 'di la dpyad pa mi 'jug go // rnam par dpyod pa byed na don // gzhan du song bas gnod par 'gyur //* (sa 2b4). *The *Vṛtti* makes it clear that we should read *snang bzhin*. The reading found in the *sKabs dang po'i spyi don* also occurs in earlier texts such as the *dBus pa blo gsal grub mtha'*. Cf. Mimaki 1982, 170-171 and n. 462. Cf. also *ibid.* n. 463 for the logical fault of *arthāntara*, one of the points of defeat (*tshar gcad pa'i gnas; nigrāsthāna*). This interpretation of *arthāntara* is borne out by the *Satyadvayavibhaṅgapañjikā* of Śāntarakṣita, D. 39a3: *don rnal ma las don gzhan zhes bya ba ni / ma 'brel ba'i don te / de tshar gcad pa'i gnas su rnam par gzhas pa ni rigs pa* dang ldan pa yin no /*. "A matter different from the principal matter" means one that is unrelated. This is properly considered a point of defeat." *The text has *rig pa*.

“So, therefore, all [those] natures that are deceptive entities [existing] because one thinks of them, [these natures] exist only customarily.”¹²

And the commentary on [Candrakīrti’s] *Madhyamakāvatāra* [Tsong kha pa’s *dBu ma dgongs pa rab gsal*] states:

“In the *Madhyamakāloka*, the opposite of what is termed the customary mode of existence is known as that which exists ultimately, or as truly established.”¹³

And [finally], as the *Satyadvayavibhaṅga* states:

“What is only as it appears, this is customary [existence]. What is other [than such a characterization] is the opposite [i.e., ultimate existence].”¹⁴

[24b5] Thus, there is nothing that is truly established, ultimately established, in reality established, etc. But there are [phenomena] that are [customarily] established by their own defining characteristics (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*), from their own side (*rang ngos nas grub pa*), by their intrinsic natures (*rang bzhin gyis grub pa*), and that are [customarily] established as being substances (*rdzas su grub pa*).¹⁵

II. [24b6] In general, there are many reasonings proving selflessness (*bdag med*; *anātman*): (1) the “neither one nor many” reason (*gcig du bral gyi gtan tshigs*; *ekānekaviyogahetu*), which analyzes the nature of phenomena; (2) the “diamond-splinters” reason (*rdo rje gzegs ma’i gtan tshigs*; *vajrakāṇahetu*), which analyzes the cause; (3) the reason refuting production of existence or nonexistence (*yod med skye ‘gog gi gtan tshigs*; **sadasadutpādapratīṣedhahetu*), which analyzes the effect; (4) the reason that refutes production according to the four points (*mu bzhi skye ‘gog gi gtan tshigs*; *catuṣkoṭyutpādapratīṣedhahetu*), which analyzes both [the

¹² *Madhyamakāloka* P. 254a6.

¹³ *dBu ma dgongs pa rab gsal* p. 130.

¹⁴ *Satyadvayavibhaṅga* k. 3, D. 1b3.

¹⁵ Cf. Tillemans 1982 on these equivalent terms. *Grub mtha’* texts stress that as Svātantrikas are Mādhyamikas, intrinsic nature, etc. are *only* accepted customarily.

cause and the effect]; (5) the “king of reasonings” (*rigs pa'i rgyal po*), which is the reason from dependent arising (*rten 'brel gyi gtan tshigs; pratītyasamutpādahetu*).¹⁶

¹⁶ The “diamond-splinters” reason is so called because it is said to “vanquish the rock of those who assert real entities.” (See *dBus pa blo gsal grub mtha'*, p. 216 in Mimaki 1982: 'di ni dngos por smra ba'i brag // 'joms byed rdo rje gzebs ma yin //). Important in the formulation of all these reasonings is the use of the qualifier “ultimately” (*don dam par; paramārthatas*), or what performs the same function, the word “truly” (*bden par*). The famous controversy, in the *Prasannapadā*, between the Svātantrika Bhāviveka and the Prāsaṅgika Candrakīrti takes up the question as to whether this qualifier should be present in Madhyamaka-style reasonings or not. Finally, it is interesting to note that Chos kyi rgyal mtshan is presenting five reasons, rather than the four that we see in certain Indian and Tibetan texts. Bhāviveka, in the *Madhyamakārthasamgraha* k. 6 (P. 381a2), speaks of “four reasons such as the refutation of production according to the four points, etc.” (*mu bzhi skye 'gog la sogs pa'i gtan tshigs bzhi*). See Lindtner 1981, 200, n. 14. Moreover, Atiśa, in the *Bodhimārgapradīpapañjikā* (P. 322a7-324a; Lindtner p. 205-211), explains, by name, the *catuṣkoṭyutpādapratīṣedhahetu*, the *vajrakaṇahetu*, the *ekānekaviyogahetu*, and the *pratītyasamutpādahetu*. Cf. also Mimaki 1982, 213-227 for dBus pa blo gsal's presentation of these four. However, Atiśa's explanation of the first reason, i.e., the *catuṣkoṭy*°, is in terms of the four points “existence,” “nonexistence,” “both,” and “neither.” But in our text the four points of the *catuṣkoṭyutpādapratīṣedhahetu* are quite different, and deal with “many producing one,” “many producing many,” “one producing many,” and “one producing one.” What Atiśa termed the *catuṣkoṭy*° is now being termed by Chos kyi rgyal mtshan the **sadasadutpādapratīṣedhahetu* (*yod med skye 'gog gi gtan tshigs*), a reasoning that involves only the two lemmas of “existence” and “nonexistence.”

As for the reasoning that our author terms the *catuṣkoṭy*°, it was the principal argument used by Jñānagarbha to prove emptiness (*śūnyatā*), and was also extensively used by Kamalaśīla in the *Madhyamakāloka* and *Sarvadharmanīḥsvabhāvasiddhi* (cf. P. 322a et passim); however, the term *catuṣkoṭy*° is probably not used in these texts in this context; the closest thing that I have been able to find—and this is not very close—is the *Satyadvayavibhaṅgapañjikā* (D. 28b6-7) speaking about *rnam par rtog pa bzhi*.

This fivefold presentation of the reasons for emptiness is not without some basis in the Indian texts and was certainly not just a simple invention on Chos kyi rgyal mtshan's part. lCang skya (*grub mtha'* p. 378) traces it back to the *Madhyamakāloka*: *slob dpon chen po Ka ma la śī la'i dBu ma snang ba las ni sems tsam pas dbu ma pa la rgol ba'i tshul mang po zhig gsungs nas de dag gi lan 'chad par lugs rigs mang du mdzad pa'i rigs pa'i skabs su [1] rdo rje gzebs ma dang / [2] yod med skye 'gog dang / [3] mu bzhi'i skye 'gog dang / [4] gcig du bral dang / [5] rten 'brel gyi gtan tshigs rnam kyang rgyas par gsungs so /*. And in fact Kamalaśīla does present these five, not by name, but at

(1) [25a1] The first is explained below. (2) The second is as follows: “The sprout is not ultimately produced, because ultimately it is not produced from itself, nor from others, nor from both [self and others], nor from no cause.” As it is said in the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* [of Nāgārjuna]:

“It is not [produced] from self, other, both, or no cause. Never, nowhere, is any entity whatsoever produced.”¹⁷

(3) [25a2] The third [reason]: “The sprout is not ultimately produced, because either it exists at the time of its cause, and is thus not produced, or it does not exist at the time of its cause, and is not ultimately produced.” States the *Madhyamakāloka*:

“An existent is not produced,
A nonexistent is like the lotus in the sky.”¹⁸

(4) [25a4] The fourth [reason]: “The sprout is not ultimately produced, because many causes do not ultimately produce just one effect; nor do many causes ultimately produce only many effects; nor does one cause ultimately produce only many effects; and nor does one cause ultimately produce just one effect.” The *Satyadvayavibhaṅga* states:

“Many do not create one entity,
Nor do many create many.
One does not create many entities,
Nor does one create one.”¹⁹

(5) [25a6] The fifth [reason]: “The sprout is not truly existent, because it is a dependent arising—like, for example, a reflection.”

least in roughly the order in which ICang skya specifies them: (1) = *Madhyamakāloka* P. 147a6-7; (2) = 148a8; (3) = 148b7-8; (4) = 149b4-5; (5) = 149a7-8. It seems, therefore, that we have two differing classificational schemata for the Madhyamaka-reasonings, both to some degree attested in Indian texts, and both being taken up by Tibetan authors.

¹⁷ *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* I k.1: *na svato nāpi parato na dvābhyām nāpy ahetutaḥ / utpannā jātu vidyante bhāvāḥ kvacana kecana //*.

¹⁸ So far, unfindable in the *Madhyamakāloka*.

¹⁹ *Satyadvayavibhaṅga* k. 14, D. 2a5.

(1) [25a6] Amongst these [reasons] we shall now explain the first. Here, there are two points: A. The presentation of the reason; B. The establishment of its [three] characteristics (*tshul*; *rūpa*).

A. [25a7] The bases (*gzhi*; *vastu*), paths (*lam*; *mārga*), and aspects (*rnam pa*; *ākāra*) are not truly established, because they are not established as being either truly one or many—just like, for example, a reflection.²⁰ As the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* [of Śāntarakṣita] states:

“Entities as asserted by ourselves and others are in reality (*yang dag tu*; *tattvatas*) without the nature of oneness or manyness. Thus they are not truly existent—like a reflection.”²¹

B. [25b1] [Establishing the three characteristics]: (a) the *pakṣadharmatva* (“the fact that the reason qualifies the subject”; *phyogs chos*); (b) the entailment (*khyab pa*; *vyāpti*).²² Under point (a) there are two: (i) establishing that the [bases, etc.] are not truly ones; (ii) establishing that they are not truly many.

²⁰ Cf. n. 4 and 5.

²¹ *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* k. 1. Chos kyi rgyal mtshan has substituted *bden par med* (“not truly existent”) for *rang bzhin med* (“without intrinsic nature”; *niḥsvabhāva*). The Tibetan translation of the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* (P. 101 sa 48b) has. . . *rang bzhin med de gzugs brnyan bzhin*. The Sanskrit text found in the *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* 173, 17-18 is: *niḥsvabhāva amī bhāvās tattvataḥ svaparoditāḥ / ekānekasvabhāvena viyogāt pratibimbavat //*. Tsong kha pa, in *dBu ma rgyan gyi zin bris* and *dBu ma dgongs pa rab gsal*, formulates Śāntarakṣita’s argument as proving *don dam par rang bzhin med pa* (“ultimately being without intrinsic nature”), but rGyal tshab rje, in *rNam bshad snying po rgyan* p. 13a, speaks of *bden par med pa*, and Chos kyi rgyal mtshan then goes so far as to incorporate this notion into *kārikā* 1. It might perhaps be that rGyal tshab and Chos kyi rgyal mtshan wished to avoid any possible confusion concerning the view *tha snyad du rang bzhin yod pa* (“customarily there are intrinsic natures”)—a position that the dGe lugs pa attribute to the Svātantrikas. Thus, they chose a completely different term, *bden par med*, instead of *rang bzhin med* or *don dam par rang bzhin med pa*.

²² For the three characteristics of a valid reason, see n. 38. Note that in this context the *anvayavyāpti* (“positive entailment”) and the *vyatirekavyāpti* (“contraposition”) are not treated individually by Chos kyi rgyal mtshan. Rather, he simply speaks of the entailment (*khyab pa*; *vyāpti*) between the reason and the property to be proved (*bsgrub bya’i chos*; *sādhya-dharma*). What this comes down to is proving that for all *x*: if *x* is neither truly one nor many, then *x* is not truly existent.

(i) [25b2] The bases, paths, and aspects are not truly ones, because they have parts (*cha bcas*; *sāvayava*). They have parts, because (a’) they exist; (b’) it is impossible that a knowable thing (*shes bya*; *jñeya*) be without parts; (c’) “having parts” is directly contradictory (*dnegos* ‘gal) with “being partless.”

[25b3] What is the *pramāṇa* (“source of knowledge”) that refutes the possibility of partless knowable things? Suppose that we are using the reason “because it has parts” to prove that the bases, paths, and aspects are not truly ones. To ascertain this by means of an inferential (*rjes dpag*; *anumāna*) *pramāṇa*, there are three [other] *pramāṇas* that must precede [the inference]: the *pramāṇa* that ascertains [the meaning of] “having parts,” the reason in question; the *pramāṇa* that ascertains “not being truly one” is directly contradictory with “being truly one”; the *pramāṇa* that refutes [the possibility of] a common element (*gzhi mthun*) qualified by “having parts” and “being truly one.”²³ Amongst these [three], it is the third that is the most difficult to understand: so let me explain this [point].

[25b5] Let us hypothesize that there are common elements [such as vases, etc.] qualified by “having parts” and “being truly one.” Now, it would follow that a vase [, for example,] would appear, to the conceptual cognition (*rtog pa*; *kalpanā*) that grasped it, as being essentially different (*ngo bo tha dad*; *bhinnarūpa*) from its parts but would [however] be [customarily] established as essentially identical (*ngo bo gcig*; *ekarūpa*) with its parts. For, although [the vase] might appear to such a cognition as being essentially different from its parts, it is essentially one with them.²⁴

²³ I have been unable to find a clear Indian source for these three *pramāṇas*. rGyal tshab rje speaks about them extensively in *rNam ‘grel thar lam gsal byed*, Vol. 1 p. 37; the context is rGyal tshab’s discussion of k. 15 of *Pramāṇavārttika*’s *Svārthānumānapariccheda*, a *kārikā* in which Dharmakīrti is arguing for the inclusion of the word “certainty” (*nges pa*; *niścaya*, *niścita*) in the definitions of the three characteristics. Nonetheless, these *pramāṇas* seem to be fairly peripheral to Dharmakīrti’s own meaning and thus may possibly be a later, Tibetan elaboration and development. Cf. also Chos kyi rgyal mtshan’s *rNam ‘grel spyi don* f. 53a.

²⁴ “Customarily essentially one” means indistinguishability to the direct perception (*mngon sum*; *pratyakṣa*) of ordinary, or non-*Ārya*, sentient beings. The idea is that when one *thinks* or speaks of parts and wholes, subjects and predicates, actions and agents, etc., one thinks of them separately even though the differences between them are only conceptually created. Such differences can not be remarked by direct perception. Cf. Tillemans 1983 for a more detailed explanation.

If it were not so [that the vase and its parts were essentially one from the point of view of customary truth], it would follow absurdly (*thal lo*) that the vase would have to be partless.²⁵

[25b7] But suppose that one agreed to the root proposition [that to a conceptual cognition a vase appears as being essentially different from its parts, although it is essentially one with them]. It would then follow absurdly that the vase would be a deceptive phenomenon (*brdzun pa; mṛṣā*). The entailment is as follows: Given a deceptive mode of being, there would be no contradiction in the fact that from the standpoint of appearance [things such as vases and their parts] might appear as being essentially different, even though in terms of the way they exist (*sdod lugs*) they are essentially one. But there is a contradiction when [we mean] things that have a true mode of being.²⁶

[26a] A further reason [why what has parts cannot be truly one]: it would follow absurdly that the whole and its many parts would not be different (*tha dad*), because if they are, they will have to be seen as

²⁵ Tsong kha pa, in *Drang nges legs bshad snying po* (Sarnath ed.) p. 137, stresses that “from the point of view of customary truth, it is certainly not contradictory for one phenomenon to be of the nature of many parts” (. . . *chos gcig cha du ma'i bdag nyid du yod pa tha snyad pa'i don la mi 'gal mod* . . .). In other words, customarily parts and wholes must be essentially one if there is to be a part-whole relationship at all. It is from the perspective of ultimate truth that this relationship becomes incoherent.

²⁶ Tsong kha pa, in *dBu ma dgongs pa rab gsal* (Sarnath ed.), p. 135-136, maintains that this argument is an “abbreviated, easily understood” (*mdor bsdus go sla bar*) way to understand the Svāntarikas' position. Moreover, on p. 136 he says—with far from obvious textual justification—that it is what Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla held (*zhi ba 'tsho yab sras kyi bzhed pa*). There are, it seems to me, three key steps in Tsong kha pa's presentation of this argument:

(a) Parts and wholes appear as being essentially different to the conceptual cognition that thinks of them (*rtog pa la ngo bo tha dad du snang ba*), although they are customarily essentially identical.

(b) Therefore, the way in which parts and wholes appear (*snang tshul*), and the way they customarily are (*gnas tshul*), are not in accord (*mi mthun pa*). Thus, they are like an illusion and are deceptive phenomena (*brdzun pa*).

(c) Whatever is truly established (*bden par grub pa*) can not be deceptive in any way (*rnam par thams cad du brdzun pa spangs*).

If we accept (a), (b), and (c), the conclusion that parts and wholes are not truly established phenomena would follow.

different during an *Ārya*’s meditative equipoise, and such is not the case.²⁷ The first part [of the reason] would follow, because if they are different, they will have to be truly different, and if they were [truly different], they [the *Āryas*] would have to see them as such. Here, the first part [i.e., the fact that if they are different, they will have to be truly different] follows, because [the parts and the whole] are [hypothesized as being] things that, on the one hand, seem to be essentially different from the standpoint of appearance but are in their mode of being essentially identical, and that, on the other hand, are also truly established.²⁸

[26a3] The second part [of the above reason] is established [i.e., if the parts and the whole were truly different, the *Āryas* would have to see them as such], because if they were [truly different], then [this difference] would have to be established absolutely (*de kho na nyid du*).²⁹

[26a3] Now suppose that one agreed to the root proposition [that parts and wholes are not different]. Then it would follow [absurdly] that the many parts would be one [i.e., identical], because they would be established and they would not be different from the whole. Here, one could not agree [that the many parts are one], because the [parts’] being one would be countered by the *pramāṇa* that knows them to be many. [Similarly] it would follow absurdly that the whole would be many, because it would be established and would not be different from [its] many parts. Here

²⁷ The dGe lugs pa maintain the (at first sight) rather confusing position that parts and wholes are different (*tha dad*) but not essentially different (*ngo bo tha dad*). Parts and wholes differ in that they have differing names and can be the subjects of different beliefs and attitudes. Cf. Phur bu lcoḡ Byams pa tshul khriḡs rgya mtsho’s *bsDus grwa chung* p. 12b. In modern terminology, we could say that they differ in that they are not intersubstitutable *salva veritate* in epistemic contexts such as “... knows that...” or “... believes that ...”. The terminology used in *bsDus grwa* and *lCang skya grub mtha’* is that they have “differing exclusions” (*ldog pa tha dad*). Cf. n. 52 below. This notion of *ngo bo gcig ldog pa tha dad* (“essentially one but having different exclusions”) crops up frequently in dGe lugs pa philosophy, and is used to explain the relation between such things as the two truths, as well as subjects and their qualities.

²⁸ My translation here is not literal. Where the Tibetan speaks of “common elements” (*gzhi mthun*), I use the construction “on the one hand ...,” “on the other hand ...”

²⁹ Cf. n. 9.

[again], one could not agree, because the [whole's] being many would be countered by the *pramāṇa* that knows it to be one.³⁰

[26a5] [Thus], by means of this line of reasoning, one denies that there is a common element qualified by “having parts” and “being truly one.” For, according to this approach, one denies that if wholes and parts are different, they have to be seen as different during the *Āryas*’ meditative equipoise. By denying this, one denies that they are truly different. And by this, one denies that there is a common element qualified by “having parts” and “being truly one.”³¹

[26a6] To summarize the sense: The bases, paths, and aspects are not truly ones, because they have parts. The entailment holds, because if anything were to be truly one, it would have to be one [thing] that does not depend on anything [else] whatsoever, and in such a case, it could not have parts. [However,] they [i.e., the bases, etc.] do have parts, because (a’) they are established bases (*gzhi grub*);³² (b’) it is impossible that a knowable thing be partless; (c’) “having parts” is directly contradictory with “being partless”.

(ii) [26bl] [Establishing that the bases, etc. are not truly many:] They are not truly many [different things], because they do not exist as true

³⁰ This is the usual Indian form of the “neither one nor many” argument. To take an example from Śāntarakṣita, in *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* k. 22 we find him arguing against a Sautrāntika-Sākāravādin school who believed that the manifold aspects and the single consciousness were non-dual (*sna tshogs gnyis med pa*). In the *Vṛtti* he states: *rnam pa de dag sna tshogs pa ‘di ni rigs pa ma yin te / rnam par shes pa gcig dang tha dad ma yin pa’i phyir shes pa de’i rang gyi ngo bo bzhin no / (57b8) ...rnam par shes pa de rnam pa du ma dang tha dad pa ma yin pa’i lus yin na ni / rnam pa de dag gi bye brag bzhin du du mar ‘gyur ro / (58a3)*. “The manifold aspects are incoherent. As they are not different from the one consciousness, they will be similar to it in nature [and will also all become one].” ... “If consciousness were a body (*lus*) indistinct from its many aspects, then it [too] would be many, just as are the various aspects.”

³¹ An argument by contraposition. If *x* has parts and is truly one, then *x* is truly existent. Hence, the whole and parts of *x* would be truly different, and this difference would have to be perceived during the *Āryas*’ meditations. Since it is not so perceived, it follows by a number of applications of *modus tollens* that *x* is not something that both has parts and is truly one.

³² “Established basis” (*gzhi grub*) is equivalent to “existent” (*yod pa*) and “knowable thing” (*shes bya*). Cf. n. 53 below and *bsDus grwa chung* chapter II (*gzhi grub kyi rnam bzhag*).

ones [i.e., as individuals]. The entailment holds, because manyness must be posited in dependence on oneness.³³

(b) [26bl] Establishing entailment [between “being neither truly one nor many” and “not being truly existent”].

[26bl] If one is to ascertain with a *pramāṇa* that the bases, paths, and aspects are not truly existent, using the reason “neither truly one nor many,” then there are three [other] preliminary *pramāṇas* needed; the *pramāṇa* that ascertains [what it means to be] neither [truly one nor many]; the *pramāṇa* that ascertains that “not truly existent” is directly contradictory with “being truly established”; the *pramāṇa* that refutes [the possibility of] a common element qualified by “being neither [truly one nor many]” and “truly established.”

[26b3] As the latter is [again] the most difficult to understand, let me explain this [point]. Suppose that with regard to a reflection one ascertains, with a *pramāṇa*, that oneness and manyness are mutually exclusive (*phan tshun spangs ‘gal; parasparaparihāraviruddha*)³⁴ and directly contradictory. Now, in dependence on this *pramāṇa*, one can refute [the possibility of] a common element qualified by “being neither truly one nor many” and “truly established.”³⁵ For, by the action of this *pramāṇa*, and without having to depend on any other mediate *pramāṇa*, one can understand that such a common element is impossible.³⁶

³³ This argument is found in *Madhyamakālaṃkāra* k. 61-62.

³⁴ Cf. *Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti* ad k. 1 (P. 52b6): *rang bzhin zhig yod par gyur na ni gcig pa ‘am cig shos pas mi ‘da ‘o // de dag ni phan tshun spangs te gnas pa ‘i mtshan nyid yin pas phung po gzhan sel bar byed do /*. “If an intrinsic nature did exist, then it could not be anything but one [i.e., individual] or the opposite [i.e., many]. These [i.e., oneness and manyness] are mutually exclusive characteristics and thus admit of no other alternative.” Cf. *Madhyamakālaṃkārapañjikā* P. 89a6 for a fuller explanation. The locutions *phung po gzhan sel bar byed pa* or *phung po gzhan med pa* (*Pañjikā*), or sometimes, *phung gsum srid pa ‘i sgro ‘dogs chod pa* (*lCang skya grub mtha’* p. 393), correspond to the formulation *tertium non datur* of the Law of Excluded Middle.

³⁵ The length of the Tibetan sentence necessitated a somewhat non-literal rendering. I chose to split it into two and repeat the word *pramāṇa* (*tshad ma*).

³⁶ The idea seems to be that one first knows that a reflection is neither one thing nor many different things and is therefore nonexistent. On the basis of this understanding, one generalizes and then comes to understand that oneness and manyness are “mutually exclusive” and “directly contradictory,” that is, that there is no third alternative between oneness and manyness for existent things (Cf. n. 34). In other words, one understands

[26b5] [Conclusions]: Therefore, the intelligent disciple, for whom the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* is destined, has a [particular] way of developing faith in the nature of the Mother [*prajñāpāramitā*]: he develops this faith by establishing, with a *pramāṇa*, the existence of the Mother three omnisciences (*mkhyen pa gsum*; *tisraḥ sarvajñatāḥ*).³⁷ He also has a [particular] way to develop faith in the power of the Mother [*prajñāpāramitā*]: this faith he develops by establishing, with a *pramāṇa*, that the [Mother] three omnisciences are capable of effectuating the perfection that is the professed purpose of their *Ārya* [*bodhisattva*] sons.

An excerpt from Tsong kha pa's dBU ma rgyan gyi zin bris

[P. Na 77b3] [Objection:] But suppose that one takes this proof [i.e., the proof that entities are neither truly one nor many] as a *svatantra* [*hetu*] (“autonomous reason”; *rang rgyud*). Then since subjects (*chos can*; *dharmin*) such as the *ātman* (“Self”), *Īśvara* (“God”), etc., asserted by non-Buddhists, and [the notions of] suffering and partless consciousness, asserted by our co-religionists, are not established, it would follow that the *pakṣadharmatva* would not be established. Hence, [using a *svatantrahetu*] would be incoherent.³⁸

the principle, for all x : if x is not one thing and x is not many different things, then x does not exist. If one understands this much, then one can *immediately* understand that for all x : if x is not truly one thing and x is not truly many different things, then x is not truly existent. It suffices to add the word “truly” to the previous principle.

³⁷ Cf. n. 4 and 5. The Tibetans frequently abbreviate *thams cad mkhyen pa gsum* by simply *mkhyen pa gsum*; in Tillemans 1983 I translated this as “three wisdoms.”

³⁸ Generally, Mādhyamikas understand by *svatantrahetu*, or *svatantrānumāna*, a proof along the lines of the Dignāga-Dharmakīrti model, where the reason (*gtan tshigs*; *hetu*) possesses the three characteristics (*tshul*; *rūpa*) necessary for validity: (a) the *pakṣadharmatva*, the fact that the reason does qualify the subject; (b) the *anvayavyāpti*, the fact that the reason entails the property to be proved; (c) the *vyatirekavyāpti*, the fact that the negation of the property to be proved entails the negation of the reason. Note, however, that the dGe lugs pa view of what constitutes a *svatantrahetu* demands certain additional conditions—see chapter V below and Tillemans 1982.

Since Dignāga, Buddhist logicians have recognized that the subject's being nonexistent is one among a number of sufficient conditions for saying that the *pakṣadharmatva* of the *svatantrahetu* does not hold. Cf. *Pramāṇasamuccaya* III k. 10, P. 130 ce 7a3:

[77b4] [Reply:] Now in the *Madhyamakālaṃkārapañjikā* [of Kamalaśīla] it is said that one can prove only *prasaṅgas* (“consequences”) in the case of unacknowledged entities imputed by non-Buddhists, but that with regard to acknowledged entities [which possess] their own natures, both [*prasaṅgas* and *svatantrahetus*] are without fault.³⁹ [Moreover,] Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge and other Tibetan scholars also said that a *svatantra* was inappropriate in the case of a [nonexistent] subject imputed by non-Buddhists.⁴⁰

[77b6] [However,] [Kamalaśīla’s] *Madhyamakāloka* explains that even if one takes a subject of the sort previously described, so long as the reason (*rtaḡs*; *liṅga*), and property [to be proved] (*chos*; *dharma*) are mere negations, a *svatantra* is most definitely appropriate; this is stated many times.⁴¹ If reasons and properties [to be proved] only applied to established

*gnyi ga la grub chos kyi * ni //*
tha snyad bya phyir gnyi ga dang //
gcig la ldog dang the tshom dang //
gzhi ma grub la mi ‘dod do //

*The *Vṛtti* (trans. Kanakavarman and Dad pa shes rab) ce 127b6-7 reads *kyis*. “One should apply the term [*pakṣa*] *dharma* to what is established for both [the debaters]. Thus, if one or both negates [the reason], or if it is in doubt, or if its locus is not established, it is not admitted [as the *pakṣadharmā*].”

Finally, note that Tibetan authors frequently cite a line from the *Madhyamakālaṃkāravṛtti* ad k. 1 as the basic source for situating the problem of *āśrayāsiddha* in the context of the “neither one nor many” argument. The key passage is (P. 52b7-8): *gtan tshigs ‘di ma grub po snyam du ma sems shig* / “Do not think that this reason is unestablished.” An “unestablished reason” (*ma grub pa’i gtan tshigs: asiddhahetu*) is one where the *pakṣadharmatva* does not hold.

³⁹ A *prasaṅga* is a proposition implied by the opponent’s position and need not be accepted by its proponent.

⁴⁰ For more on Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109-1169), an influential figure in the development of the Tibetan Pramāṇa tradition, see van der Kuijp 1978 and 1983.

⁴¹ Cf. *Madhyamakāloka* P. 188a3-6 cited in *lCang skya grub mtha’* p. 379: *gang la dngos po’i chos yod pa’i ngo bor sgrub par mi ‘dod kyi / ‘on kyang sgro btags pa’i chos rnam par bcad pa sgrub pa tsam zhig brjod par ‘dod pa de la ni ma grub pa nyid la sogs pa’i / nyes pa brjod pa tha snyad du yang dngos por gyur pa’i chos can mi dgos te / de ni de’i chos ma yin pa’i phyir ro // de la bltos nas kyang de’i chos can nyid du mi ‘thad pa’i phyir ro // de ma grub tu zin kyang bsgrub par bya ba med na mi ‘byung ba’i gtan tshigs mngon par ‘dod pa’i don grub pa la gegs byed pa med pa’i phyir ro /*. “When one does not wish to prove that a [certain] property of a real entity does in fact occur but wishes

[i.e., existent] bases (*gzhi grub*), then *svatantras*, [or in other words,] proofs that are not *prasāṅgas*, would be inappropriate for these types of subjects. But if there is nothing contradictory for a reason or a property that is a non-implying negation (*med par dgag pa*; *prasajyapraṭiṣedha*) to also [qualify] an unestablished basis, then for such [nonexistent] subjects, too, the *svatantra* will be thoroughly proper. This is the teacher and scholar Kamalaśīla's position.

[77b8] [Objection and reply:] But then what was previously explained in the *Madhyamakālaṃkārapañjikā* does not correspond to the *Madhyamakāloka*. As Dharmamitra, however, held that the *Pañjikā* was by Kamalaśīla, it should be investigated if [Kamalaśīla] might not have composed this text [i.e., the *Pañjikā*] specifically at a time when his thought was [still] immature.⁴²

[78a] Well then, what is our own position with regard to these types of [nonexistent] subjects? In this context, the *Mahātman* Dignāga states:

“By means of objects of direct perception, inference, belief, and convention, [and] pertaining to its actual basis (*rang rten la 'o*).”⁴³

merely to prove a negation of a projected property, then if it is said that there are faults such as *asiddha*, etc., [we reply] that it is not necessary that the subject be a real entity, even customarily. For, it [i.e., the property to be proved] is not [in fact] the property of that [nonexistent subject]. Moreover, it [i.e., the nonexistent subject] is not properly the subject of that [property] which would depend on it. And although it [i.e., the subject] is granted to be unestablished, this does not constitute an obstacle to the establishment of the object intended as the reason that is necessarily linked to the [property] to be proved.”

⁴² For the problem of the authorship of the *Madhyamakālaṃkārapañjikā* and the lost commentary by Dharmamitra on the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*, see Mimaki 1982a, 371, n. 39.

⁴³ See *Pramāṇasamuccaya* P. 43a6 (trans. Vasudhararakṣita and Seng rgyal), as well as the sDe dge and Co ne *bstan* 'gyur versions of *Pramāṇasamuccaya* III k. 2 (The sDe dge/Co ne version of this *kārikā* has *brtan la 'o* rather than *rten* or *brtan la 'o*). This verse, which is frequently cited by such dGe lugs pa authors as rGyal tshab rje (cf. *rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed*, Vol. 2, p. 316) and lCang skya rol pa'i rdo rje (cf. *lCang skya grub mtha'* p. 121), only figures in one of the translations of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*; it is not in the Peking version of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, nor is it commented upon in Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya* or Jinendrabuddhi's *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā*. The following verse, however, is found in the Peking version of the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and is commented on in both translations of the *Vṛtti* as well as in the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (cf. P. 294a):

Thus, in explaining that the basis [i.e., the subject] and the property [in a proper thesis (*pratijñā* or *pakṣa*)] are not refuted, he did not merely say [the words] “with regard to the subject” (*chos can la'o*) but rather “its actual subject” (*rang gi chos can; svadharmin*).⁴⁴ And Śrī Dharmakīrti explained the thought behind saying these words as follows: Although the proposition (*tshogs don*) composed of the [merely] nominal subject (*chos can 'ba' zhig pa; kevaladharmin*) and the property to be proved might be

rang gi ngo bo kho na bstan //
bdag 'dod rang gi chos can la //
mngon sum don dang rjes dpag dang //
yid ches grags pas ma bsal ba'o //

Now, instead of this reading, Tsong kha pa has obviously followed the sDe dge/Co ne version of k. 2 and Vasudhararakṣita and Seng rgyal's translation of the *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti*, where *rang rten la'o* is substituted for *rang gi chos can la* (= *svadharminī*) ...*ma bsal ba'o* (= *anirākṛtaḥ*), which makes for a difficult reading. It seems probable that Tsong kha pa understood *rang rten la'o* as meaning the same thing as *rang gi chos can la* and then introduced the term *rang rten chos can*. And even though the verse from the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* is most likely a corruption of the text, it did have quite an importance for the dGe lugs pa. Post-Tsong kha pa writers frequently cite this verse and use the terminology *rang rten* and *rang rten chos can*; rGyal tshab rje, to take an example, in *rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed*, Vol. 2, interprets quite a number of *kārikās* in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV in the light of this questionable verse.

[Remarks added in 2020]: It is now clear that the Peking version of PS k. 2 is no doubt the right version. It gives Dignāga's definition of a thesis as commented by Dharmakīrti and others. See Tillemans 2000, 3-6 for a translation of PS and PS-Vṛtti to k. 1 and 2; see also *ibid.*, 47. The Sanskrit of PS k. 2 can be reconstructed from quotes in these works as follows:

svarūpeṇaiva nirdeśyaḥ svayam iṣṭo 'nirākṛtaḥ /
pratyakṣārthānumānāptaprasiddhena svadharminī //.

“[A valid thesis] is one that is intended (*iṣṭa*) by [the proponent] himself (*svayam*) as something to be stated (*nirdeśya*) in its proper form alone (*svarūpeṇaiva*) [i.e., as a *sādhya*]; [and] with regard to [the proponent's] own subject (*svadharmin*), it is not opposed (*anirākṛta*) by perceptible objects (*pratyakṣārtha*), by inference (*anumāna*), by authorities (*āpta*) or by what is commonly recognized (*prasiddha*).”

⁴⁴ I translated *rang gi chos can* (“its own subject”) by “its actual subject,” and *rang rten* by “its actual basis,” to better bring out the contrast with “nominal subjects” (*chos can 'ba' zhig pa*). More exactly, it is the proponent's own intended subject.

negated, there is no fault, as this property [to be proved] does not negate the subject that is the actual basis of the property to be proved.⁴⁵ Thus, he [Dignāga] says “basis” in order to show that the fault occurs when one negates the subject that is the actual basis of the property to be proved, and [hence negates] the [proposition] composed of the two [i.e., of the actual basis and the property].

[78a5] Now is there [thought to be] a fault in refuting the nominal subject? This is extensively explained in passages of the *Pramāṇavārttika* such as, “For example, space, etc. by others...,” and in connection with the Vaiśeṣika position.⁴⁶

[78a6] The so-called “nominal subject” means one that is stated as the subject but is not [in fact] the basis of the property to be proved in question; it is, thus, an unrelated (*yan gar bar*) subject.⁴⁷ [Objection:] “If it is so that when [presenting] a *svatantra*, the *pakṣadharmā* has to qualify whatever might happen to be the locus of debate (*rtsod gzhi*),⁴⁸ then there will be no sense in making a difference between the nominal subject and the subject that is the actual basis. Hence, when one takes *ātman*, *pradhāna*

⁴⁵ Cf. *Pramāṇavārttika* IV k. 136-148. Note that Kamalaśīla in the *Madhyamakāloka* P. 188b-189a quotes quite a number of these particular *kārikās* from *Pramāṇavārttika* IV. Cf. also n. 41.

⁴⁶ *Pramāṇavārttika* IV k. 141 and 142.

yathā parair anutpādyāpūrvarūpaṃ na khādikam /
sakṛc chabdādyahetutvād ity ukte prāha dūṣakaḥ //
tadvad vastusvabhāvo 'san dharmī vyomādir ity api /
naivam iṣṭasya sādhyasya bādhā kācana vidyate //*

*Miyasaka 1972 and Sāṅkṛtyāyana 1953, 550 have the reading *anutpādyā pūrvarūpan*, but I have preferred to follow Manorathanandin (*Vṛtti* p. 407.5). Cf. the Tibetan of 141ab: *dper na mkha' sogs gzhan dag gis / sngon med rang bzhin skyed med min /*. “For example, when one states that space, etc. are not novel natures unproduced by other [conditions] because they are not causes for [producing their qualities such as] sound etc. all at once, the [Vaiśeṣika] adversary might say that in that case the subject, space, etc., would not have the nature of a real entity. But, like that [i.e., when the subject is the Vaiśeṣika's notion of space], there is no refutation whatsoever of the desired proposition to be proved.”

⁴⁷ Cf. *rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed*, Vol. 2, p. 317: *bsgrub bya'i chos dang 'brel med kyi chos can 'ba'zhig pa ...* “the nominal subject, which is unrelated to the property to be proved ...”.

⁴⁸ In other words, whatever is simply being spoken about, be it existent or nonexistent.

(“the Principal”),⁴⁹ etc. as the loci of debate, then the *svatantraliṅga* (*rang rgyud kyi rtags*)⁵⁰ will [still] be inappropriate.” [Reply:] But such [a position stems from] not differentiating the viewpoint of the two lords of logic [i.e., Dignāga and Dharmakīrti] from that of the infidels. Having in this way cited the texts of the *sūtra* [i.e., Dignāga’s *Pramāṇasamuccaya*]⁵¹ and the *Pramāṇavārttika*, [the matter] will be more extensively explained in accordance with the *Madhyamakāloka*.

[78bl] In the *Madhyamakāloka* it is said that it is not sufficient to refute *ātman*, *pradhāna*, etc. by just *prasaṅgas* but that [these pseudo-entities] should also be refuted by *svatantraliṅgas*. And furthermore, the refutations should pertain to the [objects’] own double negatives (*rang ldog nas*).⁵² On account of these two requirements, it is necessary that [*ātman*, etc.] be taken as loci of debate for *svatantra* proofs. And in this case, although the reason that proves they [i.e., *ātman*, etc.] are not real entities (*dngos med*; *abhāva*)⁵³ ends up refuting the subject, [the irreality of *ātman*,

⁴⁹ In the Sāṃkhya system, *pradhāna* is equivalent to *prakṛti*, the primordial matter or nature. Cf. *Sāṃkhyakārikābhāṣya* ad k. 3: *mūlaprakṛtiḥ pradhānam* /. In Tibetan translations of the Sāṃkhya terminology, *gtso bo* equals *spyi gtso bo*.

⁵⁰ *svatantraliṅga* (*rang rgyud kyi rtags*) = *svatantrahetu* (*rang rgyud kyi gtan tshigs*).

⁵¹ *Sūtra* (*mdo*) refers to *tshad ma’i mdo*, i.e., the *Pramāṇasamuccaya* of Dignāga.

⁵² This is a complicated way of saying that it is *pradhāna*, etc. *themselves* that should be refuted. In the dGe lugs pa texts on *Pramāṇa*, the *rang ldog* of *x* means simply *x* itself, or more exactly, the exclusion of everything that is *in anyway different* (*tha dad*) from *x*. There are a series of these important terms using *ldog pa*: *rang ldog*; *gzhi ldog* (“the exclusion that is the basis [for applying a term]”); *don ldog* (“the exclusion that is the meaning [for applying a term]”), etc. See the *ldog pa ngos ‘dzin* chapter (“recognizing the exclusion”) of *bsDus grwa chung* p. 10b-lla.

⁵³ I have used “real entity” rather than just “entity” or “existent” to avoid confusion between *dngos po* and *yod pa*, concepts that are quite distinct in the dGe lugs pa Tshad ma philosophy. This school’s ontology can be represented as follows:

The set A of existent things (*yod pa*) = the set of knowable things (*shes bya*) = the set of established bases (*gzhi grub*)

Proper subset of A: the set of permanent things (*rtag pa*) = the set of uncomposed phenomena (‘*dus ma byas kyi chos*) = the set of unproduced phenomena (*ma byas pa’i chos*)

Proper subset of A: the set of real entities (*dngos po*) = the set of impermanent things (*mi rtag pa*) = the set of products (*byas pa*) = the set of things able to perform a function (*don byed nus pa*)

etc.] is proven according to both ways [i.e., *prasaṅgas* and *svatantras*] without fault.

[78b3] [Dharmakīrti's] *Pramāṇavārttika*, the sense of Dignāga's utterances, states the following:

“The existence of the conventions of what is to be inferred (*dpag bya; anumeya*) and what infers (*dpog par byed pa; anumāna*) is imputed in dependence on a difference that is established for a [conceptual] consciousness.”⁵⁴

Following this [line of thought], in cases where the locus must be a real entity, such as [when one is] proving that sound is impermanent because it is a product, or that there is fire on the smokey hill, the directly [intended] basis (*dnogs rten*) for these proofs and refutations is just the object that is the conceptual image [lit. “appearance” (*snang ba*)] of *sound* or *hill* as not-not-sound or not-not-hill.⁵⁵ *Sound* and *hill*, themselves, are not the directly [intended] bases, because they do not directly appear to the conceptual cognition (*rtog pa*) that effectuates the proofs and refutations; and if one phenomenon [, such as *sound*, etc.,] is established, then at the same time

As for the term “not a real entity” (*dnogs med; abhāva*), it covers both what is permanent and what is completely nonexistent (*med pa*). A more extensive exposition of this ontology is to be found in the Sautrāntika chapters of *grub mtha'* texts. Cf. also *bsDus grwa chung* chapter II, *gzhi grub kyi rnam bzhag*.

⁵⁴ *Pramāṇavārttika* IV k. 183:

*anumānānumeyārthavyavahārasthitis tv iyam /
bhedam pratyayasamsiddham avalambya prakalpyate */*

*Cf. PV *Bhāṣya*, Miyasaka: *ca kalpyate*. Tib. *rnam par brtags pa yin*.

⁵⁵ Literally, “The very objects that are *sound* and *hill* appearing, to conceptual cognition, as what is excluded from not-those two.” I have, however, simply translated *ma yin pa las log pa* by “not-not-,” as the Tibetans themselves make no distinction between *ma yin pa las log pa* and *ma yin pa ma yin pa*. An important point to be noted is that conceptual images—also often known as “object-universals” (*don spyi*)—are not real entities (*dnogs med*). They are, however, said to be permanent and are thus not completely nonexistent (*med pa*)—see n. 53. Furthermore, to every item, existent or nonexistent, there corresponds such an image, and though the item (e.g., *pradhāna*) may be nonexistent, its image is not.

all its properties [, such as impermanence, etc.,] are also established [, but in logical reasoning, this does not occur].⁵⁶

[78b6] However, [in these examples] the image’s locus (*snang gzhi*), which appears in this way [i.e., as not-not-sound or not-not-hill], is *sound* or *hill*.⁵⁷ Thus, the locus must be a real entity. But [take] cases where the locus, i.e., the subject, need not be a real entity—when [, for example,] *pradhāna*, *Īśvara*, etc. are taken as the loci of debate. The conceptual image as not-not-*pradhāna* or not-not-*Īśvara*, however, does exist, and it is just this that one apprehends when proving that [*pradhāna*, etc.] are not real entities. Therefore, this locus [i.e., the image] does not have the defect that it is not the opponent’s object of inquiry, or that it is not what the proponent wishes to infer. Moreover, suppose that one is refuting that the image’s locus [i.e., *pradhāna*, etc.] is a real entity, because it is devoid of ability to perform a function, or that one refutes the true existence of the image’s locus by [proving that] it is neither truly one nor many. Now, these two reasons will qualify the simple image as not-not-*pradhāna* and not-not-*Īśvara*. And [thus] this very image is the subject that takes as its property the property to be proved, and is designated the *pakṣa* of which

⁵⁶ Tsong kha pa’s point in introducing *Pramāṇavārttika* IV k. 183 was that it shows the oft-discussed theme that the difference between subjects and their properties is only conceptually created (cf. rGyal tshab *op. cit.* Vol. 1, p. 97). In other words, when one says or thinks that sound is impermanent, even though there is in fact no difference between the *svalakṣaṇa* (i.e., the real entity) sound and its impermanence, there seems to be such a difference to thought. The consequence is that although the *svalakṣaṇa* sound is indirectly denoted (*brda’i zhen yul*) by the word “sound,” what directly appears to the mind, the “directly [intended] basis” (*dngos rten*) when one says “sound,” can not be the *svalakṣaṇa* sound: if it were, then sound’s impermanence, and all the other properties that are in fact not different from sound, should also appear. An inference of sound’s impermanence would thus become superfluous, as this could be established by simply hearing the word “sound.” Thus, *svalakṣaṇa* can only be (indirectly) referred to via the medium of their conceptually created counterparts; it is these images that are ultimately responsible for the separation between subject and predicate and that are the direct objects of discursive thought.

⁵⁷ The image’s locus is, as it were, the “original” of the copy. Thus, for example, *sound* is the locus of the conceptual image as not-not-sound, and *pradhāna* is the locus of the image as not-not-*pradhāna*.

is predicated the *dharma* in *pakṣadharmā*.⁵⁸ So even though the nominal subject is refuted, this does not lead to the fault that the *pakṣadharmā*[*tva*] is not established.

[79a2] If one is using [the reason] [“because it is] a product” to prove sound’s impermanence, then as the double negative image (*snang ldog*),⁵⁹ which is the appearance as not-not-sound, is not a real entity, the reason, *product*, does not qualify it. Rather, *product* must qualify the image’s locus, *sound*. This is due to the fact that the reason and property to be proved are real entities.

[79a4] If [however] “devoid of ability to perform a function” or “neither truly one nor many” are taken as reasons, then both the image’s locus [*pradhāna*, etc.] and the double negative image [i.e., the conceptual image as not-not-*pradhāna*, etc.] would be qualified by the reasons. And granted that the image’s locus is qualified by the reason, then although this [i.e., the image’s locus] might be refuted, the double negative image would [still] be established as the subject on which depends the property to be proved and the *dharma* of the *pakṣadharmā*.⁶⁰

[79a5] This has been a summary of the essentials. For a more extensive [explanation] one should consult the *Madhyamakāloka*.

⁵⁸ Usually, the term *pakṣa* means the thesis, composed of the subject and the property to be proved. But in the term *pakṣadharmā*, *pakṣa* refers only to the subject. Cf. *Pramānavārttikasvavṛtti* ad k. 1 (*Svārthānumāna*): *pakṣo dharmī / avayave samudāyopacārāt* /. “The *pakṣa* is the subject. For [here] the part is metaphorically designated as the whole.” Note that the term *dharma* in *pakṣadharmā* refers to the reason, whence the meaning of *pakṣadharmatva*: “the fact that the reason is a quality of the subject.”

⁵⁹ In other words, the image itself.

⁶⁰ Cf. Tillemans 1982, 116-118. It should be remembered that because a conceptual image as not-not-*pradhāna* is permanent, it is, in this system, not a real entity and is devoid of ability to perform a function. Cf. n. 53.

Tibetan text of the selection from the sKabs dang po'i spyi don

[New 24a6; Old 2la] / rang lugs la / slob dpon gyis bzhed pa'i rtags gyi
dgag bya'i chos ngos gzung ba dang / de gzhi gzhan gyi steng du 'gog
byed [24a7] kyi rigs pa bshad pa'o //

dang po ni / blo la snang ba'i dbang gis bzhag pa ma yin par rang gi
thun mong ma yin pa'i sdod lugs kyi ngos nas grub pa de / don dam dpyod
byed kyi rtags kyi dgag bya'i chos yin te / gang zag dang phung po de ltar
grub [24b1] na / don⁶¹ dam dpyod⁶² byed kyi rigs pas dpyad bzod⁶³ cing
'phags pa'i mnyam gzhas gis gzigs dgos pa'i phyir te /

dper na sgyu ma mkhan gyis⁶⁴ rde'u shing rta glang du sprul pa'i tshe /
rde'u shing bu sogs rta glang du snang ba na de nyid blo 'khrul ba'i [24b2]
dbang gis bzhag pa ma yin par / rde'u shing bu sogs kyi rang ngos nas
grub pa yin na / de dag gi rigs 'dra snga ma'i lag rjes su 'gyur bas mig ma
bslad pa rnams kyis kyang mthong dgos pa bzhin no //

de ltar yang / *bDen gnyis* las /

ji ltar [24b3] snang bzhin ngo bo'i phyir // 'di la dpyad pa mi 'jug go //
rnal 'byor dpyod par byed na don // gzhan du song bas gnod par 'gyur //

zhes gsungs /

gzhan yang / de de yin pa'i phyir te / blo la snang ba'i dbang gis bzhag
pa'i yod pa de kun rdzob tu [24b4] yod pa'i don yin pa'i phyir te / *dBu ma*
snang ba las /

de'i phyir de dag gi bsam pa'i dbang gis dngos po brdzun pa'i ngo bo
thams cad ni kun rdzob tu yod pa kho na'o //

zhes dang / '*Jug tīkā* las /

⁶¹ Old *den*.

⁶² Old *dpyad*.

⁶³ Old *bzad*.

⁶⁴ New, Old *gyi*. *rNam bshad snying po rgyan* p. 12b4 has *gyis*. (As I mentioned in Tille-
mans 1982, the *sKabs dang po'i spyi don* is an elaboration of rGyal tshab rje's *rNam*
bshad snying po rgyan and quotes many passages almost verbatim).

dBu ma snang bar kun rdzob⁶⁵ tu yod tshul [24b5] gsungs pa'i ldog
phyogs kyi yod pa ni don dam par bden grub tu yod par shes pas /

zhes dang / *bDen gnyis* las /

ji ltar snang ba de kho na //
kun rdzob gzhan ni cig shos so //

zhes gsungs pa'i phyir /

des na bden par grub pa / don dam par [24b6] grub pa / yang dag par
grub pa sogs med kyang / rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa / rang ngos nas
grub pa / rang bzhin gyis grub pa / rdzas su grub pa sogs yod do /

gnyis pa la / spyir bdag med gtan la 'bebs pa'i rigs pa la du ma yod de /
chos [24b7] rnams kyi ngo bo la dpyod pa gcig du bral gyi gtan tshigs /
rgyu la dpyod pa rdo rje gzegs ma'i gtan tshigs / 'bras bu la dpyod pa yod
med skye 'gog gi gtan tshigs / rgyu 'bras gnyis ka la dpyod pa mu bzhi
skye 'gog gi gtan tshigs / rigs pa'i [25a1] rgyal po rten 'brel gyi gtan tshigs
rnams su yod pa'i phyir /

dang po de 'og tu chad / gnyis pa ni / myu gu chos can / [Old 21b]
don⁶⁶ dam par mi skye ste / don dam par bdag dang / gzhan dang / gnyis
ka dang / rgyu med gang rung las [25a2] mi skye ba'i phyir te / *rTsa ba*
shes rab las /

bdag las ma yin gzhan las min //
gnyis las ma yin rgyu med min //
dngos po gang dag gang na yang //
skye ba nam yang yod ma yin //

zhes gsungs pa'i phyir /

gsum pa ni myu gu chos can / [25a3] don dam par mi skye ste / rang gi
rgyu'i dus su yod par yang mi skye / rang gi rgyu'i dus su med par yang
don dam par mi skye ba'i phyir te / *dBu ma snang ba* las /

yod pa rnam par mi skye ste //
med pa nam mkha'i pad mo bzhin //

⁶⁵ New *rdzobs*.

⁶⁶ Old *dan*.

zhes gsungs pa'i phyir /

[25a4] bzhi pa ni / myu gu chos can / don dam par mi skyed ste / rgyu du mas 'bras bu gcig kho na don dam par skyed pa yang ma yin / rgyu du mas 'bras bu du ma kho na don dam par skyed pa yang ma yin / rgyu gcig gis 'bras bu du ma kho na don dam par skyed pa yang ma [25a5] yin / rgyu gcig gis 'bras bu gcig kho na don dam par skyed pa yang ma yin pa'i phyir te / *bDen gnyis las* /

du mas gcig gi dngos mi byed //
 du mas du ma byed pa'ang min //
 gcig gis du ma'i dngos mi byed //
 gcig gis gcig byed pa yang min // [25a6]

zhes gsungs pa'i phyir /

lga pa ni / myu gu chos can / bden par med de / rten 'brel yin pa'i phyir / dper na / gzugs brnyan bzhin zhes pa lta bu'o //

de rnams kyi nang nas / gtan tshigs dang po de 'chad pa la / rtags 'god pa dang / tshul⁶⁷ sgrub [25a7] pa gnyis las /

dang po ni / gzhi lam rnam gsum chos can / bden par ma grub ste / bden grub kyi gcig dang bden grub kyi du ma gang rung du ma grub pa'i phyir / dper na gzugs brnyan bzhin / zhes pa lta bu yin te / *dBu ma rgyan las* // [25b1]

bdag dang gzhan smra'i dngos 'di dag //
 yang dag par ni gcig pa dang //
 du ma'i rang bzhin bral ba'i phyir //
 bden par med de gzugs brnyan bzhin //

zhes gsungs pa'i phyir //

gnyis pa la phyogs chos sgrub pa dang / khyab pa sgrub pa [25b2] gnyis las / dang po la / bden pa'i gcig bral du sgrub pa dang / bden pa'i du bral du sgrub pa gnyis las /

dang po ni / gzhi lam rnam gsum chos can / bden par grub pa'i gcig tu med te / cha bcas yin pa'i phyir / de chos can / cha bcas [25b3] yin te / yod

⁶⁷ Old *chul*.

pa gang zhig / cha med shes bya la mi srid / cha bcas cha med dang dngos
‘gal yin pa’i phyir /

cha med shes bya la srid pa ‘gog pa’i tshad ma de gang zhe na / cha
bcas kyi rtags kyis gzhi lam rnam gsum bden grub kyi gcig [25b4] min par
grub pa’i rjes dpag tshad⁶⁸ mas nges pa la tshad⁶⁹ ma gsum sngon du ‘gro
dgos te / de la rtags kyi mtshan gzhi cha bcas nges [Old 22a] pa’i tshad
ma dang / bden grub kyi gcig min pa bden grub kyi gcig dang dngos ‘gal
du nges pa’i tshad [25b5] ma / cha bcas dang bden grub kyi gcig gi gzhi
mthun ‘gog byed kyi tshad ma gsum sngon du ‘gro dgos pa’i phyir / de
rnams kyi nang nas tshad ma gsum pa ‘di rtogs dka’ bas / de bshad na /

cha bcas dang bden grub kyi gcig gi gzhi [25b6] mthun yod na / bum
pa chos can / rang ‘dzin rtog pa la rang gi cha shas rnams dang ngo bo tha
dad du snang ba dang / rang gi cha shas rnams dang ngo bo gcig tu grub
par thal / rang ‘dzin rtog pa la rang gi cha shas rnams dang ngo bo tha dad
du snang ba gang zhig / rang gi cha [25b7] shas rnams dang ngo bo gcig
yin pa’i phyir / ma grub na / bum pa cha bcas ma yin par thal lo //

rtsa bar ‘dod na / bum pa chos can / brdzun par grub par thal lo // khyab
ste / snang lugs la ngo bo tha dad du snang yang sdod lugs la ngo bo gcig
tu grub pa [26a1] / brdzun par grub pa’i sdod lugs la mi ‘gal yang bden par
grub pa’i sdod lugs la ‘gal ba’i phyir //

de’i rgyu mtshan yang cha can dang cha du ma chos can / tha dad du
med par thal / tha dad du yod na / tha dad du ‘phags [26a2] pa’i mnyam
gzhas gis gzigs dgos pa las / des tha dad du ma gzigs pa’i phyir / dang po
grub ste / tha dad du yod na bden par grub pa’i tha dad yin dgos / de yin
na de’i gzigs ngor tha dad yin dgos pa’i phyir / dang po der thal / snang
[26a3] lugs la ngo bo tha dad du snang yang sdod lugs la ngo bo gcig tu
grub pa dang / bden par grub pa’i gzhi mthun yin pa’i phyir /

gnyis pa grub ste / de yin na de kho na nyid du grub dgos pa’i phyir //

rtsa bar ‘dod na / cha du ma chos can / gcig tu thal / grub [26a4] cing
cha can dang tha dad du med pa’i phyir / ‘dod mi nus te / khyod gcig yin
pa la khyod du mar ‘jal ba’i tshad mas gnod pa’i phyir / cha can chos can /
du mar thal / grub cing cha du ma dang tha dad du med⁷⁰ pa’i phyir / ‘dod

⁶⁸ Old *chad*.

⁶⁹ Old *chad*.

⁷⁰ New, Old *yod*. Cf. *rNam bshad snying po rgyan* 13b2: *med*. I have not noted my occasional transformations of single *shad* (/) into double *shad* (//).

mi nus te / khyod du ma yin pa la khyod [26a5] gcig tu 'jal ba'i tshad mas gnod pa'i phyir //

rigs pa 'di la brten nas cha bcas dang bden grub kyi gcig gi gzhi mthun khegs te / de la brten nas cha can dang cha du ma tha dad du yod na tha dad du 'phags pa'i mnyam gzhas gis gzigs dgos [26a6] pa de khegs / de khegs pas de gnyis bden grub kyi tha dad yin pa de khegs / de khegs pas cha bcas dang bden grub kyi gcig gi gzhi mthun khegs pa'i phyir //

don bsdu na / gzhi lam rnam gsum chos can / bden grub kyi gcig tu med de / cha [26a7] bcas yin pa'i phyir / khyab ste / bden grub kyi gcig yin na gang [Old 22b] la'ang bltos med kyi gcig yin dgos / de yin na cha bcas ma yin dgos pa'i phyir / de chos can / cha bcas yin te / gzhi grub pa gang zhig / cha med shes bya la mi srid / cha bcas [26b1] cha med dang dngos 'gal yin pa'i phyir //

gnyis pa la / de chos can / bden grub kyi du mar med de / bden grub kyi gcig tu med pa'i phyir / khyab ste / du ma gcig la bltos nas bzhag dgos pa'i phyir //

gnyis pa khyab pa sgrub pa ni /

bden grub kyi [26b2] gcig dang bden grub kyi du ma gang rung dang bral ba'i rtags kyis / gzhi lam rnam gsum bden med du tshad mas nges pa la tshad ma gsum sngon du 'gro dgos te / de la de gang rung dang bral ba nges byed kyi tshad ma / bden med bden grub dang dngos [26b3] 'gal du nges pa'i tshad ma / de gang rung dang bral ba dang bden grub kyi gzhi mthun 'gog byed kyi tshad ma gsum sngon du 'gro dgos pa'i phyir /

tshad ma phyi ma 'di rtogs dka' bas bshad na gzhi gzugs brnyan gyi steng du gcig dang du ma [26b4] gnyis phan tshun spangs 'gal gyi dngos 'gal du nges pa'i tshad ma la brten nas bden grub kyi gcig dang bden grub kyi du ma gang rung dang bral ba dang bden grub kyi gzhi mthun 'gog nus te / tshad ma de'i byed pa la brten nas bar du [26b5] tshad ma gzhan brgyud pa la bltos mi dgos par / de 'dra ba'i gzhi mthun mi srid par rtogs nus pa'i phyir //

des na *rGyan* gyi ched du bya ba'i gdul bya dbang rnon chos can / yum gyi ngo bo la dad pa skye tshul yod de / yum mkhyen gsum yod par [26b6] tshad mas grub pa'i sgo nas yum la dad pa skye ba'i phyir / yum gyi nus pa la dad pa skye tshul yod de / mkhyen gsum de rang sras 'phags pa'i bzhed don phun tshogs sgrub nus su tshad mas grub pa'i sgo nas yum la dad pa skye ba'i phyir //

Tibetan text of the excerpt from dBu ma rgyan gyi zin bris

[P.Nga 77b3; T. 427; S. 41] gal te sbyor ba ‘di rang rgyud du byed na / gzhan gyis smras pa’i bdag dang / dbang phyug la sogs pa dang / rang sdes smras pa’i⁷¹ sdug bsngal dang / shes [77b4] pa cha med kyi chos can ma grub pas / phyogs chos ma grub par ‘gyur bas / mi ‘thad do zhe na /

‘di *dKa*’ ‘*grel* las gzhan sdes btags [T. 428] pa’i ma grags pa la ni / thal bar sgrub pa kho na yin la [77b5] grags pa’i rang gi ngo bo rnams la ni / gnyis ka ltar na yang nyes pa med ces ‘chad cing / **Cha pa** la sogs pa bod kyi mkhas pa rnams kyis kyang / gzhan gyis btags pa’i chos can la rang rgyud mi rung [77b6] bar ‘chad do //

dBu ma snang ba las ni sngar bshad pa lta bu’i chos can du bzung ba la yang / rtags chos rnam bcad tsam yin na rang rgyud shin tu yang rung bar lan mang du bshad [S. 42] de / rtags dang chos [77b7] gzhi grub kho no la ‘jug pa yin na ni / chos can⁷² de ‘dra ba la thal ‘gyur min pa rang rgyud mi rung la / rtags chos med dgag gzhi ma grub pa la’ang mi ‘gal ba yin na ni / chos can de ‘dra ba la’ang rang rgyud [77b8] rung ba legs par bsgrub pa ni / slob dpon mkhas pa **Ka ma la śī la**’i lugs so //

des na *dKa*’ ‘*grel* las sngar ltar bshad pa ‘di *dBu ma snang ba* dang mi mthun no // *dKa*’ ‘*grel* ‘di **Ka ma la śī** [78a1] **la**’i yin par **Chos kyi bshes gnyen** yang bzhed pas / ‘di ni slob dpon thugs ma rdzogs pa’i skabs su gcig tu mdzad dam brtag go //

‘o na chos can de ‘dra ba la rang [78a2] lugs ji ltar yin zhe na / ‘di la bdag nyid chen po **Phyogs kyi glang pos** /

mngon sum don dang rjes dpag dang yid ches grags pas rang rten la’o /⁷³

zhes rten te chos la ma bsal ba ‘chad [78a3] pa na / chos can la’o zhes pa tsam ma smos par rang gi chos can [S. 43] zhes pa’i [T. 429] tshig smos pa’i dgongs pa dpal ldan **Chos grags** kyis bshad pa’i tshe / chos can ‘ba’ zhig pa dang / bsgrub bya’i chos gnyis [78a4] tshogs pa’i tshogs don bsal⁷⁴

⁷¹ P. rang sngas smras pa’i. S. rang sdes pa’i sdug bsngal.

⁷² The sense of the passage would seem to suggest *chos can*, instead of *chos* as found in P.T.S.

⁷³ P.T. rang brten la’o. Cf. *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* ce 43a6: *rten*, and *lCang* p. 121: *rten*.

⁷⁴ P. *gsal*.

yang chos des⁷⁵ bsgrub bya’i chos rang gi rten chos can ma bsal pas⁷⁶
 skyon min no // des na bsgrub bya’i chos rang gi rten gyi chos can dang
 de gnyis tshogs pa bsal na / skyon yin pa [78a5] bstan pa’i don du rten
 zhes gsungs pa bshad do // chos can ‘ba’ zhig pa bkag pa la skyon ji lta bu
 yin pa ni /

dper na mkha’⁷⁷ sogs gzhan dag gis /

zhes sogs *rNam ‘grel* las rgyas par [78a6] bshad de / **Bye brag pa**’i ‘dod
 pa la ‘byung ngo //

chos can ‘ba’ zhig pa zhes pa ni / chos can du smras kyang skabs de’i
 bsgrub bya’i chos kyi rten min pas / chos can yan gar bar⁷⁸ song ba’i don
 no // [78a7] rang rgyud kyi skabs su rtsod gzhir gang⁷⁹ byung de nyid la
 phyogs chos ‘grub dgos na / chos can ‘ba’ zhig pa dang / rang rten gyi
 chos can gnyis ‘byed pa’i don med pas bdag dang gtso bo sogs rtsod gzhir
 [S. 44; 78a8] bzung ba’i tshe / rang rgyud kyi rtags mi rung zhes pa ni /
 rigs pa’i dbang phyug gnyis kyi rang gi lugs dang / mu stegs kyi khyad
 par dbye ba ma phyed pa’o / tshul ‘dis *mDo* dang *rNam ‘grel* gyi gzhung
 [78b1] drangs nas rgyas par *dBu ma snang ba* las gsungs so //

‘di yang *dBu ma snang ba* las bdag dang gtso bo sogs ‘gog pa ni thal
 ‘gyur tsam gyis mi chog gi rang rgyud kyi rtags kyis kyang dgag dgos pa
 [T. 430] dang / [78b2] de yang rang ldog⁸⁰ nas dgag dgos pa gnyis kyis
 rang rgyud kyi sbyor ba’i rtsod gzhir bzung dgos pa dang / de’i tshe de dag
 dngos med du bsgrub pa’i rtags kyis chos can bkag kyang / skyon ma yin
 pa’i [78b3] tshul gnyis kyis bsgrubs so //

Phyogs glang gis gsungs pa’i don *rNam ‘grel* las /

dpag bya dpog⁸¹ par byed pa yi //
 don gyi tha snyad gnas pa ‘di //

⁷⁵ S. *das*.

⁷⁶ P.T. *chos can pas*. S. *chos can bsal pas*. Tsong kha pa’s thought, as shown in the lines immediately below, must be *chos can ma bsal pas*.

⁷⁷ P.T.S. *mkhas*. Cf. *Pramāṇavārttika* IV k. 141 (ed. Miyasaka): *mkha’*.

⁷⁸ ICang p. 122: *yan ga bar*.

⁷⁹ P.T. *gar*.

⁸⁰ P. *rang sdog*.

⁸¹ P. *dpag*.

shes pa la grub [S. 45] tha dad la //
brten [78b4] nas rnam par brtags pa yin //

zhes gsungs pa ltar gzhi dngos po dgos pa byas pas sgra mi rtag pa dang / du ba la la⁸² me yod du bsgrub pa la yang rtog pa la sgra dang la gnyis / de gnyis ma yin [78b5] pa las log par snang ba'i don nyid dgag sgrub kyi dngos rten yin gyi sgra dang la nyid dngos kyi rten min te / dgag sgrub byed pa'i rtog pa la dngos su mi snang ba'i phyir dang / chos gcig cig bsgrubs na de'i [78b6] chos thams cad cig car du bsgrubs par 'gyur ba'i phyir ro //

'on kyang de ltar snang ba'i snang gzhi ni sgra dang la yin pas gzhi dngos por gyur pa dgos / gzhi chos can⁸³ dngos po yin pa mi dgos pa gtso [78b7] bo dang dbang phyug la sogs pa rtsod gzhi bzung ba la yang rtog pa la gtso bo dang dbang phyug ma yin pa las log par snang ba ni yod la / de nyid la dmigs nas dngos por med ces bsgrub pas gzhi [78b8] de la phyir rgol la shes 'dod dang / [S. 46] snga rgol la dpag 'dod med pa'i skyon med la / snang gzhi dngos [T. 431] por yod pa⁸⁴ don byed pa nus⁸⁵ stong dang / snang gzhi bden par yod pa bden pa'i gcig du [79a1] bral gyis⁸⁶ bkag pa na / rtags de gnyis gtso bo dang dbang phyug ma yin pa las log par snang ba de nyid la 'grub⁸⁷ la / de nyid bsgrub bya'i chos gang gi chos su 'jog pa'i [79a2] chos can dang / phyogs kyi chos gang gi chos su bzhag pa'i phyogs su btags pa nyid yin pas chos can 'ba' zhig pa bkag pas kyang phyogs chos mi 'grub pa'i skyon med do //

byas pas sgra mi [79a3] rtag par bsgrub pa na / rtog pa la sgra ma yin pa las log par snang ba'i snang ldog dngos por med pas / byas pa rtags de la 'grub pa min gyi / snang gzhi sgra la grub dgos te / dngos po rtags [79a4] dang bsgrub bya'i chos su byed pa'i gnad kyi so//

don byed pas stong pa dang gcig⁸⁸ du bral rtags su byed pa'i tshe ni⁸⁹ / snang gzhi dang snang ldog [S. 47] gnyis ka rtags de yin par grub cing /

⁸² P.T.S. *du ba la*. Cf. lCang p. 123: *du ba la la*.

⁸³ P.T.S. *gzhi chen*. Cf. lCang p. 123 *gzhi chos can*.

⁸⁴ P.T.S. *med pa*. Cf. lCang p. 124: *yod pa*.

⁸⁵ P.T.S. *gnyis*. Cf. lCang p. 124: *nus pa*.

⁸⁶ P.T.S. *gyi*. Cf. lCang p. 124: *gyis*.

⁸⁷ S. *grub*.

⁸⁸ P.T.S. *dang du bral*. Better to read *dang gcig du bral*.

⁸⁹ S. *na*.

snang gzhi⁹⁰ rtags de yin [79a5] par grub na / de bkag kyang snang ldog
bsgrub chos dang / phyogs chos kyi chos gnyis brten pa’i chos can du
‘grub bo //

‘di ni snying po bsdus pa ste / rgyas par *dBu ma snang ba* las shes dgos
so //

⁹⁰ P. *snang gzha*.

IV. Le *dBu ma'i byung tshul* de Śākya mchog ldan

(avec Tōru Tomabechi)

L'œuvre du savant Sa skya pa, gSer mdog Paṇ chen Śākya mchog ldan (1428-1507) est d'une taille et d'une diversité extraordinaires et ne peut plus être négligée par quiconque veut comprendre les développements philosophiques tibétains. L. van der Kuijp dans ses *Contributions to the Development of Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology*, un livre qui continue à faire autorité en la matière, nous a fourni la liste des textes où cet auteur traite de l'épistémologie et de la logique bouddhiques (*tshad ma*);¹ dans l'appendice à cet article, nous donnons la liste des ouvrages traitant de l'école dite «de la voie moyenne» (*dbu ma, madhyamaka*). Il est bien entendu impossible de discuter en détail ici de la question complexe de l'évolution de la pensée de Śākya mchog ldan, un tel projet nécessitant un examen approfondi de tous ses écrits majeurs, dont certains sont particulièrement volumineux. Nous devons donc nous borner à quelques remarques en guise d'introduction.

La pensée de Śākya mchog ldan, du moins dans sa version mûre, est considérée comme appartenant au courant Madhyamaka que l'on appelle habituellement «Vide de l'hétérogène» (*gzhan stong*).² Il s'agit d'une philosophie syncrétique qui fut initialement formulée par les Jo nang pa au quatorzième siècle—les antécédents indiens restent obscurs. Le gZhan stong Jo nang pa accepte l'existence d'un Absolu qui consiste en une gnose non duelle (*gnyis med kyi ye shes*), sans différenciation entre sujet ('*dzin pa*) et objet (*gzung ba*), un Absolu qui est vide de tout facteur qui

¹ Voir van der Kuijp 1983, 17.

² Voir p.ex. Seyfort Ruegg 1963, l'introduction à van der Kuijp 1983, Williams 1989, 105-109.

lui est hétérogène (*gzhan*), à savoir tout élément ou qualité appartenant à la vérité relative (*kun rdzob*; *saṃvṛti*). La vue qui contraste avec le *gZhan stong* est le *Rang stong*, qui prétend que toute chose qui soit est vide de cette chose même (*rang stong*).

Selon le *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* du *dGe lugs pa* *Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma* (1737-1802), Śākya mchog ldan ne fut pas *gZhan stong pa* pendant tout son parcours intellectuel, mais le devint à un âge relativement avancé, lorsqu'il écrivit son notoire *Lugs gnyis rnam 'byed* en 1489 (*sa mo bya lo*) à soixante et un ans. *Thu'u bkwan* discerna donc trois phases dans la pensée de Śākya mchog ldan: d'abord une jeunesse où il fut *Madhyamaka Rang stong pa*, tenant une position assez semblable à celle des *Prāsaṅgika* tibétains *Pa tshab Nyi ma grags* (1054/5-?) et *Zhang Thang sag pa*; ensuite, une période au milieu de sa vie où il fut proche de l'idéalisme bouddhique de l'école *cittamātra* («pensée-sans-plus»); enfin Śākya mchog ldan devint *Jo nang pa* dans les dernières années de sa vie.³

Comment faut-il regarder cette tentative de mettre des étiquettes familières à la pensée de Śākya mchog ldan? L'attribution d'une adhérence au *cittamātra* reste très problématique.⁴ Signalons aussi

³ Page 199: *śākya mchog pa ni dang po dbu ma / bar du sems tsam / mthar jo nang pa'i lta bar zhen* /. Toutefois, ce qu'il faut entendre par la phrase «*cittamātra* au milieu [de sa vie]» (*bar du sems tsam*) n'est pas clair. Logiquement, il devrait s'agir de la philosophie que l'on trouve dans le gigantesque ouvrage, le *dBu ma'i rnam nges*, qui fut achevé en 1477, lorsque Śākya mchog ldan avait quarante-neuf ans. Mais il serait difficile de considérer ce texte comme un ouvrage appartenant à l'école *cittamātra*. *Thu'u bkwan* s'était-il trompé de date de composition du *dBu ma'i rnam nges*? Ou pensait-il à d'autres textes? Enfin, on peut pertinemment se demander si *Thu'u bkwan* avait même lu Śākya mchog ldan, vu que les textes de cet auteur étaient proscrits à l'époque où *Thu'u bkwan* écrivait.

⁴ Voir la note précédente. Le *dBu ma'i byung tshul*, le *Lugs gnyis rnam 'byed*, le *Tshad ma'i chos byung* (composé en 1502), et d'autres textes de Śākya mchog ldan parlent de deux sortes de *Madhyamaka*, à savoir, d'une part, le *Madhyamaka* des **Prāsaṅgika* et des **Svātantrika*, ceux qui «nient l'être propre» (*ngo bo nyid med par smra ba*), et, d'autre part, le *rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma / rnam rig dbu ma* (**yogācāramadhyamaka* / **vijñaptimadhyamaka*), i.e., la pensée de Maitreya interprétée par des auteurs tardifs tels que Ratnākaraśānti. Ce *rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma / rnam rig dbu ma* est, pour Śākya mchog ldan, une pensée *Madhyamaka* qui est à contraster avec le *sems tsam* (*cittamātra*) de la présentation traditionnelle des quatre écoles (*grub mtha'*). A noter que le *dBu ma'i byung tshul* rejette également l'idée que la pensée *Yogācāra* de Maitreya soit *cittamātra*. Cf. f. 9b: *byams chos bar pa gsum gyi lta ba sems tsam du*

que l’appartenance prétendue de Śākya mchog ldan au gZhan stong de l’école des Jo nang pa, notamment à la philosophie de Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292-1361) et Jo nang Tāranātha (1575-1634/35), doit être nuancée. En effet, Tāranātha lui-même montra, dans son *Zab don khyad par nyer gcig pa*, vingt et une différences qui séparent le gZhan stong des Jo nang pa de celui de Śākya mchog ldan, bien qu’il essayât de minimiser leur importance en les appelant des «différences mineures» (*mi ‘dra ba than thun*). Certaines sont d’une importance considérable, si bien qu’il faut reconnaître qu’il y a un écart réel entre les vues de Śākya mchog ldan et celles des Jo nang pa.⁵

gnas na / de nas bshad pa’i lam lnga dang sa bcu dang / ‘bras bu sangs rgyas kyi sa’i rnam bzhag thams cad ji lta ba ma yin par skur ba gdab dgos so //. Enfin, il faut noter que le *rnal ‘byor spyod pa’i dbu ma* et le *rnam rig dbu ma* sont souvent rapprochés par des Tibétains du *rnam brdzun dbu ma* (**alīkāḥāramadhyamaka*); la position est appelée également *dbu ma chen po* et *gzhan stong*. Voir van der Kuijp 1983, 39, Seyfort Ruegg 1981, 56, 122-124 et 1988, 1269.

- ⁵ Prenons quelques exemples représentatifs. Point 3 (f. 2b4-7): Śākya mchog ldan accepte le Rang stong comme étant plus «profond» (*zab*) dans l’élimination des *prapañca* («proliférations») moyennant la pensée philosophique (*lta ba*), et le gZhan stong comme plus «profond» dans la pratique de la méditation. Dol po pa considère la vue du Rang stong comme incorporée dans le gZhan stong, et ne pense pas que le Rang stong soit adapté à l’élimination de *prapañca*, car il y a risque de nier le réel (*skur ‘debs*). Point 5 (f. 3a2-5): Śākya mchog ldan pense que la gnose non duelle (*gnyis med kyi ye shes*) ne «résiste pas à l’analyse» (*dpyad mi bzod pa*) pour déterminer si elle est réelle ou non, alors que Dol po pa pense qu’elle y résiste. Point 6 (f. 3a5-6): Śākya mchog ldan pense que la gnose non duelle est momentanée (*skad cig ma*), non éternelle (*rtaḡ pa min*) et sans persistance (*gnas pa’i go skabs med pa*), alors que Dol po pa prend la perspective typique de l’*Uttaratantra* et dit qu’elle est permanente, éternelle, et stable (*brtan pa*). Points 7-8 (f. 3b6-7): pour Śākya mchog ldan, la gnose non duelle est une connaissance (*shes pa*); donc elle est un phénomène existant (*dn̄gos po*) et un composé (*‘dus byas*), alors que pour Dol po pa elle n’est ni phénomène existant ni inexistante et elle n’est ni composée ni non composée. Points 18-19 (f. 5b3-6a4): pour Śākya mchog ldan l’être vivant n’a pas, dans son mental, un véritable (*mtshan nyid pa*) *tathāgatagarbha* («nature de buddha») qui existe déjà d’une façon développée, mais n’a que la cause (*rgyu*) de ce *tathāgatagarbha*. Les qualités (*yon tan*) de ce *tathāgatagarbha* n’existent pas encore lorsque ce dernier n’est qu’à l’état de cause. Pour Dol po pa, l’être vivant possède déjà le véritable *tathāgatagarbha*, et les qualités y sont présentes. Pour d’autres différences entre Śākya mchog ldan et Dol po pa, voir les remarques de Mi bskyod rdo rje traduites dans Seyfort Ruegg 1988, 1267-1268.

En définitive, Śākya mchog ldan fut un penseur avec des idées fort originales, qui posa de singuliers problèmes de classification à la scolastique tibétaine. Si Thu'u bkwan dégagea trois courants de pensée à différents stades de la vie de Śākya mchog ldan, il y eut une autre perspective sur ce penseur, celle du Sa skya pa Ngag dbang chos grags (1572-1641), qui déclara que Śākya mchog ldan fut un gZhan stong pa déjà depuis sa jeunesse.⁶ Quoi qu'il en soit, Śākya mchog ldan fit une répartition, qu'il pensa déjà trouver chez rNgog lo tsā ba (1059-1109) *et al.*, entre pensée philosophique (*lta ba*) et pratique méditative (*sgom*): il prétendit que le Rang stong convenait le mieux à la philosophie dialectique destinée à éliminer la surimposition (*sgro 'dogs*), alors que le gZhan stong décrivait les connaissances supérieures de la méditation. Il semble bien—et c'est ce que nous confirme aussi le *Zab don khyad par nyer gcig pa*—que Śākya mchog ldan accorda une place nettement plus importante au Rang stong dans son système de pensée que le firent d'autres gZhan stong pa tels que Dol po pa.⁷

⁶ Voir van der Kuijp 1983, 14.

⁷ Voir note 5. Cf. aussi *dBu ma 'i byung tshul* f. 8a2-4: *zhi ba 'tsho 'i rjes su 'brang ba gcig ni slob dpon seng ge bzang po ste / 'dis yum gyi don 'grel tshul / rnal 'byor spyod pa 'i tshul ltar 'grel bas / mtshan 'dzin 'gog tshul ngo bo nyid med pa 'i rigs pa dang sgom pas nyams su myong bya rnal 'byor spyod pa 'i lugs su bshad par ni gangs can pa mtha' dag 'thun pa yin no // zhi 'tsho yab sras kyis ni rnam 'grel mdzad pa 'i dgongs pa yang / sgro 'dogs gcod tshul gcig du bral sogs rang stong gi rigs pa dang / nyams su myong bya gzhan stong gi tshul du 'chad do zhes lo tsā ba chen pos bkral zhing / chen po de nyid kyang rnam 'grel gyi dgongs pa de ltar du bzhed do //*. Dans le *Lugs gnyis rnam 'byed*, on trouve des débats sur la question de savoir si les objets sur lesquels porte la pensée philosophique sont les mêmes que ceux de la méditation. Grosso modo, la réponse de Śākya mchog ldan est que la dialectique et la méditation ne visent pas d'objets radicalement séparés, car la dialectique sert à éliminer tout attachement aux caractères (*mtshan 'dzin*) à l'égard de l'objet de la méditation, alors que cet objet lui-même, i.e., le *dharmadhātu* (*chos kyi dbyings*), n'est éprouvé que par la méditation. Cf. *Lugs gnyis rnam 'byed* f. 6a-b, où Śākya mchog ldan s'efforce de démontrer la complémentarité des deux collections d'écrits attribués à Nāgārjuna, i.e., le *rigs tshogs* («corpus de raisonnements») et le *stod tshogs* («corpus d'hymnes»): *rigs tshogs su ni thos bsam gyi sgro 'dogs gcod pa 'i dbang du byas la / bstod pa 'i tshogs su ni sgom pas nyams su blang ba 'i dbang du byas pa 'o / 'o na gzhung lugs gnyis po don 'gal ba can du 'gyur te / rigs*

La philosophie de Śākya mchog ldan n'a pas manqué de susciter de vives réactions au Tibet, particulièrement chez les dGe lugs pa, qui se sentirent offensés par ses critiques, et qui, sans la moindre nuance, assimilèrent sa position à celle des Jo nang pa, contre lesquels ils avaient un *odium theologicum* profond. Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1469-1544) répondit à Śākya mchog ldan par une polémique violente dans son *bShes gnyen chen po Śākya mchog ldan pa la gdams pa*. Dans le chapitre du *Grub mtha'* traitant des Jo nang pa, Thu'u bkwan dit que Śākya mchog ldan fut motivé par «les démons de l'attachement et de la haine» (*chags sdang gi gdon*), qu'il avait écrit «de nombreuses histoires effroyables» (*ya nga ba'i gtam mang du bris*) et que ses positions furent des «vues relevant de la pire hérésie» (*lta ba ngan tha chad*) dont il ne se repentit qu'au moment de sa mort. Comme on le voit, il s'agit donc d'un débat extrêmement passionnel. Dans ce qui doit être considéré comme une page noire d'intolérance au Tibet, les œuvres de Śākya mchog ldan furent longtemps proscrites comme hérétiques, tout comme celles de Tāranātha.

Le texte de Śākya mchog ldan dont il est question dans cet article, à savoir «L'Explication de l'histoire du Madhyamaka» (*dbu ma'i byung tshul rnam par bshad pa'i gtam*), comporte trois sections principales (*sa bcad*):

- I. *dbu ma'i mtshan nyid* «définition du Madhyamaka» (f. 2a).
- II. *mtshon bya'i sgra bshad pa* «explication [de l'emploi] du terme que l'on définit» (f. 2a-4a).

tshogs su gtan la phab pa de bstod tshogs su sgom pas nyams su blang bar mi 'chad / der nyams su blang byar bshad pa de rigs tshogs su don dam pa'i bden par 'chad pa lta ci smos / yod pa tsam yang bkag pa'i phyir zhe na / nyes pa med de / rigs tshogs su thos bsam gyi shes pas sgro 'dogs bcad pa de ni / nyams su myong bya la mtshan 'dzin gyi rtog pa 'gog pa'i ched yin la / de ltar bkag nas chos kyi dbyings nyams su myong bar bstan pa la nyes pa ci yang yod pa ma yin pa'i phyir / ... 'o na lta bas gzhan zhig gtan la phab nas sgom pas gzhan zhig nyam su blangs par 'gyur ba ma yin nam zhe na ma yin te / lta bas spros pa'i tshogs mtha' dag bkag nas bsgoms pa na / goms byed kyi blos chos kyi dbyings kyi ye shes nyid las gzhan nyams su myong byar rigs pa ci yang yod pa ma yin pa'i phyir /

III. *mtshan gzhi rab tu dbye ba* «explication des divisions des instances [du Madhyamaka]». Cette troisième section est sous-divisée de la manière suivante:

III-i. *dbu ma'i dbye ba mdor bstan* «résumé des divisions du Madhyamaka» (f. 4a-5a).

III-ii. *shing rta'i srol byed ji ltar byung tshul rgyas par bshad pa* «exposé détaillé de l'histoire des fondateurs de la tradition» (f. 5a-17b). (Il s'agit des lignées du Madhyamaka en Inde et au Tibet.)

III-iii. *dgag sgrub cung zad bgyis te mjug bsdu ba* «quelques réfutations et preuves en guise de conclusion» (f. 17b-20b).

Nous donnons ici une traduction annotée de la partie III-iii de «L'Histoire du Madhyamaka,» où Śākya mchog ldan examine et évalue les pensées Madhyamaka rivales, avant tout celle de Tsong kha pa (1357-1420), qu'il soumet à une critique lucide et pénétrante. On voit, dans le *dBu ma'i byung tshul*, les thèmes familiers de la pensée gZhan stong, tels que, par exemple, l'insistance sur le caractère Madhyamaka des œuvres de Maitreya, l'acceptation d'un Madhyamaka tantrique différent de celui des Prāsaṅgika, et la position que l' Absolu est une gnose (*ye shes*) et Grande Joie (*bde ba chen po*). Il y a également emploi des termes *gzhan stong* et *dbu ma chen po* («Grand Madhyamaka»), ainsi qu'une allusion critique, vers la fin du texte, à la position Rang stong pa. Il ne s'agit donc certainement pas d'une œuvre Prāsaṅgika dans la ligne Pa tshab-Zhang Thang sag pa, ni d'une œuvre *cittamātra*, mais bel et bien d'un texte de gZhan stong.

Enfin, le colophon du *dBu ma'i byung tshul* ne comporte pas de mention explicite de date de composition. Toutefois, l'auteur indique que le texte a été sollicité par un «Karmapa»: celui-ci est vraisemblablement Karmapa Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454-1506), un personnage d'une influence marquante sur Śākya mchog ldan. Or, la biographie de Śākya mchog ldan par Jo nang pa Kun dga' grol mchog (1507-1566) nous informe que Śākya mchog ldan et Chos grags rgya mtsho se sont rencontrés en 1484 (*shing pho 'brug lo*) à gNam rtse ldan.⁸ Une hypothèse raisonnable serait donc de situer la composition de ce texte dans la période des années 1484-1490.

⁸ Cf. f. 74b-75a. Voir aussi van der Kuijp 1983, 22 et 265-6, n. 56.

Appendice

Les œuvres Madhyamaka de Śākya mchog ldan selon l'ordre chronologique de composition:

1. *sTong thun chung ba dbang po'i rdo rje zhes bya ba blo gsal mgu byed*, Vol. 4. Selon le colophon, le texte fut écrit à gSang phu Ne'u thog lorsque l'auteur avait 31 ans.
2. *dBu ma la 'jug pa'i rnam par bshad pa nges don gnad kyi tī kā*, Vol. 5. Écrit à gSang phu Ne'u thog en 1468 (*sa pho byi'i lo*); l'auteur avait 40 ans.
3. *dBu ma rtsa ba'i rnam bshad bskal bzangs kyi 'jug ngogs*, Vol. 5. Écrit à gSang phu Ne'u thog en 1470 (*rnam 'gyur zhes pa lcags pho stag gi lo*); l'auteur avait 42 ans.
4. *dBu ma chen po'i sgom rim la 'khrul pa spong zhing thal rang gi grub pa'i mtha' dang lta ba'i gnas rnam par bshad pa tshangs pa'i dbyangs kyi rnga sgra*, Vol. 4. Écrit dans l'année 1474 (*rgyal ba ces pa shing pho rta'i lo*) lorsque l'auteur avait 46 ans.
5. *dBu ma rnam par nges pa'i chos kyi bang mdzod lung dang rigs pa'i rgya mtsho*, Vol. 14/15. Écrit à gSer mdog can en 1477 (*gser 'phyang gi lo*); l'auteur avait 49 ans.
6. *dBu ma'i byung tshul rnam par bshad pa'i gtam yid bzhin lhun po*, Vol. 4. Écrit à gSer mdog can autour de 1484-1490.
7. *Shing rta chen po'i srol gnyis kyi rnam par dbye ba bshad nas nges don gcig tu bsgrub pa'i bstan bcos kyi rgyas 'grel (= Lugs gnyis rnam 'byed)*, Vol. 2. Écrit à gSer mdog can en 1489 (*sa mo bya'i lo*); l'auteur avait 61 ans. Le colophon n'indique pas la date de composition, mais ce renseignement est donné dans la biographie de Śākya mchog ldan par Kun dga' grol mchog, f. 79b.

En outre, le gSung 'bum contient les textes suivants sans indication de date de composition:

8. *bDen gnyis kyi gnas la 'jug pa nges don bdud rtsi'i thigs pa sogs dbu ma'i chos skor 'ga'zhig*, Vol. 4. Divers ouvrages:
 - a *bDen pa gnyis kyi gnad la 'jug pa nges don bdud rtsi'i thigs pa* (gTsang g-Yas ru'i sa'i thig le = gSer mdog can).
 - b *dBu ma 'jug pa'i tshig rkang gnyis kyi rgya cher bshad pa* (*ibid.*).
 - c *sPrings yig tshangs pa'i 'khor lo* (gSang phu Ne'u thog).

- d* *dBu ma thal rang gi grub mtha' rnam par dbye ba'i bstan bcos nges don gyi rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i rnam dpyod kyi gru chen* (gTsang g-Yas ru'i sa'i thig le).
- e* *gZhan lugs kyi dbu ma la rtog ges brtags pa'i nor pa'i phreng* (gSang phu Ne'u thog)
- f* *rTen 'brel bstod pa las brtsams pa'i 'bel gtam rnam par nges pa lung dang rigs pa'i 'phrul 'khor* (gSer mdog can).
- 9. *Zab zhi spros bral gyi bshad pa stong nyid bdud rtsi'i lam po che*, Vol. 4. (gSer mdog can).
- 10. *dBu ma la 'jug pa'i dka' ba'i gnas 'ga' zhig rnam par bshad pa ku mud kyi phreng mdzes*, Vol. 5. (gTsang chu mig ring mo'i bla brang).

Traduction

III-iii

La troisième section, quelques réfutations et preuves en guise de conclusion, contient trois [sous-sections].

- III-iii-1 Montrer qu'il y a le défaut de l'abandon de la Loi si l'on accepte le Milieu d'une manière trop limitée.
- 111-iii-2 Montrer qu'il y a contradiction avec les Écritures si l'on comprend [le Milieu] qui est extrêmement large autrement [que le *gZhan stong*].
- 111-iii-3 La compréhension du Milieu par les [Tibétains] modernes est en désaccord avec des Écritures qu'ils reconnaissent eux-mêmes.

III-iii-1

§ 1. Récemment dans ce Pays des neiges, on ne comprend [le Milieu] qu'en tant que Milieu qui constitue le sommet des quatre écoles philosophiques, et n'accepte pas qu'il y ait d'autres traditions textuelles du [Milieu] que celles connues sous les noms de *Prāsaṅgika* et de *Svātantrika*. En outre, on explique que le Milieu n'est rien de plus que la simple négation (*med par dgag pa*; *prasajyapratiṣedha*) qui consiste en le fait que toutes les choses sont vides d'existence réelle (*bden pas stong pa*). Affirmer une telle opinion, c'est accumuler le karma de l'abandon de la Loi, car on dénigre comme étant des positions réalistes (*dngos por smra ba*) les Paroles du Troisième cycle de l'enseignement (*bka' 'khor lo tha ma*) ainsi que les traités qui expliquent leur sens profond. Ceci a été prédit par le vénérable Ajita (Ma pham pa = Maitreya). C'est justement ce qu'il montre dans un passage [de l'*Uttaratantra*] qui commence par:⁹

«Puisqu'il n'existe dans ce monde aucun savant qui soit supérieur au Victorieux...»

⁹ RGV V k.20a: *yasmān neha jināt supaṇḍitatamo loke 'sti kaścīt kvacit...* La strophe citée par Śākya mchog ldan a de *phyir (tasmāt)* au lieu de *yasmāt* et nous avons adopté la leçon de l'original sanskrit. Il est intéressant de signaler que Bu ston cite la même strophe pour montrer que les Paroles du Troisième cycle ne doivent pas être prises à la lettre (voir Seyfort Ruegg 1973, 146).

§ 2. Si le Milieu au sens certain (*nges don, nītārtha*) n'était pas enseigné dans les traités du noble Asaṅga, il y aurait contradiction avec la prophétie, faite par le Victorieux lui-même [dans le *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*], qu'['] Asaṅga] ferait la distinction entre [enseignement] au sens indirect (*drang don, neyārtha*) et [enseignement] au sens certain (*nges don, nītārtha*).¹⁰

§ 3. Bien que l'on dise que ce [maître Asaṅga] commente l'*Uttaratantra* à la façon *prāsaṅgika*, ce commentaire ne concorde pas avec la manière dont Candrakīrti explique [le Milieu].¹¹ Puisque cette [contradiction] paraît évidente aux yeux de tous les esprits critiques, cette [opinion] n'est qu'une simple assertion [sans fondement]. Donc, si [, en acceptant cette opinion non fondée,] on expliquait le Milieu tantrique (*sngags kyi dbu ma*) comme simple négation, on ne comprendrait pas la Vacuité pourvue de toutes les excellences (*rnam kun mchog ldan gyi stong pa nyid; sarvākāraṇapetaśūnyatā*). A part cette [compréhension de la Vacuité], toutes les manières dont on comprend [la Vacuité] seraient annulées par les Écritures et, [par conséquent,] on ne comprendrait pas non plus l'union (*zung 'jug; yuganaddha*) de la Joie avec la Vacuité. Comment pourrait-on alors expliquer le corps (*sku; kāya*) et d'autres [attributs du Bouddha] où la connaissance et l'objet connaissable ne font qu'un? Expliquer ces [corps et attributs du Bouddha] comme vérité conventionnelle (*kun rdzob bden pa; samvṛtisatya*), c'est dénigrer la vérité absolue (*don dam pa'i bden pa; paramārthasatya*) [enseignée] dans la tradition tantrique. Outre cela, [la thèse que] la Vacuité comme simple négation équivaut à la Vacuité qui est unie à la Grande joie, est clairement niée dans le *Kālacakratāntra* par les

¹⁰ Cf. *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* LIII k.452: *saṅganāma tadā bhikṣuḥ śāstratattvārthakovidah / sūtranītārthaneyānām vibhajya bahudhā punaḥ //*.

¹¹ Chez les dGe lugs pa, c'est en quelque sorte un dogme que la position d'Asaṅga dans le commentaire de l'*Uttaratantra* concorde à celle des *Prāsaṅgika*. Cf., par exemple, *sTong thun chen mo* 125b5-126a1: *slob dpon 'phags pa Thogs med kyis kyang / Sa sde lnga dang / Kun las btus dang / Theg bsdus la sogs par 'khor lo tha ma'i mdo'i dgongs pa 'grel ba'i dbang du mdzad nas rnam par rig pa tsam gyi tshul du bshad kyang / rGyud bla ma'i 'grel pa 'dir ni dBu ma thal 'gyur ba'i grub mtha' ji lta ba bzhin du bshad do zhes shes par bya ste / rgyu mtshan mtha' dag par bshad du yod kyang / 'dir mangs par 'gyur bas ma bris so //*. (Cf. traduction anglaise, Cabezón 1992, 229-230). Cf. aussi Seyfort Ruegg 1969, 59-60.

illustrations [suivantes]: le raisin ne se produit pas de l'arbre de Nimba, ni l'ambrosie de la feuille vénéneuse, ni le lotus du Brahmaṇḍa.¹²

111-iii-2

§ 4. On dit que la compréhension de la vérité absolue expliquée dans les Paroles du Troisième cycle de l'enseignement, ainsi que dans leurs commentaires, n'est que la thèse réaliste, car [cette compréhension] n'est pas supérieure à la Vacuité dans le sens d'une Vacuité d'objet (*grāhya*) et de sujet (*grāhaka*) en tant que substances (*dravya*) séparées. Mais il n'y a pas [en réalité] une telle compréhension de la Vacuité dans les traditions textuelles [du troisième cycle de l'enseignement]. Alors, quelle [compréhension] y a-t-il? Il est dit que la vérité absolue n'est rien que la sagesse originellement pure, qui subsiste même après qu'on ait déterminé comme étant vides de nature propre tous les objets imaginés (*parikalpita*), tels que les choses extérieures, et tous les sujets imaginés, tels que la cognition, qui apparaissent sous la forme de ces [objets imaginés].

§ 5. [Objection:] Admettre que cette [sagesse] est établie comme existence réelle ne peut constituer la position du Milieu.

[Réponse:] Une telle objection n'est pas possible, puisque vous admettez vous aussi la Vacuité d'existence réelle comme étant vérité absolue. On ne trouve dans aucun texte ancien, qu'il fasse autorité ou non, une spécification [selon laquelle] une chose qui est établie comme vérité absolue ne serait pas établie comme existence réelle.

§ 6. [Objection:] Bien que le vénérable Maitreya explique le sens certain issu de ces traditions textuelles comme étant le Milieu, Bhāṇika et Candrakīrti l'expliquent comme n'étant pas la position du Milieu, et ces deux [derniers maîtres] sont plus convaincants.

¹² Cf. *Kālacakratāntra* V. k.71: *na drākṣā nimbavṛkṣād amṛtam api viṣāt paṅkajam brahmavṛkṣāt śūnyān nirvāṇasaṅkhyam śubham aśubhavaśāt siddhayaḥ prāṇighātāt / yajñāt svargāḥ paśūnām paramaśivapadam nendriyānām nirodhāt vedāt sarvajña-bhāṣākṣarasukham acalam na kṣarāsuddhacittāt //*.

[Réponse:] A propos de leur explication, le maître Asaṅga dit, en citant des *sūtra*, que leur [position] constitue une vue méprisante, et [il est dit,] dans des traités exégétiques indiens et dans des *sūtra*, [que] la Vacuité telle que l'expliquent les Ngo bo nyid med par smra ba¹³ est «Vacuité insensible (*bems po 'i stong pa nyid; jaḍaśūnyatā*)», «Vacuité d'anéantissement (*chad pa 'i stong pa nyid; ucchedaśūnyatā*)» et «Vacuité simpliste (*thal byung ba 'i stong pa nyid*)».¹⁴ Eu égard aux deux manières de comprendre le sens certain, [les maîtres] se réfutent mutuellement dans les traités qui font autorité. Par conséquent, nous ne pouvons pas éliminer l'une des positions en évoquant l'autre sans analyser leurs intentions profondes.

¹³ Il s'agit de «ceux qui professent l'absence de nature propre», c.-à-d. les Mādhyamika. A notre connaissance, il n'y a pas de terme sanskrit attesté dans un texte indien qui corresponde exactement à «*Ngo bo nyid med par smra ba*». Ce terme est probablement une invention tibétaine. Toutefois, un terme similaire, i.e., «*niḥsvabhāvabhāvavādin*» qui est traduit par «*rang bzhin med par smra ba*», se trouve dans la *Prasannapadā*, p. 24.

¹⁴ Les termes «*chad pa 'i stong pa nyid*» et «*bems po 'i stong pa nyid*» sont attestés dans la *Vimalaprabhā*, un grand commentaire sur le *Kālacakratāntra*. Cf. *Vimalaprabhā* p.63 (D. 395a6): *paramāṇusandohātmakadharmavicāraśūnyena, ucchedaśūnyatādūrīkṛtena* ...; *ibid.* p.77 (D. 41 lb7): ... *tadā ratnapradīpo nāma samādhiḥ katham syāt / evam anye 'pi samādhayo nīścintānā na bhavanti, svasamvedyalakṣyaṇāt, jaḍaśūnyatābhāvāt /*. Dans le *Rim lnga rab gsal*, par rapport à une strophe souvent citée par les auteurs tibétains (*Rim lnga rab gsal* 44a4: *phung po rnam dpyad stong pa nyid // chu shing ji bzhin snying po med // rnam pa kun gyi mchog ldan pa 'i // stong nyid de ltar 'gyur ma yin //*), Tsong kha pa cite le premier passage de la *Vimalaprabhā*, et il interprète «*chos rnam par dpyad pa 'i stong pa nyid*» comme étant la Vacuité mal saisie à cause de la confusion entre absence de nature propre (*rang bzhin med pa*) et inexistence totale (*cir yang ma grub pa*). Cf. *Rim lnga rab gsal* 44a6-b2: *lung de 'i don ni le 'u lnga pa 'i 'grel chen Dri med 'od las / rdul phra rab tshogs pa 'i bdag nyid kyi chos rnam par dpyad pa 'i stong pa / chad pa 'i stong pa las ring du byas pa / zhes gsungs pa ltar dbu ma 'i rtags kyi dgag bya 'i sa tshigs legs par ma zin pas / phung sogs rnam rigs pas dpyad pa na skye dgag la sogs pa cir yang ma grub pa rang bzhin med pa 'i don no snyam du go ba 'i chad stong 'gog pa yin gyi so sor rtog pa 'i shes rab kyi dpyod pa thams cad 'gog pa min no //* (cf. traduction japonaise, Yoshimizu 1989, 111-112). Il est tout à fait probable que Śākya mchog ldan se réfère ici au passage en question de la *Vimalaprabhā*, et son interprétation aurait été plus simple et plus littérale que celle de Tsong kha pa: toute la Vacuité saisie par l'examen des *dharma* est Vacuité d'anéantissement. Cf. Cabezón 1992, 29; 416, n. 24.

111-iii-3

§ 7. Certains [maîtres] modernes du Pays des neiges disent:

Le sens certain profond de ce qu'on appelle Vacuité ne se trouve pas ailleurs que dans les ouvrages de Candrakīrti, car il est dit [dans le *Madhyamakāvatāra*]:¹⁵

«De même que cette Loi n'existe pas ailleurs qu'ici, la position que l'on trouve ici n'existe pas ailleurs. Les savants doivent le constater».

§ 8. A. À l'égard du sujet (*chos can*; *dharmin*) qui est établi par une connaissance valable (*tshad ma*; *pramāṇa*), ils disent qu'il est vide de l'objet de négation (*dgag bya*) que constitue [la chose] établie par caractère propre (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*). Autrement, quelle source latente de voiles (*sgrib pa'i sa bon*) pourrait-on éliminer en contemplant [le sujet] comme étant aussi irréelle (*bden med*) que le fils d'une femme stérile?¹⁶—Pour soutenir cette [position], ils utilisent, comme source pour critiquer Bhāviveka, les textes où Candrakīrti réfute les Vijñānavādin.¹⁷

B. Si, lors d'une détermination de la Vacuité, on ne reconnaît pas séparément l'objet de négation, on tombera dans l'extrême d'anéantissement.¹⁸

¹⁵ MAV XIII k.2 (cf. traduction française, Scherrer-Schaub 1994, 268).

¹⁶ Pour Tsong kha pa, une chose complètement inexistante ne peut constituer l'objet de méditation du Milieu: il importe de réaliser dans la méditation la nature illusoire (*sgyu ma lta bu*) de la production par conditions (*pratītyasamutpāda*), cette dernière étant établie par une connaissance valable et pourvue de l'efficacité causale (*don byed nus pa*; *arthakriyāsāmarthyā*). Cf. *Lam rim chen mo* 476a2-478a6 (cf. traduction japonaise, Nagao 1954, 318-322).

¹⁷ Śākya mchog ldan semble faire allusion à une section du *Drang nges legs bshad snying po* (104al ff.) où Tsong kha pa critique la position de ceux qui admettent des choses qui sont établies par caractère propre (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*). Tsong kha pa y réfute la théorie de ceux qui affirment que les choses sont établies par caractère propre sur le plan pratique (*tha snyad du*), en citant MAV VI k.34 qui, dans le contexte original du MAV, fait partie de la réfutation de la Vacuité conçue sur la base de la nature dépendante (*paratantrasvabhāva*). Selon Tsong kha pa, la différence fondamentale entre Prāsaṅgika et Svātantrika consiste en ce que les premiers n'acceptent d'aucune façon la chose établie par caractère propre, tandis que les derniers, dont Bhāviveka est le partisan principal, l'acceptent sur le plan pratique.

¹⁸ Cf. *Lam rim chen mo* 375a4-5: *ha cang thal che nas dgag par bya ba'i tshod ma zin par bkag pa ni rgyu 'bras rten 'brel gyi rim pa sun phyung bas chad pa'i mthar ltung*

C. Pour ce qui concerne l'union entre la Joie et la Vacuité (*bde stong zung 'jug*) de la tradition tantrique, il faut l'expliquer comme une réalisation de la Vacuité de cette sorte [i.e., la Vacuité comprise dans le sens de simple négation], grâce à la Grande joie qui constitue le sujet, de même, par exemple, qu'on doit expliquer que la Vacuité a pour essence la compassion (*stong nyid snying rje'i snying po can*) [quand on parle de] la réalisation directe de la Vacuité au moyen de la grande compassion.¹⁹

§ 9. Tout ce qu'ils disent est en désaccord avec les textes qu'ils considèrent eux-mêmes comme source [pour leur position]. — Alors qu'il est dit dans les textes du Mādhyamika qu'il est nécessaire d'éliminer [tous] les quatre extrêmes de proliférations (*spros pa; prapañca*), vous ne parlez que de l'élimination de l'extrême d'existence sur le plan absolu (*don dam du*)

zhing lta ba de nyid kyis ngan 'gror 'khrid par byed do //. «Si quelque un fait une négation excessive en ne saisissant pas la limite de l'objet à nier, il réfutera la chaîne de production par conditions qui constitue la causalité. Par conséquent, il tombera dans l'extrême d'anéantissement: c'est précisément cette vue qui l'amènera dans des destins douloureux» (cf. traduction japonaise, Nagao 1954, 119).

¹⁹ Śākya mchog ldan se réfère à la notion de l'objet-sujet (*yul yul can*) que Tsong kha pa introduit dans l'expérience de *yuganaddha*. Bien que ce dernier soit souvent désigné comme «sagesse sans dualité (*gnyis su med pa'i ye shes, advayajñāna*)» (cf., par exemple, *Pañcakrama* V k.5: *grāhyaṃ ca grāhakaṃ ceti dvaidhā buddhir na vidyate / abhinnaṭā bhaved yatra tad āha yuganaddhakam //*; *ibid.* V k.25ab: *etad evādvayajñānam apratiṣṭhitanirvṛtiḥ /*), Tsong kha pa veut éviter de définir le *yuganaddha* comme simple extase où l'on discerne rien, pour ne pas tomber dans la vue de Hwa shang Mahāyāna, qui entraînerait la négation du principe de *pratītyasamutpāda*: c'est ainsi que Tsong kha pa y impose la notion de *yul yul can*, qui est en quelque sorte hétérogène à l'expérience mystique du tantra. Cf. *Rim lnga rab gsal* 49b4-6: *de yang bde ba dang de'i chos nyid ngo bo dbyer med ni chos can grub tsam nas rang gi stong nyid dang ngo bo dbyer med du grub zin pas / de rnal 'byor dbyer med du bya mi dgos la / de bzhin du stong nyid rtogs pa'i blo gzhan zhig la bde bas rgyas 'debs pa dang / bde ba bskyed pa'i 'og tu stong nyid kyi lta ba gzhan zhig gis rgyas 'debs pa yang min te / de la ni dper na sbyin sogs bdag med pa'i lta bas zin yang sbyin sogs de nyid lta ba de'i ngo bor mi skye ba ltar / stong nyid rtogs pa dang bde ba gnyis phan tshun gcig gcig gi ngo bor ma song ba'i phyir ro // 'o na ji ltar byed snyam na / yul can shes pa lhan cig skyes pa'i bde ba'i ngo bor skyes pa des / yul stong nyid kyi don phyin ci ma log par rtogs pa'i yul yul can du sbyor ba nyid bde stong dbyer med du sbyar ba'o //*. Cf. traduction japonaise, Yoshimizu 1989, 119-120. Cf. aussi Yoshimizu 1989a, 14ff.

et de l'élimination de l'extrême d'inexistence sur le plan pratique (*tha snyad du*). [En plus,] il est dit que l'élimination de l'extrême qui consiste en l'absence des deux [i.e., existence et inexistence] (*gnyis min gyi mtha' sel ba*) dépend de la négation de l'extrême qui consiste en les deux (*gnyis yin gyi mtha' sel ba*), et que, dans le cas de la négation de l'extrême d'inexistence qui dépend de la négation de l'extrême d'existence, quand l'un [des deux termes] qui se contredisent l'un l'autre (*phan tshun spangs 'gal*) est nié, l'autre sera également nié. Mais, vous considérez comme pilier central [la théorie que,] lorsqu'on nie l'un des deux termes qui se contredisent directement (*dnegos 'gal*), l'autre sera établi par implication (*don gyis*). Cette [position] est en désaccord avec les traités [pour les deux raisons suivantes]:

a. Il est expliqué dans les textes que la production par conditions (*rten 'brel; pratītyasamutpāda*) est à comprendre dans le sens d'un établissement par dépendance (*ltos grub*), et qu'il faut comprendre cet [établissement par dépendance] dans le sens d'un non-établissement, comme il est dit [dans le *Madhyamakāvatāra*]:²⁰

«L'établissement par dépendance mutuelle n'est que non-établissement. Ainsi disent les Victorieux».

b. Si, [comme on l'affirme] dans cette position [de Tsong kha pa *et al.*], le non-être (*min pa*) était établi à la place de l'être (*yin pa*) nié, il s'ensuivrait qu'une autre chose sera impliquée (*chos gzhan 'phen pa*) à la place de l'objet de négation nié (*dgag bya bkag shul du*): il serait clairement impossible de nier tous les [quatre] extrêmes de proliférations.

§ 10. Vous ne parlez pas de l'objet qui est à nier par le raisonnement logique du Milieu, à part [la chose qui est] établie par caractère propre (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*). Alors, il serait impossible de nier ni l'extrême d'anéantissement ni l'extrême d'inexistence. Par conséquent, il s'ensuivrait que l'enseignement de la «Vacuité de Vacuité (*stong pa nyid stong pa nyid; śūnyatāśūnyatā*)»²¹ serait inutile.

²⁰ MAv VI k.58cd.

²¹ Cf. MAv VI kk.185, 186 et MAvBh: *chos rnams rang bzhin med pa nyid // mkhas pas*

Puisque vous ne pouvez pas admettre qu'il y a chez les nobles mahāyānistes une manière de comprendre la Vacuité qui est supérieure à celle des Śrāvaka et des Pratyekabuddha, il est évident que, pour vous, les Śrāvaka et les Pratyekabuddha devraient avoir une compréhension parfaite de l'absence d'identité des choses (*chos kyi bdag med; dharmanairātmya*).²²

stong pa nyid ces bshad // stong nyid de yang stong nyid kyi // ngo bos stong par 'dod pa yin // stong nyid ces bya'i stong nyid gang // stong nyid stong nyid du 'dod de // stong nyid dngos po'i blo can gyi // 'dzin pa bzlog phyir gsungs pa yin // ji skad du / de la stong pa nyid stong pa nyid gang zhe na / chos rnams kyi stong pa nyid gang yin pa'i stong pa nyid des stong pa nyid stong pa 'di ni / stong pa nyid stong pa nyid ces bya'o zhes gsungs so //. «Les savants désignent l'absence de nature propre des *dharma* [par le terme] Vacuité, et, de plus, ils affirment que cette Vacuité est vide de la nature propre de Vacuité. Le fait que la Vacuité est vide de Vacuité, c'est ce qu'on admet comme *śūnyatāśūnyatā*, qui a été enseignée [par le Bouddha] afin d'éliminer l'attachement chez ceux qui conçoivent la Vacuité comme entité. Comme il est dit [dans la *Prajñāpāramitā*]: Alors, qu'est-ce que la Vacuité de Vacuité? La Vacuité qui est vide de Vacuité au sens de Vacuité des *dharma*, voilà ce qu'on appelle Vacuité de Vacuité» (cf. traduction allemande, Tauscher 1981, 72-73).

²² Cf. *Lam rim chen mo* 186a2-5: *mgon po Klu sgrub kyis kyang / sangs rgyas rang sangs rgyas rnams dang // nyan thos rnams kyis nges bsten pa'i // thar pa'i lam ni gcig nyid khyod // gzhan dag med ces bya bar nges // zhes Sher phyin la bstod pas nyan rang rnams kyang de la brten la / des na sher phyin la yum zhes kyang gsungs pas theg pa che chung gnyis ka'i sras kyi yum yin pas stong nyid rtogs pa'i shes rab kyi theg pa che chung 'byed pa min gyi / byang chub kyi sems dang spyod pa rlabs che ba rnams kyis 'byed pa yin te / Rin chen phreng ba las / nyan thos theg pa de las ni // byang chub sems dpa'i smon lam dang // spyod pa yongs bsngo ma bshad des // byang chub sems dpar ga la 'gyur // zhes lta bas ma phye zhing spyod pas phye bar gsungs so //*. «Puisque le protecteur Nāgārjuna rend hommage à la *Prajñāpāramitā* en disant: «Suivie par les Bouddha, les Pratyekabuddha et les Śrāvaka, tu es le seul chemin de la délivrance, et il n'y en a certainement pas d'autre», * les Śrāvaka et les Pratyekabuddha s'appuient eux aussi sur cette [*Prajñāpāramitā*]. Elle est donc la mère des fils aussi bien mahāyānistes que hīnayānistes, puisque [Nāgārjuna] appelle la *Prajñāpāramitā* aussi «mère» [dans la *Prajñāpāramitāstotra*]. ** Par conséquent, les mahāyānistes et les hīnayānistes ne sont pas différenciés par leurs *prajñā* qui réalisent la Vacuité; [les mahāyānistes] sont différenciés [des hīnayānistes] par leur *bodhicitta* et leurs pratiques exaltées. Lorsque [Nāgārjuna] dit dans la *Ratnāvalī*: «Ni le vœu de bodhisattva ni le transfert [des mérites provenant] des pratiques n'étant enseignés dans le véhicule des Śrāvaka, comment deviendrait-on bodhisattva en suivant le [véhicule des Śrāvaka]?», *** il affirme que [les deux véhicules] sont différenciés selon leurs pratiques, mais pas selon leurs vues philosophiques». (**Prajñāpāramitāstotra* k.17: *buddhaiḥ pratyekabuddhaiḥ ca śrāva-*

Puisque vous acceptez comme étant établis par une connaissance valable les douze personnes-agents (*byed pa'i skyes bu*) tels que la Personne (*gang zag; pudgala*), le Moi-sans-plus (*nga tsam*), etc., [votre position] serait identique à [celle des] hérétiques.²³

S'il n'y avait pas de compréhension correcte de l'identité de la personne et de l'absence de l'identité de la personne (*gang zag gi bdag med; pudgalanairātmya*) dans les Abhidharma mahāyānistes et hīnayānistes, il s'ensuivrait qu'on ne pourrait pas faire la distinction entre bouddhistes et hérétiques.

Si, lorsqu'on pénètre dans la vraie condition de l'existence (*gnas tshul bden pa*), les trois, c'est-à-dire l'indice logique (*rtags; liṅga*), l'attribut

*kaiś ca niṣevitā / mārgas tvam ekā mokṣasya nāsty anya iti niścayaḥ //; ** cf. ibid. k.6: sarveṣāṃ api vīrāṇāṃ parārthanīyatātmanāṃ / yādhikā janayanīti ca mātā tvam asi vatsalā //; *** Ratnāvalī IV. 90: na bodhisattvapraṇidhir na caryāpariṇāmanā / uktāḥ śrāvakayāne 'smād bodhisattvaḥ kutas tataḥ //.*) Cf. aussi *Drang nges legs bshad snying po* 74bl-2: ... *gang zag dang chos don dam par med pa dang yod pa'i tshul de lta yin dang bdag med gnyis kyang bshad pa ltar bya dgos la / de'i tshe chos bdag grub mthas yod par khas len na gang zag gi bdag med rtogs pa 'ong sa med pas 'Jug 'grel las kyang / chos la bdag tu 'dzin pa mi 'dor na gang zag gi bdag med mi rtogs par gsungs so // de'i phyir nyan rang gis kyang bdag med gnyis rtogs dgos so //.*

²³ Ici Śākya mchog ldan met en question la double définition que donne Tsong kha pa de l'identité de la personne: l'*ātman* à réfuter par un raisonnement (*rigs pa; yukti*) et celui à accepter sur le plan pratique (*tha snyad du*). Le premier est celui conçu comme étant établi par nature propre (*rang gi ngo bos grub pa*) sur la base du dernier saisi par la vue fausse innée sur la personnalité (*'jig lta lhan skyes*). Cf. *Lam rim chen mo* 427a6-b2: *de ltar na rang gi ngo bos grub pa'i rang bzhin tsam la bdag tu bzhag pa dang nga'o snyam pa tsam gyi blo'i yul la bdag tu byas pa gnyis las / dang po ni rigs pa'i dgag bya yin la phyi ma ni tha snyad du 'dod pas mi 'gog go // des ni 'jig lta lhan skyes kyi dmigs pa mi 'gog par ston gyi de'i rnam pa'i 'dzin stangs ni rang gi ngo bos grub pa'i nga yin pas de mi 'gog pa min te / dper na sgra rtag 'dzin gyi dmigs pa sgra mi 'gog kyang de'i zhen yul sgra rtag pa 'gog pa mi 'gal ba bzhin no //.* Tandis que cette double définition de Tsong kha pa a pour but de garder le principe de causalité sans qu'on doive admettre l'établissement par caractère propre, pour Śākya mchog ldan, accepter un *ātman* quelconque qui n'est pas nié par un raisonnement n'est rien d'autre qu'admettre l'*ātman* établi par nature propre tel que le conçoivent les hérétiques. La liste des «douze» personnes-agents à laquelle Śākya mchog ldan se réfère paraît quelque peu inhabituelle. Pour la liste traditionnelle, voir *Pañcaviṃśatī* p.19, 1.6-7. Voir aussi May 1959, 300; La Vallée Poussin 1923-31, tome 5, p. 245.

[à prouver] (*chos*; *dharma*) et l'objet [de discussion] (*don*; *artha* = *pakṣa*; *dharmin*),²⁴ étaient établis par une connaissance valable, il serait clairement impossible de réfuter le raisonnement autonome (*rang rgyud*).²⁵

²⁴ Cf. *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* s.v. *rtags chos don gsum*: *rtags zhes pa sgrub byed dang / chos zhes pa bsgrub bya'i chos dang / don zhes pa bsgrub gzhi'am rtsod gzhi bcas gsum mo* //. Cf. aussi *Vādanyāya*, p. 18: *...atha vā siddhiḥ sādhanam, tadaṅgaṃ dharmo yasyārthasya vivādāśrayasya vādaprastāvahetoḥ sa sādhanāṅgaḥ* /.

²⁵ Il s'agit ici de la distinction entre les Mādhyamika qui acceptent l'utilisation des raisonnements autonomes (i.e., les *rang rgyud pa*; **svātantrika*) et ceux qui, comme Tsong kha pa, les répudient (i.e., les *thal 'gyur ba*; **prāsaṅgika*). Śākya mchog ldan, comme de nombreux autres penseurs tibétains, semble comprendre *rang rgyud* comme étant simple raisonnement formel (*prayoga*) où, selon les exigences de la logique de Dignāga et Dharmakīrti, les termes sont établis par les deux partis dans le débat moyennant des *pramāṇa*. Pour Śākya mchog ldan, accepter que les termes soient établis par des *pramāṇa* équivaut donc à accepter le *rang rgyud*. Toutefois, l'argument de Śākya mchog ldan ne touche probablement pas Tsong kha pa, car ce dernier ajoute une exigence ontologique dans son explication du *rang rgyud*, à savoir que les termes dans un *rang rgyud* soient établis, sur le plan de la vérité conventionnelle, par leurs caractères propres (*tha snyad du ran gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*). Chose curieuse, la position de Śākya mchog ldan sur le *rang rgyud* ressemble à la première des quatre positions adverses (*pūrvapakṣa*) sur le *rang rgyud* que réfute Tsong kha pa dans le *Lam rim chen mo*, position qui est également critiquée dans le *rTsa ba'i shes rab kyi dka'gnad chen po brgyad* et autres textes. Cf. *Lam rim chen mo* 434b2-3: *'di ni tshul gsum tshad mas grub pa'i rtags kyis byed na rang rgyud dang tshul gsum khas blangs kyī mthar thug pa tsam gyis byed na thal 'gyur du 'dod par snang no* //. Ce premier *pūrvapakṣa* dans le *Lam rim chen mo* est attribué à Jayānanda, le commentateur du *Madhyamakāvatāra*, qui prétendait que les *Prāsaṅgika* n'acceptent pas que la raison logique et sa validité soient établis par des *pramāṇa*. Cf. Yoshimizu 1993, 210ff.

Enfin, en filigrane, on trouve aussi, dans ce bref passage de Śākya mchog ldan, des thèmes du débat tibétain sur la question du *chos can mthun snang ba* («les sujets qui paraissent d'une façon similaire [aux deux partis]»), un débat qui concerne l'interprétation de certains passages dans la *Prasannapadā* p. 26ff. L'idée centrale est que celui qui accepte le *rang rgyud* doit accepter que les sujets paraissent de manière similaire aux *pramāṇa* des deux partis. Voir Tillemans 1990, fn 95 pour des définitions de *rang rgyud* chez les dGe lugs pa; voir aussi Tillemans 1992, n 5 [= chapitre V, n. 2 dans la présente publication] pour le passage en question de la *Prasannapadā*; voir aussi Lopez 1987, 78 et passim pour les explications sur le *chos can mthun snang ba*. Tsong kha pa, mKhas grub rje, et les dGe lugs pa généralement, interprètent l'idée du *chos can mthun snang ba* de façon à ce que le simple fait que les termes soient établis (*grub pa tsam*) par les *pramāṇa* des deux partis, n'implique ni l'acceptation de *chos can mthun snang ba*, ni l'acceptation du *rang rgyud*.

Si le sens du Milieu n'était pas enseigné dans les ouvrages de Bhāviveka, le fait que Candrakīrti cite Bhāviveka comme autorité, en disant:²⁶

«ce que Bhāviveka a correctement expliqué...»,

serait évidemment impropre.

S'il se trouvait, dans le contexte [du Milieu], une perception (*mngon sum*; *pratyakṣa*) et une inférence (*rjes dpag*; *anumāna*) qui saisissent la Vacuité, il y aurait contradiction avec ce qui est dit dans le *Bodhicaryāvatāra*:²⁷

«L'absolu n'est pas du domaine de l'esprit»,

et contradiction avec ce qui est dit dans un *sūtra* cité dans le *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*,²⁸ selon lequel la vérité absolue dépasse même le domaine des Omniscients, et contradiction avec ce que dit Atiśa [dans le *Satyadvayāvatāra*]:²⁹

Le *chos can mthun snang ba* est une exigence plus forte: il faut que les termes soient établis par les deux *pramāṇa* d'exactly la même façon. Voir mKhas grub rje, *sTong thun chen mo* 157ff. Selon les dGe lugs pa, un réaliste et un Mādhyamika ont deux positions incompatibles sur la nature et le fonctionnement des *pramāṇa*, et c'est pour cette raison que le *rang rgyud* et le *chos can mthun snang ba* sont impossibles dans un débat entre ces deux adversaires. Bref: pour le réaliste, un *pramāṇa* est non-erronné lorsqu'il saisit les objets comme étant établis par leurs caractères propres (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*); pour les Mādhyamika, selon Tsong kha pa et mKhas grub, il y a bel et bien des *pramāṇa*, mais ces derniers sont toujours erronés (*'khrul pa*), car les objets y paraissent établis par leurs caractères propres, alors qu'ils ne le sont pas.

²⁶ Cf. *Madhyamakāśāstrastuti* k.11ab: *drṣṭvā tac chatakādikaṃ bahuvidhaṃ sūtraṃ ga-bhīraṃ tathā vṛttiṃ cāpy aha buddhapālitaḥ kṛtāṃ sūksmaṃ* (lire *sūktam*, cf. Tib. *legs bshad*) *ca yad bhāvinā* /; Tib. *brgya pa la sogs de dag dang ni de bzhin mdo sde zab ma rnam mang dang // sangs rgyas bskyangs kyis mdzad pa 'i 'grel pa mthong nas legs ldan byed kyis legs bshad dang//*.

²⁷ BCA IX k.2c: *buddher agocaras tattvaṃ*.

²⁸ Cf. MAvBh ad MAv VI k.29: *lha 'i bu don dam pa 'i bden pa ni rnam pa thams cad kyi mchog dang ldan pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyi ye shes kyi yul gyi bar las 'das pa yin te* /. «La vérité absolue, ô Devaputra, dépasse le domaine de la sagesse de l'Omniscient qui possède toutes les excellences...». Cf. Skt. BCAP ad BCA IX k.2: ... *sarvākāra-varopetasarvajñajñānaviśayabhāvasamatikrāntaṃ paramārthasatyam iti vistaraḥ* //.

²⁹ SDA k.13ab.

«La perception et l'inférence sont inutiles»,

et³⁰

«[L'absolu] ne peut pas être réalisé par les deux sortes de connaissances, [c.-à-d. la connaissance] non conceptuelle et [la connaissance] conceptuelle. Ainsi dit le savant maître Bhavya».

Il y a non seulement [contradiction avec les autorités textuelles], mais il y a aussi réfutation par la logique: [l'existence d']une perception qui prend pour objet direct l'exclusion (*ldog pa; vyāvṛtti*) consistant en l'élimination de l'hétérogène (*gzhan sel; anyāpoha*) est niée par des raisonnements logiques formulés par l'auteur du *Pramāṇavārttika*.³¹

§ 11. En plus, vous expliquez la Vacuité comme négation de l'objet à nier qui n'est pas établi par une connaissance valable, [négation] sur la base du sujet qui est à son tour établi par une connaissance valable. Ce type d'explication est contradictoire non seulement avec l'enseignement explicite de la *Prajñāpāramitā*, mais également avec ce qui est explicitement dit dans le traité de Candrakīrti lui-même appliquant à tous les sujets [le raisonnement suivant]:³²

«Puisqu'il a pour nature propre ceci, l'œil est vide de l'œil...».

En outre, il y a réfutation par le raisonnement logique suivant: la Vacuité comprise dans le sens qu'une chose, telle qu'un pot, qui est établie par une connaissance valable, est vide de l'objet de négation qui, à son tour, n'est pas établi par une connaissance valable, est la pire même des Vacuités

³⁰ SDA k.14bcd.

³¹ Cf., par exemple, PV IV k.133 = PVin III k.30 (D. 200a7-bl): *tad eva rūpaṃ tatārthaḥ śeṣaṃ vyāvṛttilakṣaṇam / avasturūpaṃ sāmānyam atas tan nākṣagocarah //*. «C'est uniquement cette nature qui est l'objet de cette [connaissance auditive]. Le reste est des universaux qui sont caractérisés par l'exclusion [des hétérogènes] et qui sont par nature irréels; par conséquent, ils ne sont pas l'objet de l'organe de sens».

³² MAV VI k.18lab.

figurant dans les traités de ceux qui professent le gZhan stong. Car il s'agit d'une compréhension [de la Vacuité] dans le sens de l'être vide d'un objet de négation qui est une nature imaginée (*kun brtags*; *parikalpita*) complètement dépourvue de caractères (*mtshan nyid*; *lakṣaṇa*), [négation effectuée] sur la base d'un sujet qui est une nature dépendante (*gzhan dbang*; *paratantra*) impure.

[Objection:] L'explication dans cette tradition [du gZhan stong] que tous les objets de connaissance (*shes bya*; *jñeya*) sont vides d'eux-mêmes (*rang stong*), n'est pas capable de rejeter les objections telles que celles qui sont posées dans des sections [des *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* où l'adversaire dit]:³³

«Si tout est vide dans ce monde...».

[Réponse:] Elle n'en est pas incapable, car nous répondons à ces [objections] en citant [le texte suivant]:³⁴

«En se basant sur les deux vérités, les bouddhas enseignent la Loi...».

Comment [ce passage réfute-t-il de telles objections]? Certes, en général lorsqu'on fait la distinction entre les deux vérités, l'inexistence prédomine sur le plan absolu, mais ces objections posées par les réalistes (*dnegos smra ba*) sont des objections qui réfutent les conventions en invoquant l'absolu

³³ MMK XXIV k.1: *yadi śūnyam idaṃ sarvaṃ udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ / catūrṇāṃ āryasa-tyānāṃ abhāvas te prasajyate* //; *ibid.* XXV k.1: *yadi śūnyam idaṃ sarvaṃ udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ / prahāṇād vā nirodhād vā kaśya nirvāṇam iṣyate* //.

³⁴ MMK XXIV k.8ab: *dve satye samupāśrītya buddhānāṃ dharmadeśanā* /.

comme raison logique.—Nous y répliquons en disant: «car cela existe sur le plan conventionnel».³⁵ Il est dit [dans *l'Abhisamayālaṃkāra*]:³⁶

«Les enseignements tels que [celui de] l' «incalculable», etc., ne résistent pas à l'absolu. Ils sont considérés sur le plan conventionnel comme émanations de la compassion du Muni».³⁷

³⁵ L'adversaire, en suivant la version de Tsong kha pa, n'accepte pas que le Rang stong signifie que toute chose est littéralement vide d'elle-même (pour lui, une cruche (*bum pa*), par exemple, n'est pas vide de cruche, mais uniquement de «cruche établie par caractère propre (*bum pa rang gi mtshan nyid kyi grub pa*)»). Or, pour appuyer sa version de Rang stong, l'adversaire fait allusion ici à un argument dans les MMK, où un réaliste prétend que production, destruction, et donc les quatre vérités et le *nirvāṇa*, seraient inexistants si toute chose était vide. Selon l'adversaire de Śākya mchog ldan, le fait que les choses soient littéralement vides d'elles-mêmes entraînerait leur inexistence complète, et donc l'inévitabilité des conséquences absurdes évoquées par le réaliste dans les MMK. Śākya mchog ldan y réplique en rappelant la distinction entre les deux vérités: une chose peut exister conventionnellement, bien qu'elle soit vide d'elle-même, et donc inexistante, sur le plan de la vérité absolue.

³⁶ AA IV k.55: *asaṃkhyeyādīnīrdeśāḥ paramārthena na kṣamāḥ / kṛpāṇiṣyandabhūtās te saṃvṛtyābhimatā muneh //*.

³⁷ Cette citation de *l'Abhisamayālaṃkāra* est suivie par le colophon où l'on trouve les informations suivantes sur la composition du *dBu ma'i byung tshul*:

(1) Śākya mchog ldan composa le *dBu ma'i byung tshul* selon la sollicitation d'un patriarche de l'ordre de Karma pa («*Karma par grags gang gis bkas bskul nas...*»). Bien que le nom de ce Karma pa ne soit pas précisé, il s'agit sans aucun doute du septième rGyal dbang Karma pa Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454-1506), qui était en termes intimes avec notre auteur (cf. van der Kuijp 1983, 16).

(2) Lieu de composition: le monastère de gSer mdog can de la région de g.Yas ru du Tibet central (gTsang) («*gTsang g.Yas ru'i chos kyi grwa / gSer mdog can du nye bar sbyar nas...*»).

(3) Copiste du texte (*vi ge pa*): le *dBu ma'i byung tshul* fut copié par un certain Kong ston Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (dpal bzang po), qui offrit la copie au temple de Ra sa (= lHa sa) 'Phrul snang. Faute d'information sur Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, il est impossible de savoir s'il s'agit de la copie originale du texte ou d'une reproduction.

*Texte***III-iii**

gsum pa dgag sgrub cung zad bgyis te mjug bsdu ba la gsum ste /

III-iii-1 dbu ma'i ngos 'dzin (17b4) rgya chung na chos spong gi nyes dmigs yod par bstan /

III-iii-2 rgya che shos de'i ngos 'dzin gzhan du byas pas lung dang 'gal bar bstan /

III-iii-3 physis byon dbu ma'i ngos 'dzin rang la grags pa'i lung dang ma mthun pa'o //

III-iii-1

§1. dang po ni / dus (17b5) physis **Gangs can** gyi ljongs na grub mtha' smra ba bzi'i rtse mo'i dbu ma dang / de'i gzhung lugs ni **Thal Rang par** grags pa dag las / gzhan la ngos mi 'dzin cing / dbu ma de yang chos thams cad bden pas stong pa'i med par (17b6) dgag pa kho na'o zhes 'chad / de skad du 'don pa 'dis ni / bka' 'khor lo gsum pa dgongs 'grel gyi bstan bcos dang bcas pa dag la dngos por smra ba nyid du skur pa btab pas chos spong gi las bsags pa ni / rje (17b7) btsun **Ma pham pa** nyid kyis lung bstan pa yin te / ji skad du /

de phyir rgyal bas ches mkhas 'jig rten 'di na yod min te //

zhes sogs kyis bstan pa de nyid do //

§ 2. 'phags pa **Thogs med** kyis gzhung 'grel rnam su nges don gyi (18a1) dbu ma ma bstan na / rgyal ba nyid kyi drang nges 'byed par lung bstan pa dang 'gal lo //

§ 3. des *rGyud bla'i* 'grel pa thal 'gyur du bkral lo zhes zer mod / 'grel pa de ni **Zla ba grags pa**'i 'grel tshul dang mi (18a2) mthun par dpyod ldan sus bltas kyang mngon sum gyis grub pas zer ba tsam du zad pas / sngags kyi dbu ma med par dgag pa nyid du bshad na / rnam kun mchog ldan gyi stong pa nyid ngos ma zin pa dang / de las gzhan gang du ngos

(18a3) bzung yang lung gis gnod pa dang / bde stong zung 'jug ngos ma zin pa dang / shes dang shes bya gcig pa'i sku sogs ji ltar 'chad / de dag kun rdzob bden par 'chad pa ni / sngags lugs kyi don dam pa'i bden pa la skur pa btab pa (18a4) kho nar ma zad / *Dus kyi 'khor lor* / nim pa'i shing las rgun 'brum dang / dug gi lo ma las bdud rtsi dang / tshangs pa'i shing las padmo mi 'khrungs pa'i dpes / med par dgag pa'i stong pa nyid de / bde chen dang zung du 'jug pa'i stong (18a5) nyid yin pa gsal bar bkag go //

III-iii-2

§ 4. gnyis pa ni / 'khor lo gsum pa dgongs 'grel dang bcas pa nas 'byung ba'i don dam pa'i bden pa'i ngos 'dzin / gzung 'dzin rdzas gzhan gyis stong pa'i stong nyid las gong du ma 'phags (18a6) pas / dngos por smra ba nyid do zhes zer mod / gzhung lugs de dag ni de lta bu'i stong nyid kyi ngos 'dzin yod pa ma yin gyi / 'o na ci zhig yod ce na / phyi rol gyi don la sogs pa'i gzung ba kun brtags ji snyed pa dang / der snang ba'i (18a7) rnam shes sogs 'dzin pa kun brtags ji snyed pa / rang gi ngo bos stong pa nyid du gtan la phab nas / de'i lhag mar lus pa'i rang bzhin rnam dag gi ye shes 'ba' zig la don dam pa'i bden par gsungs pa'o //

§ 5. de bden grub (18b1) tu 'dod pa dbu mar mi rung ngo snyam na /

khyed kyis kyang bden stong don dam par khas blangs pas der mi rung ste / don dam pa'i bden par grub nas bden par ma grub pa'i khyad par ni / sngon gyi gzhung lugs tshad ma dang ldan mi ldan gang (18b2) nas kyang ma byung ngo //

§ 6. gal te gzhung lugs de dag nas byung ba'i nges don rje btsun **Byams pas** dbu mar bshad kyang / **Legs ldan 'byed** dang / **Zla grags** kyis³⁸ dbu ma'i lugs ma yin par bshad pa de gnyis dbang btsan no snyam na ni /

'o (18b3) na de dag gi bshad pa la yang **Thogs med** zhabs kyis mdo drangs nas / skur 'debs kyi lta bar bshad cing / rgya gar ba'i man ngag gi gzhung dang / mdo sde dag na ngo bo nyid med par smra bas 'chad pa'i stong pa nyid de la / bems po'i stong (18b4) pa nyid dang / chad pa'i stong pa nyid

³⁸ Ms: kyi.

dang / thal byung ba'i stong pa nyid ces / nges don gyi ngos 'dzin tshul phyogs gnyis ka la / tshad ldan gyi gzhung dag na dgag pa phyogs re ba re mdzad yod pas na dgongs don zab mo dag la ma brtags (18b5) par phan tshun du gcig gis cig shos 'gog par nus pa ma yin no //

III-iii-3

§ 7. gsum pa ni / **Gangs can** du phyis byon pa dag na re / stong pa nyid ces bya ba'i nges don zab mo 'di ni **Zla ba grags pa**'i gzhung las gzhan du yod pa ma yin te / ji (18b6) skad du /

'di las gzhan na chos 'di ni //
 ji ltar med pa de bzhin du //
 'dir 'byung lugs kyang gzhan na ni //
 med ces mkhas rnams nges par mdzod //

ces gsungs pas so //

§ 8. **A.** de yang chos can tshad grub kyi steng du / dgag bya rang (18b7) gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pas stong pa'o // de las gzhan du mo gsham³⁹ gyi bu lta bu bden med du bsgom pas / sgrib pa'i sa bon ci zhig spong bar nus zhes 'chad cing / de'i rgyab rten du/ **Zla bas** rnam rig pa bkag pa'i gzhung rnams (19a1) **Legs ldan** 'gog pa'i gzhung du sbyor bar byed pa dang /

B. stong nyid gtan la phebs pa'i tshe dgag bya logs su ngos ma bzung na chad pa'i mthar lung ngo zhes 'chad pa dang /

C. sngags kyi bde stong zung 'jug kyang de lta bu'i (19a2) stong pa nyid de yul can bde ba chen pos rtogs pa la 'chad dgos te / dper na brtse ba snying rje chen pos stong pa nyid mngon sum du rtogs pa la / stong nyid snying rje'i snying po can du 'chad dgos pa bzhin / zhes gsung ngo //

§ 9. de skad ces zer ba de (19a3) thams cad ni rang gang la khungs su byed pa'i gzhung mtha' dag dang mi mthun te / dbu ma'i gzhung las ni / spros pa'i mtha' bzhi sel dgos par bshad la / khyed kyis ni / don dam du yod pa'i mtha' dang / tha snyad du med pa'i (19a4) mtha' gnyis sel ba las

³⁹ Ms: sam.

gzhan ma bshad / gzhung du ni / gnyis min gyi mtha' sel ba / gnyis yin gyi mtha' khegs pa la thug pa dang / med mtha' khegs pa yod mtha' khegs pa la rag lus pa sogs phan tshun spangs pa'i 'gal zla gcig khegs pa na cig shos kyang (19a5) khegs par gsungs la / khyed cag gis ni / dngos 'gal gnyis las gcig bkag pa na gcig shos don gyis grub pa gzhung shing nyid du byed pa dang / de gzhung dang 'gal ba yang gzhung du ni rten 'brel gyi go ba ltos grub dang / (19a6) de'i go ba ni / ji skad du /

phan tshun don la brten pa'i grub pa ni //
grub min nyid ces rgyal ba rnams kyis gsungs //

zhes ma grub pa nyid la bshad pa'i phyir dang / lugs 'dir yin pa bkag shul min⁴⁰ pa sogs grub na / dgag bya bkag (19a7) shul du chos gzhan 'phen par thal ba dang / spros mtha' thams cad mi 'gog par gsal⁴¹ ba'i phyir ro //

§ 10. khyed cag gis ni dbu ma'i rtags kyis dgag bya rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa las gzhan mi 'chad pa de'i tshe chad pa'i mtha' dang med (19b1) pa'i mtha' 'gog ma nus pas na / stong pa nyid stong pa nyid gsungs pa dgos med du thal bar 'gyur ba dang /

nyan rang gi stong nyid rtogs tshul las lhag pa theg chen 'phags pa la khas len ma nus pas / nyan rang la chos kyis bdag (19b2) med rtogs tshul yongs su rdzogs pa yod par gsal ba⁴² dang /

gang zag dang nga tsam sogs byed pa'i skyes bu bcu gnyis sogs tshad grub tu khas blangs pas mu stegs dang mtshungs pa dang /

theg pa che chung gi chos mngon pa na / (19b3) gang zag gi bdag dang bdag med kyis ngos 'dzin rnam dag med na phyi nang gi shan ma phyed par thal ba dang /

⁴⁰ Ms: yin.

⁴¹ Ms: bsal.

⁴² Ms: bsal.

gnas tshul bden pa la zhugs pa'i tshe rtags chos don gsum tshad mas grub
na / rang rgyud 'gog ma nus par gsal⁴³ ba (19b4) dang /

Legs ldan gyi gzhung du dbu ma'i don ma bstan na / ji skad du /

Legs ldan gyis legs gang bshad dang //

zhes **Zla bas** lung du drangs pa mi 'thad par gsal⁴⁴ ba dang /

'di skabs stong nyid rtogs pa'i mngon sum dang rjes (19b5) dpag yod na /
sPyod 'jug tu /

don dam blo yi spyod yul min //

zhes dang / *'Jug 'grel* sogs su drangs pa'i mdo las don dam pa'i bden pa
de ni rnam pa thams cad mkhyen pa nyid kyi yul las kyang 'das par gsungs
(19b6) pa dang / **A ti śas** /

mngon sum rjes dpag dgos pa med //

ces dang /

rtog bcas rtog pa med pa yi //

shes pa gnyis kyis mi rtogs zhes //

slob dpon mkhas pa Bha bya gsungs //

zhes sogs dang 'gal ba kho nar ma (19b7) zad / rigs pas kyang gnod de /
ldog pa gzhan sel dngos kyi gzhal byar byed pa'i mngon sum ni *rNam*
'grel mdzad pa'i rigs pas khegs so //

§ 11. gzhan yang chos can tshad grub kyi steng du dgag bya tshad mas ma
grub (20a1) pa bkag pa'i stong pa nyid kyi 'chad tshul 'di ni / *Sher mdo* 'i
dngos bstan dang 'gal ba kho nar ma zad / **Zla ba** nyid kyi bstan bcas las /
ji skad du /

⁴³ Ms: bsal.

⁴⁴ Ms: bsal.

gang phyir de yi rang bzhin de //
yin phyir mig ni (20a2) mig gis stong //

zhes sogs chos can thams cad la sbyar nas dngos su gsungs pa dang / rigs
pas kyang bum pa lta bu tshad mas grub pa'i don zhig / dgag bya tshad
mas ma grub pas stong pa'i stong pa nyid 'di ni / gzhan (20a3) stong du
smra ba'i gzhung las 'byung ba'i stong nyid kyi nang nas kyang tha shal
zhig ste / chos can ma dag gzhan dbang gi steng du dgag bya mtshan nyid
yongs su chad pa'i kun brtags kyis stong pa la ngos bzung ba'i phyir /

lugs (20a4) 'dir shes bya thams cad rang stong du bshad pa de / ji skad du /
gal te 'di dag kun stong na //

zhes sogs kyi skabs nas bshad pa'i rtsod pa spong bar ma nus so snyam
na /

mi nus pa ma yin te / de la ni / ji skad du /

sangs (20a5) rgyas rnamd chos bstan pa //
bden pa gnyis la yang dag rten //

zhes sogs kyis len thebs pa'i phyir /

ji ltar na / spyir bden pa gnyis so sor phye ba'i tshe / don dam du med pa
nyid dbang btsan yang / dngos smra ba'i rtsod (20a6) pa de ni / don dam
rtags su bkod nas kun rdzob sun 'byin par byed pa'i rtsod pa yin pas / kun
rdzob tu yod pa'i phyir / zhes pas lan thebs so // de skad du /

grangs med la sogs bstan pa rnamd // dam pa'i don du bzod ma yin //
(20a7) kun rdzob tu ni thugs brtse ba'i // rgyu mthun de dag thub pa
bzhed //

ces gsungs so // //

V. Tsong kha pa *et al.* on the Bhāviveka-Candrakīrti Debate

This paper consists in an examination of some aspects of the dGe lugs pa interpretation of the famous debate in Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* I.13.4-39.4, the section of the *Prasannapadā* that concerns the understanding of Buddhapālita's refutation of the Sāṃkhya's doctrine of production by self. Buddhapālita's controversial reasoning in his *Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti* on the first *kārikā* of Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakakārikās* was presented as follows in *Prasannapadā* 14.1-3 (ed. L. de La Vallée Poussin; henceforth "Pr."):

*ācāryabuddhapālitas tv āha / na svata utpadyante bhāvā /
tadutpādavaiyathyāt / atiprasaṅgadoṣāc ca / na hi svātmanā
vidyamānānām padārthānām punar utpāde prayojanam asti / atha
sann api jāyeta / na kadā cin na jāyeta / iti /* "However, the Ācārya
Buddhapālita has said: 'Entities are not produced from themselves,
because their production would be pointless and would incur the
fault of absurdity [due to an infinite regress]. For, entities that exist
in themselves do not need to be produced again (*punar*). But if, even
though existing, [such an entity] were to arise, then it would never fail
to arise.'"

In addition to the Japanese translation published in the 1940's by Susumu Yamaguchi, we now possess a new translation of *Prasannapadā* I into Japanese by Prof. Tanji.¹ However, as for translation into a European language, this remains a project that urgently needs to be undertaken again, for the translation in Stcherbatsky 1965 is exceedingly misleading both because of its outdated philosophical terminology and because of its translational errors. [Note added in 2020: We now have this long-desired new translation of *Prasannapadā* I, i.e., MacDonald 2015]. In

¹ Yamaguchi 1947; Tanji 1988.

such a project, Tibetan works, such as Tsong kha pa's *Lam rim chen mo*, *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*, *rTsa she ſtik chen*, *rTsa ba'i shes rab kyi dka' gnas brgyad*, Se ra rJe bstun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan's *dBu ma'i spyi don*, mKhas grub rje's *sTong thun chen mo*, sGom sde Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan's *Thal bzlog gi dka' ba'i gnas*, can serve as commentaries aiding one in understanding Candrakīrti's words. But, equally, the Tibetan writers make a certain number of philosophically significant contributions based on *Prasannapadā* I.

The debate—in its Indian form or Tibetan interpretation—is far too long and involved to be explained satisfactorily here. We shall have to confine ourselves to a kind of *prolegomenon* to such an explanation and make a subjectively based choice as to what should be known and investigated *before* such an explanation can be attempted. What, then, are some of the main points of interest to be found in Tsong kha pa and other dGe lugs pa writers?

First of all, undoubtedly one of the most interesting philosophical developments is the problem as to whether Mādhyaṃikas and Realists (*dnegos smra ba*) can ever have a debate about the same subject, given that the parties view subjects (*chos can* = *dharmin*) differently, the Mādhyaṃika taking them as unreal, the Realist as truly existent. The question becomes known as that of the existence or nonexistence of a *chos can mthun snang ba* (“a *dharmin* that appears similarly [to both parties in a debate]”), and is developed in detail in Tsong kha pa's *Lam rim chen mo* and in mKhas grub rje's *sTong thun chen mo*. This problem, which is sufficiently vast in its Tibetan development that it would require a separate paper or even series of papers, is only indirectly shown in *Prasannapadā* I.29-30.²

² Pr. 29.6 – 30.8: *na caitad evaṃ / yasmād yadaivotpādapratīṣedho 'tra sādhyadharmo 'bhipretah / tadaiva dharminas tadādhārasya viparyāsamātrāsādītāmabhāvasya pratyutīḥ svayam evānenāṅgīkṛtā / bhinnau hi viparyāsāvīparyāsau / tad yadā viparyāsenāsat sattvena grhyate taimirikeṇeva keṣādi / tadā kutaḥ sadbhūtapadārthaleṣasyāpy upalabdhiḥ / yadā cāvīparyāsād abhūtaṃ nādhyaṛopītaṃ vitaimirikeṇeva keṣādi / tadā kuto 'sadbhūtapadārthaleṣasyāpy upalabdhir yena tadānīm saṃvṛtiḥ syāt / ata evoktam ācāryapādaiḥ yadi kiṃ cid upalabheyaṃ pravartayeyaṃ nivartayeyaṃ vā / pratyakṣādibhir arthaiḥ tadbhāvān me 'nupālabhaḥ // iti yataś caivaṃ bhinnau viparyāsāvīparyāsau / ato viduṣāṃ aviparītāvasthāyāṃ viparīta-syāsambhavāt kutaḥ sāmṛtaṃ cakṣur yasya dharmitvaṃ syāt / iti na vyāvartate*

Secondly, a related philosophical point: we find the question as to whether the Prāsaṅgika ever used reasons (*hetu*) and examples (*drṣṭānta*). In fact, it has been a rather common view amongst Western writers, and perhaps some Tibetans, that Prāsaṅgikas are so called because they never use anything but absurd “consequences” (*prasaṅgas*) drawn from the

‘siddhādhāraḥ pakṣadoṣa āśrayāsiddho vā hetuḍoṣaḥ / ity aparihāra evāyaṃ /*. *La Vallée Poussin has *‘siddhādhāre pakṣadoṣa.*; de Jong 1978, p. 31, reads *‘siddhādhāraḥ pakṣadoṣa*. Translation: “[Candrakīrti:] Now this is not so [i.e., it is not so, as Bhāviveka had argued, that the *dharmin* is simply the unqualified general term]. For, precisely when the negation of production is intended to be the property to be proved (*sādhya-dharma*) here, then indeed this [philosopher, i.e., Bhāviveka] himself accepts the elimination of the *dharmin* that is the locus for this [*sādhya-dharma*] [and] whose being is found just because of error. Indeed, error and non-error are opposed. And so, when something nonexistent is grasped as existent due to error, as in the case of the hairs and other such [illusions grasped] by those who have [the eye-disease known as] *timira*, then at this time how could there be a perception of even the slightest trace of a real entity? And when no nonexistent thing is superimposed because there is no error, as in the case of the hairs and so forth when someone is free of *timira*, then how [too] could there be perception of even the slightest trace of an unreal entity, so that it would then have to be customarily existent? It is precisely for that reason that the venerable Ācārya [Nāgārjuna] stated [in *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 30]:

‘If, through perception or other states [i.e., *pramāṇas*], I were to apprehend something, I would affirm or negate it. But as such a thing is nonexistent, I am without reproach.’

Now, since error and non-error are thus opposed, then in the unerring state of the wise nothing erroneous can exist, so how would the customary eye [i.e., the general unqualified term] be what is the *dharmin*? Therefore, [Bhāviveka] does not avoid the thesis-fault of an unestablished locus nor the reason-fault of an unestablished basis. And so this was not at all a reply [to our criticisms].”

We should also mention Pr. 35.9 where Candrakīrti stresses that seeking agreement from both parties on an inference is generally pointless: *svārthānumāne tu sarvatra svaprasiddhir eva garīyasī / nobhayaprasiddhiḥ / ata eva tarkalakṣaṇābhidhānaṃ niḥprayojanam /*. “But in the case of an inference-for-oneself (*svārthānumāna*), it is always just one’s own acknowledgment that is particularly important, not an acknowledgment by both [parties]. For this very [reason] the logical characterizations [of Dignāga and co.] are pointless.” The passage is cited and discussed in *ICang skya grub mtha’* (Sarnath ed.) pp. 407-408.

On the Tibetan development of the problem of *chos can mthun snang ba*, see Yotsuya 1999, Hopkins 1989, Lopez 1987, p. 78 et passim as well my remarks on these and related topics in pp. 105-112 of Tillemans 1982.

opponent's position—if they were to use reasons and examples they would be no different from their Svātantrika coreligionists.³ I think that we can safely say that this view, at least as it stands, is inaccurate and needs to be nuanced to account for Candrakīrti's use of reasons and examples. An examination of Candrakīrti's own text in *Prasannapadā* I.19.8ff. reveals that Candrakīrti himself argued that one could also construe Buddhapālita's argument as having a reason and an example, though the inference would only be recognized as valid by the opponent himself. The long discussion in *Prasannapadā* begins as follows (Pr. 19.8-20.1):

athāpy avaśyaṃ svato 'numānavirodhadoṣa udbhāvanīyaḥ // so 'py udbhāvita evācāryabuddhapālitenā /. “But, if nonetheless [it is said that] one should put forward the fault of [the thesis having a] contradiction with an inference [valid] from the [Sāṃkhya's] own point of view, then [we reply that] this, too, has in fact been put forth by Ācārya Buddhapālita.”

The passage also has the noteworthy feature that Candrakīrti seems to be using, and adapting, the notion of *anumānavirodha* found in Dignāga's definition of the thesis in *Pramāṇasamuccaya* III.2. In other words, he was perfectly familiar with, and probably even partially accepted, one of the most basic definitions in Buddhist logic, that of the thesis (*pakṣa*). (Indeed, in Pr. 19.1-3 he also clearly alludes to another famous verse of Dignāga, i.e., *Pramāṇasamuccaya* IV.6 = *Nyāyamukha* 13). In short, the prevalent idea that Candrakīrti *wholly* rejected Dignāgean logic in favour of a *prasaṅga*-style method is simplistic. What he did do, however, is adapt the structures of Dignāgean logic—such as theses, reasons and examples—to his own purposes and philosophical orientation. This adaptation of the Dignāgean logic of reasons and examples is nicely brought out by Tsong kha pa *et al.*, who took passages such as Pr. 19.8 *et seq.*, as well as Candrakīrti's statements elsewhere that certain *hetu* and *drṣṭānta* are acknowledged

³ Cf. *Lam rim chen mo* p. 252 (*Collected Works*, Tashilhunpo edition, ed. Ngag dbang dge legs bde mo, Delhi, Vol. pa.): *da lta dbu ma thal 'gyur bar 'dod pa dag ni don dam pa dang tha snyad pa gang la brtsam pa'i khas len ni thal snyad du yang med de gal te de 'dra ba'i dam bca' yod na de sgrub byed kyi dpe dang rtags kyang 'dod dgos la de lta na rang rgyud par 'gyur ro*. Cf. also J. May's remarks on Mādhyamika method on p. 15 of his introduction to Candrakīrti, *Prasannapadā Madhyamakavṛtti*. Paris, 1959.

by only the opponent, to come up with the notion of a *gzhan grags kyi gtan tshigs*, or if you like, a **paraprasiddhahetu*, an “other-acknowledged reason.” This *paraprasiddha* quality is quite clear if we look at the actual reasons and examples that Candrakīrti extracts from Buddhapālita. In fact, Candrakīrti comes up with two versions in Pr. 19.8 *et seq.* The first one is rather long, as it is phrased in a five-membered Naiyāyika argument form,⁴ so, for our purposes, let us look at the second and shorter version as it is described in Pr. 22.3-5:

*atha vāyam anyañ prayogamārgaḥ / puruṣavyatiriktāḥ padārthāḥ
svata utpattivādinaḥ / tata eva / na svata utpadyante / svātmanā
vidyamānatvāt / puruṣavat /* “Alternatively, there is this other way
[to give] the reasoning: ‘For [the Sāṃkhya,] who professes production
from self, entities other than Spirit (*puruṣa*) are therefore not produced
from themselves, because they exist by themselves, just like *puruṣa*.’”

Clearly, the reason, *svātmanā vidyamānatva*, and the example, *puruṣa*, are Sāṃkhya tenets and would be totally unacceptable to the Buddhist himself. In short, the Tibetan exegesis here is very credible indeed.

It should be emphasized, then, that Tibetan writers significantly help us to clarify in what sense the Prāsaṅgika can use *hetu*, *drṣṭānta*, etc. in arguing about emptiness (*śūnyatā*). They use them in the sense of *gzhan grags kyi gtan tshigs*—reasons acknowledged by the “other,” i.e., by the opponent alone—but certainly not in the sense of autonomous inferences (*svatantrānumāna*), where the terms in the inference would have to be recognized in common by both parties. In other words, Candrakīrti, in addition to *prasāṅgas*, can use the basic Dignāgean logical structures of reasons and examples, but he strips them of the typical Dignāgean *metalogical* requirement that they be “recognized by both parties” (*ubhayaprasiddha*). Finally, note also in this connection that the Tibetans are clear that when Candrakīrti used *svataḥ* in passages like Pr. 19.8 *et seq.* concerning “other-acknowledged reasons,” he generally meant the

⁴ Cf. the condensed form in Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan’s *dBu ma’i spyi don*, f. 112a: *ngos po rnam chos can / slar yang skye ba don med de / rang gi bdag nyid du grub zin pa’i phyir / dper na / mngon par gsal zin pa’i myu gu bzhin no /*. “Take as the subject, entities; their production again is pointless, because they are already established in their own nature, like, for example, the already manifested sprout.”

opponent himself, and not Candrakīrti himself or the proponent. This sort of thing threw Stcherbatsky into misinterpretation on more than one occasion, sometimes in spite of Louis de La Vallée Poussin's helpful hints.⁵

Thirdly, we find a long discussion in dGe lugs pa literature on how we are to construe the *prasāṅga* implicit in Buddhapālita and how we should interpret Bhāviveka's critique of this *prasāṅga*. This discussion has numerous aspects, but for our purposes here, in the rest of the paper, I wish to go into one that is particularly important for our general understanding of Prāsaṅgika philosophy.

Just how do we take Buddhapālita's argument as a *prasāṅga*? To take one version, which the Tibetan literature attributed to Bhāviveka but rejected as not being Buddhapālita's actual thought, we could render it as:

myu gu chos can / skye ba don med dang thug med yin par thal / bdag las skyes pa'i phyir /. "Take the sprout as subject; it follows that its production is pointless and without end, because it is produced from itself."

The problem is that in such a case the contraposition of the consequence (*prasāṅgaviparyaya*) would be:

myu gu chos can / bdag las skyes pa ma yin te / skye ba don bcas dang thug bcas yin pa'i phyir /. "Take the sprout as subject; it is not produced from itself, because its production has a point and has an end."

This, as Bhāviveka pointed out in *Prajñāpradīpa* (see the passage translated below), would lead to the implication that an entity such as the sprout is

⁵ Cf. his translation of Pr. 18.7: *parapratijñāyās tu svata evānumānavirodhacodanayā svata eva pakṣahetudrṣṭāntadoṣarahitaiḥ pakṣādibhir bhavitavyam /*. Stcherbatsky 1965, 98: [Opponent's objection continued:] "However in accusing your opponent of contradiction you must yourself take your stand upon an argument that, in your opinion, would be free of those logical errors to which a thesis, a reason or an example are liable." My version: "However, since one accuses the opponent's thesis of being in contradiction with inference from his point of view alone, then, for himself alone, the thesis and other [members of this inference] must be free of faults concerning the thesis, reason and examples." Cf. La Vallée Poussin's remark in his n. 9 on p. 18: "*svataḥ* (*rang nyid la*) = à leur point de vue."

in fact produced from something else, for, on the one hand, its production has a point and, on the other hand, the reasoning shows that the sprout is not produced from itself. And that in turn would mean that the negation in *bdag las skyes pa ma yin* (“it is not produced from itself”) is not a non-implicative negation (*prasajyapratishedha*)—as it is supposed to be for a Mādhyamika—but is, rather, implicative (*pariyudāsa*) in that it implies that entities are produced from things other than themselves. In other words, we get a contradiction with a cardinal tenet of the Mādhyamika’s system (*kṛtāntavirodha* = *siddhāntavirodha*). Candrakīrti quotes Bhāviveka’s *Prajñāpradīpa* in Pr. 14.4-15.2:

*atraike dūṣaṇam āhuḥ / tad ayuktam / hetudṛṣṭāntānabhidhānāt / parokta-
doṣāparihārāc ca / prasaṅgavākyatvāc ca prakṛtārthaviparyayeṇa
viparītārthasādhyaataddharmavyaktau parasmād utpannā bhāvā
janmasāphalyāt / janmanirodhāc ceti kṛtāntavirodhaḥ syāt //* “Here
certain people [viz., Bhāviveka] set forth the following critique: This
[reasoning of Buddhapālita] is incoherent, because (1) it does not state
a [valid] reason and example, (2) it does not eliminate [certain] faults
that the [Sāṃkhya] adversary states, and (3) since [Buddhapālita’s
reasoning] is a statement of a consequence (*prasaṅgavākya*), then
because, by contraposing the terms in question [i.e., in the *prasaṅga*]
one puts forth a proposition to be proved (*sādhya*) and its [*pakṣa*]
dharma as the contrapositives (*viparītārtha*), one would then contradict
one’s [own] philosophical system (*kṛtānta* = *siddhānta*) in that entities
would be produced from other [things] because their production would
have a point and there would be an end to [this] production.”⁶

Later on in *Prasannapadā* I.23.3ff. Candrakīrti makes the move that the Prāsaṅgika does not have to accept the *prasaṅgaviparyaya*:

⁶ Compare the Tibetan of Bhāviveka’s own argument in *Prajñāpradīpa* (*sDe dge Tibetan Tripiṭaka, dBu ma*, Vol. 2, 49a5-50b1). The principal difference is the use of ... *dang / glags yod pa’i tshig yin pa’i phyir te* (= *sāvakāśavacanatvāc ca*) instead of *prasaṅgavākyatvāc ca*. Cf. Tanji, *Akirakana Kotoba I*, n. 118. In effect, we would have something like ...*tad ayuktam / hetudṛṣṭāntānabhidhānāt / paroktadoṣāparihārāc ca / sāvakāśavacanatvāc ca / prakṛtārthaviparyayeṇa* ... Cf. the Tibetan of Pr. given in La Vallée Poussin’s ed. of Pr. 14, n. 5. It differs in punctuation from both *Prajñāpradīpa* and the Skt. of Pr.

prasaṅgaviparītena cārthena parasyaiva sambandho nāsmākaṃ svapratijñāyā abhāvāt / tataś ca siddhāntavirodhāsaṃbhavaḥ /. “It is only the opponent who is linked to the contraposition of the *prasaṅga*, and not we, for there is no thesis of our own. And therefore, we do not have any contradiction with [our] philosophical system.”

If we take this passage as a statement of a *universally applicable methodological principle* for the Prāsaṅgika—i.e., that he never accepts any *prasaṅgaviparyaya* whatsoever—Candrakīrti might look, *prima facie* at least, rather cavalier, avoiding Bhāviveka’s unpleasant implications with a flippant wave of the hand and the cliché that he has no theses. In fact, Tsong kha pa *et al.* give us another interpretation, which presents a different Candrakīrti, one who, with good reason, did not accept the *prasaṅgaviparyaya* in this *specific case* of Buddhapālita’s argumentation against production from self but who certainly did not reject *prasaṅgaviparyaya* in each and every case.

Tsong kha pa states in *rTsa she ſik chen*, his commentary on Nāgārjuna’s *Madhyamakakārikās*:

legs ldan gyis kyang slar yang skye ba don med dang thug med du thal ba ‘phangs pa ma dgongs par spyir skye ba don med dang thug med du thal ba ‘phangs par bzung nas bzlog don khas len dgos zhes smras par bstan to //. “Bhāviveka, though, did not think that [Buddhapālita] implied the consequence that [entities’] being produced *again* (*slar yang* = *punar*) would be pointless and without end. Rather he understood [him] as implying the consequence that *in general* (*spyir*) [entities’] being produced would be pointless and without end. And then he said that we would have to accept the contrapositive (*bzlog don* = *viparītārtha*) [of the consequence].”⁷

As we shall see, it is the word *slar yang/punar* (“again”) that is of capital importance. Suffice it to caution here that *slar yang* should not be *too* quickly dismissed as just simply Tsong kha pa’s addition; Tsong kha pa himself points out that it already figures in the passage from Buddhapālita and indeed that it figures in Candrakīrti’s *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI.9ab,

⁷ Page 55.7-9 in Sarnath edition.

which concerns the same argument against the Sāṃkhya's idea of production from self.⁸

An exegetical aside is probably inescapable at this point. Even leaving aside the question of the appropriateness of *slar yang/punar*, it might at any rate be thought that this cannot be the *prasaṅga* at stake in Buddhapālita, because it turns around and changes Buddhapālita's words—it is Buddhapālita's words as they stand which constitute the *prasaṅga*. Such a *prasaṅga* would then be: "It would follow that entities are not produced from themselves, because their production would be pointless and without end." But, independent of the fact that Tibetan commentators' presentation of the *prasaṅga* does not support this literal rendering, there are, I think, logical arguments to show that such a rendering would be a mistake: notably, the *viparyaya* would be just meaningless. (It would become something like: "Entities' production has a point and has an end, because they are produced from themselves.")

A more complicated problem does present itself, however, vis-à-vis the Tibetan interpretation of the phrase *prasaṅgavākyatvāc ca* in Pr. 15.1. The phrase naturally leads us to think that Buddhapālita's words themselves are, *in some way*, a statement of a *prasaṅga* so that Bhāviveka could argue that when this *prasaṅga* is contraposed the problem of contradiction with the Mādhyamika's *siddhānta* would ensue. Now, there is some controversy amongst Tibetans as to how we should take this phrase

⁸ *rTsa she ſik chen*, Sarnath edition, p. 54.20-55.6. *sangs rgyas bskyangs kyis yang skye ba don med ces yang gi sgra smos la de'i don ni myu gu rgyu dus na rang gi bdag nyid thob zin pa'i 'og tu skye bar 'dod pas de med ces pa'i don no // tshig gsal las kyang yang gi sgra smos la 'jug pa las kyang skyes zin slar yang skye bar yongs su rtog par 'gyur na ni / zhes gsungs pas yod pa dang slar yang skye ba gnyis 'gal gyi yod pa dang skye ba mi 'gal lo /*. "Buddhapālita stated the word *punar* ('again') when he said 'being produced again is pointless.'" The meaning is that it is held [by the Sāṃkhyas] that a sprout, which at the time of its cause has already attained its nature, is then subsequently produced. Thus, this is nonexistent. In the *Prasannapadā*, too, the word *punar* is stated, and in the *Madhyamakāvatāra* [VI. 9ab] also it is said, 'Suppose it is imagined that something already produced is produced again.'"** Here, 'existence' and 'being produced again' are contradictory, but 'existence' and 'being produced' are not contradictory."

*Skt. in Pr. 14.2 reads: *na ... punar utpāde prayojanam asti* ("There is no need to be produced again"). **Cf. *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI. 8cd: *jātasya janma punar eva ca naiva yuktam* (Skt. in Pr. 13.7).

prasaṅgavākyatva, a problem that turns largely on the fact that the actual passage in Bhāviveka's *Prajñāpradīpa* does not have this phrase but rather has a different reading. To state my own point of view first, personally, I think we must take *Prasannapadā*'s reading of *prasaṅgavākyatvāc ca* as showing that *at least* Candrakīrti took the passages from *Prajñāpradīpa* as arguing that the *prasaṅgaviparyaya* leads to a contradiction with the Mādhyamika's *siddhānta*. Candrakīrti's later discussion (Pr. 23ff.), where he speaks of not having to accept the *viparītārtha* of the *prasaṅga* and thus avoiding the contradiction with *siddhānta*, shows beyond reasonable doubt that Candrakīrti *himself* took Bhāviveka's argument as turning on a *prasaṅga* and a *prasaṅgaviparyaya*.

Tsong kha pa *et al.*, however, rely heavily on Avalokitavrata's commentary to Bhāviveka's *Prajñāpradīpa*, the *Prajñāpradīpaṭīkā*, and there it is argued that in the key passage from *Prajñāpradīpa* (given above) Bhāviveka did not criticize Buddhapālita's statement as being itself a *prasaṅga*: instead he simply argued that it is "a statement that presents an occasion [for a reply]" (*glags yod pa'i tshig* = *sāvakāśavacana*; *sāvakāśavākya*).⁹ Now, the dGe lugs pa interpretation does, of course, recognize that Buddhapālita's words implicitly contain a *prasaṅga*, and indeed the dGe lugs pa, as we saw above, do argue that Bhāviveka took that *prasaṅga* in a wrong way. Their point seems to be simply that the actual passage from *Prajñāpradīpa* cited in *Prasannapadā* does not *itself* concern the *prasaṅga* and *prasaṅgaviparyaya* at stake.¹⁰ I have attempted to present the basic material on this interpretation of *Prajñāpradīpa* in

⁹ See n. 6. Avalokitavrata (*sDe dge Tibetan Tripiṭaka*, dBu ma 4, 74a2) glosses *glags yod pa'i tshig* as *rgol ba gzhan gyi klan ka'i glags yod pa'i tshig* "a statement where there is an opportunity for a reply from the other party."

¹⁰ Cf. *rTsa she ſik chen* (Sarnath edition) p. 53.5-7 explained in sGom sde Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan p. 586: *yang kha cig na re / 'dir bsgrub par bya ba bzlog pa'i don mngon pas / zhes pa la / myu gu chos can / skye ba don med dang thug med yin par thal / bdag las skye ba yin pa'i phyir / zhes pa 'di'i rtags bzlog pa gzhung de'i don du byed zer na / de mi 'thad de / skabs 'dir bsgrub par bya ba bzlog pas zhes pa'i bzlog rgyu de bdag las skye ba med de / zhes pa de bzlog dgos rgyu yin pa la / de rtags su ma bkod par bdag las skye ba rtags su bkod pa'i phyir / shes rab sgron mer bsgrub par bya ba bzlog pas / zhes dang / rigs pa'i rgya mtsho las kyang / 'di thal chos kyi rtags bzlog tshul ma yin te / bsgrub par bya ba bzlog pas / zhes dang / bdag skye med pa rtags su ma smras pa'i phyir / zhes gsungs pa'i phyir /*

the Appendix to the present article. For our purposes now, however, we need only point out that if we follow such an interpretation, we are supposed to take Candrakīrti's use of *prasaṅgavākyatva* as not having its technical sense but as meaning just the same as *glags yod pa'i tshig* (= *sāvakāśavacana*) so that it accords with Bhāviveka's words in *Prajñāpradīpa*. In fact, some Tibetan writers attribute the difference simply to translation—as if *glags yod pa'i tshig* and *thal bar 'gyur pa'i tshig* were just two Tibetan ways to translate the same term in *Prasannapadā* and *Prajñāpradīpa*.¹¹ They probably are not, as we can see in a later passage (Pr. 24.1-2) where Candrakīrti does indeed refer to Bhāviveka's objection by using the word *sāvakāśavacana* (Tib. *glags dang bcas pa'i tshig*). It seems to me that the most natural interpretation of Candrakīrti here is the more literal one, i.e., that *he* took the key passage of *Prajñāpradīpa* as speaking of a *prasaṅga* and *prasaṅgaviparyaya*: the Avalokitavrata-dGe lugs pa strategy seems unnecessarily strained and improbable in having to reinterpret the words *prasaṅgavākya*, *prakṛtārthaviparyaya*, etc. so that they do not have their usual technical sense. It is interesting to note that even many Tibetan writers, spoken about as *pūrvapakṣa* in the dGe lugs pa texts, took *prasaṅgavākyatva*, etc. literally and certainly did not accept the Avalokitavrata-dGe lugs pa view here.¹² Suffice it to say, then, that Avalokitavrata's interpretation of the passage from *Prajñāpradīpa* may perhaps represent Bhāviveka's actual thought but seems to us, and probably some Tibetan writers, too, to distort the way in which Candrakīrti himself took Bhāviveka's argument.¹³

¹¹ See e.g., *dBu ma'i spyi don*, ff.105b6-106a1: *gzhan yang / khyed kyi thal bar 'gyur ba'i tshig yin pa'i phyir / zhes pa sgrub byed 'phen pa'i thal bar 'gyur pa'i tshig yin pa'i phyir / zhes pa'i don du 'chad mi rigs par thal / tshig gsal las / thal bar 'gyur ba'i tshig yin pa'i phyir zhes pa dang / shes rab sgron mar glags yod pa'i tshig yin pa'i phyir / zhes pa gnyis 'gyur khyad ma gtogs don gcig yin pa'i phyir /*. Cf. *rTsa she ſīk chen* 52.12-15.

¹² See n. 10 and 11 above.

¹³ The dGe lugs pa scholastic manuals (*yig cha*), in turn, devote large sections of extremely intricate argumentation to explaining one controversial line from Tsong kha pa's *rTsa she ſīk chen* on the Avalokitavrata interpretation. The controversial passage is: *dnegos zin gyi rtags bzlog dgos na dngos zin gyi dam bca' yang bzlog dgos te mtshungs pa'i phyir ro //*. (Sarnath ed. p. 53.3-4) "If one must negate the explicitly mentioned reason, one must also negate the explicitly mentioned thesis, for they are similar." mKhas grub rje's

Let us now look at the revised version of the *prasaṅga* that the Tibetan authors say can be extracted from Buddhapālita's statements. As Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan gives Tsong kha pa's thought in more detail, let me quote from his *dBu ma 'i spyi don* (ff. 99a-99b):

de sngar gyi 'grel ngag des 'gog tshul ni / myu gu chos can / slar yang skye ba don med par thal / rang gi bdag (f. 99b) *nyid du grub zin pa'i phyir / ma khyab na / khyod thug med du slar yang skye bar thal / rang gi bdag nyid du grub zin kyang slar yang skye dgos pa'i phyir / don bsdu na / myu gu chos can / slar yang skye ba don med par thal / yod pa'i phyir / ma khyab na / de chos can thug med du skye bar thal / yod kyang slar yang skye dgos pa'i phyir /*. "The way in which this previous[ly mentioned] commentarial statement refutes [the Sāṃkhya] is: Take as the subject a sprout; it follows that its being produced again is pointless, because it is already established in its own nature. Should it be said that there is no entailment (*khyab pa* = *vyāpti*) [between something being already established and the pointlessness of it being produced once again], then [we reply that] it would follow that it [i.e., the sprout] would be produced again and again without end, for although it is established in its own nature, still it must again be produced. In short, take the sprout as subject; it follows that its being produced again is pointless, because it exists. Should [the opponent say that] there is no entailment, then [we reply] that it would follow that this subject is produced [over and over] without end, for although it exists, it must still be produced."

Thus, the *prasaṅga* now becomes either:

(1) *myu gu chos can / slar yang skye ba don med par thal / rang gi bdag nyid du grub zin pa'i phyir /*. "Take as the subject a sprout; it follows that its being produced again is pointless, because it is already established in its own nature."

sTong thun chen mo and most *yig cha* give a long discussion on the phrase *mtshungs pa'i phyir*. This discussion, while interesting for understanding Avalokitavrata, may well be moot when it comes to Candrakīrti's own view of Bhāviveka's argument.

Or, equivalently:

(2) *myu gu chos can / slar yang skye ba don med par thal / yod pa'i phyir* /. “Take the sprout as subject; it follows that its being produced again is pointless, because it exists.”

It is version (2) that Tsong kha pa discusses most, calling it a ‘*gal brjod kyi thal*’ ‘gyur, or “*prasaṅga* stating a contradiction,” specifically the contradiction between *slar yang skye ba* (“being produced again”) and *yod pa* (“existence”). At any rate, there is no real difference between the two versions. A third version, which we find elsewhere in Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, takes *rang gi rgyu dus su rdzogs par grub zin pa'i phyir* (“because it is completely established at the time of its cause”) as the reason instead of *rang gi bdag nyid du grub zin pa'i phyir* or simply *yod pa'i phyir*. Obviously, this reason brings out more clearly the Sāṃkhya’s position of *satkāryavāda*.

Now, on these renderings, what could be the *prasaṅgaviparyaya*? Although the reason in the *viparyaya* is often stated in Tibetan commentaries, the whole *prayoga* is not. But, nonetheless, it must be something like the following:

myu gu chos can / rang gi rgyu'i dus su rdzogs par grub zin pa ma yin te / (or alternatively, *yod pa ma yin te*) *slar yang skye ba don bcas yin pa'i phyir* /. “Take the sprout as subject; it is not already completely established at the time of its cause (or alternatively, it is not existent), because its production again has a point.”

Tsong kha pa’s main point is that in this version of the *prasaṅgaviparyaya*, the reason (“its production again has a point”) is only acceptable to the Sāṃkhya, who holds that things exist qua Primordial Nature (*prakṛti*) and are then manifested or produced again. The Buddhist, of course, will have nothing to do with such a Sāṃkhya position of *satkāryavāda*. In other words, the *prasaṅga* itself is just stated in terms of the Sāṃkhya’s tenets. And equally the reason in the contraposition of the *prasaṅga* is only acceptable to the Sāṃkhya but is in no way accepted by a Mādhyamika, nor *a fortiori* is it established by a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa*).

True, if the *prasaṅga* had been as Bhāviveka made it out to be, i.e., lacking the word *punar*, then Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti themselves

might have been rationally obliged to accept the *viparyaya*—after all, they ought to accept that *prasaṅga*’s *vyāpti* (viz., that if anything is produced from itself its production is pointless and endless) as well as the fact that entities’ production has a point and has an end. Thus the faults concerning *prasajyapratishedha/paryudāsa* would have been difficult to avoid, short of saying that Prāsaṅgikas never accept any *prasaṅgaviparyaya* or any thesis *at all*. Tsong kha pa certainly did not want to take this latter tack. As a result he insisted on the qualification *punar* and could therefore say that *in general* Prāsaṅgikas can accept a *viparyaya* but that in the *particular case at hand* in Buddhapālita and *Prasannapadā* the *prasaṅga* is of such a sort that the *viparyaya* is only acceptable to the opponent. As for Candrakīrti’s statement in this context that he has no thesis of his own (*svapratijñā*), this is apparently not the same generalized Mādhyamika principle of “no thesis” invoked in e.g., Candrakīrti’s *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI, or Nāgārjuna’s *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, but seems to apply only to the specific case at hand: the Mādhyamika does not accept the Sāṃkhya thesis that entities being produced again has a point and an end.¹⁴ Tsong kha pa states in *rTsa she ṭik chen* p. 54.11-20:

¹⁴ *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI.173: *sun ‘byin pas sun dbyung bya ma phrad sun ni ‘byin byed dam / ‘on te phrad nas yin zhes smras zin nyes pa ‘dir gang la / nges par phyogs yod de la ‘gyur gyi bdag la phyogs ‘di ni / yod pa min pas thal bar ‘gyur ba ‘di ni srid ma yin /* “The critique that was stated here—viz., ‘Does the refutation refute without any contact with the refuted or with contact?’—will definitely apply to one who has a thesis. But since I do not have this thesis, this consequence is impossible.”

The usual dGe lugs interpretation of *phyogs* (= *pakṣa*) in this context is “a thesis that asserts something established by its own nature” (*rang bzhin gyis grub pa dam ‘cha’ ba’i phyogs*). See e.g., dGe ‘dun grub pa’s comment: *dbu ma pa chos can / sun ‘byin pas sun dbyung bya ma phrad par sun ni ‘byin par byed dam ‘on te phrad nas sun ‘byin pa yin zhes smras zin pa’i thal bar ‘gyur ba ‘di ni khyod la srid pa min te / de lta bu’i nyes pa ‘di dag gang la nges par rang bzhin gyis grub pa dam ‘cha’ ba’i phyogs de la skyon du ‘gyur gyi bdag la rang bzhin gyis grub pa dam ‘cha’ ba’i phyogs ‘di ni yod pa min pas so //* (Ff. 37b-38a of dGe ‘dun grub pa’s *dBu ma la ‘jug pa’i bstan bcos kyi dgongs pa rab tu gsal ba’i me long*).

The main verse from Nāgārjuna is *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29: *yadi kācana pratijñā syān me tata eṣa me bhaved doṣaḥ / nāsti ca mama pratijñā tasmān naivāsti me doṣaḥ //*. “If I had some or another thesis (*pratijñā*) I would therefore have this fault, but I have no thesis and thus do not have a fault at all.” Seyfort Ruegg 1983 presents the numerous other verses from Indian texts that are relevant here—e.g., *Catuhśataka* XVI.25, XIV.21,

bzlog pa'i don khas blangs pa la skyon brjod pa mi 'jug pa ni "thal ba bzlog pa'i don dang yang pha rol po 'brel gyi kho bo cag ni ma yin te rang la dam bca ba med pa'i phyir ro" zhes gsungs te // 'di ni dbu ma pas 'phangs pa'i thal ba thams cad min gyi sngar 'phangs pa'i bdag skye 'gog pa'i thal ba'o // de'i thal chos ni skye ba don dang thug med du thal ba tsam min gyi slar yang skye ba don dang thug med yin la thal chos de bzlog pa'i don slar yang skye ba don dang thug bcas ni grangs can kho na 'dod kyi rang la de'i khas len med pas de khas blangs pa'i rgyu mtshan gyis grub mtha'dang 'gal ba ga la yod / des na gzhung 'dis dbu ma pas thal ba 'phangs pa thams cad kyi bzlog pa pha rol pos khas len gyi rang gis khas mi len pa dang spyir dam bca' med par bstan pa ma yin no //* *Skt. Pr. 23.3-4: *prasaṅgaviparītena cārthena parasyaiva saṃbandho / nāsmākaṃ svapratijñāyā abhāvāt /*. “The [fact that Bhāviveka’s] critique concerning the acceptance of the contrapositive (*bzlog pa'i don* = *viparītārtha*) does not apply is [to be explained as follows]: [Candrakīrti] says [in *Prasannapadā* I.23.3-4], ‘it is only [our] opponent who is linked to the contrapositive of the *prasaṅga*, (*prasaṅgaviparītārtha*), and not we, for there is no thesis of our own.’ This does not mean all the *prasaṅgas* set forth by Mādhyamikas but rather the *prasaṅga* refuting production by self that was set forth previously [by Buddhapālita]. The predicate of that *prasaṅga* (*thal chos*) was not the mere implication that production is pointless and without an end but rather that production *again* (*slar yang*) is pointless and without end. And the *viparītārtha* of the *prasaṅga*’s predicate—viz., that production again has a point and has an end—is accepted by the Sāṃkhyas alone. It is not accepted by us. Therefore, how could there be a contradiction with our philosophical system (*grub mtha' = siddhānta*) on account of our accepting that [*prasaṅgaviparītārtha*]! So

Madhyamakakārikās XXIV.13, etc. It is clear from his study that these other verses’ references to “no thesis” were interpreted by dGe lugs pa scholars in a similar way as in *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI.173: “no thesis asserting a real entity,” or some such similar formulation. We see then that dGe lugs pa do not take the usual “no thesis” claim literally, in that they feel obliged to add a qualification concerning “establishment by own nature” (*rang bzhin gyis grub pa*). Nonetheless, it is clear the Indian “no thesis” claims are interpreted as being general—we are not speaking of one specific thesis. It is thus all the more odd that in *Prasannapadā* I 23.3 the phrase *svapratijñāyā abhāvāt* seems to be interpreted as meaning just the specific Sāṃkhya thesis of *satkāryavāda*.

this text [viz., the *Prasannapadā*] is not saying that the contrapositions of all *prasaṅgas* set forth by Mādhyamikas are accepted by the opponent but not by us and that in general [we] have no theses.”

The passage shows a key methodological and philosophical stance of the dGe lugs pa Prāsaṅgika; Tsong kha pa restates more or less the same passage in other works, such as *dBu ma dgongs pa rab gsal*.¹⁵ For the sake of clarity, let us try to summarize the main points of Tsong kha pa's interpretation before going on to make a few remarks on *prasaṅgas* in general and, finally, some conclusions.

- (1) Bhāviveka supposedly misunderstood the *prasaṅga* implicit in Buddhapālita; notably he left out the word *punar* “again,” thus leading to contradiction with the Mādhyamika's view that the negation of production by self must be a *prasajyapratishedha*.
- (2) If we add *punar*, Bhāviveka's difficulty is avoided, not because the Mādhyamika will *never* accept *prasaṅgaviparyaya*, but because in this *specific case* the Mādhyamika does not accept that the production of entities *again* has a point and has an end. Only the Sāṃkhya could accept that thesis.
- (3) The Prāsaṅgika can accept *prasaṅgaviparyaya* and has theses of his own; he just does not accept the *prasaṅgaviparyaya* and thesis in this case because of the specific nature of the *prasaṅga* being presented.

A brief remark on point (3). Many contemporary writers have, partly on the basis of the argumentation in *Prasannapadā* I, taken *prasaṅgas* as being a rather special logical form. T.R.V. Murti, for example, writes:

¹⁵ *dBu ma dgongs pa rab gsal* (Sarnath ed.) p. 163: *Tshig gsal las / thal bar 'gyur pa bzlog pa'i don dang yang pha rol po nyid 'brel ba yin gyi / kho bo cag ni ma yin te / rang la dam bca' ba med pa'i phyir / zhes dang / zhes gsung pa rnams ji ltar drang snyam na / skyon med de de ltar gsungs pa ni bdag skye 'gog pa'i skabs kho na yin pas / dbu ma pas 'phangs pa'i thal ba kun la min gyi / bdag skye 'gog pa'i thal ba gnyis la yin no // de'i thal chos ni skye ba don med dang thug med du thal ba tsam min gyi / slar yang skye ba don med dang thug med yin la / thal chos de bzlog pa'i don slar yang skye ba don bcas dang thug bcas ni grangs can kho na 'dod kyi / rang la de'i dam bca ba med pa'i rgyu mtshan gyis / de khas blangs pa'i grub mtha' dang 'gal ba med ces pa'i don te lung dang po'i don no //*.

“*Prasaṅga* is not to be understood as an apagogic proof in which we prove an assertion indirectly by disproving the opposite. *Prasaṅga* is disproof simply, without the least intent to prove any thesis.”¹⁶

Whether we take an Indian or Tibetan Buddhist perspective, *in general* this is not so and misrepresents many non-Mādhyamika Buddhists’ use of *prasaṅga*—certainly epistemologists, like Dharmakīrti, used *prasaṅgas*, but did not conceive of them in *that* way.¹⁷ It is, however, far less clear as to how the Indian Mādhyamika used *prasaṅga*, for this ultimately begs the question as to how we should interpret Candrakīrti. If we subscribed to a literal interpretation of Candrakīrti as rejecting any and all *prasaṅgaviparyaya* because he has no theses, then certainly Murti’s remarks could not be far wrong. From the dGe lugs pa point of view, however, Buddhapālita’s *prasaṅga* is, as we saw earlier, classified as a ‘*gal brjod kyi thal ‘gyur*, or one “that states a contradiction [in the opponent’s own position]”. This type of *prasaṅga* is said to be one of four sorts used by Mādhyamikas, some of which *can* be contraposed to prove a thesis and some of which cannot.¹⁸ (Indeed, ‘Jam dbyangs bzhad pa even seems to argue that among these ‘*gal brjod kyi thal ‘gyur* some can be contraposed.¹⁹) In short, let us say that *if* we follow the Tibetan Mādhyamika, Candrakīrti and co. do, on occasion, use *prasaṅga* as simple disproof, but that is far from the *only* type of *prasaṅga* that they use.

¹⁶ Murti 1980, 131.

¹⁷ See, for example, *Pramāṇavārttika* IV k.12 and Manorathanandin’s commentary, both translated in my article, “Pramāṇavārttika IV (1),” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, XXX, 1986, pp. 143-162.

¹⁸ Cf. *dBu ma ‘i spyi don* f. 97b: *gzhan grags kyi rjes dpag skyed byed kyi thal ‘gyur / rgyu mtshan mtshungs pa’i mgo snyoms kyi thal ‘gyur / ‘gal (b)rjod kyi thal ‘gyur / sgrub byed bsgrub bya dang mtshungs pas ma grub pa’i thal ‘gyur ro //*.

¹⁹ *Grub mtha’ chen mo*, f. 4, p. 891 in the edition by J. Hopkins in *Meditation on Emptiness*, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI, 1973: *phyi rgol gyis mtha’ bzhi gang du khas blangs pa de la ‘gal brjod kyi thal ‘gyur yang dag bzlog don ‘phen pa dang mi ‘phen pa sogs thal ‘gyur ci rigs kyis ‘gal ba brjod nas ‘gog pa ‘og tu ‘chad ‘gyur ltar gtso bor ‘god pa’i dbu ma pa de dbu ma thal ‘gyur ba’i mtshan nyid dang sgra bshad yang des song ngo //*. “The defining characteristic and etymology of a Mādhyamika-Prāsaṅgika is: A Mādhyamika who, as will be [further] explained below, principally refutes any of the four extremes accepted by the opponent by stating contradictions by means of various *prasaṅgas*, such as, amongst others, valid ‘*gal brjod kyi thal ‘gyur*, which do or do not imply contrapositives (*bzlog don* = *viparītārtha*).”

Concluding remarks. It is not my intention to adjudicate seriously the merits of Tsong kha pa's exegesis here, but some final words on his probable motivation are in order. We know that Tsong kha pa, especially in his *Lam rim chen mo*, had to argue against a number of Tibetan *pūrvapakṣa* that held that Mādhyamikas had no theses at all, that the Mādhyamika only exposed contradictions in his opponents' positions, but held nothing of his own—inevitably these debates turn on the interpretation of texts such as *Prasannapadā* I.²⁰ The problem of the interpretation of the *prasaṅga* and the use of *prasaṅgaviparyaya*, then, has to be seen in the general context of Tsong kha pa's continuing attempt to allow that a Mādhyamika *could* have a thesis—in short that there *could* be a Madhyamaka system. In his desire to construct a global philosophy including all the five treatises (*po ti lnga*), such as *Abhidharmakośa*, *Pramāṇavarttika*, etc., but with the Madhyamaka as the last word, he probably had little choice but to interpret Candrakīrti's pronouncements about Prāsaṅgika method as bearing essentially on the specific case of the *prasaṅga* in *Prasannapadā* I. It is difficult to imagine how he could have constructed his system if he had taken them as universally applicable. So, if we wish to evaluate Tsong kha pa's interpretation, a major point to reckon with is that his *ad hoc* and restricted interpretation of *Prasannapadā*'s “no thesis”/“no contraposition” claim tends to preclude, or at least considerably weakens, the fairly well substantiated interpretation of Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika thought as being a radically irenic philosophy outside the fray of philosophical disputation and system building.

***Appendix: The Avalokitavrata-dGe lugs pa interpretation of
Bhāviveka's charge of sāvakāśavacanatva and siddhāntavirodha***

The Avalokitavrata-dGe lugs pa line takes the key passage from Bhāviveka as arguing that the literal statement in Buddhapālita is not a valid reason (*rtags yang dag*) and needs to be corrected: the reason (“because its production is pointless and without end”) must be negated; but then, it is argued, the *sādhya* (“entities are not produced from themselves”) should be suitably changed too, because if the production of entities has a point, then indirectly we know that they are produced from something else. The

²⁰ On these *pūrvapakṣa* see section IV in Seyfort Ruegg 1983.

negation of the *sādhya* in Buddhapālita, then, is “a negation of the mere denial of self-production” (*bdag skye rnam pa bcad tsam ma yin pa*),²¹ or in other words, it yields the affirmation of production from other, and hence we get the contradiction with *siddhānta*. In sum, Bhāviveka’s words *prakṛtārthaviparyayeṇa viparītārthasādhyaataddharmavyaktau* ... do not describe the contraposition of a *prasaṅga* (*prasaṅgaviparyaya*), but show which negations occur when we modify Buddhapālita’s words to come up with a valid reason. The Sanskrit terms thus have to be translated differently if we adopt Avalokitavrata’s interpretation.

Avalokitavrata himself gives a word by word commentary²² on the passage from Bhāviveka. The key passages there are taken up, with a few variants, by the dGe lugs pa (Se ra byes) lama sGom sde Nam mkha’ rgyal mtshan (1532-1592). We find the following on folios 586ff.:

*des na bsgrub par bya ba bzlog pas zhes pa de bsgrub bya bzlog tshul
rang la byed pa yin te / spyan ras gzigs brtul zhugs las /
bsgrub par bya ba zhes pa ni / dngos po (f. 587) rnams bdag gi bdag
nyid las skye ba med de / zhes bsgrub par bya ba’o / de bzlog pa’i
don mngon pas zhes bya ba ni dngos po rnams bdag gi bdag nyid
las skye ba med de / zhes bya ba bzlog pas dngos po rnams gzhan
las skye ba zhes bya bar mngon pas so //
zhes gsungs pa’i phyir / de chos bzlog pa’i don mngon pas so / zhes pa
de yang de’i dngos zin gyi rtags bzlog pa la byed rgyu yin te / yang de
nyid las /
de’i chos zhes bya ba ni bsgrub par bya ba de’i chos te dngos po
rnams bdag gi bdag nyid las skye ba med de / zhes bsgrub par bya*

²¹ See dBu ma’i spyi don f. 100b: ‘*dod na / dngos po rnams bdag skye rnam par bcad pa tsam ma yin pa de / dngos po rnams bdag las skye ba med par sgrub pa’i dngos zin gyi (b)sgrub bya bzlog pa’i don yin par thal / ‘dod pa gang zhig / dngos po rnams bdag las skye ba ni dngos zin gyi bsgrub bya bzlog pa’i don ma yin pa’i phyir /*’. “If you agree [that you must also negate the thesis as found in Buddhapālita’s commentarial statement], then it follows that ‘it is not so that entities are simply excluded (*rnam par bcad pa tsam*) from production from self’ is the negation of the *sādhya* that was explicitly stated [by Buddhāpalita] when he established that entities are not produced from self. For, you agreed [that the thesis needed to be negated] and ‘entities are produced from themselves’ could not be the negation of the explicitly stated *sādhya*.”

²² *sDe dge Tibetan Tripiṭaka, dBu ma*, Vol. 4, ff. 747a-74b2.

ba de'i phyogs kyi chos de dag gi skye ba don med pa nyid du 'gyur ba'i phyir dang / skye ba thug pa med pa nyid du 'gyur ba'i phyir / zhes bya'o // de bzlog pa'i don mngon pas zhes bya ba ni / de dag gi skye ba don med pa nyid du 'gyur ba'i phyir / zhes bya ba bzlog pa'i don skye ba 'bras bu dang bcas pa nyid du 'gyur ba dang / skye ba thug pa med pa nyid du 'gyur ba'i phyir / zhes bya ba bzlog pa'i don skye ba thug pa yod pa nyid du 'gyur ba'i phyir / zhes bya ba mngon pas so //
zhes gsungs pa'i phyir /

Translation: Therefore, when [Bhāviveka] says “by negating the *sādhya*,” the way to negate the *sādhya* is to do so with regard to [the *sādhya*] itself [in Buddhapālita’s argument], for Avalokitavratā states the following:

“*Sādhya*” means the *sādhya* “entities are not produced from their own natures.” “Because one puts this [*sādhya*] forth as a negated proposition” (= *viparītārthasādhavyaktau*) means that by negating “entities are not produced from their own nature” one puts forth [the proposition] “entities are produced from other [things].”

When [Bhāviveka] says “Because one puts forth its [i.e., the *sādhya*’s] property (*taddharma*) as a negated proposition” (= *viparītārthataddharmavyaktau*), this ought to be taken as negating the explicitly stated reason (*dnogs zin gyi rtags*) of [Buddhapālita], too, for again [Avalokitavratā] explains:

“Its property (*taddharma*)” means the property of the *sādhya*, in other words, the *pakṣadharmā* of the *sādhya* “entities do not arise from their own natures,” viz., “because their production would be pointless and because their production would be without end.” When he says, “Because one puts forth its negated proposition,” he means the negated proposition of “because their production would be pointless,” namely, “production would be efficacious (*sāphalya*),” and [he means] the negated proposition of “because their production would be without end,” namely, “production would have an end.”

VI. Mādhyamikas Playing Bad Hands: The Case of Customary Truth¹

Skilled thinkers—like good card players—sometimes have to make the most of the lacklustre hands they get. The hands they are dealt are not cards, of course, but unlikely readings or other odd textual phenomena. Some well-known cases are strikingly clear. The later Dharmakīrtian tradition, for example, took up the philosophically rich question of the autonomy of human reason, in part influenced by the seemingly random, and trivial, fact that two Indic manuscript traditions happened to have differing orders of the chapters in *Pramāṇavārttika*.² Other cases seem to me less clear than they have been made out to be, like the so-called misunderstanding of the compound *dharmakāya* as meaning a kind of metaphysical absolute, a “phantom body” of buddhas.³ Madhyamaka, too, has some of its more important philosophy influenced by quite problematic textual phenomena. Let’s take up two examples. They are by no means the

¹ The present article is an elaboration of some themes initially mentioned in Tillemans 2011, reprinted in Tillemans 2016. Much of the discussion on the term *saṃvṛti* figures in Newland and Tillemans 2011. The direct inspiration for the present discussion of *lokaprasiddha* was a conversation with Stephen Batchelor, who insightfully said to me that the discrepancy between a Pāli *sutta* text and the Mahāyānist version could be a lot more important than I had initially thought.

² Thus, one transmission began *Pramāṇavārttika* with the chapter on “inference-for-oneself” (*svārthānumāna*), the chapter elaborating the canons of human reasoning. This textual phenomenon was understood, by commentators like Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi, as in accord with their philosophical stance that logical reasoning is more fundamental than the pronouncements of the Buddha and that people can and should know Buddhist truths independently of appeals to religious authority. The other transmission had *Pramāṇavārttika* beginning with “The proof of authority” (*pramāṇasiddhi*), or the proof of the Buddha’s being *the* uniquely reliable spiritual guide; such an order of the chapters was defended by the commentator Jayanta, because, according to him, it rightly assigned primacy to the Buddha’s omniscience in assuring truth. See Ono 1997.

³ See n. 9 below.

only cases,⁴ but they are important because they concern quite radically different understandings of the idea of customary truth.

The first is the Madhyamaka construal of Skt. *saṃvṛtisatya*, Tib. *kun rdzob bden pa* (customary truth/reality) as “that which is recognized by the world” (*lokaprasiddha*)—this is no doubt influenced by a textually very problematic *sūtra* passage. The second is the fact that the major Madhyamaka explanations unpacking customary truth are, in part at least, dependent on orthographic problems and resultant confusions about Sanskrit roots. In what follows, we’ll look at the details of these two cases and look at what impact they may well have had philosophically.

We begin with *lokaprasiddha*. Candrakīrti quotes a famous passage as *his* textual source for the idea. It figures in Mahāyānist scriptures, too, notably the *Trisaṃvaranirdeśaparivarta* (chapter I) of the *Ratnakūṭasūtra* (D. f. 9b ngas ‘di skad du ‘jig rten ni nga la rgol gyi / nga ni ‘jig rten dang mi rtsod do zhes gsungs so. Taishō 310, 5a7-8: 我言世與我諍我不與世諍), although both the Chinese and Tibetan versions cite only the first half—“I have said that the world argues with me but that I don’t argue with the world.”

The passage is clearly very important for Candrakīrti. It is prominently cited in two of his works, the *Prasannapadā* ad *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* XVIII.8 and his *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* ad VI.81 (p. 179 ed. L. de La Vallée Poussin). Here is the whole passage in Sanskrit as given in the *Prasannapadā* (ed. L. de La Vallée Poussin, 370.6-8):

loko mayā sārdham vivadati nāhaṃ lokena sārdham vivadāmi / yal loke ‘sti saṃmataṃ tan mamāpy asti saṃmataṃ / yal loke nāsti saṃmataṃ mamāpi tan nāsti saṃmataṃ / “The world (*loka*) argues with me. I don’t argue with the world. What is agreed upon (*saṃmata*) in the world to exist, I too agree that it exists. What is agreed upon in the world to be nonexistent, I too agree that it does not exist.”

Now, which canonical text is being cited here? The *Ratnakūṭa* clearly indicates that the speaker is referring to a passage he supposedly stated elsewhere, but alas does not say anything more; Candrakīrti does not identify the source by name either, only as “a scripture” (*āgama*).

⁴ See n. 14 below for two more of them.

Significantly, however, we do get help from the Pāli canon. We find the following passage in *Samyutta Nikāya* III, p. 138 (ed. Léon Feer):

nāham bhikkhave lokena vivadāmi loko ca mayā vivadati // na bhikkhave dhammavādī kenaci lokasmiṃ vivadati // yam bhikkhave natthi sammataṃ loke paṇḍitānam aham pi tam natthīti vadāmi // yam bhikkhave atthi sammataṃ loke paṇḍitānam aham pi tam atthīti vadāmi //. “Bhikkhus, I do not dispute with the world; rather, it is the world that disputes with me. A proponent of the Dhamma does not dispute with anyone in the world. Of that which *the wise* [my italics] in the world agree upon as not existing, I too say that it does not exist. And of that which *the wise* [my italics] in the world agree upon as existing, I too say that it exists” (transl. Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000, 949).

Candrakīrti’s source thus seems to be a Mahāyānist recension of a *sūtra* that we also find in the Pāli canon. Now, the Pāli, in contrast to the *āgama*’s Sanskrit quoted in *Prasannapadā* (and in contrast to the Tibetan translation of the passage as found in Candrakīrti’s works) has the term *paṇḍitānam* in this passage and the discussion that follows. Thus the *Samyutta* speaks about that which “the wise (*paṇḍitānam*) in the world (*loke*)” agree upon as existing/not existing, rather than just that which is agreed upon as existing/not existing in the world. The difference is significant because it means—as the subsequent discussion explicitly shows in the *Khandavagga* of the *Samyutta Nikāya* (see Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000, 949-950)—that the Buddha accepts “impermanent, suffering, changing matter” etc., as existent and holds that “permanent, stable, eternal, unchanging matter,” etc. is nonexistent. He thus would accept an ontology proposed by the wise, i.e., qualified experts in the world. The Sanskrit, however, simply says that the Buddha accepts what is accepted in the world; experts are not mentioned.

The Sanskrit scriptural passage of unspecified provenance, then, gives the textual hand that Candrakīrti was actually dealt, and it has a marked potential to ground a type of populist view of *lokaprasiddha* and *saṃvṛtisatya*: customary existence and truth are somehow copies, or reflections, of what the average worldlings in fact think across time and culture, or perhaps just what the sixth century Indian *hoi polloi*, or at least most of them, did think. This populist bent seems to be no accident and is in the Mahāyānist sources. Indeed, the *Ratnakūṭa*, itself, explicitly glossed

the term “the world” in the cited passage as “infantile, ordinary beings,” in short, *bāla* and *prthagjana*. The Pāli *Samyutta* reading, emphasizing what experts or ideal individuals think, rather than the opinions of the infantile, does not have that same populist potential at all.

The Mahāyānist Sanskrit recension, and hence also the Tibetan version, probably lost a key word in the transmission process. (It seems to me more plausible that the word *paṇḍitānām* (= Pāli *paṇḍitānam*) dropped out in the Mahāyānist *sūtra* than that it was added in the *Samyutta*). That Mahāyānist version, with the omission, then constituted part of the scriptural basis for a school of Madhyamaka that the Tibetans eventually termed *jig rten grags sde spyod pa'i dbu ma pa* (“Mādhyamikas who practice in accordance with what is recognized by the world”) by which they meant Candrakīrti and his followers, the so-called Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas (*dbu ma thal 'gyur ba*).⁵ We'll come back to the philosophical aspects of Candrakīrti's version of *saṃvṛtisatya* as “what is recognized by the world.”

Let us now move to a second aspect of the problem of how to take *saṃvṛtisatya*. We frequently find *saṃvṛtisatya* translated as “conventional truth” or (as we have done) “customary truth,” but in fact the aspect of societal agreements and consensuality that such translations convey is far from obvious from traditional analyses of the Sanskrit term. (Leave aside, for our purposes, the ambiguity between truth and reality inherent in the terms *satya* and *bden pa*. There are linguistic-philosophical problems in putting *those* two together, too, but they need not concern us here.) Part of the reason for this lack of clarity seems to be a vacillation between two etymological derivations. The evidence is somewhat complex. As Franklin Edgerton had long ago suggested, what the Pāli renders as “consensus” or

⁵ The Sanskrit terms for the two Madhyamaka schools are widely used reconstructions from the Tibetan. On Candrakīrti's own manner of taking causal processes as they are accepted by the common man, see his *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI.32-33. A common man's explanation of how lutes make sound is found in his *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* ad VI.35 (ed. L. de La Vallée Poussin p. 121): *dper na shing dang rgyud la brten byas la / lag pa rtsol ba byas pa gsum tshogs na / sgroge byed pi wang gling bu la sogs pas / de dag las skyes sgra yang 'byung bar 'gyur /*. The passage is quoted from the *Lalitavistara* XIII, verse 114 (ed. P.L. Vaidya): *yathā tantri pratītya dāru ca hastavyāyāma trayebhi saṃgati / tuṇavīṇasughoṣakādibhiḥ śabdo niścarate tadudbhavaḥ //*. “E.g., in reliance upon strings, wood and manual effort, then by the conjunction of these three [factors], musical instruments such as *tuṇa* and *vīṇā* (“lutes”) issue a sound that arises due to these [factors].”

“agreement” (*saṃmuti*) is rendered in Sanskrit as *saṃvṛti*. It is plausible then to think, with Edgerton, that in discussions of the two truths where we should have expected a Sanskrit term like *saṃmati/saṃmata* (consensus, agreement, agreed upon) we in fact regularly ended up with *saṃvṛti* instead. We would be dealing with a potentially confusing and weighty spelling mistake, or perhaps a case of hyper-Sanskritism, where a form like *saṃmuti/saṃmati*, based on \sqrt{MAN} “to think” and *saṃ* “all together,” would become *saṃvṛti*, from \sqrt{VR} .⁶

Indeed, *saṃmati/saṃmata* would have clearly indicated that conventional, or consensual, agreements were involved—and such terms, whether in Pāli or in Sanskrit, are in fact very clearly and regularly used in contexts concerning customary truths, as we see in the quoted *sūtra* passage’s use of *saṃmata*, but also in numerous other Indic sources. But that is not the current that actually prevailed in the Sanskrit discussions of the two truths (and hence in Tibetan, too, with their use of *kun rdzob*). Indian and Tibetan commentators instead were forced to deal with *saṃvṛti*, which they thought to be etymologically derived from the root \sqrt{VR} *vṛṇoti*, “to cover, conceal,” instead of *saṃmati* coming from \sqrt{MAN} . Complicating things further is that we also seem to have explanations (as we shall see in a *Prasannapadā* passage discussed below) that suggest the term was derived from \sqrt{VRT} *vartate*, as if one might have read *saṃvṛtti* “existence, occurrence,” rather than *saṃvṛti*, due to the common phenomenon of consonant doubling in Indic manuscripts.

Candrakīrti’s three usages of the questionable term *saṃvṛti* suggest strongly that a triple ambiguity arose due to uncertainties about which of those Sanskrit roots was the right one. He seems to have been unable or unwilling to decide, and thus gave us three choices in *Prasannapadā* 492.10 (ed. La Vallée Poussin):

*samantād varaṇaṃ saṃvṛtiḥ / ajñānaṃ hi samantāt sarvapa-
dārthatattvāvacchādanāt saṃvṛtir ity ucyate / parasparasambhavanaṃ
vā saṃvṛtir anyonyasamāśrayeṇety arthaḥ / atha vā saṃvṛtiḥ saṃketo*

⁶ Edgerton 1977, 541, s.v. *saṃvṛti*: “Both Prāt[imokṣasūtra] 52.3 and Bhīk[ṣuṇīkarmavā-
canā] 28b.4 associate *saṃvṛti* (Pāli *saṃmuti*) with *saṃmata*, suggesting that ‘vṛti’ is
hyper-Skt. for Pali ‘muti.’” See also Karunadasa 1996, 25, which makes the same point,
as well as the links with the two different roots.

lokavyavahāra ity arthaḥ / sa cābhidhānābhidheyajñānajñeyādila-kṣaṇam //. “It is *saṃvṛti* in being completely an obstruction. Indeed, ignorance, because it masks completely the nature of all entities, is said to be *saṃvṛti*. Alternatively, the meaning is that what arises in mutual dependence is *saṃvṛti* because of one thing being dependent on another. Or again *saṃvṛti* means agreed upon usage or worldly transactions. This is characterized as expressions, what is expressed, cognitions, and what is cognized and so on and so forth.”

In short, one usage of *saṃvṛti* is to refer to *ignorance* whereby one takes as true what is not, thus concealing the actual way things are. Another usage is as dependent arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*), more exactly as “mutual dependence” (*parasparasambhavana*), and hence means things that lack intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*). The third usage is to mean agreements governing the use of signs, i.e., *saṃketa*, as well as the various worldly practices, or more accurately, worldly *transactions* (*lokavyavahāra*). Included here are both agreed-upon linguistic expressions (*abhidhāna*) and objects of expressions (*abhidheya*), as well as cognitions (*jñāna*) and their objects (*jñeya*).

The first usage of *saṃvṛti* clearly does rely on an etymological understanding in terms of the Sanskrit \sqrt{VR} *vṛnoti*, “to cover, conceal,” giving the sense of *saṃvṛtisatya* as true-for-the-completely-covered, true-for-the-ignorant, true-for-the-benighted—in short, truth that might be needed for people to get along in the world and spiritually progress, but that is actually nothing more than a type of fool’s gold. This *saṃvṛti* has little connection, if any at all, with what we understand as “convention” in the sense of agreements, consensus, conventions, and rule-guided activities. As for *saṃvṛti/saṃvṛtti* meaning mutual dependence, this includes all that exists—everything lacks intrinsic natures and exists through causal dependence, mereological dependence, and/or dependence upon a cognizing mind. It appears then that the term here may indeed be understood as derived from \sqrt{VRT} *vartate*, “turn,” “go on,” “take place,” “exist,” with *saṃvṛtti* (with two “t”s) meaning “being,” “becoming,” “happening.” The third use of *saṃvṛti*, however, does recognizably involve consensus and convention. Candrakīrti’s gloss of *saṃvṛti* as *saṃketa* (“convention-governed symbols,” “usage that is agreed upon”) suggests that people may well have initially read the term as *saṃmuti* or *saṃmati/saṃmata* “consensus” coming from \sqrt{MAN} “to think” and then

moved to a problematic Sanskritism and a mistaken derivation from \sqrt{VR} , or perhaps even \sqrt{VRT} .

Modern interpreters often seem to privilege one or another of these three uses of *saṃvṛti* in their interpretation of Madhyamaka philosophy, and their choice determines, in an important fashion, what *saṃvṛti* is for them. Thus some opt for the first sense of *saṃvṛtisatya* and render the term as, for example, “*vérité d’enveloppement*,” (J. May, K. Mimaki), “*vérité de surface*” (D. Seyfort Rugg), or “truth-for-a-concealer,” “concealer-truth” (J. Hopkins). On the other hand, those modern writers who translate *saṃvṛtisatya* as “relative truth” (T. Stcherbatsky), or “conventional truth” (the Cowherds and numerous others) are, in effect, choosing to downplay or even disregard the first sense in favor of the second or third.

Modern interpreters aside, what were the philosophical consequences of these two textual phenomena in actual historical Buddhist schools of thought? Candrakīrtians, especially in Tibet, where Candrakīrti’s philosophy took on an importance that it never remotely had in India, were often tempted by a kind of global error theory and a dismissal of sophistication in the discovery of truth. To be sure, this was not a pure invention of Tibetans. There are several passages in Candrakīrti’s own writings that are naturally read as going in that direction. Elsewhere (see Tillemans 2011) I have dubbed this interpretation of Candrakīrti’s philosophy “typical Prāsaṅgika.”

It seems likely that the first etymology of *saṃvṛti* played *some* role in shaping that recurring Indo-Tibetan philosophical interpretation. Thus, for example, for Tibetan Jo nang pa interpreters of Madhyamaka *saṃvṛti* (= *kun rdzob*) means what is only “existent for mistaken understandings” (*blo ‘khrul ba’i ngor yod pa*), which is a marked leaning towards the first etymological interpretation. Many Tibetan Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas, and some Indians, like Jayānanda, too, argued that for Mādhyamikas there simply could be no *pramāṇas* (means of knowledge), i.e., that no-one could actually get customary truth right—there were only widespread errors that seemed right to the world. I would venture that if key spellings—i.e., *°vṛti* and *°rdzob*—hadn’t been what they were, at least some of the push for that global error theory would have disappeared.

Perhaps, too, Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka might have been a somewhat different, possibly a more sophisticated philosophy, if the Mahāyānist *sūtra* text Candrakīrti cited had spoken of “wise people in the world,” as did the *Samyutta*, instead of just “the world.” Candrakīrtians might

have promoted, in some areas at least, more of a qualitative hierarchy of opinions and thus criticism by optimally qualified, insightful individuals, the opinions of a kind of ideal audience, rather than those of a purely actual one. In effect, they might have even been closer to the other Mādhyamikas, the so-called Svāntarikas, who stressed that the world was, in fact, badly wrong on a variety of things, and who thus placed weight on the rationally founded opinions of the judicious (*prekṣāvat*)⁷ instead of acquiescing, across the board, in the actually attested opinions of the lowest common denominator. A Svāntarika like Kamalaśīla, for example, in his *Sarvadharmāṇiḥsvabhāvasiddhi*, takes what looks to be a typical Prāsaṅgika-like position to task—viz., that all customary things are “established just because people believe them to be” (*dam bcas pa tsam gyis grub pa = pratijñāmātreṇa siddha*)—giving examples of where the world makes significant errors that *should* not be accepted.⁸

Let me conclude with a question that philologists might well pose at this point. Do such dissections of the Sanskrit and Tibetan compounds and the key *āgama* passage imply then that typical Prāsaṅgika philosophy is *just* confusion and little more? I certainly would not want to go that far. I don’t want to dismiss the influence of linguistic and textual phenomena, but I don’t want to exaggerate the importance of that influence either, as occasionally happens when philology is used to somehow *explain away* serious philosophical or religious ideas.⁹ Spelling problems, hyper-

⁷ On the Svāntarika-Mādhyamika’s recourse to the idea of “judicious people,” see McClintock 2010.

⁸ The passage from the *Sarvadharmāṇiḥsvabhāvasiddhi* is discussed extensively in Tillemans 2011 and 2016, chapter II.

⁹ Let me give an example of what I think we had better not do. Harrison 1992 argues that some current ideas about the buddha, notably that buddhas *are* “Dharma-bodies,” are to quite a degree due to our mistaken readings of some occurrences of *dharmakāyāḥ* as a plural substantive—rather than as an adjective qualifying “buddhas” (“... have the Dharma as their bodies”)—or reading the substantive uses that there are in texts exotically, rather than just as meaning “buddhas are collections of qualities/dharma teachings.” Our bad reading of texts supposedly led us to the following conceptual error: “the temptation is to impute some kind of unitary ontological status to it [the *dharmakāya*] and to engage in theological flights of fancy which are unsupported by the texts. Thus metaphor gives way to metaphysics. (Harrison 1992, 74).” Paul Harrison, Jean Dantinne 1983, and others are no doubt right in taking many substantive occurrences

Sanskritisms, and missing words in *sūtras* gave *some* impetus to a version of customary truth as a rather dumbed-down truth, with no demand for expertise, and accessible easily to all. (I don't know how anyone could quantify that influence precisely). Be that as it may, there *were* serious philosophical issues that went far beyond those textual matters.

The bigger issue here in Mādhyamika versions of customary truth can be framed as a recognizable philosophical problem: whether a normative dimension is needed, or is indispensable, in a viable concept of truth. In other words, is truth what *should* be believed, and not merely what *is* in fact believed, very possibly by people who don't know any better and are always, in some sense, wrong? This issue remains a real one independently of what canonical texts did or did not say, or how Sanskrit terms were construed. Typical Prāsaṅgikas, including I think Candrakīrti himself on a natural reading of his texts, in effect, advocated a populist *lokaprasiddha* and global error theory largely because of their basic philosophical stance: they were very reluctant to accept that Mādhyamikas *should* make truth claims and thus have theses (*pakṣa*) of their own. Thus they acquiesced in the truth claims that others—the common man—in *fact* make. Svātantrikas,

as meaning simply “the collection of qualities” or *l'ensemble des qualités*. It is clear, however, *pace* Harrison's prescriptive stance against reading *dharmakāya* absolutely/theologically (or ontologically), that there were important ways *Prajñāpāramitā* and *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* commentators took *dharmakāya* as a substantive and accorded it an absolute sense. This is not a theological flight of fancy; *it is a major philosophical idea in Buddhist scholasticism*. Following Haribhadra, for example, the *dharmakāya* is the Buddha's omniscient mind or the buddhas' omniscient minds (= *jñānātmakadharmakāya*; *ye shes chos sku*) or the absolute and unitary nature of those minds (= *svābhāvikakāya*; *ngo bo nyid sku*). See Makransky 1997, chapter X. Mainstream Yogācāra and Madhyamaka in India and Tibet uses the term in the absolute/theological fashion; it is not, as Harrison suggests, due essentially to the modern imagination and our wrong readings. What might be more reasonably claimed is that the *sūtras* had “non-absolute” uses of a term that the scholastic tradition widely read in an absolute/theological fashion and—whether we like it or not—then figured in later Indian and Tibetan religious accounts of the Buddha's bodies. Philology is indeed important; prescriptive stances and debunking usually do not help much. See also Tillemans 2007a and 2016, chapter I for arguments against some other well-known attempts at debunking, i.e., the critiques of Nāgārjuna in Robinson 1972 and Hayes 1994.

like Kamalaśīla, recognized the needed normativity in the concept of truth and saw the populist alternative as rationally disastrous.¹⁰

Interestingly enough, some philosophically inclined Candrakīrtians, too, deliberately rejected the populist, non-normative stance on questions of *saṃvṛtisatya*. Such is the case of the Tibetan dGa' ldan pa/dGe lugs pa school. Its founder, Tsong kha pa, differentiates *saṃvṛtisatya* and “customary existence” (*saṃvṛtisat*). In this latter case he opted for the second and third senses and thus maintained that when Mādhyamikas say that all things exist customarily, they do *not* mean that things exist only from the mistaken point of view of ordinary people’s obscured minds, but rather intend that they exist as dependent-arising and because of customs.¹¹ Famously, too, Tsong kha pa insisted that Prāsaṅgikas, like their Svātantrika counterparts, are able to make and defend truth claims, that there had to be *pramāṇas*, and that customary truth was not just a widespread error, a fool’s gold that only seemed to be gold to mistaken minds. He seems essentially to have read Candrakīrti to say that a common man’s position was the best a Mādhyamika could do on metaphysical matters—like causality, universals, the existence of the external world, the status of absences, and other ontologically problematic facts—but that opinions on many other types of matters would admit of considerable reform and sophisticated upgrades.¹²

Most of Tsong kha pa’s positions were first and foremost argued for in terms of their philosophical promise.¹³ They are often problematic textually, and some of the most obscure parts in his oeuvre concern *his* citing of Indian sources as backing for his ideas. I and others have gone into more details elsewhere as to how well, or badly, the philosophy fits the Indic texts of the school—Prāsaṅgika rather than Svātantrika-

¹⁰ Elsewhere (i.e., Tillemans 2011 and 2016, chapter II) I have characterized the problem as one of avoiding the “dismal slough of relativism.”

¹¹ See Newland 1992, 83.

¹² This “atypical Prāsaṅgika” is taken up in Tillemans 2011.

¹³ Curiously enough, though, his all-important choice of Candrakīrti and Prāsaṅgika as representing the *best* Madhyamaka thought, rather than Bhāviveka and the Svātantrika, is traditionally said to have been made *not* primarily for philosophical arguments but on the basis of his own, or his guru’s, visions of a tutelary deity, Mañjuśrī. On the extraordinary importance of these visions and their place in the development of the dGe lugs pa school, see Ary 2015.

Madhyamaka—to which Tsong kha pa decided to pledge allegiance. Suffice it to say here that Tsong kha pa did well what good philosophers East and West have regularly done and will no doubt continue to do: deftly philosophize as they want to with the textual transmissions they receive. Philosophy has its own imperatives: not infrequently, its sophistication and depth proceeds with, and even demands, misreading.¹⁴

¹⁴ Two cases: (1) Tsong kha pa's strained reading (in *Lam rim chen mo's* last chapter) of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* IX.140ab in order to ground his own formulation of the idea of "recognition of the object of negation" (*dgag bya ngos 'dzin*). As Williams 1998, chapter 4, shows amply, this does not work as a likely account of the text of IX.139-141, nor is it the reading of the Indian commentators like Prajñākaramati and Vibhūticandra; yet it plays such a key and philosophically subtle role in Tsong kha pa's interpretation of Madhyamaka. (2) Tsong kha pa's pseudo-Indian textual justification (in *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*) for the idea that Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas, like Bhāviveka, accept intrinsic natures on the level of customary truth. See Eckel 2003 for, *inter alia*, the convoluted textual data and their (mis)use; see Tillemans 2003 on the important philosophical implications.

VII. A Comparative Philosophy Excursus: Deflating the Two Images and the Two Truths

We all know that straight sticks look bent in water, but aren't. Indian thinkers throughout the ages have known that people who suffer from the ophthalmic condition of myodesopsia (*timira*) see falling hairs and other floaters, though there are none. Young Tibetan Buddhist monks' *Blorigs* texts tell them that the one unique moon in the sky can appear as two to sense perception (*zla gcig zla gnyis su snang ba'i dbang shes*) in certain situations (e.g., when they press on their eyes). It's commonplace: things, situations, and people are often not, in reality, what they seem to be. Pertinently, these ordinary illusions, shams, and scams, are isolated phenomena that sometimes occur in specific situations; people rightly contrast them with specific real states of affairs. Philosophers, however, typically try to extend the illusion-reality contrast to everything across the board, with duly all-encompassing categories. The extension has numerous variants, East and West. But the common thread is that it usually proceeds by analogies with ordinary cases to arrive at a grand scale ontological and epistemological position about how all things are *for* all human subjects and how they *are in themselves*. This is the *Für Sich-An Sich* dichotomy dear to Hegelians and Sartrean phenomenologists, the *ābhāsa-svabhāva* ("[mere] appearance versus intrinsic nature") dichotomy for Indian Buddhists. It is the stuff of so many works of metaphysics that, in one way or another, contrast appearance and reality. The sweeping dichotomies are couched in philosophers' terms of art that bear a strained relation with the relevant ordinary terms. Indeed, Bas van Fraassen 1999 capitalizes all these terms and rejects strongly what they represent. I, too, see such philosophy-inspired dualities as up to little good. But it is important to give them a run for the money, initially at least, to know how much of East-West cross-cultural philosophy moves in surprisingly similar ways, for better or for worse. That is where the philosophy of Wilfrid Sellars comes in for us, one of the most sophisticated wide-ranging dualisms on the market and one that has a significant similarity with many Buddhist

ideas. Our stance on Sellars may directly affect our stance on Buddhism, and perhaps vice versa. In what follows, I will have to keep textual references brief. The reader is referred to other publications where the key Buddhist Studies data is given more fully.

Wilfrid Sellars, in his 1960 Pittsburgh lectures, entitled *Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man* (see Sellars 1962, 1963), developed a sophisticated philosophy turning on two *images* of the world; the images are, in effect, not just simple ordinary images but complete representations of everything, two worldviews or world-pictures, often called “frameworks,” of the one world. Sellars’s two images are, in effect, his science-inspired version of the well-worn contrast so dear to metaphysics throughout history: appearance versus reality.¹ The manifest image is the world as it appears to us all, the world as we experience it, the world-as-it-is-for-man. First taking shape in pre-history, the manifest image figures in the evolving common-sensical ideas of the ages, and was supposedly made explicit by philosophers, like Aristotle, who provided it with the ontology, categories, and other schematic features of a philosophical system. The world as represented by science, or the scientific image, is, for Sellars, different from the manifest image of our experience, just as the various component atomic particles whirling in empty space are very different from a macroscopic object such as a chair, or just as the ice cube that is manifestly pink all throughout is not indeed so scientifically if we examine each of its colorless individual component parts. There is arguably a great deal that is vital to the manifest, but isn’t in the scientific: colored, odorous, and sonorous things, macroscopic objects, animals, people, and probably a whole lot of other things, including propositions, values, beliefs, intentions, meaning, and subjectivity, to name a few. The two images are complete accounts of the world, in their own ways, but clash, with the one not reducible to the other. Indeed, Sellars himself characterizes the manifest as an “inadequate” likeness of the world from the point of view of the scientific: there are truths *within* the manifest image, but they may well be false in the deeper framework of science: science *best* represents what really is and what is not in the world.²

¹ van Fraassen 1999, §I. 2.

² Sellars 1956, §41: “In the dimension of describing and explaining the world, science is the measure of all things, of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not” (Sellars 1963, 173).

Buddhists did not, of course, contrast the manifest with the scientific image, but rather contrasted two sets of truths, or existences, which they designated with the Sanskrit term *satya* (Pāli *sacca*; Tibetan *bden pa*; Chinese *dī* 諦).³ An urgent philological aside to clear the air before we go any further: Buddhist texts sometimes characterize these *satya* as *statements*—very roughly, those that are just taken to be true and those that are actually, or genuinely true—and other times as *states of affairs* or *sorts of things*—those generally taken to be real and those that are fully real. In what follows, we’ll take the liberty to restrict our use of “truths” to truth-bearers, i.e., statements or beliefs. What is more, this even seems to be the initial way the two truths were formulated historically, in e.g., key Pāli texts that speak of statements that need interpretation (*neyattha* = Skt. *neyārtha*) as contrasted with those that are literally true descriptions of the real. As a famous passage in the commentary to the *Kathāvatthu* of the *Abhidhammapiṭaka* says:

“The Enlightened One, the best of all teachers, propounded two truths, customary and ultimate; we do not see a third. A statement governed [purely] by agreement is true because of the world’s customs, and an ultimate statement is true in that it characterizes things as they are.”⁴

The history as to how the truths came to include entities is complicated. For our purposes, let’s say simply that customary truths describe customary things or states of affairs, and ultimate truths describe ultimate things or states. The distortion is not great, and the simplicity needed.

Now, as we have seen, it is a feature of Sellars’s thought, and indeed an essential part of his scientific realism, that the frameworks or images are in a hierarchy, with one having lesser and the other having greater claim to represent what there actually is. And for most Buddhist schools, this

³ On the history and philosophy of the two truths in Buddhism, see Newland and Tillemans 2011.

⁴ Pāli in *Kathāvatthupparakaraṇaṭṭhakathā* p. 34; *Aṅguttaranikāya Aṭṭhakathā Manorathapūraṇī* I, p. 54:

*duve saccāni akkhāsi saṃbuddho vadatāṃ varo /
sammutiṃ paramatthaṃ ca tatiyaṃ nupalabbhati //
saṃketavacanaṃ saccaṃ lokasammutikāraṇaṃ /
paramatthavacanaṃ saccaṃ dhammānaṃ tathalakkhaṇaṃ //.*

hierarchy is clearly essential too: the customary (*saṃvṛti*) is usually taken to be much less representative of reality than the ultimate (*paramārtha*). Indeed, it is frequently said to concern mistaken “appearances” (*snang ba*; *abhāsa*), or “how things appear” (*snang tshul*) to the benighted, while *paramārthasatya* concerns “realities”/“reality” (*de nyid*; *tattva*), or equivalently “how things are” (*gnas tshul*), and “things’ mode of being” (*sdod tshul*). Many famous Buddhist authors argued long and hard to show the inconsistency and impossibility of those false (*mithyā*) things or states, relegating them to mere appearance, not unlike what Zeno and Parmenides or the Idealists F.H. Bradley or J.M.E. McTaggart did with motion, relations, or time. Thus, for some Buddhists, partless atoms are the ultimate, while macroscopic objects are merely customary; for others, momentary entities are the ultimate and enduring entities are customary; for some, mind is the ultimate and the appearances of external objects are customary; for some, all things are just customary, the ultimate being the omnipresent Buddha-nature. The asymmetry in the worth of the truths is expressed by saying that ultimate truths are *paramārthasiddha* “ultimately established,” whereas customary truths are only *vyavahārasiddha* “customarily established.” Or similarly, the momentarily existing entities, atoms, or for Idealist Buddhists, the mind, are said to *exist ultimately* (*paramārthasat*), whereas macroscopic objects, enduring entities, external objects and the like are just *customary existents* (*vyavahārasat*)—it is often said that customary existents are not established by full-fledged means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*); they are said to be merely verbal designations (*prajñaptisat*), fictions (*asadartha*); they are merely thought to exist, or “exist in the perspective of mistaken minds” (*blo ‘khrul ba’i ngor yod pa*).

When Buddhists typically say customary existents are mere designations, fictions, etc., I think their point is *not* that customary things are somehow *reducible* to the more real ultimate and hence still existent, just as pharmacological entities exist but would *reduce* without loss of their important properties to the more fundamental entities of chemistry. Instead, most Buddhists are saying that customary existents are illusions, false, and deceptive (*mṛṣāmoṣadharmaka*), mere appearances in which we believe but which are errors nonetheless, and that *that is in fact all they are*, viz., products of ignorance.⁵

⁵ This is a well-known theme of some of the most basic Buddhist canonical literature, such as for example Tōhoku 201, the *Śālistambasūtra*. See the 84000.co translation,

The point about the non-applicability of reductionism is important. Sellars is not a reductionist about much of the manifest. As he makes clear at the end of *Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man*, he held that persons and values were irreducible to the scientific image. Colored objects were too.⁶ But many scholars have thought that Buddhists, especially Abhidharma followers, *were* somehow reductionist about customary existents. Why deny the seeming consensus about Buddhist reductionism concerning the self and other customary entities? The answer is that most Buddhist talk about the self, whether conceived in a gross fashion as “permanent, one, and independent” (*rtag gcig rang dbang can*) or, more subtly, as a “substantially existent autonomous entity” (*rang rkya thub pa'i rdzas yod*), is not about *façons de parler* that are reducible *without significant loss* to an impersonal account in terms of the elements (*dharma*). In fact, much will be lost. When you replace medieval medical talk about diseases being caused by demon possession by modern microbial etiologies, this is not a reductionism of one theory to another—instead, you eliminate demons from your medical science largely because you no longer accept their would-be essential, intentional features, like malice and the like, as being responsible for sickness.⁷ Reformulating talk of the self in terms of impermanent, impersonal, causally conditioned *dharma*s does not look much like reductionism, either. It will not capture the key

1.29: “Here, what is ignorance? That which perceives these same six elements to be unitary, whole, permanent, constant, eternal, pleasurable, a self, a being, a life force, a creature, a soul, a man, an individual, a human, a person, me, and mine, along with the many other such variations of misapprehension, is called ignorance. The presence of such ignorance brings desire, aversion, and delusion toward objects. Such desire, aversion, and delusion toward objects are the formations caused by ignorance.”

⁶ See the following representative passage from Sellars’s “Science, Sense Impressions, and Sensa: A Reply to Cornman,” quoted in deVries 2005, 223: “...I used my principle of reducibility to argue that whatever manifest objects may be correlated with, they cannot literally consist of micro-physical particles, or be literally identical with wholes consisting of micro-physical particles. For, given this principle, a whole consisting of micro-physical particles can be colored (in the naive realist sense) only if these particles are themselves colored (in the naive realist sense) which, ... ‘doesn’t make sense’.”

⁷ The example is that of Siderits 2015, 11-13, who argues the opposite: for him, the self is *not* like the malicious disease-causing demon that will be *eliminated* by better medical science; it is instead *reducible* to *dharma*s.

features upon which Buddhist thinkers invariably insist: people wrongly imagine they have selves that are permanent (*rtaḡ* = *nitya*), acausally independent, personal substances (*rdzas* = *dravya*), and autonomous (*rang rkyā thub pa*) agents.⁸

Indeed, the self is supposedly the main source of suffering and attachment and needs to be somehow overcome precisely because it is such a harmful and seductive unreality. Here is how Jonardon Ganeri characterized the Buddhist view:

“Our Buddhists think that the evolution of the concept EGO brings with it all manner of defilements, and one form of justification for that claim is that the concept rests in this way on an error. Sthiramati’s comment on the first of the *30 Verses* [of Vasubandhu] bears the point out: he says that the concept of self presents only an apparent (*nirbhāsa*) referent, just as the perception of someone with an eye-

⁸ See, for example, the descriptions of gross (*rags pa*) and subtler (*phra mo*) conceptions of the self as given in *Grub mtha’* texts like *Grub mtha’ rin chen phreng ba* of dKon mchog ‘jig med dbang po. See p. 88 *et seq.* in K. Mimaki’s edition. Or see the Sautrāntika (*mdo sde pa*) chapter of *lCang skya grub mtha’* of lCang skya Rol pa’i rdo rje. These Tibetan elaborations of the self have the Abhidharmic views insightfully right. The terms *rtaḡ gcig rang dbang can gyi bdag* and *rang kya thub pa’i rdzas yod du grub pa’i bdag* are Tibetan inventions, but there is no reason to say that the ideas are not Indian. Finally, it seems that too much reductionist mileage has been made about Vasubandhu’s saying in *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (p. 1208, ed. D. Shastri): “Monks, karma exists, ripening [of karma] exists, but no agent is perceived apart from the agreed upon [successive causation of the] elements (*dharmasaṃketa*), [no agent] that [supposedly] discards the present aggregates and connects with other ones.” (*bhikṣavo ‘asti karma asti vipākaḥ kārakas tu nopalabhyate ya imāṃś ca skandhān niḥśipati anyāṃś ca skandhān pratisaṃdadhātī anyatra dharmasaṃketāt* /). This *sūtra* passage quoted in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* is sometimes cited in its unreliable translation by Stcherbatsky as evidence for Buddhists’ acceptance of a lighter version of self that is, or reduces to, a bundle of impersonal elements. Indeed, that is part of what the philosopher Derek Parfit uses as Buddhist backing for his version of reductionism; see Parfit 1991, 502. Cf., however, the analysis in Ganeri 2007, 162–163. The passage is cited by Vasubandhu in a refutation of the Personalist’s (*pudgalavādin*) idea of a self that exists separately from the aggregates. It is not, for him, actively *promoting* a light version. It is certainly not saying that common talk of self could somehow be reformulated as talk of the aggregates without very significant change or loss. It is, in my opinion, therefore, not to be taken as evidence for a Buddhist reductionism.

disease presents only apparent hairs and circles. It is ‘metaphorically designated’ (*upacaryate*) because it is said to be there when it is not, as if one were to use the word ‘cow’ when there is an ox” (Ganeri 2011, 185).

This is textually accurate and, I think, bodes badly for reductionism. Of course, one may have some reasons to prefer *another* idea of the self as less extreme—perhaps taking *manas*, or *manovijñāna* (“mental consciousness”), or something else, like *svasaṃvedana* (“reflexive awareness”), as a “minimal self.” And perhaps a lightweight version, inspired by some Buddhist ideas and unburdened with a heavy load of illusory attributes, would seem to be a more philosophically anodine replacement. Perhaps some such light version of self might even be somehow reducible to *dharmas*. But let’s be clear: common human beings’ actual concepts of self, as depicted by most major Indian Buddhists, are loaded with pernicious, vitiating falsities. They are hardly anything light and reducible.

Indeed, we can go further: it seems that neither the main Ābhidharmikas, nor Dharmakīrti, nor the main Indian Idealist Buddhists were reductionists about things customary, be it selves, carts and other macroscopic objects, time, universals, etc. Most are better seen as *error theorists*, regularly claiming that the customary goes back to people’s ignorance and habitual “karmic tendencies that have no beginning” (*anādivāsanā*). They may have differing elaborations of that error theory—seeing the mistake as one of imputing permanence, real universals, or externality, etc.—but the common feature is that customary truths are “truths” for those who are thoroughly in the wrong, i.e., pseudo-entities with irredeemable features. There is even a very strong push to get rid of *all* customary objects; when one attains the state of the Noble Ones (*ārya*) and first understands correctly on the “path of seeing” (*darśanamārga*), one no longer experiences any of them until one gets out of one’s meditative state and must deal with the world of ordinary people. *Nirvāṇa* and “the attainment of cessation” (*nirodhasamāpatti*) are like that in most schools, too, be they Theravāda, Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, or Yogācāra.⁹ In short, despite all the respect

⁹ See Griffiths 1986 on the Buddhist elimination of objects, and indeed all intentional mental activity, in the attainment of cessation.

I have for my philosophical colleagues who try to find a sophisticated Buddhist reductionism, I think that it is probably going to be a dead end if we stay in keeping with the spirit of Buddhist canonical texts.

An East-West issue emerges: the manifest-scientific dichotomy—and, I would maintain, the Buddhist dichotomy between two truths—has a hard to resist dialectic leading to discardability: we seem to have to regard the manifest and the customary as inferior, or even false, irreducible to the scientific/ultimate (which is true), and therefore to be *discarded*. Van Fraassen takes Sellars in that way but doesn't endorse it himself; instead he rejects the Sellarsian philosophy of two images *because, inter alia*, it leads to discardability of one or the other. And there is a similar specter of elimination to the Buddhist's two truths.

Most partisans of the images or the two truths would protest that they *never* would advocate, nor somehow bring about actual elimination on a wide scale. Sellars was not himself an eliminativist, and Buddhists only countenanced actual elimination in the meditative states of elite, high-level practitioners, as it was generally feared that if ordinary people somehow eliminated the customary they might think that reincarnation, karmic retribution and the like would also be wiped out, with disastrous ethical consequences. Nonetheless, a would-be Sellarsian philosophy or Buddhism that would *have to end up* discarding the manifest/customary is more than just a slanderous caricature: it exposes potentially serious consequences inherent in the dichotomies. If the scientific image is the deepest, complete account of the world, then it is indeed hard to see why it shouldn't, over time, take precedence over the irreducible world-qua-appearance, i.e., the manifest image, and displace it; if the ultimate is the deepest, truest, complete picture of how everything is, then why shouldn't it, too, displace the irreducible customary? More generally, if framework Φ yields a deeper complete picture of the world than Ψ and Ψ clashes irretrievably with Φ , then why would rational individuals keep a place for Ψ ?

Sellars himself has a complex position, repeatedly emphasizing that practical reason—the domain of the manifest—cannot and should not be discarded by theoretical reason—the domain of the scientific.¹⁰ The full

¹⁰ See deVries 2005, 161: "Should we then give ourselves over to scientific truth and abandon the manifest image altogether? No, because in the end practical reason retains primacy over theoretical reason."

stereoscopic picture of human life supposedly requires both. He often says that the manifest is needed pragmatically because the scientific depends on the manifest (since we could not have had science's theories without our experience and its world-picture). Whereas there are right and wrong views in terms of reasons and criteria *within* the manifest and its schematizing philosophies, there is no scientific reason—i.e., a reason *within* the scientific world-picture—for accepting the whole of the manifest, with its internal differentiations and views on what is true or not. Thus, there is only *pragmatic* necessity to accept the scientifically inadequate manifest.¹¹ Furthermore, while the scientific picture only describes what is so, the manifest tells us what ought to be and is essential to rationality in that any attribution of knowledge or other mental states to someone involves locating those states “in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says” (Sellars 1956, §36). The idea has been taken up by thinkers like John McDowell, who argues against the “bald naturalism” of the exclusively scientific as lacking the provisions for “logical space,” that is, the normative features inherent in ethics, in epistemology, and reasoning, and, more generally, essential to a world with meaning for humans.

Some will say that Buddhists are indeed pragmatists and accept customary existents for a utility payoff. I have argued against the philosophical feasibility of a general utilitarian account of the genesis of objects and states in some detail elsewhere and will not repeat those discussions in any detail here.¹² Could a Buddhist use practical reason in a different and perhaps more Sellarsian way to keep the specter of elimination at bay? I am thinking of arguments for the practical indispensability of the customary/manifest to understand the ultimate/scientific. These are not utilitarian arguments that gross objects etc., are fictions retainable because they come out well in a calculus of happiness: they are arguments to show that the inadequate manifest/customary is presupposed in deliberations about the more adequate and deeper scientific/ultimate.

¹¹ “Thus, although methodologically a development *within* the manifest image, the scientific image presents itself as a *rival* image. From its point of view the manifest image on which it rests is an ‘inadequate’ but pragmatically useful likeness of a reality which first finds its adequate (in principle) likeness in the scientific image.” Sellars 1963, 20.

¹² Tillemans 2016, Introduction.

A potential argument of this sort is to be found in an intriguing textual passage in Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* XXIV.10 and Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā* thereupon:

"But, unless one accepts what is customary in the world—what is expressed, expressions, consciousness, and objects of consciousness—one cannot teach ultimate truth.... To show this [Nāgārjuna] thus states: The ultimate is not taught unless one bases oneself upon the customary...."¹³

To unpack this passage, let's go back to talking about two complete but rival frameworks Ψ and Φ . How does this passage help combat the specter of elimination of Ψ ? Candrakīrti and Nāgārjuna can be read, relatively trivially, as simply saying that Ψ is a needed tool along the way to one's understanding the deeper framework Φ and that it *could* (or should) be discarded once Φ has been adopted. This line of argument does not, then, make a *lasting* place for the manifest/customary. Didactic conservation is at most a temporary respite.¹⁴

More charitably, the Buddhist authors could also be read as saying that important features of Ψ just *cannot* be discarded *whenever* one is reasoning about, or speaking about, the true/ultimate framework, on pain of undercutting the preconditions for Φ to be understandable and adoptable at all. On the first interpretation talking about things in the inadequate terms of framework Ψ is justified only as a starting point in the teaching of some type of truer, deeper, framework. At some point, one will go beyond it and think of Φ free of Ψ . The second interpretation is stronger: there are several features of the manifest/customary, such as propositional

¹³ Sanskrit in La Vallée Poussin's edition of *Prasannapadā* 494.8-12: *kiṃ tu laukikam vyavahāram anabhyupagamyā abhidhānābhidheyajñānājñeyādilakṣaṇam aśakya eva paramārtho deśayituṃ ...pratipādayann āha / vyavahāram anāśritya paramārtho na deśyate /*. French translation in May 1959, 229.

¹⁴ Nāgārjuna's disciple Āryadeva would seem to lend support to this interpretation. See Āryadeva's *Catuhśatakaśāstrakārikā* as cited in Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*, ed. L. de la Vallée Poussin, 370: *nānyabhāṣayā mleccchaḥ śakyo grāhayituṃ yathā // na laukikam ṛte lokaḥ śakyo grāhayituṃ tathā //*. "Just as one cannot make a barbarian understand by any language other [than his own], so, too, ordinary persons cannot be made to understand without [using] what is mundane."

attitudes, thoughts, universal properties, persons, reasons, and norms that *must* remain so long as we are thinking about the scientific/ultimate. Without propositional attitudes, for example, it would be impossible to believe or know that this framework is the most adequate; without good reasons we could not defend its being so;¹⁵ without persons there would be no-one who knows it. I have argued (Tillemans 2016, chapter XI) that this interpretation takes Buddhists as offering transcendental arguments for the broad outlines of the customary: the customary is presupposed as a necessary condition for thought about the ultimate.¹⁶ More generally, important features of Ψ are necessary conditions for Φ 's intelligibility and will thus have to remain. They would be pragmatically justified, not because of simply being needed temporary steps on the road to something better, but because their elimination would incur a type of contradiction, a kind of practical self-defeat. If scientific positions or ultimate truth led to elimination of the manifest/customary, those positions would themselves be unbelievable, unjustifiable, and unassertable.¹⁷

This much will have to do for a Buddhist-inspired attempt to bolster Sellars' appeal to practical reason. It would be a partial counter to elimination, although it is unclear to me precisely how many of the

¹⁵ One could see that strategy as interestingly similar to Lynne Rudder Baker's defense of mind and propositional attitudes: a scientific view like that advocated by Churchland 1981, which outright eliminates the manifest, commits a type of auto-refutation, a "cognitive suicide." See Baker 1987, 1998; see Tillemans 2016, chapter XI, 212 *et seq.*

¹⁶ I was following a lead of Dan Arnold 2008, who, I think, convincingly showed Nāgārjuna as using a transcendental argument going in the opposite direction, i.e., as arguing that the customary presupposes the ultimate. Arnold reads *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* XXIV.20 as showing that customary truth has as a necessary condition the fact that things have no intrinsic nature; there can be nothing which things would be in themselves and continue to be irrespective of all extrinsic factors, like various causes, human influences, and the like. The customary world-picture—in which things change, perform functions, are identifiable under concepts and language, etc.—could only work if things, in final analysis, had no such intrinsic natures.

¹⁷ Candrakīrti, in his commentary to this verse, makes it clear that his final aim is a direct, non-conceptual understanding of the ultimate free from "conceptual proliferations" (*niṣprapañca*). This means an understanding where unrealities (customary truths, language, discursive thought) are thoroughly relinquished—*atattvaṃ hi parityājyam*. The question that occupies us, however, is whether *discursive* thought about an ultimate requires that the customary be conserved. The second interpretation says it does.

features of the manifest image and customary truth would be saved in this way. Propositional attitudes, persons, reasons, and justifications could be, but I don't know how well and how much we would recuperate features like macroscopic objects, secondary qualities or much of ethics and aesthetics, or the flow of time, or "logical space." It is also unclear to me whether this interpretation would have gotten an approving nod from Sellars himself.¹⁸ Let us leave those matters on hold. Instead, the time has come to ask more seriously whether the Sellarsian two images and the usual Buddhist approach to two truths are worthwhile to pursue further philosophically *at all*. I think that so long as we have an irreducible hierarchy, with the manifest/customary being false or fictions and the scientific/ultimate being real, the specter of elimination will not go away. There is, however, another problem that is just as serious and won't easily go away either: the specter of unintelligibility. Those two specters, as we shall see, make me want to look elsewhere, away from philosophies that cultivate frameworks.

Here is what I mean by the "specter of unintelligibility." Bas van Fraassen argued, *inter alia*, that the manifest—and I would say also customary truth, as it is usually understood by Buddhists—is a framework populated by odd *intensional* entities, so odd that there is a serious problem of intelligibility. Intensional entities are those for which usual identity criteria do not hold. They are typically meanings or properties, or they are objects of propositional attitudes: people usually have incomplete knowledge and understand things under a limited or even wrong perspective, and the "object" *as it is appears* to their thought is, thus, not easily identifiable with the object in the world. If we start to talk about complete, grand scale frameworks, like manifest images or customary truth, those odd intensional entities are not just occasional objects of propositional attitudes, modal contexts, and the like: they are everywhere in the framework. In a very real sense we do not understand what is *in* those frameworks.

¹⁸ Cf. deVries 2005, 11: "A leitmotif that runs through a great deal of Sellars's writing is that what is prior in the order of knowing need not be prior in the order of being, and that certainly applies in his view to the relation between the manifest and scientific images." If this is right, Sellars's position may be more in keeping with our first interpretation of the passage from Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti.

Worse, given such frameworks, truth, too, becomes “truth-within-the-framework” and about the intensional entities. Indeed, the manifest/customary are not just series of simple descriptions and claims about things or states in the world—claims that may be right or wrong in the banal fashion in which we make true and false claims about garden-variety things. Instead they are always descriptions and claims about things/states *as they seem to be* to certain people—ordinary people or even classical metaphysicians for Sellars, and, for Buddhists, ignorant ordinary worldlings (*pr̥thagjana*) with their mistaken minds. These entities, in short, are things-for-X, things-as-they-seem-to-X, and not just things *tout court*; the claims concern things-as-they-seem and are true or false depending on how well they capture these things-as-they-seem-to-X.

This extreme intensionality is a recurrent stance in two truths formulations. Even Candrakīrti not infrequently adopts it, as we see in a famous passage from his *Madhyamakāvatāra*:

“All things bear two natures constituted through correct and false views. The object (*viśaya*) of those who see correctly is said to be ‘reality’ (*tattva*) and the object of those who see falsely is said to be a ‘customary existence’ (*saṃvṛtisatya*).”¹⁹

The object of those who see falsely is an intensional object, a thing that doesn’t really exist but only “exists” in the mind of the mistaken, an object-qua-mistaken-appearance. And the hierarchy is clear, too, as is the reliance on frameworks. Indeed, elsewhere in *Madhyamakāvatāra* Candrakīrti alludes to the idea of different world frameworks, depending on whether one is a spirit, a god, an animal, or a human, with right answers

¹⁹ *Madhyamakāvatāra* of Candrakīrti, chapter VI, verse 23. The Sanskrit is found in Prajñākaramati’s *Bodhicaryāvatārapañjikā* 361: *samyañmr̥ṣādārśanalabdhabhāvam / rūpadvayaṃ bibhṛati sarvabhāvāḥ // samyagdr̥śāṃ yo viśayaḥ sa tattvam / mr̥ṣādr̥śāṃ saṃvṛtisatyam uktam //*. Note that I have translated *labdhabhāvam* as “constituted,” literally “whose being is gained.” This is in keeping with Louis de la Vallée Poussin’s French translation: “les choses portent une double nature qui est constituée par la vue exacte et par la vue erronée.” The Tibetan *rnyed pa* (= Skt. *labdha*), if taken as “[whose being] is found,” could (if taken literally) yield a more problematic interpretation of the verse, meaning that the two natures are in some sense *found* by two types of perceptions, as if they were somehow already there in the objects.

“internal” to the frameworks and pertaining to the objects-as-perceived by the denizens of worlds—pus for the spirits, water for humans, ambrosia for the gods, etc.²⁰ Such framework-relativity in Madhyamaka is not much different from what we find in Buddhist Idealist texts like the *Vimśatikā* of Vasubandhu, which in verse three cites the example of the *pūyanadī* (“the river of pus”) as illustrating how consensus about appearances occurs across all beings of a like kind, without there being external objects.

Talk of frameworks and “objects” internal to them is rife, too, in Buddhist literature on epistemology (*pramāṇavāda*). These Buddhists regularly speak of several such “objects” and their role in conceptual thinking—in scholastic elaborations of the positions of Indian thinkers like Dharmakīrti and Dharmottara, we find objects of thought classified as “appearing objects” (*snang yul*), “grasped objects” (*gzung yul*), “objects of determination” (*zhen yul*), and “objects-as-they-are-grasped” (*‘dzin stangs kyi yul*). As I have tried to show (Tillemans 2020), if these objects-that-appear, objects-as-they-are-grasped, and the like are entities at all, they present huge problems of intelligibility. Even more usual formulations of identity criteria for intensional entities do not hold—the ideas of identity (*ekatva* = *gcig nyid*), whether developed by Dharmakīrti and his successors or by Tibetan writers on *pramāṇa* (*tshad ma*), demand that there is a different entity for each word, even when the words are synonyms. The Indo-Tibetan Buddhist idea, then, is that these objects *will be* different when they just *seem*, or appear (*snang*), different to the thinker. They will, e.g., *seem* different to the thinking subjects because words for them vary in different languages or because the thinker apprehends them with different information about each, and so forth. This is extreme intensionality, what I have termed “ultra-intensionality,” and it is pervasive in the prevailing Indo-Tibetan Buddhist philosophies of language and logic, i.e., in the Buddhist theories of *apoha*.²¹

²⁰ *Madhyamakāvatāra* VI.71b: *chu ‘babs klung la yi dwags rnag blo yang* / “And the spirit’s (*preta*) cognition of pus regarding a river.”

²¹ On the “exclusion theory” (*apohavāda*) in Buddhist philosophy of language, logic, and metaphysics, see Siderits, Tillemans, Chakrabarti 2011.

In short, there are recognizable features that come back in various forms when Buddhists, including most Mādhyamikas,²² philosophize in terms of world frameworks, error theories, and double truths. The problem in all such thinking, Sellarsian or Buddhist, besides the specter of elimination, is that it is hardly intelligible *what* we are referring to, if it is things-as-they-seem-to-X with truths about them being merely internal to a framework. Of course, it would be quite intelligible to say simply that people often *think wrongly* that they are talking about straightforward things, and that it turns out they are not talking about anything at all. But Sellarsians and Buddhists *aren't* saying that. They take people's thoughts and language as about nothing (fully) real, but *also* somehow about odd things-as-they-seem-to-X, denizens-of-the-manifest-image, objects-qua-appearances, or what have you. And those are also somehow "objects" whether X thinks about them rightly, whether what X thinks about them corresponds to the way these "objects" are or not. It looks like that is how it is with Sellars's manifest image and the debates about things within it and that is how it is with most Buddhist understandings of customary truth and Buddhist debates about "internal" truth and falsity, i.e., about the customarily right (*tathyaśamvṛti*) or customarily wrong (*mithyāśamvṛti*). Frameworks, their hierarchies, their internal objects, worlds and the rest look increasingly unpromising.

That being said, they die hard. Of course, people regularly (and harmlessly) talk about "my world," "your world," "things for me," and the like. A.R. Luria famously described the experiences of a brain-damaged individual in *The Man with a Shattered World*, and Oliver Sacks, in books like *An Anthropologist on Mars*, described his patients' fascinatingly and oddly structured worlds. That much phenomenology need not be a problem. But a philosopher who tries to take such phenomenological descriptions as also ontologically charged and about genuine *worlds*, frameworks, or what have you, is on murky grounds especially if the latter are supposedly

²² Of course, there are several Tibetan interpretations of Madhyamaka and anything and everything Candrakīrti wrote. See e.g., Vose 2009, Tillemans and Tomabeche 1995. But most rightly recognize how much emphasis he placed on the customary being erroneous and "objects" for the ignorant.

inhabited by objects-as-they-are-for-X, as opposed to objects-as-they-are-for-Y.²³

Let's try something quite different. Can we do better, conserving a place for science, human experience, Madhyamaka Buddhist truths and the like on a level playing field with no frameworks, no hierarchy of truths, no fictions (useful or otherwise), and no odd internal objects? Some years ago, Graham Priest, Mark Siderits, and I argued that deflationism is the most plausible approach to truth in a rationally reconstructed Madhyamaka philosophy.²⁴ We could have gone further: there are deflationist accounts of existence, objects, meaning and reference that could fit well into such a reconstructed Madhyamaka Buddhist philosophy. Deflationism is a package deal and we could have, and probably should have, availed ourselves of more of the package. The result would have been a level playing field with no frameworks, hierarchies of truth, odd objects, and truths internal to frameworks.

Here are the basics. Deflationary theories, broadly speaking, make do with interlocking formulae that bring out uncontroversial features of how one uses terms like "truth," "reference," and "existence." As is regular practice in deflationism, we use angled brackets to designate the proposition that p (i.e., the thought that such and such is so) and the constituents of the proposition, viz., singular and general concepts. Thus, deflationists trivially explain truth with equivalences along the lines of $\langle p \rangle$ is true if and only if p ; or in the case of reference they say that the singular concept $\langle n \rangle$ refers to x iff $n = x$; and $\langle n$ is $F \rangle$ is true iff $\langle n \rangle$ refers to n and the general concept $\langle F \rangle$ is true of n . As for existence, they can get there from deflationary truths: if $\langle n$ is $F \rangle$ is true, then we can infer that n is F and then infer that there is an x such that $x = n$.²⁵ A deflationary approach, as the term suggests, is thus to be contrasted

²³ For an attempt to make objects of thought and worlds for X intelligible nonetheless, see Crane 2001.

²⁴ Priest, Siderits, Tillemans 2011.

²⁵ The above formulations are those of Thomasson 2014 in keeping with those of Paul Horwich. They are certainly not unusual. See Armour-Garb and Beal 2005; Christopher Hill 2006. The mutually implicative nature of the key semantic terms is brought out in Thomasson 2014, Horwich 2004, 73f. There is a deflationary account of meaning, too.

with accounts of reference, truth, meaning, and existence that involve “substantive” properties that one should discover and investigate to form generalizations of the sort $\langle p \rangle$ is true if and only if $\langle p \rangle$ corresponds to facts (or is made true by reality, is useful to believe, is verifiable, etc.), or $\langle n \rangle$ refers to x iff $\langle n \rangle$ bears relation R to x (i.e., is causally connected to x , is intentionally linked to x , etc.), or Fs exist iff Fs are causally efficient (or figure in our best science, etc.).

Truth is thus defined by an infinite series of equivalences $\langle p \rangle$ is true iff p , whether we are talking about important and subtle matters of science or religion, or the ordinary truths of daily experience. We don’t, for example, have one set of propositions that are true because they are useful to believe and another distinct and rival set that are true in some deeper and different way, like correspondence to the realities of science or metaphysics. The concepts of existence and reference are also simple. Objects that exist or are referred to are not those that are somehow in a privileged class because of substantial properties or relations. Instead of hierarchical frameworks, what remains is a level playing field with no substantial positions on the real sense of “existence” or the real sense of “truth.” And the facts and realities we discuss are what Paul Horwich 2006, 194 terms “deflationary facts” (as opposed to “REAL facts”), i.e., those “to which we are committed merely by making assertions and accepting the equivalence of ‘ p ’ and ‘it’s a fact that p .’” They are real in an ordinary sense and are not illusory (cf. the banal distinction between illusion and reality mentioned at the start of this paper), but that is all.

Of course, this account doesn’t mean that various truths and existence-claims will not be contested or that they will become purely subjective affairs. There will be head-on clashes about difficult problems of subatomic physics, where one claim is that x exists and the other is that x does not exist; $\langle p \rangle$ will be true or not true irrespective of whether people believe it is. On the other hand, in typical longstanding philosophical controversies—whether numbers, tables, chairs, people, minds, and thoughts exist—existence will follow trivially from the truth of propositions like $\langle 5$ is a prime number \rangle , \langle Sally is sitting on a chair \rangle , and the like. The result of the deflationist package, then, is what some term “easy ontology.”²⁶ Others speak of using existential quantification simply as a logical structure

²⁶ Thomasson 2015.

without Quine-style ontological commitment.²⁷ In any case, the upshot is that one can just as well say that there is something that is January, or that January exists, chairs exist, atoms exist, and so do numbers, thoughts, moral qualities, abstract entities, absences, and people; it even matters little whether they are reducible or not to other things—they exist, we unproblematically refer to them, and we think true thoughts about them. This liberality also has direct bearing on our investigation of the dualities of manifest/scientific and customary/ultimate: if one is deflationist across the board, one is unburdened with odd entities in inferior experiential or customary frameworks. There is no need to introduce frameworks—hierarchical or otherwise—relative to which they exist in an internal way.²⁸

A radical deflationism across the board, accepting only deflationary facts, no grounding reality, and no *substantial* accounts of truth, existence, and reference, could not only be a way out of the twin specters of Sellars's philosophy; it would be a promising Madhyamaka. Laura Guerrero 2013 used the deflationism argued for in Priest, Siderits, Tillemans 2011 to rationalize customary truth in Dharmakīrti. We can go further and apply it to *both* truths for the Madhyamaka. Indeed, if we take a Buddhist position like that of the Tibetan Mādhyamika thinker Tsong kha pa (1357-1419), both customary and ultimate truths are established by genuine means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*). It is important to see how unique, and not typically Indian, this position is: customary truths are *not* simply widely accepted errors with things only “existent in the perspective of mistaken minds” (*blo 'khrul ba'i ngor yod pa*), which is the more usual Indo-Tibetan interpretation, be it in Candrakīrti or other Buddhists. The other subtle point, on which he differs from most Indian and Tibetan thinkers is that both truths are only *customarily established*; whether an ultimate truth or a customary truth, neither is better grounded, better established, or captures anything *ultimately established* or *ultimately existent*. The formula that

²⁷ See Fine 2009.

²⁸ Frameworks are, alas, regularly used by Buddhists to protect dogma as true internally. But they aren't just the stuff of philosophy and religion. They are often beloved of anthropologists who think that they are investigating rival conceptual schemes/frameworks of different cultures. Linguists are sometimes attracted by Benjamin Lee Whorf's hypothesis of a specific and inherent metaphysical framework in each language, making translation between certain languages impossible. A major critical study of their intelligibility is Davidson 1984.

dGe lugs pa debaters know says it all: *don dam bden pa yin na don dam par grub pas ma khyab* / “If, or because, something is an ultimate truth it does not follow that it is ultimately established.” In fact, to be more precise, something stronger and more surprising follows traditionally: *don dam bden pa yin na don dam par ma grub pas khyab* / *don dam bden pa yin na don dam par yod pa ma yin pas khyab* / “If anything is an ultimate truth it follows that it is *not* ultimately established; if anything is an ultimate truth it follows that it is *not* ultimately existent.” As Newland 1992, 94 put it:

“The distinction between being an ultimate (*don dam yin*) and ultimately existing (*don dam du yod*) is critical in Tsong-kha-pa’s system. Emptiness is found, known, and realized by a mind of ultimate analysis, and therefore it is an ultimate truth. However, emptiness is not ultimately existent because it is not found by the ultimate mind analyzing *it*.”

Guy Newland is right: this is critical to understanding Tsong kha pa. We misunderstand or ignore it at the peril of wrongly making his Madhyamaka accept formulae along the lines of “the ultimate truth is that (because everything is empty (*śūnya*)) there is no ultimate truth” and then perhaps moving to rather murky paradoxes like “The ultimate truth is both ultimate and not,” or “the ultimate truth, emptiness, is that there both is and is not an ultimate truth.” Such formulae might arise from acceptance of what is a relatively common Indo-Tibetan idea in non-Madhyamaka and some Madhyamaka Buddhism alike, viz., that ultimate truth (*don dam bden pa* = *paramārthasatya*) is ultimately established (*don dam par grub pa* = *paramārthasiddha*) and ultimately existent (*don dam du yod pa* = *paramārthasat*). But that is precisely what Tsong kha pa’s school did *not* accept in their Madhyamaka.²⁹ Tsong kha pa and his followers, of course,

²⁹ See Tillemans 2013 (= 2016, chapter IV). For the position that Candrakīrti and Nāgārjuna were “dialetheists” and thus accept some true contradictions, see Deguchi, Garfield, Priest 2008—the ultimate truth paradox is taken there as a core example of Madhyamaka dialetheism that cannot and should not be explained away. My argument in Tillemans 2013 is precisely that it was avoided rationally by thinkers like Tsong kha pa. The volume dedicated to Buddhist dialetheism is *Philosophy East and West* 63.3, 2013, ed. Koji Tanaka, which contains rejoinders by Deguchi, Garfield, Priest.

never admitted their originality and significant differences from India and indeed extol their Indian conformity. Nonetheless, original they were.³⁰

In sum, truths are established and not just believed in, customary things exist and are not just errors, but no truth is better grounded, better established, or “truer” than another. It is only the procedures for establishing the truths that differ—two kinds of analysis (*dpyod pa* = *vicāra*)—as well as their subject matters, viz., respectively, all worldly, scientific or religious states of affairs and the lack of any real intrinsic nature, or ultimate status of any of them, i.e., their emptiness. Instead of a contrast between mere false appearance and reality, the Madhyamaka now focuses predominantly on something much like a distinction between a harmless, ordinary realism (more exactly, the acceptable part of an ordinary conception of truth and reality) and metaphysical realism, embracing the former and rejecting the latter.³¹ While deflationism, by itself, does not

³⁰ We have a considerable number of key dGe lugs pa ideas where Indian sources are being used in a strained and implausible manner. The two that stand out the most starkly are the interpretations of Śāntideva’s *Bodhicāryāvatāra* 9.140 to justify the idea of “recognizing what is to be refuted” (*dgag bya ngos ’dzin*) and the use of passages from Bhāṣiveka to justify the position that Svātantrikas accept that customarily things are what they are because of inherent natures (*tha snyad du rang bzhin gyis grub pa*). See Williams 1995 on *Bodhicāryāvatāra* IX.140, Eckel 2003 on the Indian “sources” for *tha snyad du rang bzhin gyis grub pa*. See Tillemans 2016, 58 for another example, viz., Tsong kha pa’s breaking down of the rigid separation between “worldlings” and Noble Ones (*ārya*). Finally, many of Tsong kha pa’s famous *dka’gnas brgyad* (“eight difficult points [of the Madhyamaka]”), though often interesting and even important Buddhist philosophy, are also hardly supported by Indian texts—as adversaries such as Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge rightly did not fail to point out.

³¹ In traditional Buddhist texts we find several well-attested terms that are used equivalently to depict what I am calling “the metaphysically real” (as contrasted with what is real in the ordinary sense). For example, the Sanskrit *satyatas* (really, truly), *dravyatas* (substantially), *vastutas* (in terms of real entities), *svabhāvena* (by its intrinsic nature), Chinese *zhen* 真, *shi* 實, or *shi you* 實有 (truly, substantially), and others. In Tibetan we also have very important and suggestive terms that, to my knowledge, do not come from Sanskrit and do not have equivalents in Chinese texts: “what is established from its own side” (*rang ngos nas grub pa*) and “in terms of its own exclusive mode of being” (*rang gi thun mon ma yin pa’i sdod lugs gyi ngos nas*). All of these terms form a kind of semantic circle of interlocking and mutually implicative concepts. It might thus be objected that this seemingly inevitable circularity would preclude us properly *understanding*

rule out adherence to metaphysical realism and intrinsic natures, it does at least undercut one of the major arguments for it, viz., that without such grounding in reality truth claims become arbitrary and subjective. Metaphysical realism may have an obsessive hold on our thinking, but at least, technically speaking, it turns out to be unnecessary, for we don't need to define truth or reference substantively in terms of a privileged relation with the metaphysically real, or define existence as membership in that reality. "Everything makes sense to one for whom emptiness [i.e., the absence of the metaphysically real] makes sense."³²

I grant fully that the obsession with grounding is stubborn and *does* need more than *just* limp-wristed deflationism if the obsession is to be relinquished. Here's a brief postcard-like sketch of what I think that "more" should be. There are two Madhyamaka strategies: (1) argue directly against other people's realist metaphysics to show that their positions are incoherent and that their arguments all fail to establish the grounding they seek to establish—in short, use a series of negative metaphysical reasonings case by case; (2) tease out the sources and the seductiveness of the needless obsession with grounding. I am much more optimistic about the second. I have little problem admitting that Nāgārjuna's negative arguments against the Indian philosophies of his day will themselves be contested at pretty much every step of the way. They were so contested in the past by intelligent non-Buddhists and probably will be now by many analytic metaphysicians. I would venture to say that a considerable share of such arguments probably have a very limited shelf-life, turning

the Buddhist idea of "metaphysical realism." One could, however, reply that at least *some* important circles are benign. To go back to a classic article of Paul Grice and Sir Peter Strawson, there are arguably a number of key "family-circles" where individual terms cannot be defined except in terms of members of the same group—these include moral terms, like "morally wrong," "blameworthy," "breach of moral rules," etc., as well as the circle of terms that famously—and, arguably, quite unfortunately—bothered W.V. Quine in "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" (Quine 1951), i.e., "analyticity," "synonymy," "necessity," etc. There are no doubt others. Thomasson 2014 speaks briefly of Grice and Strawson 1956 in connection with the deflationist family-circle of interlocking terms; Fine 2009, 175 considers the concept of reality and other ontological concepts to be in an escapeless circle but holds that this fact does not preclude comprehension. One would have to say something similar about the Buddhist circle.

³² *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās* XXIV.14: *sarvaṃ ca yujyate tasya sūnyatā yasya yujyate /*.

as they do on Sanskrit grammar or notions whose extensions beyond their historical context are unconvincing. Even if they were to successfully cast doubt on third century Indian ontologies, it is hard to see that they would tell against *all* ontologies past and future. Turning to the second strategy, this is where a Tibetan contribution to Madhyamaka excels. The original feature of the Tibetan tactic of recognizing what is to be refuted (*dgag bya ngos 'dzin*), viz., versions of metaphysical realism, is that it is not nearly so dependent on a plethora of negative metaphysical reasonings. It uses other more introspective, or phenomenological means, to bring the needless (and pernicious) realism out into the open, a difficult task. Indeed, this is not unlike Wittgenstein's bringing seductive "superlative facts" out into the open. To those who, like me, see diagnosis and clarification of the numerous misguided demands for superlative facts as vitally important, not just theoretically but on a personal and ethical level, this is good philosophy and fits into some of the subtler issues of our time.³³ *Bons baisers du Tibet*.

Postscript

A word on what we can predict as *consequences* of deflationism. Grand scale dualities like appearance and reality, or ontology in general—and hence much of analytic metaphysics—will probably have little place for the deflationist, be she Mādhyamika or philosopher of science. She makes localized differentiations between ordinary cases of illusion and reality and stays quietistic about the dubious metaphysical extensions. Nonetheless, a level playing field, for a deflationist about manifest/scientific dichotomies or Buddhist two truths, will not be a peaceful one. As I had mentioned there will be head-on debates about various truths amongst physicists, geographers, economists, politicians, biblical scholars, and others.

It is sometimes said that a deflationist approach in Madhyamaka will sacrifice much of traditional Buddhism.³⁴ Many of the more extreme ideas of Mahāyānist bodhisattva ethics will indeed probably not fare well. Buddhists who use elaborate scholastic reasoning to attribute one's wealth and poverty to one's deeds in previous lives, for example, should expect

³³ On superlative facts and the introspective techniques to recognize what is to be refuted, see Tillemans 2016, 40 *et seq.*

³⁴ See MacKenzie 2009.

head-on debate. Indeed, Buddhist ethics is, and always was, in a head-on clash with rival views: Buddhists themselves intended their views on reincarnation and karma to rival those of the materialists of their time, i.e., the Cārvāka, who accepted neither. Many present-day Buddhists stress that their same canonical positions *should* clash with modern views, too. A deflationist's liberalization of the idea of existence and his resultant easy ontology will not protect Buddhist truths when the positions are rival in this way.

At some point we need a working account of what constitutes a head-on clash between positions. No doubt, it is not going to be easy to formulate precisely when an argument is head-on between rival positions—there will be shaded areas and there will be many cases where issues of rivalry or compatibility themselves become the important subjects of debate. A minimal claim: all-encompassing frameworks are not the way to go. They have long been used to shield dogmas or long-standing beliefs as somehow still “true” *within* a protected context. Nothing is gained by that obscurantism.

ASPECTS OF INDIGENOUS GRAMMATICO-
LINGUISTIC THOUGHT

VIII. On *bdag*, *gzhan*, and the Supposed Active-passive Neutrality of Tibetan Verbs¹

There is a quite common position, held by writers on Tibetan, such as Michael Hahn and Constantin Regamey, to the effect that Tibetan verbs exhibit no differentiation of voice whatsoever. This absolute voice-neutrality was expressed by Michael Hahn in the following way (speaking about the verb *mtshong ba*):

Sie kann gemäss der impersonalen Natur des tibetischen Verbs, das keine Unterscheidung von Aktiv und Passiv kennt (...) aktivisch—‘ein Sehender’—und passivisch—‘einer, der gesehen wird’—interpretiert werden.²

Further on in the same work Hahn made it clear that for him, even from a semantic point of view, Tibetan verbs were absolutely voice-neutral and could just as well be translated by a German active construction or by a German passive, depending only upon stylistic factors. He wrote:

Es ist zu betonen, dass es im Tibetischen bei ein und demselben Verb keinen Genuswechsel gibt, selbst wenn man diesen in der Übersetzung gelegentlich aus stilistischen Gründen vornehmen wird. So lautet z.B. der Satz *rgyal pos dgra bo gsod do* in genauer Wiedergabe ‘Es findet ein

¹ The original article was published in the *Festschrift* for Ernst Steinkellner and contained the following dedication: “Ernst Steinkellner, over the years, has done so much to make Dharmakīrti’s thought accessible and to promote the place of this great philosopher on a world stage. Actually, he has done much more than that: his own contributions and the works published in his ‘orange’ series have covered virtually the whole spectrum of Indo-Tibetan Studies, from Tabo to Tantra to Tibetan history and other subjects. The present article is on one of those ‘other’ subjects, i.e., indigenous Tibetan grammar. Ernst Steinkellner initially encouraged me to delve into this material, too.”

² Hahn 1985, 28.

Feind-Töten staat dur den König (als den Urheber der Verbalhandlung).’, die man dann mit gleicher Berechtigung in ‘Der König tötet den Feind.’ und ‘Der Feind wird vom König getötet.’ umformen kann.³

This position, in its broad outlines, seems also to be maintained in recent analyses of Tibetan. Nicolas Tournadre, in his 1996 study, *L'Ergativité en tibétain. Approche morphosyntaxique de la langue parlée*, far and away the best work done yet on the phenomena of ergativity and its related issues in spoken Tibetan, accepts strongly that Tibetan (spoken and Classical) lacks active-passive diathesis; his stance on this looks to be similar and every bit as radical as that promoted by Hahn and Regamey, even if his arguments differ here and there from theirs. Such claims of absolute voice-neutrality seem to me much too strong and neglect or misinterpret some important data. Indigenous Tibetan grammar may well help us disentangle some of these recurrent claims about the features of Tibetan.

A. Tournadre draws upon illustrative parallels with Chinese, citing with approval a passage from Hagège 1975 concerning Chinese verbs that do not distinguish, neither in terms of sense (*ni par leur sens*), nor in terms of any marking (*ni par la présence d'une marque*), any definite orientation of the action towards any one of the participants, or actants. The example that Hagège gave was *yu chi le*, and he (rightly) claimed that it could just as well mean “The fish ate” or “The fish has been eaten.” Claude Hagège then went on to say that this phenomenon of dual-orientation, where voice is not indicated by anything other than context, frequently occurs in certain specific types of verbs in various languages, e.g., “to look,” which can mean that someone is looking at something or that something looks like something else. Tournadre relies on these remarks of Hagège and then draws a categorical conclusion: this same phenomenon of complete absence of orientation (be it in terms of sense or marking) is general to all Tibetan verbs that are transitive, or in other words, verbs that have two (or more) actants:

Nous prétendons qu'en tibétain l'absence d'orientation est *générale* [my italics] pour tous les verbes transitifs ou biactanciels. Cette absence

³ Hahn 1985, 58. See also Regamey 1946-47.

de diathèse est, comme on l'a vu plus haut, compensée par les marques casuelles qui précisent si l'actant est agent ou patient.⁴

In fact, Tournadre's parallel with Chinese needs some qualification to avoid misunderstanding. As is clear in the passage quoted above and in his arguments discussed in our Appendix, Tournadre is *not* saying that Tibetan *sentences* are all ambiguous in exactly the way that *yu chi le* is in Chinese, where it is indeterminate (apart from context) as to whether the fish ate or whether the fish was eaten. What he is saying is that the Tibetan verb taken by itself, or in terms of its own morphological features, exhibits no voice orientation. Thus, although in Tibetan the verb *zas pa* remains unchanged when one says "X ate" or "X has been eaten," the case markings going with "X" will resolve the ambiguity as to whether it signifies the agent (i.e., the eater) or the patient (i.e., what has been eaten). Thus, Tournadre's point—and I presume Hahn's too—is *not*, if I understand him rightly, that whole Tibetan sentences are ambiguous and

⁴ Here is the whole passage in Tournadre 1996, 88-89:

L'absence d'orientation du verbe n'est pas un phénomène rare. C. Hagège l'a montré à propos des verbes transitifs en chinois:

Un grand nombre d'entre eux, dans les énoncés de types courants, n'impliquent ni par leur sens, ni par la présence d'une marque, une orientation exclusive du procès par rapport à un des participants, et par conséquent ne supposent pas de différenciation entre un état et une action dans l'expression linguistique. Il en résulte, quand on passe du chinois au français par exemple, des ambiguïtés, que le contexte, évidemment, peut toujours lever pour un Chinois. C'est le cas dans le type d'énoncé où un verbe de ce genre est précédé d'un nom. Ex: *yu chi le* (poisson manger mod.acc.) peut signifier "le poisson a mangé" ou "le poisson a été mangé" (1975: 46-47).

Il poursuit en rappelant qu'en anglais:

de nombreux verbes sont doublement orientables ou à diathèse non spécifiée sinon par le contexte: ex. eat "manger" et "se manger" [...] apply "appliquer" et "s'appliquer," look "regarder" et "paraître".

et ajoute que dans d'autres langues la double orientation ou l'absence de diathèse est restreinte à certains champs sémantiques (français) ou à certains verbes particuliers (hébreu mischnaïque). Nous prétendons qu'en tibétain, l'absence d'orientation est générale pour tous les verbes transitifs ou biactanciels. Cette absence de diathèse est, comme on l'a vu plus haut, compensée par les marques casuelles qui précisent si l'actant est agent ou patient.

completely context dependent in the way in which *yu chi le* is, but rather that Tibetan and Chinese verbs forms have no morphological features of their own (e.g., distinctive flexion, use of additional morphemes, affixes, etc.) that allow us to say that they are, in themselves, either active or passive. This, as I will argue, is probably only an interesting half-truth in that it involves a carefully circumscribed set of data, notably the past or perfective (*‘das pa*) forms like *zas pa* (ate, has eaten, has been eaten), *bsad pa* (has killed, has been killed): it is *not*, *pace* Tournadre and Hahn, generalizable to all or even to most Tibetan verbs.

B. One of the points that we emphasized in *Agents and Actions in Classical Tibetan* (AACT), interpreting evidence from indigenous grammarians, was that, at least from a semantic perspective, Tibetan verbs do not seem to be absolutely equal and neutral with regard to the action’s orientation. For clarity let me try to bring this out again with a kind of abridged version of what figured in that earlier publication.

Tibetan grammarians, commenting on a verse from the *rTags kyi ‘jug pa*, maintain that “present” (*da lta ba*) forms, like *gcod par byed* (... cuts), show “self” (*bdag*) and focus upon the agent and the activity that he does, while “future” (*ma ‘ongs pa*) forms, like *gcad par bya* (... is/will be cut), show “other” (*gzhan*) and highlight the patient and the activity that the patient undergoes. A kya Yongs ‘dzin, for example, speaks of *gcod* as showing the woodcutter’s “exertion of cutting the wood with an axe” (*sta res shing gcod pa’i rtsol ba*), while *gcad* conveys “the fact of the wood being cut into bits” (*shing dum bur bcad pa’i cha*).⁵ Or, what is the same, virtually all indigenous grammarians writing on these subjects distinguish between *byed pa’i las/ byed pa* (act-qua-doing) and *bya ba’i las/bya ba* (act-qua-thing-done), the former being the “act belonging to the agent” (*byed pa po la yod pa’i las*), the latter the “act belonging to the patient, or ‘focus of the action’” (*bya ba’i yul la yod pa’i las*). Thus, various occurrences of the present, e.g., *gcod do*, *gcod par byed*, are said to express “act-qua-doing,” while those of the future, e.g., *gcad do*, *gcad par bya*, express “act-qua-thing-done.” And what is important to note is that the present and future verb forms, e.g., *gcod* and *gcad*, are said to show the one or the other of the two sorts of acts (*las*), but *never both*.

⁵ AACT p. 40-41, §7.

In fact, the use of the Tibetan terms *da lta ba* (present) and *ma 'ongs pa* (future) are notoriously misleading, as they are not just, or even primarily, terms for tenses. Certain grammarians, like gSer tog and A lag sha Ngag dbang bstan dar, even explicitly differentiated between the time (*dus*) when an action or event would be said to happen and the orientation and mode of that action, making it clear that in theories about “self” and “other,” the terms “present” and “future” expressed a prominence of the one or the other actant, the actual temporal values expressed by the so-called “present” and “future” forms being at most approximative.⁶ In any case, in the network of interlocking terminology found in grammatical treatises’ chapters on “self” and “other,” there seems to be a systematic attempt to arrive at a type of theory of orientation of verbs, broadly speaking in terms of agent-prominence versus patient-prominence. If that’s right, then the grammarians’ explanations, if they are to be believed, would seem to indicate that there is, at least in the case of present and future forms, a determinate orientation towards one or another actant and that at least these forms are not ambivalent or neutral after all. All this is of course framed with a heavy reliance on semantic notions like “agent,” “patient,” “doing,” “thing-done,” and so forth, but it should at least be clear that *total* absence of orientation of verbs is not being promoted by traditional grammar. This suggests that the parallel with Chinese and Tournadre’s generalization of that parallel are hard to defend, or at the very least that they are not receiving support from sophisticated Tibetans theorizing about their own language.

C. Naturally one can ask the question whether traditional Tibetan grammarians were right about all this, or even whether their theories are germane to our discussion. I think that the fact of Tibetan verbs’ exhibiting some specific orientation, at least in terms of meaning, can be relatively well maintained, irrespectively of whether one relies heavily on evidence from indigenous grammar or not. One can see evidence for some such semantic orientation in translators’ choices of Tibetan equivalents for Sanskrit. It is, for example, not surprising that Tibetan translators of Sanskrit texts were sensitive to the patient-prominence of forms ending in *par bya* and generally used them to translate Sanskrit terms ending

⁶ See Tillemans 1991, i.e., chapter X in the present work.

in suffixes of obligation (*kr̥tyānta*), terms that are passive-oriented in Sanskrit. E.g., in philosophical contexts *sādhya* “what is to be proved” is rendered as *bsgrub bya* or *bsgrub par bya ba*. But going to less specialized contexts, it is clear that there are many cases that can be given where it is not just optional as to whether we translate by active or passive, nor is it simply a stylistic choice or a matter of context. To take Hahn’s example, arguably the “present” (Pt) form *gsod* in *rgyal pos dgra gsod do* is better rendered by “The king kills the enemy” than by “The enemy is killed by the king.” Equally, if we chose the “future”(F) verb-form *gsad* and constructed a sentence like *dgra rgyal pos gsad do*, a passive translation would be more accurate in the very way in which an active translation is not. The point can be brought out by the following simple pair of relative clauses:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. | <i>gsod pa'i</i>
kill (Pt)+GEN | <i>rgyal po</i> (the king who kills)
king |
| 2. | <i>gsad pa'i</i>
kill (F)+GEN | <i>dgra</i> (the enemy who is/will be killed)
enemy |

Nothing would ever justify translating the first clause as “the king who is killed”; nor could we translate the second as “the enemy who kills.” Once we grant that *gsod* and *gsad* in 1 and 2 exhibit this orientation, it is reasonable to say that they would exhibit it in other phrases, too.⁷ The

⁷ Nor is the choice of *gsad* or *gsod* simply a choice of allomorphs, as if it were a matter of one morpheme that had two or more alternative forms, like using *ru*, *su*, *r*, etc. after certain consonants, instead of the oblique case marker *la*. Tournadre seems to think that this is all that is involved, even though he is aware that choice of active or passive translations are not arbitrary in examples like 1. and 2. See Tournadre 1996, 269-271. He offers a complex account as to why what seems like orientation is no more than usage of allomorphs depending upon “agreement” between the antecedent and the verb. Thus, he gives a number of examples (e.g., **gcad bya'i sta re* versus *gcod byed kyi sta re*) where using the future form is agrammatical and others where the present is agrammatical. The discussion is not convincing. The examples are indeed odd in most contexts, simply because it is usually anomalous to talk about, say, the axe that is to be cut (i.e., *gcad bya'i sta re*) rather than the axe that is doing the cutting (*gcod byed kyi sta re*). But *nothing* definitively rules out *gcad bya'i sta re*: we could, for example, imagine

same active translation of *gsod* would thus be preferable in the case of *rgyal pos dgra gsod do* and the same passive translation of *gsad* would be preferable in the case of *dgra rgyal pos gsad do*. Neither here nor in 1 and 2 is there the ambiguity or absence of orientation that Hagège had spoken about in the case of Chinese. The generalized parallel with Chinese is *not* forthcoming.

D. Now, again it could be objected that one could grant this much but still not accept genuine voice orientation of Tibetan verbs. One could stress that A kya Yongs ‘dzin’s *semantic* considerations about what highlights the agent’s effort and what highlights the action undergone by the patient are not themselves enough to justify ascribing a difference of active and passive *voice* to verb forms. The reason would be that while some distinctions may be made from a semantic perspective, genuine *voice* differences are made on the basis of appropriate observable morphosyntactic data and not just on interpretations of meanings. Thus, it would be argued that genuine voice difference would involve, for example, something like transformations between active and passive with case-reassignment and with corresponding flexional changes in the verbs. Flexional changes and case-reassignment are what occurs in German, French, Sanskrit, English and other accusative languages, where an O[bject] NP of the active sentence becomes the S[ubject] of the passive and the A[gent] is marked by a different and non-core case, a preposition, etc. But there is no such case-reassignment in Tibetan where A and O remain, respectively, in the ergative and (usually) the absolutive.

Nor could one appeal to ergative languages’ analogue to passivization in accusative languages, i.e., the phenomenon of so-called “antipassive” constructions. Many ergative languages, while often not having a passive, do indeed have a genuine distinction of voice between active and antipassive, with regular case-reassignment and other morphosyntactic features—an antipassive is a construction where the O NP is marked by

talking about *gsad bya’i sta re* in an extraordinary high-tech context of the axe being cut by a device like a laser. Switching to more probable examples like *gsad bya’i dgra* (the enemy who is to be killed) and *gsod byed kyi dgra* (the enemy who kills), both are equally grammatical and it thus seems inescapable to recognize that the orientation of *gsad/**gsod* is what determines our choice of translation.

a non-core case, preposition, and so forth, and the A NP becomes the S, encoded with the Ø-marking of the absolutive case. Note, however, that there is no evidence that Tibetan, spoken or written, does have an antipassive, and thus the question of criteria for ascribing voice to an ergative language like Tibetan is undoubtedly more complicated than it is in the case of certain other such languages that admit antipassives.⁸

It is not hopeless, however. Granted, *some* morphosyntactic elements would be minimal requirements: we would need to have at least, as R.M.W. Dixon put it, “some explicit formal marking of a passive construction (generally, by a verbal affix or else by a periphrastic element in the verb phrase...)”.⁹ In that light, relying on purely semantic distinctions alone—like those framed by A kya Yongs ‘dzin *et al.* in terms of act-qua-doing and act-qua-thing-done, the agent’s exertions and what the patient undergoes, etc., etc.—would be thought insufficient to enable us to speak of voice in Tibetan. The question, thus, is as follows: are the requisite explicit formal markings to be found in Tibetan? The answer seems to be “Yes”: we can find a significant opposition between a pair of morphological features pertaining to verbs. The important caution is that we should take into account the crucial differences between the so-called “present” (*da lta ba*) and “future” (*ma ‘ongs pa*) verb-forms and not concentrate only on the “past” (*‘das pa*), as Tournadre has done. Let me elaborate by bringing in the opposition between *byed tshig* and *bya tshig*. Again, I think indigenous grammar does have an important contribution to make.

E. The contrast between the Tibetan relative clauses given as 1 and 2 above can be brought out using the grammarians’ terms *byed tshig* and *bya tshig*, i.e., expressions for doing and thing-done, or in other words the

⁸ See Dixon 1994, 146 on antipassives; AACT p. 105 *et passim*; Tournadre 1996, 94 *et seq.*

⁹ Dixon 1994, 146. Cf. Lazard 1998, 226: “We shall content ourselves here with a rough definition: passivization is transferring the active, with the same notional content, to a marked construction, in which the verb takes a particular form (which may, depending on the language, be considered a case of inflexion or of derivation), in which the object (if there is one) takes the place of the agent and in which the agent becomes an oblique term or disappears. ... On the other hand, in certain languages there are constructions which border on the passive but do not conform to the definition given above: for instance, the verb does not change form or one or the other of the actants does not change grammatical function.”

periphrastic *par byed* added to present forms and the *par bya* added to the future form. The explicit presence, or at least applicability, of *par byed* and *par bya* is what Tibetan grammarians take to be hallmarks of self and other, respectively. Thus, equivalent to 1 we have 3 using *byed pa*, i.e., the present form of “to do” joined to the present form of “to kill” (*gsod*) with its suffix *pa* + the oblique case-marking. Equivalent to 2 is 4, using *bya ba*, i.e., the future form of “to do” joined to the future of “to kill” (*gsad*) with the suffix *pa* + the oblique case-marking.

- | | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3. | <i>gsod par</i>
kill (Pt)+OBL
the king who kills | <i>byed pa'i</i>
do(Pt)+GEN | <i>rgyal po</i>
king |
| 4. | <i>gsad par</i>
kill (F)+OBL
the enemy who is to be killed | <i>bya ba'i</i>
do(F)+GEN | <i>dgra</i>
enemy |

Turning to nouns, the *byed tshig* shows agents and their instruments, i.e., what does or aids in doing the action, while *bya tshig* shows patients, i.e., what is to receive or undergo the action. Thus, we have e.g., *gsod par byed pa po* (the [wood] cutter), *gsod byed* (the means of cutting, i.e., the axe) and *gsad bya* (that which is to be cut, i.e., the wood), or *gsod byed* versus *gsad bya*, and other such examples, all of which follow the same pattern of nouns using the present and future verb forms plus *byed* and *bya* analogously to the *par byed* and *par bya* in 3 and 4.

It should be emphasized that this opposition between present and future forms is precisely what traditional grammarians emphasize in their theory of *bdag* and *gzhan*. Indeed, Si tu himself makes an important distinction between the meanings (*don*) of verb forms and their categorization as *bdag* or *gzhan*, so that being *bdag* or *gzhan* does not reduce to purely semantic matters of expressing only act-qua-doing and act-qua-thing-done, or the agent's exertion and what the patient undergoes, respectively, but involves a somewhat stronger criterion, namely, that in addition there must be two correlated forms, existent or at least constructible. *A verb or noun classified as showing bdag or gzhan must either end in a byed tshig or bya tshig that are either actually given, or it must be such that a byed tshig/bya tshig can be correctly added.* What we have seen in the above discussion is that the forms to which *byed tshig* and *bya tshig* figure, or

can correctly be added, are the present and future, respectively. The other important point of which grammarians were abundantly aware is that *byed tshig* and *bya tshig* are correlated and form a pair: when a form admits of a *byed tshig*, there will be a correlated form admitting of a *bya tshig*, and vice versa. The consequence is that a verb form is neither *bdag* nor *gzhan* unless appropriate flexional change associated with *byed/bya* is possible. This is what Si tu expresses by saying that the categories of self and other apply when verbs have forms in *par byed* and in *par bya* that are both of the same force (*phan tshun shed mtshungs pa*):

“In this work [i.e., in Thon mi Sambhoṭa’s *rTags kyi ‘jug pa*], in order to include the terms ‘agent’ and ‘focus of action,’ [Thon mi] makes a separate division in terms of self and other. In the process of making this [division], he also included [in the categories of self and other] [only] those words expressing [acts-qua-]thing-done and [acts-qua-]doing (*bya byed kyi tshig*) that are related to self and other and that mutually have the same force (*phan tshun shed mtshungs pa*).”¹⁰

¹⁰ Si tu p.194, AACT pp. 62-63 §4: *gzhung ‘dir byed pa po dang bya ba’i yul gyi sgra rnams bsdu ba’i phyir bdag gzhan gyi dbye ba zur du mdzad pa yin zhing / de’i zhar las bdag gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i bya byed kyi tshig phan tshun shed mtshungs pa rnams kyang bsdu pa yin no /*. The translation in AACT has been amended on one significant point, notably, the understanding of *phan tshun* in *phan tshun shed mtshungs pa rnams*. I had added a wrong remark in square brackets that badly distorted the basic idea. Thankfully, Müller-Witte 2009, 191, n. 112 spotted the error.

rTags kyi ‘jug pa’s infamous śloka twelve mentions self/other and different times/tenses (*dus*) for each of the prefixes. Si tu’s way of interpreting Thon mi is that the mention of the “times”/tenses in śl. 12 is there to include remaining (*lhag ma*) forms that are neither self nor other. Thus, e.g., in *pho ni ‘das dang gzhan bsgrub phyir* “The masculine [prefix –b] is for establishing past and other,” the point is that *b-* applies to *gzhan* forms like *bsgrub*, *bsgrub par bya* but also to past forms like *bsgrubs*, which are not included in *bdag* or *gzhan*. Similarly, *g-* is said by Thon mi to apply to both self and other (i.e., *gcod do*, *gcod byed*, *gcad do*, *gcad bya*, etc.) and to the present. Si tu interprets “the present” to include forms like *gcod kyin ‘dug* (i.e., the vernacular present, “... cuts”) and *gcod bzhin pa* (i.e., the present continuative, “... is cutting”), which use the auxiliaries *kyin ‘dug* and *bzhin pa* and are hence included in neither self nor other. The same logic is applied to the other uses of the prefixes.

Si tu’s point about only including expressions for thing-done (*bya tshig*) and expressions for doing (*byed tshig*) that both have the same force (*phan tshun shed mtshungs pa* =

That alternation between (*par*) *byed* and (*par*) *bya* is not possible in the case of the past (*‘das pa*), nor in the case of the imperative (*bskul tshig*) or certain periphrastic constructions using auxiliaries. To take the verbs “to kill” and “to cut,” for example, Tibetan grammarians exclude pseudo-past forms like **bsad (par) byed*, **bsad (par) bya*, **bcad (par) byed*, or **bcad (par) bya*. Nor would they accept pseudo-imperatives like **sod (par) byed*, **sod (par) bya*, or **chod (par) byed*, **chod (par) bya*. And, finally, Si tu and others exclude present forms with auxiliaries (*tshig grogs*), such as *gcod kyin ‘dug* or *gcod bzhin pa (...is cutting)*, in that there are no bona

stobs mtshungs pa) is that *bya*-forms (such as *bsgrub bo*, *bsgrub par bya*, *bsgrub bya*) and *byed*-forms (like *sgrub bo*, *sgrub par byed*, *sgrub [par byed] pa po*) are correlates with only a change of orientation of the action towards the patient or the agent, i.e., passive versus active. It is only when *bya tshig* and *byed tshig* can be put into one-to-one, or equal, correspondence that we can say that the respective forms are to be included under *bdag* and *gzhan*. By contrast, verbs with auxiliaries such as *gcod bzhin pa* “X is in the process of cutting Y,” *gcod kyin snang* “X seems to cut Y,” or *gcod kyin ‘dug* “X is cutting Y” do not have a patient-oriented correlate in Tibetan. There is no acceptable Tibetan sentence **gcad kyin snang*, **gcad kyin ‘dug*, or even **gcad bzhin pa*. Thus, verbs like *gcod bzhin pa*, *gcod kyin snang*, and *gcod kyin ‘dug*, which use auxiliaries, are not categorizable as either self or other. See also n. 11 below.

Finally, major traditional grammarians generally do not offer explanation of Si tu’s term *phan tshun shed mtshungs* (“both having the same force,” “mutually of the same force”). We do find the following modern “frank discussion” (*‘bel gtam*) of the term *bya byed kyi sgra phan tshun shed mtshungs pa* in bShad sgrub rgya mtsho 1994, p. 7: *bya byed kyi sgra phan tshun shed mtshungs pa dang byed ‘brel las tshig don ‘dra la / bya byed kyi sgra phan tshun shed mi mtshungs pa dang byed med las tshig don gcig yin / bya byed tha dad pa’i las tshig dper na / bya ba sgrub pa po / sgrub byed / sgrub par byed ces pa’i byed tshig dang / bsgrub bya’i bya ba / bsgrub par bya zhes bya tshig gnyis su dbyer yod pas de gnyis phan tshun shed mtshungs pa’am do mnyam pas de skad ces grags so /*. “When *bya* and *byed* expressions are mutually of the same force, [this] is the same as a verb that has a [distinct] agent. When it is not so that *bya* and *byed* expressions are mutually of the same force, this is synonymous with the verb being without any [distinct] agent [i.e., intransitive]. Transitive verbs have a two-fold division into *byed* expressions, such as *bya ba sgrub [par byed] pa po*, *sgrub byed*, *sgrub par byed*, and *bya* expressions, such as *bsgrub bya’i bya ba*, *bsgrub par bya*. Therefore, they are spoken of in this way [as *bya byed kyi sgra phan tshun shed mtshungs pa*], because those two [i.e., the *byed* expressions and the *bya* expressions] are of the same force, or, in other words, they have “equal weight” (*do mnyam*).”

fide corresponding phrases with a *bya*-compatible future form—**gcad kyin* ‘dug and **gcad bzhin pa* are regarded as impossible.¹¹

¹¹ The following passage from Si tu’s discussion of the prefix *d-* gives the most complete account of this reasoning (Si tu pp. 234–235): *ma ning gi sngon ‘jug gnyis po de bshad ma thag pa’i bdag gzhan gnyis po der mi gtogs pa’i dus da lta ba la ‘jug pa’i tshul ni / byed pa po bdag dang ‘brel ba’i byed pa’i tshig gi dper brjod pa de rnams nyid tshig grogs kyis bsgyur ba las shes par bya’o // de’ang dper na / gcar bar byed / gcar ro / dkri bar byed / dkri’o lta bu da lta ba’i sgra yin mod kyi gzung bar bya / gzung ngo / dgang bar bya / dgang ngo / lta bu gzhan gyi sgra la’ang de shed mtshungs yod pas sngar stobs mtshungs kyis bdag gzhan du zlas phye ba’i bdag sgra’i khongs su bsdus nas brjod zin pas ‘dir ni don gyis bdag byed pa’i tshig yin yang gzhan gyi sgra la de dang shed mtshungs sbyar rgyu med pas gong smos bdag sgra’i khongs su sdud par mi ‘os pa’i / gcar gyin snang ngo / gcar bzhin pa’o // dkri yin ‘dug go // dkri bzhin pa’o // lta bu sngar smros pa’i bdag sgra’i byed tshig de rnams nyid brjod tshul tshig grogs kyi khyad par dang bcas pas dper brjod par bya’o //* “Here is the way the two neutral prefixes [*g-* and *d-*] are used for the present tense [forms] that are not included amongst either the self or other [verb forms] that we have just given: it has to be understood that the various examples of expressions for ‘doing’ that are related with the agent, i.e., with self, stem from transformations through auxiliaries. Now, *gcar bar byed*, *gcar ro* (‘... hits’), *dkri bar byed*, *dkri’o* (‘...winds up/ties’) and the like certainly are present tense expressions. And in the case of expressions for ‘other’ too, like *gzung bar bya* (‘... is to be grasped’), *gzung ngo*, *dgang bar bya* (‘... is to be filled’), *dgang ngo*, there are [expressions, like ‘*dzin par byed*, ‘*dzin no*, etc.] that have the same force (*shed mtshungs*) as them. So earlier on [in Si tu’s list of examples *g-* and *d-* prefixed verbs] they [i.e., *gcar bar byed*, etc.] had been stated included under ‘self’ when the classification in terms of self and other was made on account of [expressions for thing-done and doing] having the same force (*stobs mtshungs kyis*). Consequently, here [i.e., among the verb forms covered by the word ‘present’ (*da lta*) in Thon mi’s śloka on *g-* and *d-*], there are [verb phrases] like *gcar gyin snang ngo*, *gcar bzhin pa’o*, *dkri yin ‘dug go*, *dkri bzhin pa’o*, which are unfitting to be included under the ‘self’ expressions previously given [in the lists of *g-* and *d-* forms], in spite of them being ‘by their sense’ (*don gyis*) expressions for doing, i.e., self, because ‘other’ expressions cannot be used having the same force as them (*gzhan gyi sgra la de dang shed mtshungs sbyar rgyu med pas*). The examples [of present *g-* and *d-* prefixed forms that were neither self nor other, i.e., *gcar gyin snang*, etc.] had to be stated because the types of presentation (*brjod tshul*) of the words for doing, or ‘self’ expressions, that had been given earlier were [now] provided with specific auxiliaries (*tshig grogs kyi khyad par dang bcas pas*).” I understand *gcar* here not in the intransitive (*byed med las tshig*) sense of “coming near” (to which “self” would not apply) but in the transitive sense of “hit.” Cf. *Dag yig gсар bsgrigs s.v. gcar2: byis pa la gcar mi rung* “You shouldn’t hit children.”

Interestingly enough, Si tu and others did seem to give purely semantic characterizations of the orientation of the action in the case of the past (i.e., perfect) form of a verb like “to cut” (i.e., *bcad zin pa*). Following Si tu, the past can be classified, semantically, as expressing *bya ba’i gzhi la yod pa’i las*: it is taken as expressing “an act pertaining to the basis of the action,” viz., to the patient.¹² It is not however either *bdag* or *gzhan*,¹³ because there can be no appropriate opposing pair of *byed* and *bya* forms. Other grammarians, like A kya Yongs ‘dzin and gSer tog, say much the same thing about the past expressing act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba’i las*) and will also extend the semantic characterizations of act-qua-doing (*byed pa’i las*) to the imperatives and forms with auxiliaries.

That said, this semantic characterization of the past forms in particular is somewhat controversial amongst a few contemporary grammarians. And indeed there is something quite odd about this supposed “meaning” of the past tense in Tibetan. What seems more likely is that the past is a particularly ambivalent form in Tibetan, that “in itself” a past form like *bcad* (... has cut/has been cut) does not seem to privilege any one particular orientation over another. Indeed, context is probably the only determining factor, as if the Tournadre-Hagège approach applied *here*, even if it did not

¹² See Si tu 203-204: *spyir yang bya ba gzhi la yod pa’i las la dus gsum du dbyer rung ba ma yin te / shing gcad par bya / gcod par byed / bcad zin lta bur mtshon na gcad bya ma ‘ongs pa dang bcad zin ‘das pa gnyis bya ba’i gzhi dang ‘brel ba mod kyi gcod byed da lta ba byed pa po dang ‘brel ba las bya ba’i gzhi ‘brel ba’i skabs med do /*. “In general, one cannot categorize the act present in the basis of the action in terms of the three times. If one takes [examples] like *shing gcad par bya* (“the wood is to be cut”), *gcod par byed* (“... cuts”), *bcad zin* (“... has been cut”), the future *gcad bya* (“... to be cut”), and the past *bcad zin* (“...has been cut”), both are indeed connected with the basis of the action [i.e., the patient], but the present *gcod byed* (“...cuts”) is connected with the agent and is never connected with the basis of the action [i.e., the patient].”

The term *bya ba’i gzhi la yod pa’i las* is a synonym of *bya ba’i yul la yod pa’i las*, or just simply *bya ba’i las* (act-qua-thing-done). The point of the above passage is simply that not all tenses show patient-oriented action: the past and future do; the present does not.

¹³ As for Si tu’s statement that the past is neither self nor other, we find him introducing the list of examples of the past as follows (Si tu p. 196-196. See AACT p. 64-65 §5): *dbye ba de gnyis su ma ‘dus pa’i dus gsum las byas zin ‘das pa’i sgra ni* “From among the three times not included in that two-fold division [of self and other], the [examples of] words expressing past [tense] are...” See also n. 10 above.

in the case of the present and future forms.¹⁴ It is not at all clear *why* Si tu and others thought that *bcad pa* etc. somehow should be said to *mean* an act-qua-thing-done rather than a doing. Enough said on this unclarity. The important point to be gleaned seems to be that there is recognition that a verb's meaning is one thing, but that the presence of morphosyntactic factors necessary for full-blown *bdag* and *gzhan* is another.

F. The tentative lesson from traditional grammar seems to be as follows: many verbs do exhibit morphosyntactic features that are relevant to voice orientation. These features, however, only pertain to what grammarians call the “present” (*da lta ba*) and “future” (*ma 'ongs pa*) forms of verbs, and not to the so-called “past” (*'das pa*), the imperative, and some other forms using auxiliaries. Although the Tournadre-Hagège scenario of complete ambivalence and context-dependency may quite possibly describe the “past,” nonetheless no such generalization can be made to all verb-forms. Absolute neutrality across the whole spectrum seems unlikely.

¹⁴ The contemporary Tibetan grammarian bKra shis dbang 'dus has acknowledged this ambivalence and context-dependency of the past tense, although it is certainly not a widespread view amongst grammarians. Note that he speaks of *bdag* and *gzhan* (and not just *byed las/bya las*) both being applicable to the past according to context. See *rTag kyi jug pa'i snying po dka'gnad gsal ba'i me long*, p. 13: *'das tshig de dngos po bdag gzhan gang du gtogs she na / rdo bzo bas brtsigs lta bu byed pa po dang 'brel nas bshad na dngos po bdag gi khongs dang / so phag brtsigs lta bu bya ba'i yul gyi dngos po'am las dang 'brel nas bshad na dngos po gzhan gyi khongs su gtogs so /*. “Does a verb in the past tense belong to the entity self or other? If one says something like, ‘The stone mason has laid [them],’ where there is a relation with the agent, then [the action] is in the category of the entity self. And if one says something like, ‘The bricks have been laid,’ where there is a relation with the entity that is the focus of the action, or [in other words] with the object (*las*), then [the action] is included in the category of the entity that is other.” See AACT p. 24-25, n. 49 and p. 83 *et seq.* Major grammarians, like gSer tog, Ngag dbang bstan dar, Si tu, dNgul chu, A kya Yongs 'dzin, and others do not, however, share this view. Some (like Si tu and his commentators) may refuse to classify the past as either *bdag* or *gzhan*, *stricto sensu*, but do nevertheless say that it expresses, or means, *bya ba'i las* (act-qua-thing-done). It is not clear whether A kya Yongs 'dzin held exactly that position, but it is clear that for him, too, the past expressed *bya ba'i las*. See AACT p. 42-43, §9: *sngon 'jug gi pho ba yig bya ba'i las 'das pa la 'jug pa ni / dper na / nor bsgrubs / lha bsgoms ...*

Where does this leave the central issue of active-passive diathesis in Tibetan? The full-blown *bdag* and *gzhan* opposition, as Si tu explains it, is not just a semantic matter of expressing “doing” and “thing-done,” but also involves the changes of verb flexions, marking, and periphrastic forms that Dixon would take as minimal requirements for talk about voice. *Bdag* and *gzhan*, at least in the hands of Si tu and his commentators, are then potentially relevant in our attempt to understand issues of voice orientation in Tibetan. Still, no doubt, it would be weird and wrong to claim that traditional grammar supports attributing a simple and straightforward active-passive diathesis to Tibetan. Usual definitions of passivization and diathesis turning on case-reassignment, where agents are represented by oblique case terms and objects become the subject, etc., will not be satisfied. Perhaps the most one can say is that Gilbert Lazard’s characterizations of some other problematic data would also be applicable here in the case of Tibetan: “there are constructions which border on the passive” even though “one or the other of the actants does not change grammatical function.”¹⁵ It seems that borderline cases of partial satisfaction of criteria for the passive are not infrequent.¹⁶

Appendix: a more detailed look at Nicolas Tournadre’s argument for the absence of active-passive diathesis in Tibetan

Nicolas Tournadre sees none of the needed morphosyntactic factors for one to be able to ascribe active and passive voices to Tibetan. Here is the argument on p. 87-88 of Tournadre 1996, an argument which also figures in his earlier work, i.e., Stoddard and Tournadre 1992:

En revanche, il n’y a pas en tibétain de diathèse (opposition de voix passif/actif) soit morphologique soit transformationnelle. On peut facilement montrer que les verbes (à l’écrit comme à l’oral) ne sont pas orientés. L’énoncé:

¹⁵ See n. 9 above.

¹⁶ Cf. e.g., Givón 1982.

3.28a	<i>Kho</i>	<i>bsad+song</i>
	il+ABS	tuer(PASSÉ)+AOR, CONST

...

signifie aussi bien: “On l’a tué”, “Il a été tué”, ou encore “(X) l’a tué”, tandis que:

3.28b	<i>Kho+s</i>	<i>bsad+song</i>
	il+ERG	tuer(PASSÉ)+AOR, CONST

...

signifie: “il a tué.” ou “il l’a tué.”

Ces deux exemples illustrent bien le fait que *seules les marques des participants indiquent si l’action est agie ou subie*. [Tournadre’s italics.] Ni le verbe ni l’auxiliaire ne sont susceptibles de subir une transformation. Ce qui est un argument supplémentaire montrant qu’il n’y a pas de diathèse en tibétain. C’est-à-dire que, par exemple, le verbe *byed* “faire” ou le verbe *bsad* “tuer” ne peuvent pas être transformés respectivement en “être fait” ou “être tué” ni par une flexion ni par l’adjonction d’un affixe ou d’un morphème particulier.

First of all, we see that there is an orientational difference to be made between 3.28a and 3.28b. Tournadre’s point, however, is that although our understanding of orientation might vary because of marking of actants, the verb remains absolutely unchanged, and for that reason, in absence of some difference in verb auxiliaries, flexion, etc., we cannot ascribe diathesis.

His example is actually a very interesting case because it involves a verb in the past (i.e., perfect) tense: *kho/khos bsad song*. In fact, he is quite right to say that whether we take these sentences as active or passive the verb *bsad* stays the same. As we had argued too, the past form may well be the best candidate for ambivalence and context-dependency. To put things another way, Tournadre would be right essentially because he’s citing an example in the perfect tense and there is no corresponding verbal flexion that could ever show any difference of voice. That much is fine. But it is *not* always the case in Tibetan, and notably it is not the case with other verb tenses. In short, the example is not amenable to generalization. It is especially not amenable to generalization in the case of Classical Tibetan, where, as I mentioned earlier, we have present forms, actually or potentially with *par byed*, and future forms, with *par bya*, showing,

respectively, act-qua-doing and act-qua-thing-done. There is thus a significant sense in which we can and do have morphosyntactic factors that are connected with orientation. But their occurrence is circumscribed; the past (perfect) has its own specificities.

IX. Transitivity, Intransitivity, and *tha dad pa* Verbs in Traditional Tibetan Grammar

Tibetan grammar, one of the Buddhist “sciences” (*rig gnas*; *vidyāsthāna*), has a considerable heritage from Indic Vyākaraṇa literature, some of which is to be found in translation in the *sgra rig pa* section of the Tibetan canon. A good deal of writing on Tibetan grammar, however, is paracanonical, frequently in the form of indigenous Tibetan commentaries on the two treatises attributed to Thon mi Sambhoṭa, the *Sum cu pa* and *rTags kyi ‘jug pa*.¹ Besides the historical interest of a tradition of Tibetan scholars’ reflections on their own language, there are also potentially significant insights to be gained from such informed investigations into the structure of Tibetan. Questions of voice and transitivity in Tibetan should be among some of the most relevant to contemporary linguists working on Himalayan languages as well as to philologists and specialists in Buddhist Studies seeking to understand better the structure of a language that was so important in the transmission of Buddhist scriptures. While it is not infrequently argued that voice and transitivity are *completely absent* in Tibetan, it seems that an examination of indigenous Tibetan grammatical literature, in particular the *rTags kyi ‘jug pa* commentaries, does not actually bear that view out and instead provides arguments for a nuanced acceptance of some features of voice and transitivity. In Tillemans 2007 (chapter VIII above) I have dealt with possible connections between active-passive diathesis and the grammarians’ concepts of verbs that show “self” (*bdag*) and “other” (*gzhan*). I now turn to the grammarians’ distinction between “differentiating” (*tha dad pa*) and “non-differentiating” (*tha mi dad pa*) verbs, arguing that these notions exhibit significant connections with transitivity, especially if transitivity is taken as a feature admitting of gradation.

¹ Synopses of canonical and paracanonical texts on grammar and extensive explanation of key notions are to be found in Verhagen 1994, 2001.

Setting the stage: a dense passage from Si tu Paṇ chen

In his lucid and savage critique of many of his predecessors' writings on Tibetan traditional grammar, the great eighteenth century grammarian, Si tu Paṇ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699-1774), lamented that his confused countrymen erred in understanding the basics of *bdag/gzhan* (self/other) because of their inadequate appreciation of distinctions between types of verbs. He wrote (Si tu p. 205, Dharamsala ed.; AACT 8-9):

yang 'grel byed snga ma thams cad kyis 'di skabs las kyi tshig la byed pa po gzhan dang dngos su 'brel ma 'brel gyi rnam dbye ma mdzad pa ni shin tu mi legs te / de ma shes na byed po dang bya ba tha dad pa dang tha mi dad pa'i las kyi tshig so sor ngos mi zin cing / de ma zin pas 'dir bstan bdag gzhan gyi tha snyad gang la 'jug pa tshul bzhin ma rtogs par long ba'i 'khar ba bzhin gar 'dzugs med pa'i cal col mang po byung bar snang ngo //. “Moreover, all the previous commentators in this context failed to make the distinction between verbs (*las kyi tshig*) that were directly related with distinct agents (*byed pa po gzhan dang dngos su 'brel ba*) and those that were not related. This was extremely pernicious, for when they did not know that, then they did not recognize verbs as being [of] heterogeneous [types] when the agent (*byed po*) and [focus of] the action (*bya ba*) were different (*tha dad pa*) and when they were not different (*tha mi dad pa*). And because that went unrecognized, they did not know how to apply properly the terms ‘self’ and ‘other’ that were being taught there [in Thon mi’s śloka], and much completely unfounded nonsense seems to have ensued, as if they depended upon the canes of the blind.”

Indeed, it became a cardinal tenet of Si tu’s interpretation that *bdag* and *gzhan* could only apply to verbs “directly related with distinct agents” (*byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba*) and could not apply to verbs such as “to go” (*'gro ba*)² or “to become/change into” (*'gyur ba*). In these cases,

² Tibetan-Tibetan dictionaries classify *'gro ba* as *byed med las tshig* (“a verb without a [distinct] agent”) or *tha mi dad pa* (“[agent and object] not being different”). See e.g., *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs* and *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, s.v. *'gro (ba)*. Note, however, that this classification in terms of *byed med las tshig* versus *byed 'brel las tshig* is not to be confused with another important distinction to be made between Tibetan verbs, i.e., those showing volitional or nonvolitional actions. See the Appendix below.

a distinct agent does not directly appear (*byed pa po gzhan dngos su mi snang ba*; see AACT p. 69 §8); the usual traditional explanation is that when one says “I go,” there is supposedly no real distinction between an agent, i.e., the goer, and the object/patient, i.e., what receives the action of going. Si tu’s commentator, dNgul chu Dharmabhadra (1772-1851), expressed the basic idea in following way in his *Si tu’i zhal lung*, pp. 50-51 (Japanese translation in Inaba 1986, 369; text Inaba 1986, 444):

de yang byed pa po gzhan mi snang zhes pas / dper na / bdag ‘gro’o lta bu’i tshe / ‘gro ba de bya tshig yin kyang / ‘gro bya ‘gro byed gnyis ka bdag yin pas / ‘gro bya las gzhan pa’i ‘gro byed med pas na ‘di la bdag gzhan gyi dbye ba’ang mi byed pa yin no /. “Now, when [Si tu] says ‘A distinct agent does not appear,’ [he means that] in cases such as ‘I am going/I go,’ although ‘go’ is a word for an action [i.e., a verb], that which undergoes [the action of] going (*‘gro bya*) and the goer (*‘gro byed*) are both I, and thus there is no goer distinct from that which undergoes [the action of] going. Therefore, in such a case, the division in terms of self and other (*bdag gzhan gyi dbye ba*) is not made, either.”

Let’s try to demystify the central ideas, as they can be seen to make interesting and important sense when seen in the context of transitivity and intransitivity.

Unpacking tha dad pa-tha mi dad pa and other synonymous traditional classifications of verbs

As the passages cited above show, the principal elements of traditional Tibetan grammar’s analysis of verbs—*bdag* and *gzhan*, or agents and objects/patients, as well as their corresponding actions—are, from the time of Si tu Paṇ chen on, considered to be applicable only to actions that have a genuine, full-fledged agent. Following Si tu, the key element in an agent being genuine is that it must be a distinct entity from that which receives the action, the patient. And thus Si tu speaks about “distinct agents” (*byed pa po gzhan*) and about verbs where agent and patient are distinct (*tha dad pa*). *Bdag*, *gzhan* etc., do not apply when such a distinct agent is simply lacking, or where the existence of a distinct person instigating the action is not explicit in the sentence and is at most only situationally implied. A merely situationally implied agent is ruled out by the specification that the action must be “directly (*dngos su*) related” to the agent. This specification

serves to exclude verbs like “to become,” “to turn into” (*gyur*) where some or another human agent may have been remotely responsible in making something become something new but is unmentioned in the sentence and indeed not referred to at all. Thus, e.g., *lcags gser du 'gyur ba* “The iron turns into gold.” Here the existence of an alchemist is at most situationally implied, providing one has also subscribed to alchemy as the likely way in which such a transformation happens. Of course, for unbelievers in alchemy or personal karma, the sentence can be understood perfectly well as asserting that some sort of mysterious natural evolution occurs without any agency at all.

So much for the intra-systemic explanation. Is it possible to find a more universalizable theoretical schema in which to place these two types of verbs that Si tu speaks about and that others apparently failed to appreciate properly? Is there a way of unpacking the traditional grammarian’s notion in more recognizable terms, like transitivity? I’ve long held that there is. But unpacking Tibetan grammar is certainly not without problems, and indeed recently various such issues have been raised by Heather Stoddard and Nicolas Tournadre. It is thus worth revisiting the question as to whether the division between verbs that do or do not have distinct agents, i.e., *byed 'brel las tshig* and *byed med las tshig*, or *bya byed tha dad pa/ tha mi dad pa*, is legitimately explicable as indigenous Tibetan grammar’s version of a transitive/intransitive distinction.

Stoddard and Tournadre, in a number of publications (joint and separate) on Tibetan grammar and linguistics, have preferred not to adopt this rapprochement and maintained a translation of the terms that mirrors the Tibetan—thus *tha dad pa* becomes “différentiatif” and *tha mi dad pa* “indifférentiatif”—on the grounds that the traditional distinction is semantic, while the transitive-intransitive distinction is morphosyntactic. Other separate arguments are also used by these authors against imputing transitivity, so that it behooves us to cite the whole passage from their book written in collaboration with sKal bzang gyur med, *Le Clair miroir*. There they distance themselves somewhat from the position of traditional Tibetan grammar—and from sKal bzang gyur med 1981 as well—on the matter of *tha dad pa/tha mi dad pa* in order to argue that *tha dad pa/tha mi dad pa* is not the same as, or even significantly similar to, transitivity/intransitivity. In fact, their arguments seem to arrive at two separable conclusions, the first a weak thesis about the grammarians’ *tha dad pa* verbs not being transitive verbs (or not being enough like

what we mean by “transitivity” for the rapprochement to be meaningful) and the second a considerably stronger thesis to the effect that Western notions of transitivity *do not apply at all* to Tibetan. Of course, if Western transitivity-intransitivity distinctions do not apply to the Tibetan verb at all, then we wouldn’t find such verbs by examining those that grammarians dub *tha dad pa*.³ Can we show that what grammarians are talking about is a bona fide feature of Tibetan and does in fact mesh with a Western distinction between transitive and intransitive, so that we can henceforth rest easy in using the schemata of transitivity and intransitivity in talking about Tibetan? Things aren’t quite that neat. To state my conclusion at the outset: the grammarians’ ideas of *tha dad pa*, etc., are indeed *not* straightforwardly identical with usual conceptions of transitivity but do capture important elements in the notion of transitivity, a notion which, duly expanded, is applicable to Tibetan.

Let us, however, begin with Stoddard and Tournadre’s own arguments, quoting a representative passage from *Le Clair miroir*. (I won’t translate the French, but will paraphrase the points raised):

“Nous avons préféré utiliser le terme de différentiatif traduisant littéralement le tibétain *tha dad pa* plutôt que celui de transitif car ce dernier réfère davantage à un caractère syntaxique (le verbe admet un objet). La notion de verbe différentiatif (*bya tshig tha dad pa*) est par contre essentiellement sémantique. Ainsi, en français, dans la phrase suivante: Il a rejoint Lhasa, le verbe ‘rejoindre’ est transitif, tandis qu’en tibétain quel que soit le verbe employé (*byon/slebs*), Lhasa étant un circonstant de lieu (du point de vue sémantico-référentiel), il sera forcément marqué à l’oblique et le verbe sera donc considéré comme indifférentiatif. Par ailleurs, il semble difficile d’appliquer sans adaptation le concept de transitivité dans une langue ergative

³ Cf. Tournadre 1996, 82, who argues against the use of the notion of transitivity (“contre l’emploi de la notion de transitivité”) and quotes with apparent approval the remarks of James Matisoff 1973. Matisoff’s remarks concern Lahu, but it is clear that they are taken by Tournadre to be relevant to other Tibeto-Birman languages, too. We cite the whole passage on p. 82: “La nécessité de remanier le concept de transitivité n’est pas une spécificité du seul tibétain. Citons James Matisoff à propos de lahu, une autre langue tibéto-birmane du groupe lolo: ‘Such distinctions as transitive/intransitive and active/passive are basically alien to Lahu grammar (1973:195).’”

ne possédant ni sujet, ni opposition actif/passif. ... Les seuls critères formels donnés par les auteurs tibétains pour déterminer le caractère différentiatif ou indifférentiatif d'un verbe sont liés aux marques actanciennes. Ainsi, l'agent d'un verbe différentiatif est marqué à l'ergatif (*byed sgra*) tandis que le patient est à l'absolutif (*ngo bo tsam*). En revanche lorsque l'agent est à l'ergatif et l'autre participant à l'oblique, le verbe n'est pas considéré comme différentiatif (Stoddard and Tournadre, 1992: 246)."

I don't think these arguments prove the inapplicability of transitivity to Tibetan, but they do bring out relevant features of the Tibetan language and merit a step by step analysis.

A. First, Stoddard and Tournadre complain that *tha dad pa/tha mi dad pa* is essentially a semantic distinction, while transitivity/intransitivity is syntactic. Let us try to unpack the traditional grammarians' distinction and take it beyond its semantic formulations of agents/doers and patients being somehow the same things or different. The clear syntactic implication of an action being "directly related with a distinct agent" (*byed pa po gzhan dang dngos su 'brel ba'i las*), or in other terms having a "patient and agent that are different" (*bya byed tha dad pa*), is that the verb has at least two genuine actants. And equally "not having an agent distinct from a patient" implies that the verb, like intransitive verbs generally, has only one actant, or in other words has a valence of one. There seems to be sufficient connection with the idea of valence that one could reasonably venture that such semantic formulations—be they in Tibetan or, e.g., in Sanskrit, where instead of having/not having a distinct agent one speaks of "having or not having an object/patient" (*sakarmaka-akarmaka*)—do express, in admittedly semantic garb, the usual syntactic considerations of verb valence that are taken as indicators of transitivity/intransitivity. Traditional Tibetan grammarians had a predilection for a semantic formulation of things because that is very often what traditional grammars do; we may, for our reasons, find it justifiable on occasion to read their works with somewhat different eyes.

B. Another qualm Stoddard and Tournadre have about making the leap to transitivity is that the latter concept has little or no bearing if there is no active and passive opposition in Tibetan. This argument for the strong thesis turns on showing that there is no diathesis *at all* in Tibetan—it is thus one to which I have tried to reply in detail elsewhere (see chapter

VIII above). In short, grammarians' explanations on *bdag* and *gzhan* seem to go significantly beyond purely semantic matters of highlighting agents and patients and tend towards an alternation of specifically correlated verb flexions.

C. Let's go to the end of the quote from *Le Clair miroir*. I am somewhat puzzled by Stoddard and Tournadre's claim that the label *tha dad pa* ("différentiatif") would only be applied when the patient is in the absolutive (i.e., \emptyset), and not when it ends in an oblique case-marker, like *la*.⁴ Their argument is, I take it, for the weaker thesis of *tha dad pa* not being, or not being much like, transitivity: verbs with a patient ending in \emptyset or in *la* could both be taken as biactantial and thus would be transitive in the usual sense of having two actants; but for indigenous grammarians the latter sort, i.e., verbs taking a patient ending in the particle *la*, would supposedly not (or never?) be *tha dad pa*. Alas, I am not at all sure that traditional grammar would maintain that the *simple* presence of the *la* must change the verb from *tha dad pa* to *tha mi dad pa*. Indeed if we take, e.g., the explanations of A lag sha Ngag dbang bstan dar (1759-1840) on *bdag*, *gzhan*, and *bya byed las gsum*, in his *Sum rtags* commentary, *sKal ldan yid kyi pad ma 'byed pa'i snang ba'i mdzod*, he manifestly treats the usual "woodcutting example" (where the patient, wood = *shing*, does not usually have the *la* particle) in just the same way as he treats "Form is to be looked at with the eyes" (*mig gis gzugs la blta bar bya*), where the patient, form = *gzugs*, does take *la*. Both example-sentences have verbs to which an analysis in terms of *bdag/gzhan* applies, implying that the verbs are *byed pa po dang 'brel ba/tha dad pa*. Indeed, all the usual classifications of agents, patients, actions etc., are given in an absolutely parallel fashion in the two example-sentences even though in the case of "form being looked at" one marks the patient, form, with the *la*. The mere presence of *la*, in short, is not a sufficient reason for Ngag dbang bstan dar to classify the sentence *gzugs la blta bar bya* as having a type of *tha mi dad pa* verb, one to which self/other (*bdag/gzhan*) wouldn't apply.⁵

⁴ The terminology adopted for designating Tibetan cases is that of Tournadre 1990.

⁵ See f. 185.2-4: *gnyis pa rgyas par bshad pa la / bdag gzhan gyi don dang / sngon 'jug gi 'jug tshul lo / dang po ni / spyir bya byed las gsum ni / sta res shing gcod pa lta bu la mtshon na sta re byed pa / shing las / gcod pa bya ba dang / de bzhin du mig gis gzugs la blta bar bya zhes pa la mig byed pa / gzugs las / blta ba bya ba dang / ... des na de lta*

Indeed, a patient can on occasion be marked by *la*—in Ngag dbang bstan dar’s example, the marker *la* does not indicate a circumstant, but marks a genuine actant. As far as I can see, the *tha dad pa-tha mi dad pa* (“differentiatif-indifférentiatif”) opposition in traditional grammar does *not* depend on the patient being marked with or without *la*.⁶

D. Stoddard and Tournadre cite the specific case of the verbs *byon pa* (“go,” “reach”) and *slebs pa* (“come,” “arrive”) as showing that biactantial (and thus normally transitive) verbs are nonetheless classified as *tha mi dad pa* because of the use of *la*. The peculiarities of these verbs *byon pa*, ‘*gro ba*, *slebs pa*, etc., especially “going to X,” “going to Lhasa” (*lha sa la* ‘*gro ba*), etc. have given special difficulties to traditional grammarians, especially because of the connections with grammatical arguments used in Indian Madhyamaka Buddhist analyses of the Sanskrit verb \sqrt{GAM} . I have taken up some of those issues in Tillemans 1991a. Suffice it to say here that it does not seem to me that the fact that “going to Lhasa” is classified as *tha mi dad pa* militates against the general applicability of any notions of transitivity-intransitivity to *tha dad pa-tha mi dad pa*. These are specific anomalies and have to be seen as such.⁷

bu byed pa la bdag dang las la gzhan gyi tha snyad byed pa yin pas de'i skabs kyi las la bya rgyu'i las dang byed bzhin pa'i las gnyis yod de .../.

⁶ Interestingly enough, Tournadre 1995 brings up this type of phenomenon in spoken Tibetan and compares it to the use of the ergative as giving emphasis. Thus, the difference between *g.yag zhon pa red* and *g.yag la zhon pa red* is a pragmatic one like that between “He rode a yak” and “It is a yak that he rode.” See Tournadre 1995, 272. In literary Tibetan, however, the emphatic use of the ergative does not seem possible. It is a problem as to how precisely to interpret sentences like *shing la gcod do /*.

⁷ The mere fact of certain verbs in English and French having usual morphosyntactic coding associated with transitivity while their counterparts were not classified as *tha dad pa* in Tibetan doesn’t itself prove much once we have granted a graded phenomenon of transitivity. Gradation being accepted, the recurring phenomenon that a verb such as “to like” is handled differently in different languages is itself explicable by the fact that this is generally a verb with a relatively low degree of transitivity à la Hopper-Thompson: it is not telic, nor volitional, nor punctual and the object is little affected. In short, the fact that “I like beer” in, say, Tibetan or Spanish (i.e., *Me gusta la cerveza*), is handled with morphosyntactic coding more in keeping with the intransitive verbs of those languages, seems to be something that regularly happens with verbs of reduced transitivity.

The case of “going to Lhasa” (*lha sa la* ‘*gro ba*), however, is potentially more of a problem, because more of the Hopper-Thompson features of higher transitivity are satisfied,

To sum up, the traditional grammarians' talk about verbs like "cut," etc. being *tha dad pa* (the agent and patient being different) and *byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba* (having a distinct agent), can be seen as connected with two features on the morphosyntactic level: (a) these verbs have a valence of two or more;⁸ (b) these verbs invariably have the agent marked with the ergative marking. This suggests that we are dealing with a recognizable phenomenon when Tibetan grammar speaks of *tha dad pa*,

such as "going" being volitional and "Lhasa" being well individuated. It might seem that Stoddard and Tournadre would be right in saying that the fact that grammarians say that this verb is *not* classifiable as *tha dad pa* is a problem for the relevance of *tha dad pa* to transitivity. It could be replied, however, that here again comparison with other languages is of some relevance in resolving the anomaly. When the patient is totally or very significantly affected, the verb should approach high transitivity, as other strong indicators of transitivity will also be present. That much is straightforward. When, however, the would-be patient (e.g. Lhasa) is not affected at all or only very partially so, we do find uses of coding usual to intransitive verbs. As Hopper and Thompson 1980, 254 points out, there seems to be a quite considerable leeway to use intransitive coding when the patient is not a "true patient" in the sense of receiving the action:

... [A]lthough the presence of a true patient participant is a crucial component of transitivity, that of a second participant which is not much of a patient (i.e., which does not receive any action) is not. ... [S]uch clauses with less than ideal patients are coded in many other languages with various of the trappings found in intransitive clauses.

I would, thus, tend towards a double conclusion: Stoddard and Tournadre's argument about "going to X" shows an odd feature of the Tibetan treatment of these verbs but does not seriously challenge the position that *tha dad pa* / *tha mi dad pa* capture certain core features of transitivity/intransitivity.

⁸ Of course, it could be argued (as does Tournadre elsewhere) that Tibetan has the feature of being able to omit actants—be they agents or patients—and that this would create some problems for attributing valence to verbs and using the traditional definition. Tournadre 1996, 80: "Malheureusement la définition donnée ci-dessus [i.e., celle de *tha dad pa* / *tha mi dad pa*] présente un inconvénient dans le cas du tibétain; en effet, ainsi qu'on l'a déjà souligné, aucun complément n'est obligatoire en tibétain et cela contrairement à ce qui se passe en français (et dans de nombreuses langues indo-européennes) où un verbe transitif exige la présence d'un objet..." Indeed one would have to account for such a phenomenon of "argument-omission." An analysis of Tibetan zero-anaphora, as Derek Herforth had proposed in AACT, may well be what is needed to show how and when nouns for agents and patients that had figured overtly in a preceeding discourse can be dropped, all the while preserving co-reference.

byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba, etc. It suggests that “transitivity” is not a complete misnomer. The question is what exactly we should henceforth mean by “transitivity.”

Transitivity à la Hopper and Thompson

The intuitive notion of transitivity, as Paul J. Hopper and Sandra A. Thompson characterize it, is that an action is “carried over,” or “transferred,” from an agent to a patient. The agent is thus a genuine and fairly high-potent instigator of the transfer and, in ergative languages, will be marked. Implicit in the carry-over of action due to an agent is the need for a patient/object that will receive such an action: we therefore should expect to find transitive verbs generally having two or more actants.

But, in fact, this is only part of transitivity for Hopper and Thompson, who see the notion as admitting of grades in function of the presence or absence of ten different factors—the intuitive type of transitivity is thus one that is very high on the continuum outlined in Hopper and Thompson 1980.⁹ We’ll henceforth speak of “transitivity” as meaning transitivity as analyzed in Hopper and Thompson 1980, 1982.

Now, both in Spoken Tibetan and Written Tibetan, there are verbs with differing grades of transitivity, if one adopts the tenfold criterion. Thus the nonvolitional verb “to see” (*mthong ba*) in *ngas khyed mthong ngo* “I see you” is much less transitive than the verb “to kill” (*gsod pa*) in *ngas khyed gsod do* “I am killing you,” in that the killing is volitional, and moreover the patient is totally affected, a test that “seeing” obviously does not satisfy. If we apply the *tha dad pa-tha mi dad pa* distinction as being

⁹ See the table in Hopper and Thompson 1982, 3:

	High transitivity	Low transitivity
A. Participants	2 participants or more (A and O)	1 participant
B. Kinesis	action	nonaction
C. Aspect	telic	atelic
D. Punctuality	punctual	nonpunctual
E. Volitionality	volitional	nonvolitional
F. Affirmation	affirmative	negative
G. Mode	realis	irrealis
H. Agency	A high in potency	A low in potency
I. Affectedness of O	O totally affected	O not affected
J. Individuation of O	O highly individuated	O nonindividuated

a Tibetan attempt at distinguishing transitivity-intransitivity, then there is the following problem: I would argue that both verbs are best taken as on the same side of the traditional grammarians' fence, i.e., *tha dad pa* (see Appendix). For a certain class of nonvolitional verbs (e.g., to see, to know, to hear, etc.), therefore, the Tibetan *tha dad pa* would not correspond to the intuitive notion of action "carried over from agent to patient," in that no action is carried over from agent to patient in the case of seeing and knowing, etc., if by that we understand that the patient would have to be significantly or totally affected. (After all, my seeing something usually does little, if anything, to it).

Also, *tha dad pa-tha mi dad pa*, or transitivity-intransitivity à la *grammaire tibétaine*, would differ from the transitivity continuum of Hopper and Thompson in that indigenous Tibetan grammar would fix a quite clear border separating verbs that are *tha dad* from those that are *tha mi dad*, instead of adopting a shaded continuum with high and low grades. That said, it looks to me that at least the middling to high levels of Hopper and Thompson's transitivity are captured by the traditional grammarians' categories of *tha dad pa*, or equivalently *byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba'i las tshig* (verbs where the agent and patient are different; verbs that have a distinct agent). And, equally, the other side of the border, i.e., *tha mi dad pa*, *byed pa po gzhan dang ma 'brel ba'i las tshig* (verbs where the agent and patient are not different, or what is the same, do not have a distinct agent) does capture much of what would be very low on the Hopper-Thompson scale. This is probably not a surprise at all, in that Hopper and Thompson themselves claim that their approach does account more or less for much of our "folk theories" and traditional notions about transitivity. A strong thesis to the effect that *the*, or *any* meaningful, notion of transitivity is completely inapplicable to Tibetan would thus be wrong. A bit of Tournadre's weaker thesis would, however, remain. Although we do not subscribe to Stoddard and Tournadre's own arguments against linking *tha dad pa* and transitivity, there is at least one very important factor militating against an *outright* identification. Simply put, *tha dad pa/tha mi dad pa* involves a rigid border while transitivity may well be best seen as a complex graded phenomenon.

***Appendix: On the use of tha (mi) dad pa
in the Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary***

There is a rather unfortunate confusion in the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (*Zang han da cidian*) of Zhang Yisun *et al.*, where verbs like *mthong ba* (“to see”), *shes pa* (“to know”), and others are designated as *tha mi dad pa*. This is the standard dictionary used by tibetologists nowadays. Cf., however, the *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs* of Blo mthun bSam gtan *et al.* in which *mthong ba* and *shes pa* are clearly (and rightly) designated as *byed ‘brel las tshig* (= *byed pa po gzhan dang dngos su ‘brel ba’i las tshig* = *tha dad pa*). A similar critique of the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*’s treatment of verbs like *mthong ba* is found in Tournadre 1996, 191, n. 20. What seems to have happened is that the authors of the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* assimilated nonvolitional—what sKal bzang ‘gyur med 1981 designates as *bya tshig gzhan dbang can*—with *tha mi dad pa*. They are not the same thing. See AACT p. 27-28, Stoddard and Tournadre 1992, 250-252 on the differences to be made between *tha dad pa*-*tha mi dad pa* and the opposition *rang dbang can*/*gzhan dbang can*, sometimes rendered as “autonomous/dependent,” but less literally, “controled/uncontroled,” or “volitional/nonvolitional.” [*Nota bene*: In the introduction to the present volume, I have analysed the arguments of a twentieth century grammarian and editor of the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, viz., rDo rje rgyal po, in favor of the classification of *shes pa* and the like as *tha mi dad pa*].

X. gSer tog Blo bzang tshul khrims rgya mtsho on Tibetan Verb Tenses

To what degree do the Tibetan grammarians' classifications of the three tenses—or more literally, the three times (*dus gsum*)—into past (*'das pa*), present (*da lta ba*), and future (*ma 'ongs pa*) really describe actions and states in the past, present, or future? Are they tenses, showing how a state, event, or action is situated in time relative to the speech act—before, simultaneous, or subsequent¹—or is “tense” just being used more or less infelicitously?

The question is not new. Shōju Inaba 1955 had already argued that future forms, as one finds them in the major Tibetan dictionaries or in traditional grammarians' lists of verbs, have little or nothing to do with the future.² Indeed, it seems true that the so-called “future” is the most problematic of the Tibetan grammarians' classifications and is often an odd misnomer for something quite different. Comparisons with Sanskrit give a working idea of the anomalies: (1) In Tibetan translations of Sanskrit future tenses, the future simplex forms that we find in dictionaries are rarely used; instead, the Sanskrit future is typically translated by what the grammarians would term a present (*da lta ba*), or by a periphrastic form using this present form plus *par 'gyur*. (2) The grammarians' future (e.g., *gzung*) is frequently used to express a Sanskrit present passive, or this “future” and its related forms in *par bya* (e.g., *gzung bar bya*) are used to translate Sanskrit terms ending in the suffixes of obligation (*kṛtya*) *-ya*, *-tavya* and *-anīya*. Pāṇini

¹ Cf. Bussmann 1996, 478, *s.v.* tense: “fundamental grammatical (morphological) category of the verb which expresses the temporal relation between a speech act ... and the state of affairs or event described in the utterance, i.e., which places the event spoken of in relation to the temporal perspective of the speaker.”

² See AACT p. 82, n. 73 and p. 90.

speaks of a number of uses of *krtya*, such as in cases of permission (*sarga*), opportunity (*prāptakāla*), fittingness (*arha*), etc.³

It may well be impossible for us to find *the* precise reason why Tibetan grammarians, from Thon mi Sambhoṭa (seventh century?) to Si tu Paṇ chen (1699-1774), chose to use the term “future” here, but it is nevertheless noteworthy that at least one grammarian was himself aware that the traditional Tibetan classification of the three times (*dus gsum*) did not correlate very well with the actual temporal values expressed by Tibetan verbs. That grammarian was the fifth gSer tog incarnation, Blo bzang tshul khriṃs rgya mtsho (1845-1915) of sKu ‘bum monastery in present-day Qinghai. gSer tog’s tactic was to distinguish between two ways of classifying the three times (*dus gsum gyi ‘jog tshul*), one being in terms of the triad, “actions, agents, and objects” (*bya byed las gsum gyi dus gsum*), and the other being the “general way to classify the three times” (*spyir dus gsum gyi ‘jog tshul*), i.e., in terms of the actual temporal value of the verb in a particular context. The former classification is clearly based on some key ideas from Si tu Paṇ chen (although the mere term *bya byed las gsum gyi dus gsum* may itself be new), but the latter type of analysis was, as far as we know, first developed in gSer tog’s major work, the *Sum cu pa dang rtags kyi ‘jug pa’i mchan ‘grel* (MHTL 5412).⁴ In his chapter on *bdag* and *gzhan*, we find explicit references to Si tu and to A lag sha Ngag dbang bstan dar (1759-1840), and it is obvious that gSer tog was heavily indebted to these two authors for many of his ideas. Nonetheless, this twofold approach to problems of tense is not to be found in their works, nor does it seem to be found in the *Sum rtags* works of other famous eighteenth and nineteenth century grammarians, such as lCang skya Rol

³ Cf. Renou 1975 §160b: “La valeur d’obligation s’affaiblit très souvent, surtout dans les formes en *ya-*, en éventuel : chose permise (*sarge*), opportune (*prāptakāle*), capacité (*śakti*), convenance (*arhe*); ép[ique] et ailleurs, en simple futur imprécis, *bhavya* ... et *bhāvya-*, ... *vaine*ya ‘qui va se convertir’... See Pāṇini’s *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3.3.163; 3.3.169-171; pp. 132-133 ed. Böhrtlingk 1977.

⁴ His other grammatical work is entitled *Bya byed las gsum dus gsum dang bcas pa’i dper brjod che long bsdus pa* (MHTL 5413). This text consists of numerous examples of verb forms but is also prefixed by a number of verses that summarize gSer tog’s position on *bdag*, *gzhan*, and *bya byed las gsum*. The text is included as an appendix to the edition of the *mchan ‘grel*—i.e., *gSer tog sum rtags*—that has been printed in China.

pa'i rdo rje (1717-1786), dNgul chu Dharmabhadra (1772-1851), dByangs can Grub pa'i rdo rje (1809-1887) or A kya Yongs 'dzin dByangs can dga' ba'i blo gros (1740-1827). We provisionally hypothesize, therefore, that it is gSer tog's own invention.

A working idea of gSer tog's twofold distinction can easily be given by means of a parallel with English and French, where, as in numerous other languages, context can determine that the action occurs at a different time than what the grammatical tense of the verb would otherwise express. For example, in the sentences *I am going there tomorrow*, *J'y vais demain*, standard present forms are being used to express an action that will occur in the future relative to the time of the speech act. As we shall see, gSer tog exploits this general type of distinction to make, *inter alia*, some potentially significant remarks about the puzzling case of future simplex and future in *par bya*, and thus it merits investigation in some detail. Unfortunately, gSer tog himself never gave a rigorous and exhaustive description of the two schemata, contenting himself with a number of remarks and examples here and there in his chapter on *bdag* and *gzhan*. [Note added in 2020: this work is translated below in chapter XII]. We shall look at some of these remarks and try to piece together his various ideas.

By way of a typical case, take a verb such as “to seek,” *'tshol ba*, with a dictionary future form *btsal ba*. For grammarians the simplex *btsal*, or *btsal lo*, and its related forms in *par bya* / *bar bya* and *bya* (i.e., *btsal bar bya*, *btsal bya*) are future (*ma 'ongs pa*) and are said to express (as we have argued earlier in AACT) patient-prominence. To use the grammarians' term, they express future act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba'i las ma 'ongs pa*). This type of action is categorized under the rubric *gzhan* (“other”) and is invariably explained in the context of the triad, actions, agents, and objects (*bya byed las gsum*), as being related to the object/patient (*las*) of the action. The present simplex *'tshol ba* or the continuative form *'tshol bzhin pa* are taken as agent-prominent, or “present act-qua-doing” (*byed pa'i las da lta ba*), are classified under *bdag* (“self”), and are related to the agent (*byed pa po*). As for the past *btsald⁵* or *btsald zin pa* there is some controversy as to how it should be taken, but gSer tog and others (such as A kya Yongs 'dzin) clearly relate it to the object/patient. The result is that we have a schema where the three tenses are correlated with members of

⁵ We follow gSer tog in conserving the old supplementary --d suffix (*da drag*).

the triad, *bya ba*, *byed pa* (*po*), and *las*: gSer tog can thus speak of *this* schema as being “the three times in terms of the triad, actions, agents, and objects” (*bya byed las gsum gyi dus gsum*; see chapter XII, §13 *et seq.*).

A simpler way to express this point is to say that *bya byed las gsum gyi dus gsum* are essentially “tenses” as we find them in any Tibetan-Tibetan or Tibetan-English dictionary—these are also the past, present, future stems found in traditional grammar’s lists of the “three times” of verbs. Let us thus from here on speak of the “dictionary present” like *tshol ba*, a “dictionary future” like *btsal ba*, and a “dictionary past,” like *btsald*. In many occurrences these three “dictionary forms” will also have their same corresponding temporal values and will express actions that are before (past), simultaneous with (present), or in the future relative to the speech act. But gSer tog brings up the point that quite often this dictionary-style classification does not reflect the actual temporal value of verbs. This can be in the following cases: (1) contexts where present dictionary forms have to be understood as actually expressing an action in the future; (2) verbs that make no distinction between their “dictionary presents” and “futures” and hence have to rely on auxiliaries (*tshig grogs*) to make periphrastic forms expressing such distinctions; (3) the special case of future act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba’i las ma ‘ongs pa*), viz., *btsal bar bya*, etc., which, in itself, just expresses the modal sense of “... is to be done” or “... ought to be done,” and not the strictly temporal future.

This is, of course, a rather condensed account of gSer tog’s ideas: for supporting evidence we now have to look at some of the various arguments occurring in pp. 137-156 of his *mchan ‘grel*, where he expresses these ideas in the grammatical jargon of *bdag* and *gzhan*. Here, then, are the relevant passages.

1. Context. gSer tog introduces his distinction between the two perspectives on tense on p. 140 of his *mchan ‘grel* (see chapter XII, §13 below):

‘on kyang bya byed las kyi dus gsum dang / spyir dus gsum gyi ‘jog tshul la khyad par cung zad re yod de / dper na / gdul bya’i sems can / zhes pa lta bu la mtshon na / las sgra de yi ‘jug yul rnam pa gsum du yod de / gdul bya zhes pa las sgra dngos ma ‘ongs pa dang / sems can ni las / ‘dul ba ni byed pa da lta ba / btuld pa ni byas zin ‘das pa / gdul bar bya zhes pa ni bya ba’i las ma ‘ongs pa zhes bya zhing / sems can de gdul ba’i bya bas slar ‘dul dgos pa ni / dus kyi dus ma ‘ongs

pa dang / ‘*dul bzhin pa ni* / *dus kyi dus da lta ba dang* / *btuld zin pa ni* / *dus kyi dus ‘das pa’i don yin par go dgos so* // “However, there is some difference between the way to classify the three times in terms of [the triad] actions, agents, and objects (*bya byed las kyi dus gsum*) and the way to classify the three times generally (*spyir dus gsum gyi ‘jog tshul*). Take, for example, something like [the phrase] *gdul bya’i sems can* (‘the sentient being to be disciplined’). One should understand the following points (*don*). There are three spheres of application for the word *las* (‘patient/object’): *gdul bya* (‘that which is to be disciplined’), i.e., the actual, future word for the object (*las sgra dngos ma ‘ongs pa*), or *sems can* (‘sentient being’) are termed the object (*las*); ‘*dul ba* (‘... disciplines/...is disciplining’) is termed present doing (*byed pa da lta ba*); *btuld pa* (‘... has been disciplined’) is termed the past that has been done (*byas zin ‘das pa*); *gdul bar bya* (‘... is to be disciplined’) is termed the future act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba’i las ma ‘ongs pa*). And when we again have to discipline (*slar ‘dul dgos pa*) the sentient being by means of a disciplinary action (*gdul ba’i bya ba*), this [use of ‘*dul*] is temporally future (*dus kyi dus ma ‘ongs pa*); ‘*dul bzhin pa* (‘...is now disciplining’) is temporally present (*dus kyi dus da lta ba*); *btuld zin pa* (‘... has been disciplined’) is temporally past (*dus kyi dus ‘das pa*).”

Explanatory remarks. The schema of three uses of the word *las* (*las sgra*) that gSer tog invokes here is found in other grammatical treatises⁶ and is as follows: (1) the patient/object, i.e., *gdul bya* and *sems can*; (2) the act-qua-doing, i.e., present forms such as ‘*dul ba*; (3) the act-qua-thing-done, i.e., the future *gdul bar bya* and the past *btuld pa*. All these forms (with the exception of *sems can*) are cases of *bya byed las gsum gyi dus gsum* “the three times in terms of the triad, actions, agents, and objects.” To this gSer

⁶ Cf. A kya Yongs ‘dzin, *rNam dbye brgyad dang bya byed las sogs kyi khyad par mdo tsam brjod pa dka’i gnas gsal ba’i me long* (Collected Works, 2, New Delhi, 1971, p. 452): *spyir na las kyi sgra de yi* // ‘jug yul gsum du shes bya ste // *gcad bya zhes pa las sgra dngos* // *gcod par byed sogs byed pa’i las* // *gcad par bya dang bcad par byas* // *rim pa bzhin du bya ba’i las* // *ma ‘ongs pa dang ‘das pa’o* // “In general, it should be understood that there are three spheres of application for the word *las*. When one says, *gcad bya* (‘what is to be cut’), this is an actual word for *las*; *gcod par byed* (‘...cuts’), etc. is *byed pa’i las* (‘act-qua-doing’); *gcad par bya* (‘... is to be cut’) and *bcad par byas* (‘... has been cut’) are, respectively, future and past *bya ba’i las* (‘act-qua-thing-done’).”

tog opposes a general schema in terms of *dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa, dus kyi dus da lta ba* and *dus kyi dus 'das pa*—literally, “future/present/past time in terms of time,” an unpalatable translation which, following the sense, I have abandoned in favour of “the temporally future/present/past.” In sum, this passage is arguing that there are cases where the context shows that the present dictionary form, or “present in terms of actions, agents, and objects,” is used to indicate an event that *will* occur, one that is, temporally speaking, in the future. This seems to be the point of his example: the verb in *slar 'dul dgos pa* (“will again have to discipline”) is indeed a present dictionary form, but indicates an action in the future due to the word *slar* (“again”). The other two examples, viz., *'dul bzhin pa, btuld zin pa*, are cases where the dictionary forms and the actual strict temporal values seem to coincide.⁷

2. Auxiliaries. On p. 148 of his *mchan 'grel* (chapter XII, §35 below), we find the following elaboration upon some remarks of Si tu concerning certain *g-* and *d-* prefixed forms that are not included under self and other:

ma ning dang 'chad 'gyur mo dang shin tu mo rnams kyi skabs su shes par bya rgyu zhig yod de / gcad bya / gcod byed / dpag bya / dpog byed ces pa lta bu ga da gnyis yig gzugs mi 'dra bas bdag gzhan gnyis car la 'jug pa na / bya byed kyi tshig dang tshig grogs ma sbyar yang / des bya las ma 'ongs pa dang byed pa da lta ba yin par go nus mod kyang / gsub bya / gsub byed / dkri bya / dkri byed ces pa lta bu ga da gnyis yig gzugs gcig gis bdag gzhan gnyis ka la 'jug pa'i tshe / byed tshig gis ma gsal ba rnams la / gsub kyin / dkri yin lta bu tshig grogs kyin gin gyin yin bzhi bo las gang rung sbyar bas byed pa da lta ba ston tshul gcig dang / ga da gnyis yig gzugs gcig gis bdag gzhan gnyis ka la 'jug pa na / dmigs kyis dus la 'jug pa'i tshe / gsub kyin / dkri yin lta bu dus kyi dus da lta ba dang / gsub par 'gyur / dkri bar 'gyur lta bu tshig grogs sbyar bas dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa gsal bar ston pa'i tshul gcig ste tshul gnyis yod pa'i gnad kyis / rtas gzhung 'dir bdag gzhan dang dus gsum so sor gsungs dgos byung ba yin no //. “In connection with the neutral [prefixes *g-*, *d-*] as well as the feminine [*-a-*] and extremely feminine [prefix *m-*] that will be explained [below], there is a [point] that should

⁷ We find other somewhat ironical remarks on the influence of context, particularly in cases, like *smin pa* (“to be ripe”), that have only one dictionary form. See chapter XII, §29.

be understood. Take [expressions] such as *gcad bya* ('what is to be cut'), *gcod byed* ('what effectuates the cutting,' 'the means of cutting'), *dpag bya* ('what is to be understood') [and] *dpog byed* ('what effectuates the understanding,' 'means of understanding'), where [the prefixes] *g-* [and] *d-* are applied for both self and other via different written forms [i.e., *gcod*, *gcad*, *dpog*, *dpag*, etc.]. Then, even when the expressions *bya* [and] *byed* and auxiliaries (*tshig grogs*) are not used, these [simplex forms, i.e., *gcad*, *gcod*, etc.] enable one to understand that it is future act-qua-thing-done (*bya las ma 'ongs pa*) and present doing (*byed pa da lta ba*) [at stake]. By contrast, take [expressions] such as *gtsub bya* ('what is to be rubbed'), *gtsub byed* ('what effectuates the rubbing,' 'means of rubbing'), *dkri bya* ('what is to be tied up') [and] *dkri byed* ('what effectuates the tying,' 'the means of tying'), where *g-* [and] *d-* are applied for both self and other via one and the same written form [i.e., *gtsub* and *dkri*, respectively]. In those cases, when [the simplex forms *gtsub* and *dkri*] are not clarified by means of an expression *byed*, then by using one of the four auxiliaries *kyin*, *gin*, *gyin*, [or] *yin* in *gtsub kyin*, *dkri yin*, and the like, [we can convey] present doing (*byed pa da lta ba*). Such is one way to show [how *g-* and *d-* are used]. And when *g-* [and] *d-* are applied for both self and other via one and the same written form [as in the case of *gtsub* and *dkri*], then if they are applied specifically (*dmigs kyis*) for the times (*dus*), *gtsub kyin*, *dkri yin*, and so forth are the temporally present (*dus kyi dus da lta ba*), while by using auxiliaries [in verbal forms] such as *gtsub par* 'gyur ('... will rub') [and] *dkri bar* 'gyur ('... will tie up'), one clearly [conveys] the temporally future (*dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa*). Such is another way to show [how *g-* and *d-* are used]. Given the two ways, then self, other, and the three times needed to be spoken about separately here in the root text [i.e., in śloka twelve of the *rTags kyi 'jug pa*]."

Explanatory remarks. The contrast is between verbs, such as *gcod pa*/*gcad pa* ("cut"), that distinguish between present and future dictionary forms—i.e., *bdag* and *gzhan*—and those, such as *gtsub pa* ("rub"), that do not.⁸ In the latter case, it can be in function of the presence of *par byed*

⁸ The verb *gtsub pa* has the same form for present and future, although it does have a separate past form. The same holds for *dkri ba*.

(e.g., *gtsub par byed*) or *par bya* (e.g., *gtsub par bya*) that we can classify a verb like *gtsub pa* in terms of “doing” or “thing-done,” i.e., self and other, respectively—the “*gtsub*” retains one and the same written form (*yig gzugs gcig*). However, suppose that *byed* and *bya* are not used with *gtsub* and *dkri* and that there are only auxiliaries (*tshig grogs*) used to differentiate tenses so that self and other do not apply. Thus, depending on the auxiliary used, i.e., *kyin* or ‘*gyur*’, a verb like *gtsub* can show, respectively, *dus kyi dus da lta ba*, the temporal present, or a temporal future (*dus kyi dus ma ‘ongs pa*). gSer tog, again echoing Si tu, invokes the uses of auxiliaries in his exegesis on Thon mi Sambhoṭa’s śloka: on the one hand, *gcod pa/gcad pa*, *gtsub par byed*, *gtsub par bya* are covered by self and other in Thon mi’s line “the neutral is for both [self and other] and for the present” (*ma ning gnyis ka da ltar ched*);⁹ on the other hand, when Thon mi says “for the present” the temporal specification (i.e., *gtsub kyin*, or *gtsub ‘gyur*) capture what remains outside self and other. Note that gSer tog, like many others, sees Thon mi’s “for the present” as capturing the *main* (*gtso*) use but not the only one. “Future” is included too.

3. The special case of future act-qua-thing-done. gSer tog’s remarks on this subject come in the context of a criticism of A lag sha Ngag dbang bstan dar. gSer tog writes on p. 145 of his *mchan ‘grel* (chapter XII, §30 below):

bsTan dar pa’i ‘grel bar / ras de sang nyin bkru bar bya / yi ge de da dung bklag par bya’o zhes pa lta bu ma ‘ongs pa la ‘jug pa yod par gsungs pa ni bam bshad yin nam snyam ste / dper brjod dngos bstan ltar na sang nyin dang da dung zhes pa’i tshig gis dus kyi dus ma ‘ongs pa bstan gyi / bkru bar bya dang bklag par bya zhes pa bya las ma ‘ongs pa nyid las ma ‘das pa’o //. “In [A lag sha Ngag dbang] bstan dar’s commentary, when it is stated that there are applications [of *b-*] for the future such as ‘That cloth is to be washed tomorrow’ (*ras de sang nyin bkru bar bya*) and ‘That letter is still to be read’ (*yi ge de da dung bklag par bya’o*), I wonder whether this might be a corrupt explanation (*bam bshad*) [of the prefix *b-* being used for the temporally future]. In keeping with what [bsTan dar’s] example statements actually said (*dngos bstan*), the words *sang nyin* (‘tomorrow’) and *da dung* (‘still’)

⁹ “The neutral [prefixes *g-* and *d-*] are for both [self and other and] the present.”

show the temporally future (*dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa*), but *bkru bar bya* ('...is to be washed') and *bklag par bya* ('... is to be read') are no more than just the future act-qua-thing-done (*bya las ma 'ongs pa*)."

Explanatory remarks. Ngag dbang bstan dar, on p. 186 of his *Sum rtags* commentary, *sKal ldan yid kyi pad ma 'byed pa'i snang ba'i mdzod*, had argued:

gzhung 'dir dngos su ma bstan kyang ma 'ongs pa la 'jug pa ni / dper na / ras de sang nyin bkru par bya'o / yi ge de da dung bklag par bya'o sogs so /. "Although not literally taught in this text [i.e., the *rTags kyi 'jug pa*] there are the following cases where [b-] is applied for the future: 'That cloth is to be washed tomorrow,' 'That letter is still to be read,' and so forth."

gSer tog, then, seems to be maintaining that here, in Ngag dbang bstan dar's examples, actual future temporal value is not expressed by the dictionary future forms and the ending in *par bya*, but rather by the context, i.e., the words "tomorrow" and "still." His remarks imply that the "future" in *par bya* is much less of a real future than a type of modal form, a position that would, of course, tally well with our earlier observations about Tibetan translations using dictionary futures + *par bya* for the Sanskrit suffixes of obligation (*krtya*). To go gSer tog one step further, the future act-qua-thing-done would, as in the Sanskrit *krtya*, show an essentially passive, or "patient-prominent,"¹⁰ action that is/was to be done, the form in *par bya* being in itself virtually temporally neutral. And although gSer tog does not explicitly say so, he would presumably have to agree that the future simplex forms, *bklag go*, etc. would also receive their real temporal value from elsewhere—context, or perhaps even auxiliaries like *bzhin*.¹¹ In any case, the passages given above—especially the debate with Ngag dbang bstan dar—do suggest that gSer tog came up with a significantly

¹⁰ See AACT p. 80 *et seq.*

¹¹ Here it is relevant to note that A kya Yongs 'dzin, in his *rTags kyi 'jug pa'i dka' gnas*, gives some examples of a periphrastic present passive, i.e., a "present act-qua-thing-done" (*bya las da lta ba*), formed from the dictionary future plus the present continuative auxiliary *bzhin*. Thus, e.g., *gcad bzhin pa* ("... is being cut"). See AACT p. 48, §15. It is not clear to me, however, whether these forms are regularly attestable Tibetan.

different and more nuanced account of the Tibetan verb tenses. No doubt, he made some real progress upon the traditional account of *dus gsum* by distinguishing between dictionary-style verb tenses and the various contexts and periphrastic constructions in which these verb forms can be used to express actual temporal values.

To return now to the problem posed at the outset, what we see in gSer tog should reinforce and complement a perspective like that of Inaba, for whom stems, as found in dictionaries, are in effect misleadingly named. While the so-called present and future stems are, for Inaba, active and passive imperfectives, respectively, the past is perfective but ambivalent with regard to voice. In short, a binary opposition between imperfective and perfective—*grosso modo* a difference of aspect between temporally unbounded or atterminative actions and bounded or terminative actions—is coupled with a distinction of voice.¹² I think that it would make eminent sense to add the traditional contribution, too. True, there is no analogue in *Sum rtags* literature to the imperfective-perfective aspectual distinction, but it is relatively natural to take the *Sum rtags* division between act-qua-doing (*byed las*) and the act-qua-thing-done (*bya las*), or self and other, as reinforcing the distinction of voice put forth by Inaba: the present stem shows self; the future stem shows other; the past is often said to be ambivalent, showing neither. Finally, the relationship between the so-called dictionary-style tenses (which are not tenses *stricto sensu*) and actual temporal values of verbs is brought out in the distinction by gSer tog between *bya byed las gsum gyi dus gsum*—i.e., the dictionary past, present, and future stems—and *spyir dus gsum*—i.e., the actual temporal value of verbs in a sentence, possibly due to context and auxiliaries. Combining those three, viz., aspect, voice, and temporal value, would be a major step towards an account of verbs in Classical Tibetan.

¹² See Derek Herforth's summary of Inaba's views in AACT p. 82, n. 73. On imperfective-perfective, see Comrie 1976 and Bussmann 1996, 219-220, *s.v.* imperfective vs perfective. To take a rough and ready example in English, contrast the imperfective "The house burned/was burning for some time" with the perfective "The house burned down in an hour."

XI. On the Assimilation of Indic Grammatical Literature into Indigenous Tibetan Scholarship¹

In 1994 Pieter Cornelis Verhagen published the first volume of his *History of Sanskrit Grammatical Literature in Tibet*, subtitled “the Transmission of the Canonical literature.” There Verhagen focused upon the Tibetan translations of Indian texts on the formal grammatical theory (*vyākaraṇa*) of the Sanskrit language. He presented forty-seven of such texts on grammar, provided summaries of terminology and translational practices, and enabled specialists and non-specialists alike to form an overview of the extensive Indic grammatical literature preserved in the Tibetan canon, i.e., the *bsTan* ‘gyur. In 2001 Verhagen published the second (and probably, as he tells us, the last) volume of his *History*, subtitled this time, “Assimilation into Indigenous Scholarship.” It is this volume that will be the focus of the present review article. As the subtitle suggests, the volume takes up the assimilation and integration of Indic Vyākaraṇa into the indigenous Tibetan intellectual milieu, and thus deals with, *inter alia*, the thorny question of the origins of the grammatical notions used by Tibetan authors in their description of their own language. Let us try to provide a working idea of the rich contents of this volume before taking up a number of points for discussion.

The first chapter, entitled “Indigenous and Extra-canonical Tibetan Literature on Sanskrit Grammar,” is organized into sub-chapters treating of the “pre-classical period,” the “classical period,” and the “post-classical period,” by which Verhagen means, respectively (as explained in the first volume of the *History*), the period of the Tibetan royal empire and first dissemination of Buddhism from the mid-seventh until the mid-ninth centuries C.E., the period from the eleventh through fourteenth

¹ The present article is a review of Verhagen 2001. In citing passages from this and other works, I have changed the transcriptions to accord with the Wylie system that I have adopted. For the bibliographical details of the first volume, see the entry for Verhagen 1994.

centuries, and the period from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Verhagen discusses and summarizes sixty-one texts of various sorts. These range from *bsTan 'gyur* texts on the “eight great [linguistic] topics” (*gnas brgyad chen po*) and Sanskrit nominal inflexion by the ninth century Tibetan lCe Khyi ‘brug, to the famous *Smra sgo* quite possibly composed in Tibetan by Smṛtijñānakīrti, as well as the treatises by Sa skya pa authors and the revised extra-canonical translations of *Cāndravyākaraṇa*, *Sarasvatīvyākaraṇa*, *Kātantra*, and other Indic texts. Included in this chapter are also summaries of numerous indigenous extra-canonical Tibetan works on such topics as *Smra sgo*, the *Kātantra*, and the fine details of the exegesis of Sanskrit *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs*.

The second chapter, entitled “Indic Models of Description in Tibetan Indigenous Grammar,” discusses Indic antecedent terms, concepts and models in indigenous Tibetan grammatical literature. This indigenous literature is known as *Sum rtags*, as it stems from the two fundamental texts, *Sum cu pa* and *rTags kyi 'jug pa*, attributed traditionally to the seventh century author Thon mi Sambhoṭa. Verhagen first presents a number of clearly attested Tibetan translational equivalents of Sanskrit Vyākaraṇa terms and then proceeds to the list of *Sum rtags* terms that seem to be without discernible (or at least convincingly discernible) Indic antecedents, such as *sngon 'jug*, *rjes 'jug* (“prefixes and suffixes”), as well as the notorious terms *bdag* (“self”) and *gzhan* (“other”) that have on several occasions led Western writers to unhelpfully “discover” *ātmanepada* (“middle voice”) and *parasmaipada* (“active voice”) in Tibetan.²

After a section comparing the organisation and style of Pāṇinian Vyākaraṇa and that of the two Tibetan treatises, Verhagen, building on the work of Nils Simonsson, gives a lucid analysis of two competing Indic positions on *ming* (*nāman*) and *tshig* (*pada*) that were taken over into Tibetan works and that led to some tension and hence complex attempts at

² First and foremost is Berthold Laufer 1898, 543 who saw *bdag* as the Tibetan equivalent of the Sanskrit *ātmanepada* (“middle voice”) and *gzhan* as the Tibetan equivalent of the Sanskrit *parasmaipada* (“active voice”). Against this, see Tillemans 1988, 494, AACT, 11-13, Verhagen 1991, 209, and Verhagen 2001, 297-300. Interestingly enough, there are passages in *Si tu* where the Tibetan grammarian seems to recognize a clear connection between *bdag/gzhan* and active and passive voices. But *bdag* is taken as the active and *gzhan* is taken as the passive! It's the opposite of Laufer's attempt at equivalences. For the passage from *Si tu*, see Verhagen 2001, 298-300.

synthesis. It turns out that the Indian grammatical literature's interpretation of *nāman* as being a simple, or free, lexical word form without case suffixes and *pada* as being a word form *with* such a suffix is what we find when indigenous Tibetan grammarians closely follow *Cāndravyākaraṇa* or *Kātantra*.

On the other hand, in *Sum rtags* as well as in *Smra sgo*-inspired literature, *ming* and *tshig* are frequently understood along the Buddhist model of *Abhidharmakośa* II.47, which gives the triple division of *vyañjanakāya* ("collection of speech sounds/phonemes"), *nāmakāya* ("collection of words"), and *padakāya* ("collection of phrases"). On this latter version, *ming/nāman* is a word or term (like "lotus") that results from phonemes being conjoined, while *tshig/pada* is a phrase (like "blue lotus") composed of two or more *ming/nāman*. Verhagen is no doubt right in stressing the importance of the second model in Tibetan literature. In fact, the Abhidharmic model, in one form or another, is pretty much exclusively what we find in Tibetan philosophical works, be it Abhidharma commentaries, the doxographical literature (*grub mtha'*), or manuals on epistemology (*tshad ma*) and classification of valid cognition (*blo rigs*), and even Madhyamaka. It is also what dominates in the *rTags kyi 'jug pa*, notably śloka 32, a fact that, as Verhagen explains in some detail, posed serious difficulties to the commentator Si tu paṇ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699-1774), who had a net preference for the Vyākaraṇa-inspired model.³

The chapter continues by comparing the Indic phonological terminology with that found in Tibetan *Sum rtags*; there are numerous clear and unsurprising equivalences, a big debt to *Kātantra*, and perhaps some influences from Tantra (as we will discuss below). In the remaining section of the second chapter, Verhagen takes up "Syntax and Case Grammar," looking at the use of the six *kāraṅkas* in Sanskrit Vyākaraṇa and Tibetan *Sum rtags* and then taking up in detail the *bdag* (self)/*gzhan* (other) dichotomy that figures so prominently in *Sum rtags*, notably in the *rTags kyi 'jug pa* and its commentaries. In this section he discusses in considerable detail the work of Tom Tillemans and Derek Herforth and that of Roy A. Miller. He then offers some of his own views and suggestions on these issues, arguing, *inter alia*, that a key term like *dnegos po* is not being used in the usual Indian grammatical sense of *bhāva* but

³ Verhagen 2001, 240-251.

that nevertheless a probable ancestry from specific Indic grammatical terms and concepts is still traceable. We will take this up in detail below.

After the concluding observations in which Verhagen summarizes his results and stresses that *Sum rtags* has a “Buddhist stance” (largely because of elements derived from Abhidharma and Tantra), we are provided with no less than eleven excellent appendices, with *inter alia* the following contents: the catalogue on Sanskrit grammatical texts compiled by the nineteenth century writer Akhu rin po che; some other title lists on *sgra rig pa* (“science of sounds”), *Kātantra*, etc.; *capita selecta* on Sanskrit case grammar from Indic and Tibetan sources; the text and translation of Chos grub’s short work on the eight Sanskrit cases; addenda to Verhagen’s 1994 publication, i.e., the first volume of the *History*.

This much will have to suffice as a summary of the contents of the second volume of Verhagen’s *History of Sanskrit Grammatical Literature in Tibet*. We may now be in a better position to take up two points in some detail, although the work contains so much original research that it is extremely difficult to do justice to its breadth and importance. While one may be doubtful, or even be in quite strong opposition, about some matters—as I am—Verhagen’s two volumes are extraordinarily well-informed and, in my view, constitute the most significant contribution that has been made on the subject of Indic Vyākaraṇa texts in Tibet and the assimilation of this literature into indigenous Tibetan scholarship. This book and the earlier volume are genuinely impressive achievements, showing a high level of competence in Sanskrit and Tibetan. They will remain reference works for all future research in this area.

Tantric influences upon the Sum cu pa and rTags kyi ‘jug pa

Verhagen, although relatively skeptical of many of Roy Miller’s claims of Tantric influences upon *Sum rtags*, does nevertheless think that there are *some* such influences and that they are important. Granted, as Miller had maintained, we do find the use of the pair of terms *āli* and *kāli* (for vowels and consonants, respectively) that seem to have been adopted by the *Sum cu pa* from Indian Tantric traditions.⁴ On the other hand, it is much less convincing to me when Verhagen opines that the *rTags kyi ‘jug pa*’s use

⁴ This borrowing from Tantra had been pointed out in Miller 1966.

of “gender terminology” like *pho* (“masculine”) and *mo* (“feminine”) to classify consonants and vowels is also a significant Tantric influence.⁵

Curiously enough, if I have Verhagen right, it is pretty much the fact of there *being* gender opposition in phonological description that suggests to him Tantric origins *because the masculine-feminine polarity is so important and pervasive in Tantra*. The nerve of the argument seems to be expressed in the following passage:

“The background of this ‘gender’ terminology in the *klog thabs* literature can of course be found in the Tantristic schemata of polarity symbolism in terms of sexual opposition. This symbolism is a pervasive feature in Tantrism in general. For Buddhist Tantrism the following scheme of correspondences can be set up:

Female = *prajñā* / *śūnyatā* / moon / *padma* / *lalanā* / *bhaga* / left / static-passive, etc.

Male = *upāya* / *karuṇā* / sun / *vajra* / *rasanā* / *liṅga* / right / dynamic-active, etc.”⁶

To be fair, things are a bit more complicated than I depict them to be, because this argument is not stated directly in connection with the use of *pho-mo* and *ma ning* (neuter) terminology in *Sum rtags* but rather in connection with that terminology as it is found in Tibetan *Klog thabs* literature (pronunciation manuals of *mantras*). However, Verhagen himself makes the link with *Sum rtags*, saying on the next page:

“The twofold ‘gender’ categorization of the Tibetan phonemes in TKJ [*i.e.*, *rTags kyi ‘jug pa*] 1, mentioned above, is an exact reflection of this Buddhist Tantristic model. It seems fair to conclude that the Tibetan grammarians have derived this ‘gender’ labelling in general, as well as the correlations vowel = feminine and consonant = masculine, from this Tantristic idiom.”⁷

This inference from the gender polarity of *pho* and *mo* to the Tantric origins of this *Sum rtags* scheme is then supposedly reinforced by another

⁵ Verhagen 2001, 262ff.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 265.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 266.

important thread in Verhagen's argument, namely, that certain relatively late commentaries, notably that of Si tu paṇ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas, glossed *pho* and *mo* in terms of the schema of the masculine being identified with "means" (*upāya*) and the feminine with "insight"/"wisdom" (*prajñā*). Here is how Verhagen put it:

"In fact, Si tu Paṇ chen makes this connection with the polarity symbolism of the Tantras explicit in his commentary anent the masculine/feminine dichotomy of phonemes, sub TKJ [i.e., *rTags kyi 'jug pa*] 1, where an additional characterization is added: the feminine phonemes, the vowels, he designates as *shes rab kyi rang bzhin* 'having the nature of *prajñā*' and the masculine consonants as *thabs kyi rang bzhin* 'having the nature of *upāya*.'" ⁸

All this looks doubtful to me. First of all, some of the gender-related terminology in *Sum rtags*, like *mo gsham* ("barren feminine") and *shin tu mo* ("extremely feminine") is not clearly Tantric, in spite of its seeming connection with "femininity" or "sexuality."⁹ Secondly, Si tu's use of the *prajñā-upāya* duality here may well be little more than the usual scholastic penchant for synthesis, where a commentator uses concepts from other significant, but potentially quite alien, contexts. It's difficult to deduce much from this commentarial stratagem to what lay behind the *pho-mo* "gender terminology" for the author(s) of the *rTags kyi 'jug pa*. To take a parallel, elsewhere in the *mKhas pa'i mgul rgyan*, Si tu also makes a few remarks showing that he wants to use the *apoha* theory of meaning to explain some points of grammar. But from the mere fact of Si tu's occasionally talking about "particulars" (*rang mtshan* = *svalakṣaṇa*) and "conceptual exclusions constituting universals" (*spyi ldog*, *ldog* = *vyāvṛtti*) it would be absurd to conclude anything about supposed *apohavāda* in the *rTags kyi 'jug pa*.¹⁰

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 266.

⁹ Here Verhagen's speculations about Tantra's "distinction of various types within the female sex, primarily in connection with the sexual practices associated with the higher classes of Tantra" (p. 267) can hardly be considered convincing.

¹⁰ *mKhas pa'i mgul rgyan* p. 206 (Dharamsala edition): *shin tu zhib mor dpyod pa'i tshe dngos po rnams kyi rang mtshan so so nas rang gi rang la bya ba 'gal yang spyi ldog rags pa nas tha snyad tsam la 'jig rten gyi grags pa dang mthun par rang gis rang la bya ba 'byung ba 'ang dgos so //*.

But these are perhaps comparatively minor objections. What is much more seriously telling against Verhagen's point of view is that there are undoubtedly many features and doctrines that are important, even vital, to Tantric Buddhism but are not themselves specifically, or essentially, Tantric at all. Masculine-feminine imagery connected with *prajñā*, *upāya*, *karuṇā*, *śūnyatā*, etc., while obviously important to Tantra, is also very important to much of the Mahāyāna, so that it is very hard to say that such imagery is somehow a mark of Tantrism. Indeed, José Cabezón, in an article entitled "Mother Wisdom, Father Love: Gender Based Imagery in Mahāyāna Buddhist Thought," describes the widespread Mahāyāna portrayal of wisdom as female, or as the mother, and means as the father. Here is how Cabezón describes the thesis of his article:

"In what follows we shall examine the use of gender categories (female and male) as symbols for the two most important concepts of Mahāyāna Buddhism, wisdom (*prajñā*)-gnosis (*jñāna*) on the one hand, and method (*upāya*)-compassion (*karuṇā*) on the other."¹¹

Many of the passages from the Mahāyāna texts cited by Cabezón could, I think, suffice to show the inconclusiveness of male-female imagery being evidence of Tantrism. Probably one of the clearest is the passage from the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra* that speaks of the perfection of wisdom as being the mother of bodhisattvas and skill in means as being their father. In a similar vein, Cabezón cites the opening verse of Maitreya's *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, a scholastic text of Mahāyāna Buddhism that begins by paying homage to the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*) as the "mother" of spiritual practitioners.¹² Finally, it is worth noting that Tibetans frequently divide the Mahāyāna teachings into two, the wisdom lineage stemming from Nāgārjuna and the lineage of skill in means stemming from Asaṅga.

The mere fact that gender opposition appears in *Klog thabs* texts devoted to Tantric subjects, like *mantras*, is therefore not probative for a conclusion about the origins of *pho-mo* in *Sum rtags*, nor even about the Tantristic origins of the *pho-mo* scheme used in *Klog thabs*. Oddly enough, in an earlier publication Verhagen tells us:

¹¹ Cabezón 1992, 183.

¹² See Cabezón 1992, n. 14 and pages 185-186.

“So far I have not found other examples of the ‘gender’ terminology [i.e., classifying phonemes in terms of masculine, feminine and neuter] in the Vajrayāna literature.”¹³

It looks like there are no real reasons for ascribing specifically Tantric origins to this gendered classification of phonemes in *Sum rtags* and *Klog thabs* other than the general and well-known importance of sexual imagery in Tantra—but this, as I have argued, is not conclusive at all. As for *prajñā-upāya* duality in Si tu being seen as evidence of Tantrism, *the prajñā-upāya scheme is not exclusively, nor even predominantly, Tantric at all, even though it is very important to Tantra*. The *prajñā-upāya* duality with its gender associations is as much a feature of the Mahāyāna Buddhism of *sūtras* and the scholastic as of Tantric texts. I can’t see how the fact that Si tu spoke of *shes rab kyi rang bzhin* (“having the nature of *prajñā*”) and *thabs kyi rang bzhin* (“having the nature of *upāya*”) would come close to proving what Verhagen wishes it to prove.

Apart from the terms *āli-kāli* and the inconclusive *pho-mo* opposition, one is hard pressed to see anything else that counts as significant evidence of Tantric influence on *Sum rtags*. Verhagen himself seems reluctant to attach much importance to correspondences of phonemes with the elements and is skeptical about Miller’s claims that the description of graphs is traceable to Tantra or to Tantra’s predilection for the iconographical.¹⁴

¹³ Verhagen 1993, 334.

¹⁴ Cf. Verhagen 2001, 273-274: “Beyond this terminological correspondence, I would hesitate to speculate on a relation between these *Vajrayāna* phoneme-categories in terms of ‘elements’ and the symbolical function (or rather interpretation) of the phonemes in the Sanskrit alphabet that we find in the Śaiva Tantrism.” As for the descriptions of the graphs’ forms being evidence of Tantrism, Verhagen’s remarks on p. 275-276 are particularly relevant. I quote them in full: “Parenthetically I would like to add that the description of morphonemes in terms of their graphical form, as occurring in Tibetan indigenous linguistics, need not *per se* be traced to an origin in the Tantristic jargon, or to a Tantristic predilection for the visual, the iconographical. We find such descriptions, in terms of the visual form of the graph, in Vyākaraṇa as well, most notably in Durgasimpha’s *Kātantra-vṛtti* when it describes *visarga*, *jihvāmūliya* and *upadhmāniya* (two allophones of *visarga*), and *anusvāra*, as ‘having the form of a pair of girl’s breasts,’ ‘having the form of a *vajra*,’ ‘having the form of an elephant’s frontal globes,’ and ‘being a mere drop.’ The Tibetan commentators on *Kātantra* either take over this terminology, or—particularly in the later periods—adapt it to the form of the graph used in the Tibetan transcription.”

And as Verhagen himself seems to recognize,¹⁵ the other phenomena that have been advanced by Roy Miller as evidence of Tantrism—such as the use of the schema *sgra* and *don* (“word and meaning/object”) and the use of fourfold classifications, as well as the supposed sexual connotations in *‘jug pa*, *sbyor ba* and *ming gzhi*—are hardly worth serious consideration. Fourfold classifications are ubiquitous in Buddhism and Indian philosophy; as I had argued elsewhere, the use of *sgra don* is ubiquitous in Tibetan scholastic literature.¹⁶ As for the supposed sexual connotations in *‘jug pa*, etc., Verhagen says all he needs to when he diplomatically states:

“The observations [by Miller] on the ‘rich tantristic play-of-metaphor inherent in’ the technical terms *‘jug pa* (also meaning ‘to lie with a woman’) and *sbyor-ba* (also ‘to copulate’) in Miller (1993: 56 n. 39) and the juxtaposition of *ming-gzhi* with *g‘yang-gzhi* ‘an orgie in Tantric mysticism (...)’ in Miller (1993: 58 n. 41) are somewhat too trivial to be convincing.”¹⁷

In fact, the general impression that I have is that looking for influences of Tantrism in *Sum rtags* has been, and continues to be, a dead end. Indeed, would-be significant “Tantristic influence upon the *Sum rtags*” looks suspiciously as if it might well be one of those pieces of hyperbole that have been so repeated in academic circles that people end up thinking that they are true and of real consequence.¹⁸ The actual slimness of the evidence is worth stressing here, because later in the conclusions to

¹⁵ See, e.g., *ibid.* n. 609: “The erroneous standpoint that the dichotomy between *sgra* ‘words, phrases etc.’ and *don* ‘propositional content, purpose of a speech-act’ is an essentially and typically Tantristic notion ...” See also *ibid.* p. 334: “I am not wholly convinced that this predilection for fourfold grouping must necessarily be a specifically Tantristic notion. Note, for instance, the so-called *catuskoṭi*, the matrix of four complementary logical positions, which is Buddhist in origin—elsewhere proposed by Miller as a possible exemplar for certain aspects of *Sum rtags*, cf. *infra*—but which has no connection with Tantrism whatsoever.”

¹⁶ See Tillemans 1994, 129.

¹⁷ Verhagen 2001, n. 609. The references are to Miller 1993.

¹⁸ The idea figures repeatedly in Miller’s writings and also in those of Verhagen so that I suspect that there is a type of build-up and reinforcement by repetition. See e.g., Verhagen 1996, 427 where the Tantric origin of the *pho-mo* terminology is now referred to as having recently “come to light.”

his *History*, Verhagen (inspite of a guarded skepticism about most of Miller's claims) will also invoke the presence of Tantric influences as one of his major reasons for saying that Tibetan indigenous grammar has a "genuinely Buddhist stance."¹⁹ At most I would grant the presence of Buddhist elements in the use of the Abhidharmic interpretation of *ming* and *tshig* and in one or two curious terminological affinities with Tantra. That said, it's hard to see that the *view* of language underlying or developed by *Sum rtags* has anything more than an incidental and minor connection with Buddhism, let alone Buddhist Tantra. There is no notable role for any major Buddhist *doctrine* here, be it the semantic theory of *apoha*, momentariness, emptiness, or dependent arising, nor of course is there any *significant* Buddhist Tantric doctrine or theme, like the two stages of *anuttarayogatantra*, deity propitiation, *mantras*, Tantric moral discipline, vows, guru devotion, etc.

bdag, gzhan, and dngos po

Verhagen has a long, interesting, and informed discussion about the possible Indic background for *bdag* ("self"), *gzhan* ("other"), and *dngos po* ("entity," "object," "quality," "domain," "thing," etc.) in *Sum rtags* commentaries' accounts of the use of Tibetan prefixes (*sngon 'jug*). He could well be on the right track when he discerns in *bdag* and *gzhan* the implicit Indic principle of agents and active verbs being labeled similarly as *kartr* ("agent") and objects and passive verbs being labeled similarly as *karman* ("direct object"). Here is how Verhagen puts it:

"I assume that specifically the functioning of the *kāraka*-system in the labeling of predicate, agent and direct object in active and passive clauses may have served as the model, or perhaps rather the inspiration, for the *bdag/gzhan* description. Compare the identical syntactic-semantic labeling of agent and active VP (viz., *kartr*), and of the direct object and passive VP (viz., *karman*) in the *kāraka* system of Sanskrit grammar, with the analogous processes of categorizing agent (and instrument) and present (and imperative) tense VP identically as

¹⁹ Cf. Verhagen 2001, 332: "However, the author(s) of *Sum rtags* seem to have taken a genuinely Buddhist stance in their linguistic description."

bdag, and direct object and future (and perfect?) tense VP as *gzhan* in Tibetan grammar.²⁰

Verhagen will then argue in his discussion on p. 301ff., that it is in the light of this similarity of labeling that the use of the term *dngos po* in the definitions and explanations of *bdag* and *gzhan* is also to be situated. The point of saying that both the *byed pa/byed las* and the *dngos po* are termed *bdag* is, to take Verhagen's formulation, that both the "performed action" and "the nominal element [occupying the syntactic position] of the agent" are to be classified under the same label.²¹ Verhagen thus chooses to translate *dngos po* as the "nominal element" occupying a certain syntactic position; he rejects Tillemans and Herforth's rendition of *dngos po* by "entity"; he also rejects Miller's attempt to see *dngos po* as being the *bhāva*, or "verbal action *per se*," discussed in the Indic grammatical traditions.²²

I think that translating *dngos po* as the "nominal element" is justifiable with regard to Si tu and A kya Yongs 'dzin, although as we shall show, it looks ill-adapted to some other grammarians' versions of *dngos po*, where a whole panoply of translations (including "thing," "entity," "domain," etc.) end up partially justifiable depending upon which Tibetan author one follows. Against equivalences with *bhāva*, Verhagen argues that *dngos po* in *Sum rtags* does not have the sense of "meaning of a (Sanskrit) root or of the derived nominals"; like Tillemans 1994, he also rejects these attempts to see any connection here with so-called action nouns like *pāka* ("cooking"), etc. derived from roots like \sqrt{PAC} , etc.; he too rejects Miller's attempt to identity the *bdag* and *gzhan* of *Sum rtags* with (respectively) the rather *recherché* notions of *ābhyañtara* and *bāhya-bhāva* ("internal

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 298.

²¹ See *ibid.* p. 307-308. As for the translation of *byed pa* as "performed action," cf. p. 308: "In particular the translations 'performed action' and 'undergone action' for *byed pa* and *bya ba* should be regarded as tentative. I take *byed pa* as the VP-expressed action which is primarily correlated with the agent and which emphasizes the active aspect of the action, whereas *bya ba* is the VP-expressed action primarily connected with the direct object and representing the passive aspect. In many respects my interpretation of these terms approaches that of Tillemans and Herforth who passim translate *byed pa'i las* as 'act-qua-doing' and *bya ba'i las* as 'act-qua-thing-done,' or 'A[gent]-prominent action' and 'P[atient]-prominent action', respectively."

²² *Ibid.* p. 309-313.

and external action *per se*”) that crop up occasionally in the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali.²³

Verhagen, however, seems to want to go a bit further, at least if I’ve read him correctly. After noting several different uses of *dn̄gos po* in *Sum rtags*, he ends up putting forth the hypothesis that the Indic grammatical source for the term in the *rTags kyi ‘jug pa* commentaries is quite possibly *dravya*, i.e., the substance or concrete object often contrasted with *kriyā*, “action.” He argues that the equivalence, *dn̄gos po* = *dravya(tā)*, is attested on occasion and that this identification would also be compatible with the use of the word *dn̄gos po* in the *Sum cu pa* 20, where we find a treatment of several objects being described by the pronoun *de* (“that”).²⁴

Let me first attempt to take stock of what seems to me to emerge *validly* from his discussions.

A. Verhagen has, I think, laid to rest a number of spurious side-tracks concerning *dn̄gos po*, notably the equivalences with *bhāva* “verbal action *per se*,” as well as the attempts at equivalences between *dn̄gos po bdag*, *dn̄gos po gzhan*, and *ābhyantara-* and *bāhya-bhāva*, respectively. I think there is no question about this.

B. He has found a potentially important parallel in Indic grammar’s similar labeling of agents/objects and active/passive verb phrases. His explanation would also begin to explain Si tu’s idea that actions and *dn̄gos po* are classified together as *bdag* or *gzhan*. It is interesting that this point is never, as far as I can see, significantly explained by the Tibetan grammarians; one suspects that it was even somewhat mysterious for them. It would be understandable that the Indic context of similar labeling was not sufficiently clear to most commentators and that they therefore simply could not give much of a gloss on the matter.

What remains is to look at the relation between the Indic *dravya* and *dn̄gos po* more critically. In fact, it is not clear to me if Verhagen actually wishes to assert that *dn̄gos po* in *bdag/gzhan* contexts is the equivalent of *dravya* (just as, e.g., *las* is for *karman*). Some passages in Verhagen’s chapter on *dn̄gos po* do suggest this view, such as when he states,

²³ *Ibid.* p. 312-313. See Miller 1992 and my reply in Tillemans 1994.

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 315.

“It seems quite plausible, if we insist on applying an Indic gloss to the term *dn̄gos po* in this context, to choose *dravya* in the sense of ‘[element expressing] substance’, i.e., a nominal (compare the term “substantive”) or an NP, here related to a specific syntactic function.”²⁵

Other characterizations, such as *dravya* being simply a “possible model, or perhaps more aptly inspiration, for this *dn̄gos po* concept”²⁶ seem to advance a much looser connection, and I’m not sure that I actually understand what this connection is. In the crucial places, the argument is probably *too* cautious.

The unclarity needs to be better resolved if this type of argument about terminological ancestry is to have much weight. Let us for our purposes distinguish between a modest and a stronger claim. The modest claim would be that the idea of *dravya* somehow made its way into *Sum rtags* and somehow served as a “model” or “inspiration”— this would be in keeping with Verhagen’s earlier characterization of the influence of the Indic similar labeling principle on *bdag* and *gzhan* as being an “inspiration.” Seeing some antecedent *inspiration* for *dn̄gos po* in the Indic grammarians’ notion of *dravya* might be an acceptable, albeit extremely vague, modest claim, if what was meant was simply that there were some interesting/significant parallel ideas and principles lying behind the *dn̄gos po* in some or several *Sum rtags* texts and the *dravya* of Vyākaraṇa. Of course, it will remain beyond us to say how this “inspirational” process actually worked in history and came to influence Tibetan grammarians. But leave that aside: it is in any case something else to make the stronger and more precise claim, to which Verhagen seems to lean on occasion, that *dn̄gos po* in the *Sum cu pa* 20 and in the commentaries on the *rTags kyi* ‘jug pa’s account of prefixes and suffixes is the Tibetan equivalent of a particular use of *dravya*. The equivalence *dn̄gos po* = *dravya* is relatively rare and the equivalence *rdzas* = *dravya* so very common that if one wants to argue for the applicability in *Sum rtags* of this rare equivalence one has to find some strong textual evidence from some type of well-known Sanskrit grammatical or philosophical literature translated into Tibetan and having a clear influence on *Sum rtags*. Verhagen doesn’t do that. He gives

²⁵ Verhagen 2001, 314.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 314.

parallels between the concepts involved—which would perhaps partially corroborate what I’m terming the “modest claim”—but nothing much to support the stronger claim, except one entry from the *Mahāvyutpatti* (i.e., 8510) and the fact that S.C. Das and Tshe ring dbang rgyal (ed. Bacot) gave this equivalence in their dictionaries (that date from the 1930’s and before).²⁷ This is inadequate evidence upon which to base the stronger claim.

In fact, I doubt that the vaguer “modest claim” about terminological inspiration is ever going to be convincing unless someone can adequately explain why *dnegos po*, in several perfectly competent grammarians’ accounts, is not *just* used for agents and objects, but is *also* used for actions, i.e., for what an Indian grammarian would term *kriyā*—in fact, as we shall see, there seems to be a rather striking lack of consensus about its use amongst Tibetan grammarians. As Verhagen himself stated, recognizing the potential problem in his own account:

“In any case, once we assume that the *dnegos po* categorization can (at least occasionally) include the verbal argument as well, it is evident that the translations ‘entity,’ as proposed by Tillemans and Herforth, or ‘nominal element [associated with a specific syntactical position]’, as I have suggested, for *dnegos po* will not be adequate to cover each and every instance of the use of the term anymore.”²⁸

Verhagen will later on dismiss these problematic occurrences of *dnegos po* as “sporadic,” or as due to imprecise usage of polysemic and “multivalent terminology,”²⁹ and hence of relative insignificance, sticking with his earlier argument that “in Si tu’s definitions of *bdag* and *gzhan*, as well

²⁷ *Ibid.* n. 539.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 317.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 317: “However, such use of the term *dnegos po* for both nominal and verbal arguments is sporadic. And, of course, polysemy or multifunctionality of technical terms and the unannounced switching of codes and meanings, are frequent phenomena within *Sum rtags*. In the light of this tendency of multivalent terminology, and, especially, on account of the clearly predominant use of the term *dnegos po* for the nominal category, it is justified, in my opinion, to maintain the hypotheses that I have set forth here with regard to the meaning of the term *dnegos po* and the assumption of an Indic model in the term *dravya*.”

as in the other available exegesis of these concepts, the term *dnegos po* is unmistakably primarily related to the syntactic functions of ‘agent’, ‘instrument,’ and ‘direct object,’ functions typically and exclusively attributed to nominal elements.”³⁰

Let’s try to be fair to the data from Tibetan texts. There is quite a mind-boggling variety in the uses of *dnegos po* in the *bdag* and *gzhan* context that is not due to the polysemy of the term, or looseness of usage, but rather is due to different grammarians having different *ideas* about what *dnegos po* is in this context. The English translations could thus differ considerably depending upon which of the differing theories we adopt as being the preferable one. There are, for example, important writers, like the dNgul chu Dharmabhadra (1772-1851), dByangs can Grub pa’i rdo rje (1809-1887), and, I think, quite a few modern Tibetan grammarians,³¹ who *do* use *dnegos po* to designate actions. dNgul chu and dByangs can Grub pa’i rdo rje, for example, classify *both* (*gnyis*, *gnyis po*) the agent (*byed pa po*) and the act-qua-doing (*byed las*) as *dnegos po bdag* and *both* the direct object, i.e., the focus of the action (*bya ba’i yul*), and the act-qua-thing-done (*bya las*) as *dnegos po gzhan*.³² The contemporary grammarian, sKal

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 311.

³¹ For example, the modern grammarian dMu dge bsam gtan (1914-1993), in his *Bod kyi yi ge’i spyi rnam blo gsal* ‘jug ngogs, when explaining the prefixes *da*, *ga*, and ‘*a*, uses *dnegos po bdag* and *dnegos po gzhan* with no more specificity than just what is expressed by *bdag* and *gzhan*. See his p. 92: *sngon* ‘jug gi ma ning ga dang da gnyis ni / *dnegos po bdag gzhan gnyis dang* / *dus da lta ba ston pa’i ched du* ‘jug (/) *sngon* ‘jug gi mo ‘a yig ni / *dnegos po bdag gzhan gnyis las gtso cher bdag la* ‘jug pa dang / *dus gsum las da lta ba dang ma* ‘ongs pa ston pa’i ched du ‘jug go // *sngon* ‘jug gi shin tu mo ma yig ni *dnegos po bdag gzhan gnyis dang* / *dus gsum ga la khyad med du mnyam par* ‘jug pa yin no //.

³² See e.g., dNgul chu’s *Si tu’i zhal lung* p. 51 where he explains the use of *g-* and *d-* prefixed forms to show *dnegos po bdag* and *dnegos po gzhan*—here he clearly includes under *dnegos po bdag/dnegos po gzhan* numerous verbal forms, like *gcod par byed*, *gcod do*, *dgag go* etc., along with the usual nominal forms like *gcod pa po*, *gcad bya*, *gcod byed*, etc. The text is as follows: *sngon* ‘jug gi ma ning ga da dag ni shing *gcod pa po* / *gcod byed* / *skyon dgag pa po* / *dgag byed lta bu byed pa po’i dnegos po dang* / *gcod par byed* / *gcod do* / *dgag par byed* / *dgag go* / *lta bu byed pa po dang* ‘brel ba’i byed las gsal byed kyi sgra gnyis *bdag gi dnegos po dang* / *gdam pa* / *gzung ba* / *gcad bya* / *gcad par bya ba* / *gcad bya’i shing* / *dgag bya* / *dgag par bya bya* / *dgag bya’i skyon lta bu byed pa po gzhan dang dnegos su* ‘brel ba’i bya ba’i yul gyi *dnegos po dang* / *gcad par bya* / *gcad do* / *dgag par bya* / *dgag go* / *lta bu bya ba’i yul dang* ‘brel ba’i bya ba gsal byed

bzang ‘gyur med, whose work has been (in part) translated by Heather Stoddard and Nicolas Tournadre, does something quite similar, adapting the usual definition of *bdag* and *gzhan* in Si tu so that instead of saying that the agents, objects, and actions “... are called *bdag/gzhan* (*bdag ces bya/gzhan ces bya*),” it says that the agents, objects, and actions are “called *dngos po bdag/dngos po gzhan*.”³³ Not without justification, Stoddard and Tournadre end up translating sKal bzang ‘gyur med’s use of *dngos po bdag gzhan* as “les domaines agentif et objectif.”³⁴ One may quibble as to whether “domaine” is the best solution, but one thing that is clear is that sKal bzang ‘gyur med, dNgul chu Dharmabhadra, and dByangs can Grub pa’i rdo rje are not just speaking of nominal elements when they use *dngos po*. As we shall see below in a passage from a nineteenth century grammarian translated below, there were most likely *several* grammatical schools who in one way or another endorsed the applicability of *dngos po* to actions.

In short, the use of *dngos po* for actions does, I think, need to be taken much more seriously than saying it is simply “sporadic” or loose. I think Verhagen is right in stressing that *dngos po*, in Si tu and A kya Yongs ‘dzin, is predominantly, or primarily, the agent and object. No problem about that. But he’s on much shakier ground when he talks about this being so in “other available exegesis of these concepts.”

In a note to my introduction to Tillemans and Herforth 1989, I had said that we focused on Si tu and A kya Yongs ‘dzin’s position for the sake of simplicity—I felt we had to deliberately simplify in order to be

kyi sgra gnyis gzhan gyi dngos po ste /. See also dByangs can Grub pa’i rdo rje’s *rTags ‘jug dka’gnad gsal ba’i me long*, p. 81: *las gang zhig la byed pa po / gzhan dang dngos su ‘brel ba yi / dbang du byas nas byed po dang / de yi byed pa gnyis po ni / dngos po bdag yin bya yul dang / bya ba gnyis po dngos po gzhan /*.

³³ For Si tu’s definition, see AACT, 62-63, §1; Verhagen 2001, 307. For sKal bzang ‘gyur med’s version, see his pages 377-378: *bdag gzhan gyi go don—bya ba gang zhig byed pa po gzhan dang dngos su ‘brel ba’i dbang du byas nas / byed pa po’i dngos po de nyid dang / de’i byed pa / de dang ‘brel ba’i byed las da lta ba bcas la dngos po bdag ces bya zhing / byed pa po bsgrub par bya ba’i yul gyi dngos po dang las kyi dngos po / de dang ‘brel ba’i bya las ma ‘ongs pa bcas la dngos po gzhan zhes bya’o //*.

³⁴ Stoddard and Tournadre 1992, 262 *et seq.*

comprehensible.³⁵ Thus we concentrated on these two important authors' understandings, all the while acknowledging at least some of the differences here and there in a footnote and in the glossary. Probably I should have expressed more caution and warnings than just a long footnote about the complexity of the historical positions on *dn̄gos po*. *Mea culpa*. Below we'll look again at the details of the positions on *dn̄gos po* that seem to occur in Tibetan grammatical writings. In any case, I think it will be apparent that while simplification for expository purposes is one thing, saying that the doctrine of *dn̄gos po* is such and so and that the rest is sporadic and to be discounted is another. The problem is that Verhagen, in his argument about Indic terminological ancestry, has to satisfactorily *explain away* the several major differences amongst Tibetan authors. After all, the nerve of his evidence is just that *dn̄gos po* in the Tibetan grammatical contexts is essentially similar to *dravya*.

I can perhaps imagine the following possible Verhagen-style attempt at such an explanation: using *dn̄gos po* for actions may well be similar to what happens in general in *bdag* and *gzhan*, i.e., the terms apply primarily to agents and objects/patients and then derivatively to the respective actions. In short we may well have here with *dn̄gos po* another variant upon the similar labeling of nominal and verbal elements that Verhagen noticed in Vyākaraṇa and hence in *bdag* and *gzhan*: agents, objects/patients, and also (on occasion) actions will be termed *dn̄gos po* because of a similar labeling of the nominal and verbal.

This would be a valiant try and it is about as far as I can, or want to go in trying to save *dravya* as the ancestor, inspiration, model, etc., of *dn̄gos po*. It would be *too* much of an attempt to save the theory over the refuting data. The real point I want to make, after this rather long excursus about strong and modest claims, is that the attempt to understand the *bdag* and *gzhan* concepts via Indic antecedent terms is by and large a failure, no matter which claim we adopt. Although the method of finding Indic antecedent terms works very well in some areas of *Sum rtags*—as Verhagen skillfully shows—it sinks into speculative quicksand when we get to *bdag* and *gzhan*. Berthold Laufer had “seen” *ātmanepada* and *parasmaipada* as the origins, Roy Miller had “seen” *ābhyaṅtara*-/bāhyabhāva, and I would tend to say that speculation about *dravya* is going down the same route: the

³⁵ AACT, 6-7, n. 11.

data will not fit here either. The most we can say is that on such and such a grammarian's interpretation, *bdag* and *gzhan* concepts and terms may start to look more recognizably similar to Indian terminological antecedents, but that as soon as we shift to another grammarian these Indic antecedents often start to look less plausible and sometimes look impossible.

Let me support this largely pessimistic assessment with some sobering passages showing the incredible diversity of positions that one finds amongst Tibetan grammarians, not just with regard to *dnegos po*, but also with regard to key terms like *bya ba'i yul* and hence also the basics of *bdag* and *gzhan*. Because the positions are so different it becomes impossible to find one adequate translation for all these understandings of *dnegos po*—be it “thing,” “entity,” “domain,” or “nominal element.” I thus have no choice but to bite the bullet and leave *dnegos po* in Tibetan. The passages to be analysed come from the celebrated late nineteenth century-early twentieth century scholar, dKar lebs drung yig Pad ma rdo rje (born 1858), a.k.a. O rgyan rdo rje, who has a long and very valuable explanation of the history of Tibetan accounts of *bdag* and *gzhan* and *dnegos po* in his *rTags 'jug dka' gnad snying po rabs gsal gyi 'grel pa mtha' dpyod dvangs shel me long* (henceforth *Dvangs shel me long*). I should mention straight off that this text is the one that had been partially, and badly, translated by Jacques Durr in 1950 and attributed by him to a certain Don 'grub, who supposedly, according to Durr's misunderstanding of the colophon, lived in the eighteenth century.³⁶ In fairness, however, it should be said that Durr's effort was genuinely pioneering in a period where very little was available and that the Tibetan text he used shows considerable differences from the one we now have at our disposal. The text we are using is that edited by Chab spel Tshe brtan phun tshogs and Ma grong Mi 'gyur rdo rje, and published in a collection of this grammarian's works grouped under the general title *dKar lebs sum rtags dka' 'grel*. Let us first begin with a passage where dKar lebs drung yig Pad ma rdo rje (henceforth just “Pad ma rdo rje”) summarizes four positions, or perhaps even four “schools of thought” (*lugs*), on *dnegos po*.

ci yin zhe na 'grel pa la lar byed pa po'i dnegos po de nyid dang / bya ba'i yul gyi dnegos po bya ba dang bcas pa zhes dang / dper brjod skabs /

³⁶ See AACT, 10, n. 18.

byed pa po bdag gi dngos po'i sgra ni / sgrub pa po / sgrub byed ces sogs / byed po dang bya ba gnyis dngos por bzhed pa'i lugs gcig (/ yang la lar / dngos po bdag dang / dngos po gzhan dang / dngos po bdag gzhan gnyis ka dang / bya ba'i yul gyi dngos po zhes sogs bzhir bzhed pa'i lugs gcig / yang la lar byed po dang byed pa gnyis ka dngos po bdag dang / bya yul dang bya ba gnyis ka dngos po gzhan zhes byed po dang / byed pa / bya yul / bya gzhi dang / shugs kyis byed las dang / bya las bcas dngos po drug tu bzhed pa'i lugs gcig / yang la lar byed pa po mi'i dngos po de nyid dang / yul gyi dngos po shing de zhes sogs dngos po bzhir bzhed la de'ang mi'i dngos po de nyid ces pa mi kho rang la zer ram / rdzas dngos la zer ci yin nges pa med pa'i lugs gcig bcas snang ba... /

“Why [do people misunderstand *dngos po*]? (1) One position is that in one commentary [i.e., Si tu], it is said ‘the *dngos po* of [or: which is] the agent itself and the *dngos po* of [or: which is] the focus of the action (*bya ba'i yul*) along with the [undergone] action (*bya ba*),’ and when [Si tu] gives examples he says ‘the expressions for the agent, i.e., for the *bdag gi dngos po*, are: ‘establisher’ and ‘means of establishing’,’ and so on and so forth. [According to this position] the agent (*byed po*) and the [undergone] action (*bya ba*) are both held to be *dngos po*. (2) Another position is that in another [commentary] it is said ‘the *dngos po* which is self (*dngos po bdag*), the *dngos po* which is other (*dngos po gzhan*), the *dngos po* which is both self and other (*dngos po bdag gzhan gnyis ka*), and the *dngos po* of [or: which is] the focus of the action (*bya ba'i yul gyi dngos po*)’ and so on. [According to this position] it [i.e., *dngos po*] is held to be fourfold. (3) Another position is that in yet another [commentary] it is said, ‘the agent (*byed po*) and the instrument (*byed pa*) are both the *dngos po* which is self (*dngos po bdag*), while the focus of the action (*bya ba'i yul*) and the [undergone] action (*bya ba*) are both the *dngos po* which is other (*dngos po gzhan*).’ [According to this position], the agent, instrument, the focus of the action, the basis of the action (*bya gzhi*), and, by implication, the act-qua-doing (*byed las*), and act-qua-thing-done (*bya las*), are held to constitute six *dngos po*. (4) And another position is that in yet another [commentary] it is said ‘the very *dngos po* of [or: which is] the person who is the agent (*byed pa po mi'i dngos po de nyid*) and the *dngos po* of [or: which is] the focus, i.e., the wood’ and so forth. [According to this position] *dngos po* is held to be fourfold. But when it says ‘the very *dngos po*

of [or: which is] the person,' there is no certainty whether [the text] is talking about the person himself (*mi kho rang*) or a thing (*rdzas dngos*) [belonging to him]. There seem to be all these [four positions]."³⁷

The passage cited in position (1) is recognizably from the section on *bdag* and *gzhan* in Si tu Paṇ chen's *mKhas pa'i mgul rgyan*, so that we can say that, at least following Pad ma rdo rje, this supposedly presents Si tu's view on the matter.³⁸ As for (2) we can be confident that this is the position of Ri bo mDangs mkhan rin po che, who was, according to Pad ma rdo rje, one of the "great intermediate period scholars" (*bar skabs kyi mkhas pa chen po*), in the same period as Si tu, dNgul chu, dNgul chu's disciple dByangs can Grub pa'i rdo rje, and mKhas dbang lHag bsam.³⁹ Unfortunately I have no exact dates or precise titles for the text(s) of this author, but at least we can see that earlier in the *Dvangs shel me long*, Pad ma rdo rje cites part of this same verse from a text of mDangs mkhan rin po che.⁴⁰ As for the other two positions, I cannot ascertain who held them; their attribution will have to remain open. Ironically, one of the terms that Pad ma rdo rje uses in (4) is *rdzas dngos*. That said, it is obvious that the term is not being used in a technical Vyākaraṇa sense of *dravya*, but rather to formulate a simple dichotomy between people (*mi*) and inanimate things (*rdzas dngos*). Note that Pad ma rdo rje himself, in his own account

³⁷ *Dvangs shel me long*, p. 81. Note that, in the passage, the interpretation of the genitive case linking *dngos po* to *byed pa po*, *bya ba'i yul*, etc., is unclear, so that either a possessive or an appositive rendering is possible.

³⁸ See the text and translation in AACT, 62-63, §1.

³⁹ See *Dvang shel me long* p. 60: *bar skabs kyi mkhas pa chen po kun mkhyen Si tu / rje dNgul chu ba yab sras / mDangs can mkhan rin po che / mKhas dbang lhag bsam pa bcas... /*

⁴⁰ Interestingly enough, Pad ma rdo rje states that Si tu, dNgul chu, and lHag bsam held pretty much the same position that agents and instruments were *dngos po bdag* and the focus (*yul*) and the action (*bya ba*) were *dngos po gzhan*. *Dvangs shel me long* p. 62: *Si dNgul lHag bsam byed po dang byed pa la dngos po bdag dang / bya yul dang bya ba la dngos po gzhan du bzhed kyang / mDangs mkhan rin po ches tshigs bcad du / dngos po bdag gzhan gnyis ka dang bya ba'i yul dang rnam pa bzhi / zhes bzhi ru'ang bzhed do* // Schubert 1937, 7-9 discusses a commentary on *Sum rtags* by lHag bsam, who is most likely Karma smon lam lHag bsam bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan of dPal spungs monastery, the nineteenth century author of *Sum rtags 'brel pa legs bshad snang ba dam pa* (full title: *Bod kyi brda sprod pa'i gzhung sum cu pa dang rtags kyi 'jug pa nyung ngur shig gis go sla bar bkral ba legs bshad snang ba dam pa*, TBRC Resource ID no. W8LS19987).

of woodcutting and *dnegos po* (that we will translate below) clearly *holds* that the *dnegos po* is indeed just the inanimate thing, i.e., the axe or knife.

It is worth mentioning that elsewhere in his *Dvangs shel me long* Pad ma rdo rje distinguishes three schools of thought on *dnegos po* and classifies the positions of numerous writers, from dBus pa blo gsal (first half of the fourteenth century) and Śākya mchog ldan (1428-1507) to Si tu and dNgul chu, in this threefold schema. Again, the panoply of positions is quite extraordinary.⁴¹ For our purposes, what immediately emerges from this passage and the one translated above is the utter lack of consensus in Tibetan grammarians' use and explanation of *dnegos po*. That said, it is at least quite clear that several major writers are said to classify actions as *dnegos po*. I think the consequences of taking Pad ma rdo rje's account seriously would thus be twofold: (1) The term *dnegos po* would, as I said earlier, be impossible to translate in a way that would meaningfully capture all the major Tibetan positions; (2) The potential problem that Verhagen sees with his own account of *dnegos po* and *dravya* (viz., the fact that *dnegos po* is sometimes used for verbal elements and not just nominal elements) would remain and would be accentuated.

Finally, let's look at Pad ma rdo rje's own take on the infamous woodcutting example that is invariably at the heart of these discussions. It should be apparent that not only is *dnegos po* taken in a peculiar way, but so is *bya ba'i yul*.

bcad 'di la bltos nas bdag gzhan dus gsum du dbye dgos te / dper na shing gcod mkhan / shing gcod pa po / shing gcod po rnams don gcig ste byed pa po dang / gcod byed ces pa gri'am sta re sogs byed pa po'i dnegos po de yin / shing gcod par byed ces pa byed po bdag la yod pa'i las sta re shing la rdeg stangs kyi 'du byed de yin / gcod par byed ces pa byed po'i dnegos po sta re ma gsal ba'i byed las gsal byed rnams la bdag ces bya zhing / shing gcad bya'i yul / gcad rgyu'i sa cha / shing gcad sa rnams don gcig ste lchang ra'am nags tshal lta bu / gcad bya'i shing / gcad bya / gcad rgyu zhes pa rnams don gcig ste bya ba'i dnegos po shing sdong lta bu dang / shing gcad par bya zhes pa bya ba gzhi la yod pa'i las yin ste sta re shing la zug shul nas shing shog brul ba'i nyag ltong gi rnam 'gyur de'o //.*

⁴¹ The relevant passage is translated in AACT, 9-10.

“Looking at ‘to cut,’ we should distinguish it according to self (*bdag*), other (*gzhan*), and the three times. For example, the terms [for ‘woodcutter’] *shing gcod mkhan*, *shing gcod pa po*, and *shing gcod po* all mean the same, i.e., the agent (*byed pa po*). Moreover, the *gcod byed* (‘means of cutting’), viz., a knife or an axe, etc., is the *byed pa po*’i *dnegos po* (‘[concrete] entity belonging to the agent’). *Shing gcod par byed* (‘... cuts the wood’) is the act belonging to the agent, i.e., to *bdag*, namely, it is the conditioning factor consisting in the manner the axe strikes the wood. We term *bdag* the expressions for the act-qua-doing (*byed las*) that do not express the *dnegos po* (‘[concrete] entity’), the axe, such as *shing gcod par byed*. The terms [for ‘the place where the wood is to be cut’] *shing gcad bya*’i *yul*, *gcad rgyu*’i *sa cha*, *shing gcad sa* all mean the same, viz., the grove or the forest. The terms [for ‘the wood to be cut’] *gcad bya*’i *shing*, *gcad bya*, *gcad rgyu* all mean the same, i.e., the *bya ba*’i *dnegos po* (‘[concrete] entity pertaining to / belonging to the undergone action’), namely, the tree. And when one says *shing gcad par bya* (‘the wood is cut/is to be cut’), this [expresses] the act that belongs to the action’s basis, that is to say, this is the transformation of notches into fallen woodchips where the axe had pierced the wood.”⁴²

*The text reads *bcad par bya*, which is surely wrong.

A number of things emerge. First, Pad ma rdo rje adheres to the general idea that *dnegos po* is only a thing or substance (represented by a noun), but instead of saying that the agent (e.g., the woodcutter) and the instrument (e.g., the axe) are *dnegos po*, he says it is just the instrument (e.g., the axe) that is classified as *dnegos po*—in the case of *gzhan* it is just the thing acted upon (e.g., the wood) that is *dnegos po*. Pad ma rdo rje, in effect, seems to take the genitive in the specification *byed pa po*’i *dnegos po* in Si tu’s definition of *bdag* and *gzhan* as being a simple possessive. The meaning is then “the concrete entity/thing of, or belonging to, the agent,” or if we take the woodcutting example, it is just the axe of the woodcutter.

⁴² *Dvangs shel me long*, p. 69-70. The translation of *dnegos po* as “concrete entity” here is in keeping with Pad ma rdo rje’s own position that *dnegos po* is a garden-variety, macroscopic thing, like an axe or a tree.

Second, Pad ma rdo rje includes under *gzhan* the place where the action happens—e.g., the place for woodcutting (*shing gcad sa, gcad rgyu'i sa cha*), viz., the forest—in addition to the direct object (the wood) and the action that the wood undergoes. This is no minor point, and in fact sKal bzang 'gyur med has the same position. In effect, these grammarians are interpreting the term *bya ba'i yul*—which we had translated as “focus of the action” and which on A kya Yongs 'dzin's interpretation meant simply the direct object/patient (i.e., the wood)—as meaning the “place of the action.” In fact, while A kya Yongs 'dzin and others, like dNgul chu and dByangs can Grub pa'i rdo rje, take *bya ba'i yul* as meaning the same as *las* (“the direct object”/“patient,” *karman*),⁴³ sKal bzang 'gyur med explicitly argues against that view, saying that the *bya ba'i yul* will take a *la* particle (indicating a locative) and that the *las* should not. Although sKal bzang 'gyur med does not explicitly acknowledge where his own position came from, it certainly appears to at least go back to Pad ma rdo rje and probably considerably further. I'll leave open the historical investigation as to who was behind Pad ma rdo rje's own position. It would be nice if the *bya ba'i yul* taken as a locative was just a sporadic lapsus in chapters on self and other, but I think it's not. The inclusion of “the place of the action” in *gzhan* badly muddies the waters, especially if we see a correspondence between *bya ba'i yul* and *bya ba/bya las* being similarly labeled *gzhan* and the Indic idea of direct objects and passive verbs having a similar labeling as *karman*. Probably, in large part, the problem is that *yul* is triply ambiguous, meaning not only “object,” but “place,” and “goal”: there are thus also locative and even dative senses to *bya ba'i yul*, even though, all things considered, the principal one in the context of self and other certainly has to be *las*, the object.⁴⁴

It's time to conclude this somewhat deliberately provoked series of confusions and arrive at a methodological principle: *bdag* and *gzhan* is

⁴³ See n. 32 above.

⁴⁴ AACT, 101, s.v. *bya ba'i yul*. Note that gSer tog Blo bzang tshul khriims rgya mtsho (1845-1915) recognizes that *bya ba'i yul* can have a dative sense, meaning the goal of the action, as when he glosses *phyug por 'gro ba'i ched du* (“for the sake of getting rich”) as the *bya ba'i yul* of paupers diligently seeking wealth (*dbul pos 'bad pas nor btsal*). See chapter XII, §§3-5. In the numerous other occurrences of the term *bya ba'i yul* in gSer tog's discussion of self and other, however, it is clearly equivalent to *las*, “the object.”

not a subject whose mysteries will be significantly elucidated by the usual indological methods of tracing Sanskrit original terms. The temptation has been great (and probably still is great) to find “essential” uses of *bdag*, *gzhan*, and *dnegos po* and dismiss the others by finding *the right* Indic antecedent—we feel we can then cut to the essence and dismiss the rest as irrelevant, or as some type of confusion or loose usage. This type of methodology needs to be better seen for what it is, a natural *a priori* of an indologically educated reader of Tibetan texts. Of course, looking for *the right* Sanskrit term is not *always* a waste of time—far from it. But it is a strategy that often need serious challenging, case by case. It is my contention that while it may work in many areas of Tibetan grammar, in dealing with the most recalcitrant subjects, like *bdag*, *gzhan*, and *dnegos po*, it has been and continues to be, more self-stultifying than fertile. What we can say is that there were a few Tibetan grammarians, like Si tu, who explicitly recognized a connection between *bdag* and *gzhan* and Sanskrit voices⁴⁵ and that there may well be a similar labeling principle at work, but the search for the actual terminological ancestry in India continues to come up short.

The case of *dnegos po* and *dravya* should be instructive, for if we are true to the Tibetan texts in their variety, we cannot reasonably come up with Indic ancestors like *dravya*, especially if the only argument we have to offer is some supposedly striking similarity between the use of *dravya* in Vyākaraṇa and the use of *dnegos po* in *Sum rtags* literature. The upshot is that genuine understanding of what were traditionally called the “difficult points” (*dka' gnad*) of the *rTags kyi 'jug pa* (viz., *bdag*, *gzhan*, and related notions) is to be gained primarily by tibetological methods. There is no substitute for carefully reading, translating, and comparing a lot of different Tibetan *Sum rtags* treatises, trying to discern patterns and identify indigenous schools with their indigenous debates. When the going gets hard on these “difficult points,” India has surprisingly little help to offer.

⁴⁵ See Verhagen 2001, 299.

XII. The Chapter on *bdag*, *gzhan*, and *bya byed las gsum* from the Commentary of gSer tog Blo bzang tshul khrims rgya mtsho on the *Sum cu pa* and *rTags kyi 'jug pa*

§1. [137] With regard to the fourth [heading], i.e., “for what purpose are the [prefixes] applied?”, there are the following two [subheadings]: 1. a brief explanation of actions (*bya* = *bya ba*, *kriyā*), agents (*byed* = *byed pa po*, *kartr*) and objects (*las*, *karman*). 2. the actual explanation as to how the [prefixes] are applied.

§2. [138] 1. Since those who do not direct their minds properly to the meaning of [terms] such as “actions,” “agents,” “objects,” “self” (*bdag*), “other” (*gzhan*), “past” (*'das*), “future” (*ma 'ongs*), [and] “present” (*da lta ba*) do not understand the meaning of the *rTags kyi 'jug pa* conclusively, let me therefore explain a bit [what these terms mean]. While there are a few differences in the division of actions, agents, and objects according to whether the [verb] is or is not in relation with a distinct agent, nonetheless, to take the main points, the performance (*bgyi ba*) by an agent of that act (*las su bya ba*)¹ which is to be performed is termed “action,” the principal agent (*byed pa po gtso bo*) and secondary agent (*byed pa phal ba*) of that action are both termed “agents (*byed pa* = *byed pa po*),” and the object which is a focus of the action (*bya ba 'i yul*) is termed “object” (*las*).

§3. Let's explain these [notions] on the basis of some examples. When one says

¹ I take *las su bya ba* here in the sense of “act” and not in its well-known technical sense where it means the second Sanskrit case, i.e., accusative, and especially the use of the Tibetan particle *la* in the accusative. Note that *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* s.v. *las su bya ba* gives *bya ba byed pa*—which can be “thing-done and doing” (cf. n. 3 on Bra ti dge bshes) or simply “doing an action”—as the first sense. The technical sense is presented as the second explanation in that dictionary.

“For the sake of getting rich, wealth is/will be sought after with diligence by paupers,”

getting rich is a focus of the action, the pauper is the principal agent, diligence is the secondary agent, wealth is the actual object and “... being sought after” is the actual action.

§4. When one says

“For the sake of initiation, the hands hold a vase,”

initiation is a focus of the action, the hands are the agent, the vase is the object, and holding is the action.

§5. When one says

“For ablution, a vase is to be held,”

ablution is a focus of the action, vase is the object, being held is the action. The agent has to be indirectly understood (*shugs las rtogs pa*).

§6. When one says

“He holds a vase,”

the vase is the object, holding is the action. By saying *byed* [in ‘*dzin par byed*] one indicates the agent [i.e., “he”].

§7. As for the meaning of the twofold division into self and other, in this context when we speak of “self” and “other,” we should not understand simply the self and other as when we generally [i.e., ordinarily] differentiate [one] self and other [people]. Rather, the agent (*byed pa po*) and instrument (*byed pa*)² of an act and the act-qua-doing (*byed pa’i las*) are said to be self, while the focus of the action (*bya ba’i yul*), the [undergone] action [i.e., “thing-done”] (*bya ba*), and the act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba’i las*) are said to be other.³

² Here *byed pa* has to be taken in its sense of “the instrument” (= *karaṇa*). See AACT p. 6 and pp. 101-102, s.v. *byed pa*.

³ Cf. Si tu p. 193: *pho ni ‘das dang gzhan bsgrub phyir // zhes sogs kyi go don dpyis phyin par byed pa la / thog mar ‘di shes dgos te / las gang zhig byed pa po gzhan dang dngos su ‘brel ba’i dbang du byas nas / byed pa po’i dngos po de nyid dang de’i byed pa dang*

§8. [139] Now, when a pauper diligently seeks wealth, then in terms of the two [aspects] that pertain to the act [of wealth-seeking] in question at that time—i.e., the act that is to be done (*bya rgyu'i las*) and the act that one is now doing (*byed bzhin pa'i las*)—the act of seeking the wealth now (*nor 'tshol bzhin pa'i las*) is [classifiable as] the act that he [i.e., the pauper] is doing now (*byed bzhin pa'i las*). Thus, in terms of self and other it is [classified under] the entity self (*dnegos po bdag*), and it is termed “the act that pertains to the agent” (*byed pa po la yod pa'i las*), “the present act” (*da lta ba'i las*), and “the act of seeking” (*'tshol bar byed pa'i las*). But seeking and then finding the wealth is the act that is to be done (*bya rgyu'i las*), and thus in terms of self and other it is [classified under] the entity other (*dnegos po gzhan*), and it is termed “the act that pertains to the focus of the action” (*bya ba yul la yod pa'i las*), “the future act that is to

bcas pa la ni bdag ces bya zhing / des bsgrub par bya ba'i yul gyi dnegos po bya ba dang bcas pa la ni gzhan zhes bya'o //. “The masculine [prefix *b-*] is for establishing the past and other.’ To achieve a thorough understanding of the sense of this and the rest [of śloka twelve in the *rTags gyi 'jug pa*], one must first be aware of the following: Given some act directly related with a distinct agent (*byed pa po gzhan*), then that very entity (*dnegos po*) which is the agent and its ‘doing’ (*de'i byed pa*) are termed ‘self.’ The entity which is the focus (*yul*) to be established by that [agent] as well as that thing which is to be done (*bya ba*) are termed ‘other.’” See Tillemans 1988, 491 *et seq.*; AACT 4-8, 62-63. For the two senses of *bya ba*, i.e., action taken in a general sense and the “patient-prominent” sense of “thing-done,” see AACT 71, n. 2. In the latter sense it is contrasted with *byed pa* (“doing”) and becomes a particular type of action. Cf. Bra ti dge bshes *rTags kyi 'jug pa'i dgongs 'grel*, p. 162: *las ni bya ba byed pa gnyis /*. “The act is of two sorts: thing-done and doing.” Finally, note that the term *bya ba'i yul* is also used differently on occasion by indigenous grammarians. In the preceding and subsequent paragraphs, *gSer tog* uses the term *bya ba'i yul* (“focus of the action”) in two ways: 1. in the sense of object (*las* = *karman*) or patient of the action, expressed by an accusative case. 2. as the goal of the action, expressed by a dative. The first sense is what figures in the traditional definition of self and other and is no doubt the main use in most traditional exegeses of śloka twelve, including that of *gSer tog sum rtags* (see §§2, 9, 10, 11, 22). The second sense, however, is what we see used in *gSer tog*’s paragraphs §§3-5. A few other grammarians (e.g., sKal bzang ‘gyur med and dKar lebs drung yig Pad ma rdo rje) saw *bya ba'i yul* as involving a *la* particle (whereas *las* would not): they maintained that *bya ba'i yul* could be (or had to be) a locative, the place of the action. See chapter XI on the triple ambiguity of *bya ba'i yul* in *Sum rtags* literature; for an attempt to understand the diverse sorts of *las* and *bya ba'i yul*, see also Zeisler 2006.

be done” (*bya ‘gyur ma ‘ongs pa’i las*), and “the act pertaining to what is being sought after” (*btsal bya’i las*). Therefore, we should understand that the act pertaining to the agent and the act pertaining to the focus of the action, respectively, acquire the sense of self and other.⁴

§9. If we condense these [above-mentioned] points, they are [all] subsumed under two [categories, viz.,] “entities” (*dngos po*) and “acts” (*las*). In “entities” there is the entity self, the entity other, and the entity that is the object (*las kyi dngos po*). We say that the pauper and his diligence are, in terms of self and others, the entity self, and in terms of the triad, action, agents, and objects, they are said to be agents (*byed pa = byed pa po*). We say that the wealth that is sought after (*btsal bya’i nor*) is, in terms of self and other, the entity other in that it is a focus of the action to be accomplished; we say that it is the entity that is the object (*las kyi dngos po*), in terms of the triad, action, agents, and objects. As for the action of wealth being sought (*nor btsal ba’i bya ba*), in terms of self and other, it can be said to be an entity other in that it is the entity that is the thing-done (*bya ba’i dngos po*).⁵

§10. As for acts (*las*), there are two sorts: act-qua-doing (*byed pa’i las*) and act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba’i las*). The pauper’s seeking wealth diligently is said to be the act-qua-doing (*byed pa’i las*) in that it is the act related to the agent, the pauper (*byed pa po dbul po dang ‘brel ba’i las*). The action of seeking wealth with diligence is said to be the act related to the agent (*byed pa po dang ‘brel ba’i las*) and the act related to self (*bdag dang ‘brel ba’i las*), because, being related to the diligence, it is of the same nature (*ngo bo gcig*) as it. The fact of wealth being sought after and then found (*nor btsal nas rnyed pa’i cha*) is said to be the act-qua-thing-

⁴ See AACT 21-22.

⁵ A kya Yongs ‘dzin does not recognize the patient-prominent action as *dngos po gzhan*. Si tu does not explicitly do so, either (AACT p. 62-63). They classify it as just *gzhan* (“other”). See AACT p. 6 *et seq.*, n. 11. However, see chapter XI for an in-depth discussion of Tibetan grammarians’ diverging uses of the term *dngos po* and the consequent difficulty of finding convincing Indic antecedents for this term in Vyākaraṇa literature. Our discussion in chapter XI is based on the four diverging positions that the nineteenth century grammarian dKar lebs drung yig Pad ma rdo rje describes. dKar lebs drung yig Pad ma rdo rje adds his own position, too. His own view and gSer tog’s view are significantly different from the four. One should not underestimate the divergences amongst grammarians on the interpretation of *dngos po*.

done (*bya ba'i las*) and the act related to the other (*gzhan dang 'brel ba'i las*), because it is the act related to the focus of the action, i.e., wealth.⁶

§11. [140] Action (*bya ba*) is also of two [sorts]. The effort [involved] in wealth being sought after with diligence (*nor 'bad pas btsal ba'i rtsol ba*) is termed the action pertaining to the agent (*byed pa po la yod pa'i bya ba*) in that it pertains to the agent, the pauper. [Wealth] having been sought after and found (*btsald zin rnyed pa*) pertains to the focus of the action, the wealth, and is thus said to be the action that pertains to the focus of the action (*bya ba yul la yod pa'i bya ba*).⁷

§12. As for the meaning of the divisions into the three times (*dus gsum*), the act of wealth being sought after (*nor btsal bya'i las*) is something that will be done (*bya 'gyur*) while a [future] act of seeking (*'tshol ba'i las*)⁸ is something that [the agent] will do (*byed 'gyur*). Thus they are [classified as] future. The act of now seeking wealth (*nor 'tshol bzhin pa'i las*) is what [the agent] is doing now and is hence present. When one becomes rich after having sought [wealth] (*btsald zin phyug por song ba*), the action has been already done and is thus termed past. “Seek wealth!” (*nor tshold cig ces pa*) is an imperative (*bskul tshig*) included in act-qua-doing (*byed las su gtogs pa*) and is thus said to be future.⁹

⁶ AACT pp. 7-8. *Ibid.* p. 40 §7 for A kya Yongs 'dzin's explanation. Müller-Witte 2009, 207-209 sees *gSer tog*'s formulation of *bya ba'i las* in terms of a result like “finding” as an anticipation of the causative-resulative (*Kausativ-resultativ*) distinction developed by contemporary grammarians like dPa' ris sang rgyas—it can be seen as going in the direction of a type of *Zustandspassiv*, emphasizing a result like being found, rather than a *Vorgangspassiv*, emphasizing the seeking process that is undergone.

⁷ The translation is deliberately passive in keeping with *gSer tog*'s view that *btsald* (past of *'tshol*) would show act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba'i las*) and, thus, an act related to the other. See also below §20. Note that A kya Yongs 'dzin also takes the past as showing *bya ba'i las*. See AACT p. 42, §9. Not all grammarians do—Si tu takes the past as showing neither self nor other. For the differences between Si tu, *gSer tog*, and A kya Yongs 'dzin on the question of the past, see Tillemans 1988, 501; see also Herforth's discussion in AACT, 83 *et seq.*

⁸ *'tshol ba* is the present simplex form, but what is meant here is the periphrastic “future act-qua-doing” (*byed 'gyur ma 'ongs pa*) construction, viz., *'tshol bar 'gyur*, where the present simplex form is linked with the auxiliary *'gyur*.

⁹ (a) The term *byed las* has two important uses in this text: the ordinary sense of “function,” “action,” “work,” and the specialized sense of “act-qua-doing.” For the ordinary sense see M. Goldstein *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan*, Kathmandu,

§13. However, there is some difference between the way to classify the three times in terms of [the triad] actions, agents, and objects (*bya byed las kyi dus gsum*) and the way to classify the three times generally (*spyir dus gsum gyi 'jog tshul*). Take, for example, something like

gdul bya 'i sems can (“the sentient being to be disciplined”).

There are three applications for the word *las* (“object”/“patient”):¹⁰ *gdul bya* (“that which is to be disciplined”), i.e., the actual, future word for the object (*las sgra dngos ma 'ongs pa*), or *sems can* (“sentient being”) are termed the object (*las*); *'dul ba* (“... disciplines/...is disciplining”) is termed present doing (*byed pa da lta ba*); *btuld pa* (“... has been disciplined”) is termed the past that has been done (*byas zin 'das pa*); *gdul bar bya* (“... is to be disciplined”) is termed the future act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba 'i las ma 'ongs pa*). One should understand the following points: when we again have to discipline (*slar 'dul dgos pa*) the sentient being by means

1978, s.v. *byed las*. *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs* p. 537 gives: *byed las ni rgyu rkyen zhig gis dngos su bskyed pa 'i 'bras bu'am nus pa 'i ming ste / sman gyi byed las / nad kyi byed las zhes pa lta bu /*. “*byed las* is the name for the effect that is directly produced by a cause or condition, or [the name] for the capability. For example, the action of the medicine, the action of the sickness.” See §19 for this use in gSer tog.

(b) In the phrase *byed las su gtogs pa* in §12, however, *byed las* is best taken in the specialized sense of *byed pa 'i las*, rather than its ordinary sense. If we take it that way, we find that gSer tog’s characterization of the imperative is saying the same thing as that of A kya Yongs ‘dzin, who speaks of the imperative as *byed pa 'i las su gtogs pa* “included in act-qua-doing.” Note that the imperative is quite controversial—some grammarians argue that it should be neither act-qua-doing nor act-qua-thing-done (AACT p. 21). A kya Yongs ‘dzin, however, does take it as showing act-qua-doing (*byed pa 'i las*) (AACT p. 54, §22): *da lta ba dang bskul tshig gnyis byed pa 'i las su gtogs la /*. “The present and imperative are both included in act-qua-doing.”

(c) Although grammarians usually say that there is a link between *bya ba 'i las* and the future, there are periphrastic futures—like *gcod par 'gyur* “he will cut”—which do *not* show *bya ba 'i las*, but rather *byed pa 'i las*. See chapter X. It seems that, if we are to believe gSer tog, the imperatives also show both future and *byed pa 'i las*.

¹⁰ This triple application for the word *las* is found elsewhere, too, e.g., in A kya Yongs ‘dzin’s *rNam dbye brgyad dang bya byed las sogs kyi khyad par mdo tsam brjod pa dka 'i gnas gsal ba 'i me long*, p. 452. For the details, see chapter X, n. 6. The three are: the object, the act-qua-doing, and the act-qua-thing-done.

of a disciplinary action (*gdul ba'i bya ba*), this [use of 'dul] is temporally future (*dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa*); 'dul *bzhin pa* ("is now disciplining") is temporally present (*dus kyi dus da lta ba*); *btuld zin pa* ("... has been disciplined") is temporally past (*dus kyi dus 'das pa*).¹¹

§14. In this context, the meaning of "being related to a distinct agent" (*byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel*) or "not being so related" is as follows. When a distinct agent directly establishes an object and action (*bya ba*), this is said to be an act related to a distinct agent (*byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba'i las*). To state examples, such as *gser 'gyur rtsi*¹² *yiś lcags gser du bsgyur ba* ("Iron is/will be changed into gold by the alchemical elixir"):

gser du bsgyur bya'i lcags ("The iron that is to be changed into gold")
sgyur pa po ("the changer," "the alchemist")
gser du sgyur bar byed ("[He] changes [it] into gold")
 [141] *gser du bsgyurd zin* ("[It] has been changed into gold")
gser du sgyurd cig ("Change [it] into gold!").

And:

gnas nas dbyung bya'i gte po ("The ringleader who is to be expelled from the place")
'byin pa po ("the expeller")
gnas nas 'byin par byed ("[He] expels [him] from the place")
gnas nas phyung zin ("[He] has been expelled from the place")
gnas nas phyungs shig ("Expel [him] from the place!").¹³

¹¹ *gSer tog* contrasts *bya byed las gsum gyi dus gsum* ("the three times in terms of actions, agents, and objects") and *spyir dus gsum* ("the three times generally"). See chapter X above for the details. As he points out, there are cases where the context or the use of certain auxiliaries show that the present stem, i.e., the "dictionary form," is being used to indicate an event that *will* occur later relative to the speech act. This is the point of his example where the verb 'dul in *slar 'dul dgos pa* ("have to discipline again") is indeed a present stem but shows the temporal future (*dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa*) because of the word *slar* ("again").

¹² See Lokesh Candra, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary* (Kyoto: Rinsen, 1976), s.v. *gser 'gyur rtsi* = *rasa* ("mercury"; "the alchemical elixir"). Literally, "the extract for changing [something] into gold". Cf. also *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, s.v. *gser 'gyur: lcags sogs gser du bsgyur nas gyur pa'i don*.

¹³ See s.v. 'byin in Goldstein *op. cit.* "gnas nas 'byin; to kick out, to fire from a job/

Such are [examples showing] how we get different written forms (*yig gzugs*)¹⁴ according to the actions and agents.

§15. When an object and action seem to be established all by themselves (*rang gi ngang gis*), without directly having any distinct agent (*byed pa po gzhan*), this is said to be an act that is not related to a distinct agent (*byed pa po gzhan dang ma 'brel ba 'i las*). Let's state some examples. Suppose a round lump of iron in front of some or another person spontaneously changed into gold all by itself [we would use the following expressions]:

gser du 'gyur bya 'i lcags (“the iron that is to change [by itself] into gold”)

gser du 'gyur bzhin pa (“[It] is now changing into gold”)

gser du gyurd zin (“[It] has changed into gold”)

gser du 'gyur zhig (“May [it] change into gold!”).

And:

gnas nas 'byung bya 'i dge slong (“the monk who is to go out from the place”)

gnas nas 'byung bzhin pa (“[He] is now going out from the place”)

gnas nas byung zin (“[He] has gone out from the place”)

gnas nas 'byung zhig (“May [he] go out from the place!”).

In such cases, the account of actions, agents and objects applies, but there are two ways that it applies: *a*) [different] meanings apply without the written forms changing accordingly [or] *b*) they apply with different written forms.¹⁵

position.” See also *ibid.* s.v. *gte po* “ringleader, principal criminal, chief conspirator/schemer.”

¹⁴ Literally, “forms of letters.”

¹⁵ The point is that many intransitive (*tha mi dad pa*) verbs simply remain invariable in all tenses, while some others, like *'gyur ba* or *'byung ba*, do have differing forms for the past and the present/future. *gSer tog* allows that intransitives can be talked about in terms of actions, agents, and objects. In what follows, however, he shows how that analysis is not at all the same as in the case of transitive (*tha dad pa*) verbs, i.e., those where the agent and object/patient are different (*tha dad*). Other grammarians—especially the

§16. In this vein, when the iron itself (*rang nyid*) changes into gold, [this] is due to the activity of¹⁶ its elements [142], but is not due to an agent distinct from the elements. This is because while [the change] may indeed be due to the activity of the merit (*bsod nams* = *punya*) of the person in question, and the merit itself, which is like an agent, is something other [than the iron], still [the merit] does not directly appear (*dngos su mi snang ba*) [as a distinct agent acting upon the iron to change it into gold]. When the monk himself (*rang nyid*) goes out from a place without there being anyone who expels him from [that] place, there is not directly any distinct agent (*byed pa po gzhan dngos su med pa*), only just the [monk] himself who is the agent. If we analyze well cases such as these, an unmistakable certainty will arise concerning the meaning of the triad actions, agents, and object, [acts] being related or not to a distinct agent, and the meaning of self and other.

§17. Moreover, when things are gathered (*bsdu ba*) inwardly from the edges, but in direct dependence on the effort of a person (*skyes bu'i rtsol ba*) [we have the following]:

bsdu bya (“what is to be gathered”)

sdud pa po (“the gatherer”)

sdud byed (“what effectuates the gathering,” “the means of gathering”)

sdud bzhin (“[He] is now gathering”)

bsdus zin (“[It] has been gathered”)

sdud par 'gyur (“[He] will gather”)

sdus shig (“Gather!”).

And when scattered things assemble in one place:

nineteenth century writer dByangs can Grub pa'i rdo rje—did apply the term “agent” to *'gro ba po* (“goer”) and other such forms of intransitive verbs, and even spoke of them as showing self (*bdag*). However, they also insisted that this was not the genuine sense of the grammatical term “self,” i.e., self properly speaking (*bdag dngos*), but only a secondary sense of “self” (*bdag don phal ba*). The issue and the different points of view of grammarians are presented more fully in our n. 44 to §45 below. See also Tillemans 1991a.

¹⁶ We read *rang gi 'byung ba rnams kyi byed pas* rather than the text's *rang gi 'byung ba rnams kyi byed pas*. The passage is closely based on Si tu, and the former reading is what is found in Si tu. See AACT p. 69, §8.

btu bya
sdud pa po
sdud par byed
sdud bzhin
btus zin
sdud par 'gyur
*sdud cig.*¹⁷

These kinds of different written forms that we have shown above apply in several ways, and thus it is important to study them thoroughly and determinedly.

§18. In this treatise [i.e., in śloka twelve of the *rTags kyi 'jug pa*], [Thon mi] put forth a division into self and other in order to include words for agents (*byed pa po*) and focuses of action (*bya ba 'i yul*). In that [self-other division] are present doing (*byed bzhin da lta ba*), future thing-done and doing (*bya 'gyur dang byed 'gyur ma 'ongs pa*), and past accomplished thing-done (*bya ba byas zin 'das pa*). To include what is not pervaded (*ma khyab pa*) by the divisions of self and other, [Thon mi] put forth the division in terms of the three times (*dus gsum gyi dbye ba mdzad pa*).¹⁸

§19. Thus, in this context, it is absolutely indispensable to understand such distinctions as: (a) why all uses of sentences that involve actions (*byed las dang 'brel ba 'i ngag gi sbyor ba*)¹⁹ are pervaded by the three

¹⁷ It seems that gSer tog is once again contrasting transitive and intransitive verbs. However, the passage is problematic as the verbs *sdud pa*/*'thu ba* admit of many variant forms. See Hill 2010, '*thu* 3, which seems to be the closest to what gSer tog has in mind. Note that in *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, '*thu ba* is given as *tha mi dad pa*, i.e., intransitive, and has the past form *btus pa*, the future *btu ba* and the imperative *thus*. I prefer to leave the examples untranslated here.

¹⁸ In §18-19 gSer tog is elaborating on a key passage from Si tu. See AACT, 62, §4. See chapter VIII, n. 10 for an emendation to our earlier translation.

¹⁹ We have somewhat tentatively taken *byed las* in the phrase *byed las dang 'brel ba 'i ngag gi sbyor ba thams cad* in the ordinary sense of “action,” rather than as the technical grammatical term “act-qua-doing.” See n. 9. The other possibility is to translate the phrase as we did in AACT 62, §4, viz., “all uses of sentences which involve act-qua-doing [and act-qua-thing-done].” The rationale for translating in the present fashion is a methodological one: simplicity and the avoidance of heavy reliance on square bracketed passages that decide an interpretation. Our translation in AACT was motivated by the fact that the phrase was glossed by Si tu’s commentator dNgul chu Dharmabhadra

temporal divisions (*dus gsum gyi dbye bas ... thams cad la khyab pa*) but the division into self and other is not pervasive to that extent (*de tsam du khyab pa min pa*) [i.e., the division into self and other does not pervade all uses of the three times]; (b) why the expressions for thing-done and doing (*bya byed kyi tshig*) [like *bsgrub par bya* and *sgrub par byed*], which involve actions and which both have the same force (*phan tshun shed mtshungs pa*), are also included in divisions of self and other.²⁰

§20. 2. To take the second [outline], i.e., the actual explanation as to why the [prefixes] are applied: In order to show what reasons there are for applying the prefixes (*sngon 'jug*) to the radical letters (*ming gzhi 'i yi ge*)²¹ the following is said: Amongst the five prefix-letters, the masculine letter *b-*, is, in terms of the three times, applied to show past accomplished

as *bya byed kyi las dang 'brel ba'i ngag gi sbyor ba thams cad* “all uses of sentences involving act-qua-thing-done and act-qua-doing” (see AACT 62, §4 and n. 12). The disadvantage of such a translation is that Dharmabhadra's gloss in terms of *bya las* and *byed las* would seem to imply that Si tu and gSer tog were only talking about transitive verbs. This would clash with the idea that the three times apply to all verbs, be they transitive or intransitive. One could also perhaps argue, with the contemporary grammarian Tshe rdor, that *bya byed dang 'brel ba'i ngag gi sbyor ba* is not limited to transitive verbs but includes intransitives—in support one might cite gSer tog's §15, where he clearly recognizes applications of *bya* and *byed* to intransitives. See also n. 44. I leave the question open as to the merits of that twenty-first century reinterpretation of Dharmabhadra's gloss. In any case, adopting Tshe rdor's interpretation, the details of the translation might perhaps differ a bit, but the upshot would end up essentially the same as translating *byed las* by “(any and all) actions.” Cf. Müller-Witte 2009, 209 *et seq.* on the different understandings of the key phrase *byed las dang 'brel ba'i ngag gi sbyor ba thams cad*.

²⁰ Expressions (like *sgrub par byed*) that show act-qua-doing (*byed pa'i las*), and those (such as *bsgrub par bya*) that show act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba'i las*), are necessarily co-existing correlates, with only a difference of voice, viz., agent- vs patient- prominence. The idea goes back to Si tu (AACT 62, §3-4). See also chapter VIII. On the term *phan tshun shed mtshung pa*, see chapter VIII, n. 10.

²¹ The *ming gzhi* is the main letter to which prefixes, superscripts, subscripts and suffixes are added. Cf. *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs s.v. ming: ming gzhi ni sgra sbyor gyi yi ge'i tshag bar gcig gi nang gi yi ge rtsa ba ste dmangs lta bur mtshon na ma ni ming gzhi'i yi ge yin /*. “The radical is the root letter in one syllable in the use of a word. To take something like *dmangs*, *ma* is the radical letter.”

act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba'i las byas zin 'das pa*) that is related to a distinct agent. [143] For example:

snod bkang (“The receptacle has been filled”)
chu rgyun bkag (“The stream of water has been stopped”).

And:

bkang (“...has been filled”)
bkag (“... has been stopped”).

§21. It is due to the power of the word *dang* (*dang sgra*, “and”) [in the first line of śloka twelve] that [the prefix *b-*] applies [also] to things-to-be-done (*bya 'gyur*) that are related to distinct agents (*byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba*) or to future acts-qua-thing-done (*bya las ma 'ong pa*).²² For example:

bklag par bya (“... is to be read”)
bskor bar bya (“... is to be turned around/circumambulated”)
bklag bya (“what is to be read”)
bskor bya (“what is to be turned around”)
bklag (“... should be read,” “...will be read”)
bskor (“... should be turned around,” “...will be turned around”).

§22. Amongst self and other, [the prefix *b-*] is applied for the entity other (*ngos po gzhan*), i.e., the focus of an action related with a distinct agent, as in the following examples:

bzhog bya'i shing (“the wood that is to be split”)
bskul bya'i chos (“the Dharma that is to be promulgated”).

²² In effect, gSer tog argues that when Thon mi said “past and other” (*'das dang gzhan*) he supposedly meant “the past and the entity other, *inter alia*,” so that *b-* is not limited to expressions for the past and the entity other (*ngos po gzhan*), like *bklag bya* or *bklag bya'i deb* (“the book to be read”), but can also apply, implicitly or via the sense, to future patient-prominent forms, like *bklag par bya* and *bklag go* (“... is to be read”). See §42 and n. 36 for more on gSer tog’s exegesis of *dang* as showing *sdud pa'i don* (“the conjunctive sense”).

§23. In terms of the triad actions, agents, and objects, [*b-*] is applied in order to establish an act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba'i las*) related with a distinct agent. For example:

nor brku bar bya (“The wealth is to be stolen”)
gzugs blta bar bya (“The form is to be looked at”)
brku bya (“what is to be stolen”)
blta bya (“what is to be looked at”)
brku (“... should be stolen,” “... will be stolen”)
blta (“...should be looked at,” “...will be looked at”).

§24. Furthermore, *brjod bya* (“what is to be said”), *brjod zin* (“...has been said”), *bshad bya* (“what is to be explained”), *bshad zin* (“...has been explained”), and the like, by means of the same written form [*brjod* and *bshad*], present words for the focus of the action as well as for the past that has been accomplished. [Future stems] such as *bcib pa* (“... will/should be ridden,” “mount,” “conveyance”), *bza' ba* (“...will/should be eaten,” “food”), and the like apply to the entity other without needing clarification by means of the particle *bya*. In the context of the neutral prefixes [*g-* and *d-*] that we will explain [below], [future stems such as] *gzung ba* (“...will/should be grasped,” “what is to be grasped”), *gzhäl ba* (“... will/should be measured,” “what is to be measured”) and the like state words for the focus [of the action], even without the particle *bya* (*bya tshig*).

§25. In the case of an entity other such as *brgyan par bya* (“...is to be adorned”) and *bskor bar bya* (“... is to be turned around”), one does not get the *da drag* (i.e., “the supplementary suffix --*d*”).²³ Therefore, when one adds the finalizing particle [*-o*] (*slar bsdu*) or the various [periphrastic] expressions with the particle *bya* (*bya tshig gi tshig sna*)[144], one gets

²³ The supplementary suffix (*da drag*) was used after the suffixes (*rjes 'jug*) -*n*, -*r* and -*l* before the ninth century orthographic reform known as *skad gsar gcad*. *gSer tog* seems to allow it also as a deliberate archaism in a “stylized usage.” With verbs it is especially used in the past. It is clear that the supplementary suffix is also, on occasion, used with present forms like ‘*dzind*’ (“grasp”). *gSer tog* advises against using future *bya* forms like *btsald bya*, because *btsald* would show only the past (‘*das pa*’) of the verb *rtsol ba* (“strive”); a combination of a definite past form with a future ending in *bya* is incoherent for him. The problem arises because *btsal* itself can be either past (‘*das pa*’) or future (*ma 'ongs pa*).

[the future forms] *brgyan no* [and] *bskor ro*, but one does not get *brgyan to* and the like. And though the *da drag* has been long applied in cases such as *btsald bya*, the *da drag* cannot possibly show both the focus of the action and the past together. Thus, though we might, because of the [intended] sense (*don gyis*) [of *btsald bya*], get it [being used] for the entity other, one should eliminate the *da drag* in the written form *btsal bya*, and so we will not get the *da drag* [used] for the focus of an action or other. In the context of the neutral [i.e., *g-*, *d-*] and feminine [i.e., *'a-*] prefixes that we shall explain [below], even though the *da drag* may be applied for an entity self, as in *'dzind* (“grasp”) [and] *gsold* (“beseech”), still, when one adds finalizing particles (*slar bsdu*) or various [other] particles, one should know how to distinguish between the following: (a) the [forms] showing present doing (*byed pa da lta ba*) where the *da drag* has been eliminated, such as *'dzin no* [and] *gsol lo*, and (b) the stylized [archaic] usages conveying doing (*byed pa zin pa'i nyams dod pa rnams*) where we do still get the *da drag*, as in *'dzind to* [and] *gsold to*.

§26. In terms of [the prefixes] that have been explained and those that will be explained [below],

bsten par bya (“... is to be relied upon”)
bsten bya (“what is to be relied upon”)
bsten (“... should be relied upon,” “...will be relied upon”)
gtang bar bya (“... is to be sent”)
gtang bya (“what is to be sent”)
gtang (“... should be sent,” “... will be sent”)
dpyad par bya (“... is to be analyzed”)
dpyad bya (“what is to be analyzed”)
dpyad (“... should be analyzed,” “... will be analyzed”)
mchod par bya (“... is to be offered”)
mchod bya (“what is to be offered”)
mchod (“... should be offered,” “... will be offered”)

and the like are applications for the object (*las*), or the future act-qua-thing-done (*bya las ma 'ongs pa*), or the entity other (*dngos po gzhan*).

§27. *sten pa po* (“relier”)
sten par byed (“... relies”)
sten byed (“what effectuates the reliance,” “the means of relying”)
sten (“...relies”)

*gtong ba po, gtong bar byed, gtong byed, gtong,
dpyod pa po, dpyod par byed, dpyod byed, dpyod,
mchod pa po, mchod par byed, mchod byed, mchod,*

and so forth are applications for the entity self (*dnegos po bdag*) or the doing (*byed pa*).

§28. In the following, [the prefixes] show together:

(a) accomplished thing-done (*bya ba byas zin*) and the temporally past (*dus kyi dus* ‘*das pa*’), as in

bstend par byas (“... has been relied upon”)
bstend zin (“... has been relied upon”)
bstend (“.... has been relied upon”)
btang bar byas, btang zin, btang,
dpyad par byas, dpyad zin, dpyad,
mchod par byas, mchod zin, mchod;

(b) what one is doing (*byed bzhin*) and the temporally present (*dus kyi dus da lta ba*), as in

sten (“...relies”)
gtong, dpyod, mchod;

(c) what is to be done (*bya* ‘*gyur*’) and the temporally future (*dus kyi dus ma* ‘*ongs pa*’) both, as in

bsten (“... will be relied upon”)
gtang, dpyad, mchod.

§29. Amongst the three times that are not pervaded by the divisions of self and other spoken about in this context [i.e., in Thon mi’s śloka twelve], there are the following applications:

The past:

grub (“... has been established” intransitive [*tha mi dad pa, byed med las tshig*])
‘*dus* (“... has come together” intr.)
byung (“... has occurred” intr.). [145]

The present:

'grub bzhin (“... is now becoming established” intr.)

'grub (“... is established” intr.)

'du bzhin (“... is now coming together” intr.)

'du (“... comes together” intr.)

'byung bzhin (“... is now occurring” intr.)

'byung (“... occurs” intr.).

The future:

'grub par 'gyur (“... will/would be established” intr.)

'grub 'gyur (“... will be established” intr.)

'grub (“... will be established” intr.)

'du bar 'gyur, 'du 'gyur, 'du,

'byung bar 'gyur, 'byung 'gyur, 'byung.

As for [verb phrases] where the same written forms (*yig gzugs gcig pa*) occur with or without various particles added to them, there are many [uses of such verbs] that are individually settled cases (*so so'i bab*), have to be understood inferentially (*dpags te shes dgos pa*) in terms of the [semantic] capabilities of the preceding and subsequent expressions (*snga phyi'i tshig gi nus pa*), and so on and so forth. However, they cannot all be written up. We would expend paper and ink, but there would be no further purpose [that would be accomplished]. So [phrases] such as “the pustule that has ripened is ready to be lanced” (*rnag smin pa rtol ran pa*) and “the fruit that is ripe is ready to be eaten” (*shing tog smin pa za ran pa*) will just be cases that stand out for analysis if there are some lucky disciples that come along later.²⁴

²⁴ Note that *smin pa* (“... is ripe,” “...ripens,” “... has ripened,” “...will ripen”) is indeed an intransitive verb (*byed med las tshig, tha mi dad pa*) that has the same form as past, present, and future stem. *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* gives the following for *rnag smin pa*: *rdol ran pa'i rnag rnyings pa* “a longstanding pus[tule] that is ready to burst open.” To speculate a bit, it seems that in gSer tog’s first example *smin pa* might be understood as the past form, i.e., the pustule that had previously ripened, or that has ripened to the point where it can now be lanced. In the other case, *smin pa* may be the present, i.e., “the fruit that is ripe.”

§30. In [A lag sha Ngag dbang] bstan dar's commentary, when it is stated that there are applications [of *b-*] for the future such as "That cloth is to be washed tomorrow" (*ras de sang nyin bkru bar bya*) and "That letter is still to be read" (*yi ge de da dung bklag par bya'o*), I wonder whether this might be a corrupt explanation (*bam bshad*) [of the prefix *b-* being used for the temporally future]. In keeping with what [bsTan dar's] example statements actually said (*dnegos bstan*), the words *sang nyin* ("tomorrow") and *da dung* ("still") show the temporally future (*dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa*), but *bkru bar bya* ("...is to be washed") and *bklag par bya* ("... is to be read") are no more than just the future act-qua-thing-done (*bya las ma 'ongs pa*).²⁵

§31. Now, generally (*spyir*), in cases of acts pertaining to the basis of the action (*bya ba gzhi la yod pa'i las*), [verb phrases] such as *bklag bya* ("what is to be read," "... is to be read") are applied for the future act-qua-thing-done, the temporally future, as well as for the actual expression

²⁵ See AACT p. 16-18 and chapter X (above) on this argument of A lag sha Ngag dbang bstan dar (1759-1840), a Mongolian who wrote in Tibetan and had a considerable influence on gSer tog—as is clear from the repeated references to him in other parts of gSer tog's *mchan 'grel* (see §§42, 48, 53). On p. 186 of bsTan dar's *Sum rtags* commentary, *sKal ldan yid kyi pad ma 'byed pa'i snang ba'i mdzod*, we find: *gzhung 'dir dnegos su ma bstan kyang ma 'ongs pa la 'jug pa ni / dper na / ras de sang nyin bkru par bya'o / yi ge de da dung bklag par bya'o sogs so /*. "Although not actually taught in this text [i.e., the *rTags kyi 'jugs pa*] there are the following cases where [*b-*] does apply to the future: 'That cloth is to be washed tomorrow,' 'That letter is still to be read,' and so forth." bsTan dar, therefore, maintains that *b-*prefix applies to both past and future. gSer tog does accept bsTan dar's and Si tu's general position (see §31 and §48) that the śloka twelve's specification of tenses admits of many exceptions, including future verb phrases. He shows, in §48, how at least three lines of śloka twelve would have to be thoroughly amended, if we were to require complete coverage, or "pervasion" (*khyab pa = vyāpti*), of all the linguistic phenomena. gSer tog, however, is skeptical about the particular examples that bsTan dar gives, arguing that *bkru bar bya* ("... is to be washed") and *bklag par bya* ("... is to be read") are not in themselves temporally future (*dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa*). He says, in effect, that in themselves they show patient-prominence, or thing-done (*bya las*), and are only "future" in the sense of *bya las ma 'ongs pa*, i.e., as modal, patient-prominent forms rather than genuine conveyors of future time. In sum, for gSer tog, the examples given by bsTan dar are misleading tricks: the temporal future (*dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa*), or future time *stricto sensu*, in such examples is not conveyed by "... *par bya*" but by words like "tomorrow" (*sang nyin*) and "still" (*da dung*).

for the object (*las kyi sgra dngos*). *bklags zin* (“... has been read”) and so forth, which are both temporally past (*dus kyi dus ‘das pa*) and past accomplished thing-done (*bya ba byas zin ‘das pa*), are related to the basis of the action. *klog par byed* (“... reads”) and the like, which are acts-qua-doing, present doing (*byed bzhin da lta ba*), and temporally present (*dus da lta ba*), are related to the agent.

§32. As for the neutral prefixes, *g-* [and] *d-*, in terms of the pair self and other related to a distinct agent,²⁶ they are applied to radicals (*ming gzhi*) for both (*gnyis ka*) [possibilities, i.e., self and other]: i.e., (a) for what is the agent, viz., the entity self, as well as for the act-qua-doing related to that [agent], and (b) for what is the entity other pertaining to the action, as well as for the thing-done related to that [entity] (*de ‘brel gyi bya ba*). Let us state some examples [showing] application of the letter *g-* for the entity self:

khirms gcod pa po (“a decider of laws,” “a judge”)
sbyin pa gtong ba po (“a giver”).

Applications for the doing related to self (*bdag ‘brel gyi byed pa la ‘jug pa*):

[146] *gcod par byed* (“... cuts”)
gcod byed (“what effectuates the cutting,” “means of cutting”)
gcod (“... cuts”)

²⁶ It is quite unclear to me how the phrase that is to be found in the text, viz., *ming gzhi la byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i las*, could ever be integrated into the syntax of gSer tog’s sentence. Fortunately, we have a completely parallel passage in §39 where gSer tog describes the uses of the prefix ‘a- saying: *sngon ‘jug gi mo ‘a yig ni / ming gzhi la byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i bdag gzhan gnyis las dngos po bdag dang ... la ‘jug pa*. We conclude that the copyist just left out the words *bdag gzhan gnyis* in our troublesome passage: being used to seeing the term *byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i las*, he wrote this instead of *byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i bdag gzhan gnyis las*, which must be the correct reading. At any rate, the idea of gSer tog’s commentary on the phrase *gnyis ka la ‘jug pa* in Thon mi’s verse is clear enough: on the one hand, *g-* and *d-* prefixed expressions can apply to self, namely agents and the acts related to agents; on the other hand, they can apply to other—objects and their corresponding acts.

gtong bar byed (“... sends”)

gtong byed (“what effectuates the sending,” “means of sending”)

gtong (“... sends”).

Applications for the entity other (*dngos po gzhan la ‘jug pa*):

gcad bya’i shing (“the wood that is to be cut”)

gtang bya’i nor (“the wealth to be sent”).

Applications for the thing-done (*bya ba la ‘jug pa*):

gcad par bya (“... is to be cut”)

gcad bya (“what is to be cut”)

gcad (“... will/should be cut”)

gtang bar bya (“... is to be sent”)

gtang bya (“what is to be sent”)

gtang (“... will/should be sent”).

§33. Let us [now] state examples of the applications of the letter *d-* for the entity self:

gting dpog pa po (“one who fathoms the depths”)

dka’ gnas dpyod pa po (“one who analyzes the difficult points”).

Applications for the doing related to that [entity] (*de ‘brel gyi byed pa*):

dpog par byed (... “understand [inferentially],” “... infers,” “... measures,” “... fathoms”)

dpog byed (“what effectuates the understanding,” “means of understanding”)

dpog [147] (“... understands”)

dpyod par byed (“... analyzes”)

dpyod byed (“what effectuates the analyzing,” “means of analysis”)

dpyod (“... analyzes”).

Applications for the entity other:

dpag bya’i lkog gyur (“the imperceptible [entity] to be understood”)

dpyad bya’i don (“the meaning to be analyzed”).

Applications for the thing-done related to that [entity] (*de 'brel gyi bya ba*):

dpag par bya (“... is to be understood”)

dpag bya (“what is to be understood”)

dpag (“... will be understood”)

dpyad par bya (“... is to be analyzed”)

dpyad bya (“what is to be analyzed”)

dpyad (“... will/should be analyzed”).

§34. Among the three times [of actions] that are related with a distinct agent, [the prefixes *g-* and *d-*] are applied to show principally (*gtso bor*) the present (*da lta ba*). Let us state some examples where the letter *g-* is applied for the present:

shing gcod (“... cuts the wood”)

sbyin pa gtong (“... gives”)

'og tu gnon (“... suppresses”)

sman gdu (“... brews the medicine”).

To state some examples where the letter *d-* is applied for the present:

rig pas dpyod kyin [148] (“... analyzes with intelligence”)

zho dkrog gin (“... stirs up the yoghurt”)

logs su dgar gyin (“... sets aside”)

skud pas dkri yin 'dug (“... ties [it] up with thread”).

§35. In connection with the neutral [prefixes *g-*, *d-*] as well as the feminine [*'a-*] and extremely feminine [prefix *m-*] that will be explained [below], there is a [point] that should be understood. Take [phrases] such as *gcad bya* (“what is to be cut”), *gcod byed* (“what effectuates the cutting,” “the means of cutting”), *dpag bya* (“what is to be understood”) [and] *dpog byed* (“what effectuates the understanding,” “means of understanding”), where [the prefixes] *g-* [and] *d-* are applied for both self and other via different written forms [i.e., *gcad*, *gcod*, *dpog*, *dpag*, etc.]. Then, even when the particles *bya* [and] *byed* and auxiliaries (*tshig grogs*) are not used, these [simplex forms, i.e., *gcad*, *gcod*, etc.] enable one to understand that it is [respectively] future act-qua-thing-done (*bya las ma 'ongs pa*) and present doing (*byed pa da lta ba*) [at stake]. By contrast, take [phrases] such as *gtsub bya* (“what is to be rubbed”), *gtsub byed* (“what effectuates the

rubbing,” “means of rubbing”), *dkri bya* (“what is to be tied up”) [and] *dkri byed* (“what effectuates the tying,” “the means of tying”), where *g-* [and] *d-* are applied for both self and other via one and the same written form [i.e., *gtsub* and *dkri*, respectively].²⁷ In those cases, when [the simplex forms *gtsub* and *dkri*] are not clarified by means of the particle *byed*, then by using one of the four auxiliaries *kyin*, *gin*, *gyin*, [or] *yin*, [the verb phrases] *gtsub kyin*, *dkri yin* and the like convey present doing (*byed pa da lta ba*)—such is one way they convey [meaning] (*ston tshul gcig*). And when *g-* [and] *d-* are applied for both self and other via one and the same written form [as in the case of *gtsub* and *dkri*], then if they are applied specifically (*dmigs kyis*) for the times (*dus*), *gtsub kyin*, *dkri yin* and so forth clearly convey the temporally present (*dus kyi dus da lta ba*), while by using auxiliaries [in verbal forms] such as *gtsub par* ‘gyur (“... will rub”) [and] *dkri bar* ‘gyur (“... will tie up”), they clearly convey the temporally future (*dus kyi dus ma ’ongs pa*). Such is another way. Given the two ways (*tshul gnyis*), then self, other, and the three times needed to be spoken about separately here in the root text [i.e., in śloka twelve of the *rTags kyi* ‘jug pa].²⁸

²⁷ The verbs *gtsub pa* (“rub”) and *dkri ba* (“tie up”) each have the same forms for their present and future, although they do each have separate past forms.

²⁸ *gSer tog* is taking *gnyis ka* (“both self and other”) in the second line of Thon mi’s śloka as covering verb phrases in *byed* or *bya*, such as *gtsub (par) byed* or *gtsub par bya*. In *gSer tog*’s eyes, Thon mi’s *da lta* (“present”) covers two types of present using auxiliaries like *kyin*, *yin*, etc, one showing the agent-prominent voice of the action, the “present doing” (*byed pa da lta ba*), the other showing that the action is actually occurring now, i.e., in the temporally present (*dus kyi dus da lta ba*). See also §44 below: “*da ltar* (“present”) [in the second line of śloka twelve] ... showed both the present doing (*byed pa da lta ba*) and the temporally present (*dus kyi da lta ba*) with the same force (*shed mtshungs*).”

It is not clear to me, however, that what *gSer tog* says about *gtsub kyin* is exactly Si tu’s position. Si tu had argued that *all* uses of auxiliaries, like *kyin*, *bzhin*, ‘gyur, were excluded from self because there were no correlated expressions showing other that would have the “same force” (*stobs mtshungs* = *shed mtshungs*) as them. Cf. n. 29 below. *gSer tog*, on the other hand, seems to be claiming that *gtsub*—which is both the present and future stem— can take auxiliaries like *kyin* or other periphrastic constructions when the dominant intention is to disambiguate voice. He thus speaks of two possible ways in which *gtsub kyin* and the like can convey meaning (*ston pa’i tshul*): they can be used to show simply doing (*byed pa*), i.e., the agent-prominent voice (roughly, as in “he rubs it,” “he is rubbing it”), or they can be used with the specific intention to show temporal

§36. Also, in the commentary of Si tu [Paṇ chen], it is said that [g- and d-] are applied for cases of present time that are not included in the afore-mentioned [categories of] self and other. This arrives at the sense of what is said in [Thon mi's] text about applications [of the prefixes] for the three times (*dus gsum kyi 'jug pa*), and thus, I understood it to be the best explanation.²⁹

value (as in “he rubs it right now”). In the latter case, *gtsub kyin* would, presumably, not come under self. The question then arises: Does gSer tog (contrary to Si tu) admit *gtsub kyin* as showing self when it shows doing?

Finally, it should be noted that Thon mi's verse remains problematic on gSer tog's exegesis. As we saw in §34, when Thon mi says *da lta ba* (“present”), he is, according to gSer tog, only describing how g- and d- are principally (*gtso bor*) used. Hence, gSer tog also allows that there can be temporally future (*dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa*), periphrastic verb phrases using the auxiliary 'gyur, such as *gtsub par 'gyur* (“... will rub”). However, as he explains in §44, those temporal futures are supposedly “gotten (i.e., understood, acquired) [indirectly] via the sense [of Thon mi's words]” (*don gyis thob pa*). In effect, he admits that, on his (and Si tu's) exegesis, the verse's words are far from exhaustive and need to be extensively supplemented to be watertight. The same theme of the lack of completeness in what Thon mi literally says is taken up in §48 where gSer tog shows how the verse would have to be amended if it were to be a rigorous description of the uses of the prefixes.

²⁹ gSer tog is, no doubt, thinking of a difficult passage in Si tu pp. 234-235; D. 74b3-75a1: *ma ning gi sngon 'jug gnyis po de bshad ma thag pa'i bdag gzhan gnyis po der mi gtogs pa'i dus da lta ba la 'jug pa'i tshul ni / byed pa po bdag dang 'brel ba'i byed pa'i tshig gi dper brjod pa de rnams nyid tshig grogs kyi sbsgyur ba las shes par bya'o // de'ang dper na / gcar bar byed / gcar ro / dkri bar byed / dkri'o / lta bu da lta ba'i sgra yin mod kyi gzung bar bya / gzung ngo / dgang bar bya / dgang ngo / lta bu gzhan gyi sgra la'ang de dang shed mtshungs yod pas sngar stobs mtshungs kyi bdag gzhan du zlas phye ba'i bdag sgra'i khongs su bsdu nas brjod zin pas 'dir ni don gyis bdag byed pa'i tshig yin yang gzhan gyi sgra la de dang shed mtshungs sbyar rgyu med pas gong smos bdag sgra'i khongs su sdud par mi 'os pa'i / gcar gyin snang ngo / gcar bzhin pa'o / dkri yin 'dug go / dkri bzhin pa'o / lta bu sngar smros pa'i bdag sgra'i byed tshig de rnams nyid brjod tshul tshig grogs kyi khyad par dang bcas pas dper brjod par bya'o //* “Here is the way the two neutral prefixes [g- and d-] are used for the present tense [forms] that are not included amongst either the self or other [verb forms] that we have just given: it has to be understood that the various examples of expressions for ‘doing’ that are related with the agent, i.e., with self, stem from transformations through auxiliaries. Now, *gcar bar byed*, *gcar ro*, *dkri bar byed*, *dkri'o*, and the like certainly are present tense expressions. And in the case of expressions for ‘other’ too, like *gzung bar bya*, *gzung ngo*, *dgang bar bya*,

§37. Concerning the auxiliaries of these [verbal forms], *gtsub bzhin* (“... is rubbing now”) [and] *dkri bzhin* (“... is tying up now”) have been used in many commentaries. However, the term “auxiliary” (*tshig grogs*; literally “companion-word”) in this context is not anything like an association by friendship, but means the use of a particle (*tshig phrad*) endowed with a [certain] capability. Consequently, while the four [particles] *kyin*, etc. are used as auxiliaries for the present and ‘*gyur* is used as an auxiliary for the future, the word *bzhin* itself is applied for several meanings, including, amongst others, in order to convey the present. So I think that it would not [itself] be an auxiliary.³⁰

§38. As for the assertion by many scholars that words for actions, agents, and objects that are related to self and other are present, [their reasoning was as follows:] When wood is cut by an axe, one is doing now (*byed bzhin yin pa*) the action of cutting, and so it is dubbed the act-qua-doing (*byed pa’i las*); the wood going now (‘*gro bzhin pa*) into pieces is dubbed the act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba’i las*). Thus [both act-qua-doing and act-qua-thing-done, i.e., both self and other] are determined [by these scholars] to be in the present [as they involve what is happening now, i.e.,

dgang ngo, there are [expressions, like ‘*dzin par byed*, ‘*dzin no*, etc.] that have the same force as them. So earlier on [in Si tu’s list of examples of *g-* and *d-* prefixed verbs] they [i.e., *gcar bar byed*, etc.] had been stated included under ‘self’ when the classification in terms of self and other was made on account of [expressions for thing-done and doing] having the same force (*stobs mtshungs kyi*). Consequently, here [i.e., among the verb forms covered by the word ‘present’ (*da lta*) in Thon mi’s śloka on *g-* and *d-*], there are [verb phrases] like *gcar gyin snang ngo*, *gcar bzhin pa’o*, *dkri yin ‘dug go*, *dkri bzhin pa’o*, which are unfitting to be included under the ‘self’ expressions previously given [in the lists of *g-* and *d-* forms] in spite of them being by their sense (*don gyis*) expressions for doing, i.e., self, because ‘other’ expressions cannot be used having the same force as them (*gzhan gyi sgra la de dang shed mtshungs sbyar rgyu med pas*). The examples [of present *g-* and *d-* prefixed forms that were neither self nor other, i.e., *gcar gyin snang*, etc.] had to be stated because the types of presentation (*brjod tshul*) of the words for doing, or ‘self’ expressions, that had been given earlier were [now] provided with specific auxiliaries (*tshig grogs kyi khyad par dang bcas pas*).” See the detailed discussion of this passage in chapter VIII, n. 10 and 11.

³⁰ Presumably, *gSer tog*’s point is that *bzhin* has many other senses apart from its use in periphrastic verb phrases in order to indicate the present. It means “face,” “like,” “according to,” “even though,” etc. See Goldstein, *Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan*, s.v. *bzhin*.

byed bzhin pa and *'gro bzhin pa*]. But when Zha lu lo chen said that act-qua-thing-done are future, his idea was that they are future [events] that will have to be done (*bya 'gyur ma 'ongs pa*).³¹

§39. To take up the feminine prefix, the letter *'a-* in terms of the pair of self and other that is related with a distinct agent, it is applied to the radical (*ming gzhi*) for [showing] the entity self and the act-qua-doing.

To state some examples of applications for the entity self:

grub mtha' 'gog pa po (“a refuter of philosophical systems”)
gnas su 'jog pa po (“one who places [...] in a position”).

³¹ I cannot determine to which scholars gSer tog is referring when he says that “many scholars” hold that both act-qua-doing and act-qua-thing-done are present. In the other part of the passage, however, he is putting a common slant on Zha lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po (1441-1527) as emphasizing the “future act-qua-thing-done” expressed by *g-* and *d-* prefixed forms. Note that A kya Yongs 'dzin presents a similar view on Zha lu lo chen—see AACT, 42-44, §10—but then introduces the novel idea that Tibetan has a present passive, i.e., a present act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba da lta ba*), as in supposedly *b-*prefixed presents like *bsgrub bzhin pa* (“is being established”).

The usual discussions on this theme from Zha lu lo chen seem to me to go well beyond what Chos skyong bzang po himself actually said. The latter had simply stressed that *g-* and *d-* applied both to the present and to the future but that such a fact did not represent a contradiction with Thon mi, who only spoke of the present here. His point was that Thon mi's verse only spoke of *principal* uses of the prefixes—an exegetical strategem that will be frequently used by later commentators, like gSer tog and others, too.

Here is a summary of Zha lu lo tsā ba's discussion in his *rTags kyi 'jug pa* commentary, i.e., *Zha lu sum rtags*, p. 27-30. On p. 27 he says that *g-* and *d-* apply principally (*gtso che ba*) to self, other, and the present. He then goes on to say on p. 28 that while *sbyin pa gtong ba* (“he gives gifts”), *shing gcod pa*, *sems can gsod pa*, and *'og tu gnon pa* are applications of *g-* for the present, the related forms without the *o* (*na ru*) vowel, viz., *gtang ba* (“what will be given,” “what is to be given”), *gcad pa*, *gsad pa*, and *gnan pa* are applications for a “future focus of the action” (*bya ba'i yul ma 'ongs pa*). On p. 28-29 he concludes: “It is not contradictory to say that [*g-*] applies for the present when there seem to be several [examples] of *g-* prefix being applied for the future. This is because [Thon mi] said [‘present’] on account of the principal [use]” (*gas 'phul ma 'ongs pa la 'jug pa du ma snang bas da lta ba la 'jug par bshad pa dang mi 'gal te / gtso che ba'i dbang gis gsungs pa'i phyir ro /*). Note that these points are not taken up in *lCang skya sum rtags*, though it is said to be based on the commentary of Zha lu lo chen. See Schubert 1937, 59-60.

Applications for act-qua-doing:

‘*gog par byed* (“... refutes”)
 ‘*gog byed* (“what effectuates the refutation,” “means of refuting”)
 ‘*gog* (“... refutes”)
 ‘*jog par byed* (“... places”)
 ‘*jog byed* (“what effectuates the placing,” “means of placing”)
 ‘*jog* (“... places”).

§40. Given the power of the word *dang* (*dang sgra* “and”) [in śloka twelve], [‘*a-*] is also applied for the entity other that is related to a distinct agent. For example:

‘*khod par bya* (“... is to be settled”)³²
 ‘*khod bya* (“what is to be settled”)
 ‘*khod* (“... will/should be settled”)
 ‘*bud par bya* (“... is to be pushed out”) [150]
 ‘*bud bya* (“what is to be pushed out”)
 ‘*bud* (“... will/should be pushed out”).

§41. [The prefix ‘*a-*] is applied to show the temporally future from amongst the three times that are related to a distinct agent (*byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba ‘i dus gsum*), and to show future thing-done and doing (*bya ‘gyur dang byed ‘gyur ma ‘ongs pa*), which may or may not be related to the [distinct agent].

To state some examples of applications for the temporally future (*dus kyi dus ma ‘ongs pa*):

‘*thab par ‘gyur* (“... will fight”)³³
 ‘*khod par ‘gyur* (“... will settle”).

³² The example is problematic in that both *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs* and *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* classify ‘*khod pa* (“exist,” “be settled,” “be written,” “be called”) as intransitive.

³³ The verb ‘*thab pa* is transitive and has only one form.

Applications for act-qua-thing-done:

'thab par bya (“...is to be fought”)*'thab bya* (“what is to be fought”)*'thab* (“...will be fought”)*'khod par bya*, *'khod bya*, *'khod*.

§42. In the commentaries of Si tu Paṇ chen and bsTan dar lha rams pa [i.e., A lag sha Ngag dbang bstan dar], [Thon mi's] root śloka was corrected and then stated as *mo ni bdag da ma 'ongs phyir* (“The feminine [prefix ‘a-] is for self, the present, the future”) [rather than *mo ni bdag dang ma 'ongs phyir* (“The feminine [prefix ‘a-] is for self and the future”)]—this seems [to have been done] with the pure intention that simple minds might understand more easily.³⁴ But let us once again give a condensed explanation of the meaning of the text's śloka. When [Thon mi] said,

³⁴ gSer tog himself does not see this reading as necessary, but at most as having pedagogical value. Si tu, however, does comment on *da* (“present”) instead of *dang* (“and”). On Si tu p. 248 we get the following discussion of *da* versus *dang*: *'dir gzhung gi yig cha rnams su mo ni bdag dang ma 'ongs phyir / zhes pa yod cing 'grel byed snga ma rnams la 'ang dogs pa ma shar mod / de ni 'dir bstan gyi bdag gzhan dang dus gsum gyi dbye ba gzhung gi dgongs pa bzhin ma phyed pas nongs te / bdag gi tha snyad ma bstan pa'i da lta ba'i tshig 'a phul can mang du yod pa skabs 'dir bstan dgos pa ma shes par 'dug pa'i phyir ro / des na gzhung de ltar bklags pa gzhung gi bstan bya ma rdzogs pa'i skyon du 'gyur bas yig nor brgyud par shes par byos la dkyus su bkod pa bzhin gzung bar bya'o //*. “Here, there is [the reading] *mo ni bdag dang ma 'ongs phyir* in various texts, and doubt did not occur to the earlier commentators, either. But this [reading] does not classify the divisions of self, other, and the three times taught in this [verse] in keeping with the thought of the text, and thus it is mistaken. For, it was not understood that in this context it should be shown that there are many present [tense] words having the prefix ‘a- that were not indicated by the designation ‘self’ [in Thon mi's verse]. Consequently, when the text has been read in that manner there will be the fault that what the text teaches is incomplete. So be aware that a mistaken reading has been transmitted! In the real text (*dkyus*)* [the reading] should be accepted as we have presented it.” *Cf. *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* s.v. *dkyus*: *dpe cha'i gzhung dngos*. Note that Ngag dbang bstan dar p. 187.3-6 echoes Si tu's line of thought and gives a number of examples of ‘a- being used for the present: *sngon 'jug 'a yig da ltar ba la 'jug pa ni / skud pa 'khal bzhin pa / gdan la 'khod bzhin pa sogs dang / de bzhin du / 'jug / 'don / 'thor / 'gog / 'bul / 'tshol sogs 'a yig da ltar ba la 'jug pa mang du yod pa'i phyir / yig cha rnams su / mo ni bdag dang ma 'ongs phyir // zhes byung ba yig nor du shes par byos la gong du bkod pa bzhin gzung bar bya'o //*. Bacot 1946, 66 adopted Si tu's reading, too.

pho ni 'das dang gzhan bsgrub phyir (“The masculine [prefix] is for establishing the past and other”),³⁵ stating the word *'das* (“past”) was for the following reasons: the temporally past (*dus kyi 'das pa*) was there, too, but especially (*bye brag tu*) [“past”] indicated the already accomplished thing-done (*bya ba byas zin pa*) related with a distinct agent. The word *dang* was not just a filler in the verse (*tshigs bcad kha skong tsam ma yin par*), but rather had a conjunctive sense (*sdud pa'i don*).³⁶ That is to say, [the prefix *b-*] is not only applied for the temporal past or what has been accomplished, but also for the future that is to be done (*bya 'gyur ma 'ongs pa*) [indirectly included via the sense].³⁷

§43. The word *gzhan* (“other”) [in the first line of verse twelve] is applied for the entity other of that action which is related to a distinct

³⁵ See n. 38 below.

³⁶ The natural translation of *dang* (“and”) in Thon mi’s verse is as the simple conjunction between two terms X and Y. This is what grammarians call *sdud pa* “conjunction” and is, of course, how most uses of *dang* are to be read, although there are other important uses, too. The *Sum cu pa* has five uses of *dang*: (1) *sdud pa* (“conjunction”), *'byed pa* (“disjunction”), *rgyu mtshan* (“reason”), *tshe skabs* (“time [of an event]”), *gdams ngag* (“imperative”). See Bacot 1946, 39, *gSer tog sum rtags*, 87-88, for the five *dang sgra'i jug tshul*. *gSer tog*, however, seems to understand *sdud pa* here as conjoining “X and, amongst other things, Y.” Thus, in the first line of śloka twelve the *dang* supposedly includes future forms, besides explicitly conjoining the terms “past” and “other.” And in line three *dang* does not just conjoin “self” and “future,” but also allows the entity other, acts-qua-doing, and acts-qua-thing-done. See §§21, 40, 45. In short, besides conveying the conjunction between self/other and terms for the three times, *dang* serves to include verb forms that were not otherwise explicitly mentioned by Thon mi but were “obtained [indirectly] via the sense” (*don gyis thob pa*). See n. 40. Finally, as *gSer tog* makes clear, the *dang sgra* in Thon mi’s verse is not there simply to fill the place of a syllable in a verse that otherwise would lack the required number of syllables. His point is that *dang* is not like the particle *ni*. One of the uses of *ni* he talks about in his *Sum cu pa* commentary is indeed as *kha skong* (“a filler”), typically *metri causa*. *gSer tog sum rtags* p. 86: *kha skong ni brjod don gzhan ston rgyu med par tsheg bar gyi sa khongs tsam zhig 'dzin pa* “Being a filler means that it just takes the place of a syllable without having to show any difference in the expressed meaning.”

³⁷ “Future that is to be done” or “future [event] that will have to be done” (*bya 'gyur ma 'ongs pa*) is the same as “future act-qua-thing-done” (*bya las ma 'ongs pa*), i.e., verb forms in ... *par bya*. They can be included via the sense: grammarians include the future-qua-thing-done as other. Cf., however, n. 38, 40 below on the exegesis of *gSer tog*, *Zha lu lo tsā ba*, and *Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge*.

agent; the word *bsgrub* (“establishing”) [151] is applied for establishing act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba’i las*).³⁸ That is to say, the masculine [prefix]

³⁸ Note that gSer tog seems to understand *bsgrub*—the future form of *sgrub* (“establishes”)—as actually specifying a category of action, so that the first line of Thon mi’s verse specifies three possibilities for *ba-* i.e., “past,” “other,” and “what will be established,” rather than just two (“past” and “other”). If we wanted to translate Thon mi’s verse in accordance with this interpretation—one that I consider implausible—we would have “The masculine [prefix] is for the past and other [and] what will be established.” *lCang skya sum rtags* has this interpretation; see Schubert 1937, 58–59. Miller 1976, 491 pointed out that this interpretation of *bsgrub* occurs in Zha lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po (1441–1527) and hypothesized that “This interpretation has a good deal to recommend it, and it might well be that Dharmapālabhadra [= Chos skyong bzang po] is the only one of the commentators here not to have lost sight of the mnemonic basis of the passage which clearly determined the original choice of terms used.” I don’t think so. First, it is difficult to attach much weight to a would-be mnemonic argument about *bsgrub* beginning with a *b-*, and especially to the supposed implication that *therefore* the line describing the use of *b-* must include not only *gzhan* and ‘*das* but an additional category, i.e., *bya ba bsgrub*. Second, for better or worse, it seems that Zha lu lo tsā ba’s interpretation was not original nor confined to him: it seems relatively common in earlier and in later grammatical texts. Not just do later writers like gSer tog and lCang skya Rol pa’i rdo rje have it, but Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489), who was slightly anterior to Zha lu lo tsā ba, has it, too. See Go rams pa’s *rTags ‘jug gi tīkā* 2b–3a: *ci’i phyir zhes sogs tshig rkang lnga ste / pho yi yi ge ba ni / ‘das pa la ‘jug pa dang / gzhan pa la ‘jug pa dang / bya ba bsgrub pa la ‘jug pa gsum las ... gsum pa ni smon lam btab / sems bskyed ces pa lta bu’o //*. “Concerning the five lines beginning with ‘why [are the prefixes applied?],’ the masculine letter *ba-* is applied for the past, it is applied for other, and it is applied for thing-done that will be established (*bya ba bsgrub pa*). From these three, the third is [illustrated with examples] like *smom lam btab* (‘...prayers will be made’), *soms bskyed* (‘... the mind [of enlightenment] will be generated’).” Third, and most importantly, this interpretation is *not* borne out by Si tu, who clearly takes *bsgrub phyir* as going with ‘*das* and *gzhan*: Thon mi’s phrase ‘*das dang gzhan bsgrub phyir* is glossed as “for establishing the past” and “for establishing other.” See Si tu p. 209: *sngon ‘jug gi pho yig ba ni dgos pa dus gsum las / byed pa po gzhan dang dngos su ‘brel ba’i bya ba byas zin ‘das pa (b)sgrub pa’i phyir dang / dngos po bdag gzhan gnyis las gzhan te byed pa po gzhan dang dngos su ‘brel ba’i bya ba’i yul dang bya ba bsgrub pa’i ‘jug pa yin no //*. “As for the prefix letter *b-*, it is for the following needs: in terms of the three times, it is for establishing the past accomplished thing-done that is directly related with a distinct agent; and in terms of the pair, self and other, it is applied for establishing other, i.e., the focus of the action directly related to a distinct agent and the thing-done (*bya ba*).”

letter *b-* is applied to show principally (*gtso bor*) the following: in terms of the triad, actions, agents and objects (*bya byed las gsum*), [it is for] the focus of the action (*bya ba'i yul*) or object (*las*); in terms of self and other, the entity other; in terms of the three times, the past that has been accomplished.

§44. When [Thon mi] said, *ma ning gnyis ka da ltar ched* (“The neutral [prefixes] are for both [self and other][and] the present”), *ma ning* (“neutral”) refers to the pair *g-* and *d-*.³⁹ As for the word *gnyis ka* (“both”), the śloka [directly] spoke of applications for the entities self and other that are related to a distinct agent. Thus, in terms of the triad, actions, agents, and objects, the applications for acts-qua-doing related to self and those for the action or act related to other are gotten [indirectly] through the sense (*don gyis thob*) [of the śloka’s word “both”].⁴⁰ Turning to the word *da ltar* (“present”), in terms of the three times related to a distinct agent, it showed both the present doing (*byed pa da lta ba*) and the temporally

³⁹ Cf. Si tu p. 227: *sngon 'jug gi ma ning ga da gnyis ni dngos po bdag dang gzhan gnyis ga la 'jug pa dang / der ma gtogs pa'i dus gsum las da lta ba ston pa'i phyir 'jug go //*. “The neutral prefixes, *g-* and *d-* are applied for both the entities self and other, and they are applied to show the present from among the three times that are not included in that [i.e., self and other].”

⁴⁰ Act-qua-doing and act-qua-thing-done are, respectively, agent-prominent and patient-prominent, and hence included under the rubrics self and other. Tibetan grammarians, whatever their other differences, generally agree upon this inclusion. See AACT, 3-8 and 62, §3. The general strategem of including various verb forms that are “obtained/ gotten [indirectly] via the sense” (*don gyis thob pa*) or “understood [implicitly] via the sense” (*don gyis rtogs par bya*) is certainly not original to *gSer tog*, either—although he seems to me to rely on it more than many other grammarians. We find it already used by Zha lu lo tsā ba Chos skyong bzang po to explain how future forms in *par bya* are covered by the first line of Thon mi’s verse, even though that line only explicitly mentions “past” and “other”: *Zha lu sum rtags* p. 26: ... *me yis bsregs pa dang bsreg par bya / legs par bsams dang bsam par bya // zhes sogs de ltar bshad pa rnams kyi snga ma snga ma rnams 'das pa'i tshig dang phyi ma phyi ma rnams bya ba la 'jug pa ste / bya ba'i sgra ma sbyar yang don gyis rtogs par bya'o //*. “...When one says ‘burned by fire’ and ‘to be burned by fire,’ ‘well thought out’ and ‘to be thought out well,’ and the other such [pairs of] examples [that we have given], then the first of each [pair] is an expression for the past and the second of each applies to thing-done (*bya ba*). Although the word *bya ba* is not used [by Thon mi], it is to be understood [implicitly] via the sense.”

present (*dus kyi da lta ba*) with the same force (*shed mtshungs*).⁴¹ So the applications [of the neutral prefixes *g-*, *d-*] for future thing-done and doing (*bya 'gyur dang byed 'gyur ma 'ongs pa*) and the applications for the temporally future (*dus kyi ma 'ongs pa*), whether they are related or not to a distinct agent (*byed pa po gzhan 'brel yin min*), are [all] gotten through the sense (*don gyis thob pa*) [of the śloka's words].⁴²

§45. When [Thon mi] said, *mo ni bdag dang ma 'ongs phyir* ("The feminine prefix is for self and the future"), *mo* ("feminine") refers to the letter 'a-. The word *bdag* ("self") is for the entity self which is related to a distinct agent,⁴³ while *dang* is conjunctive (*sdud pa*), that is to say, [the prefix 'a-] is [also] applied for the entity other, whether it is or is not related to a distinct agent,⁴⁴ and for the acts-qua-doing and acts-qua-thing-

⁴¹ I.e., with even weight (*do mnyam*). Cf. chapter VIII, n. 10 on *bya byed kyi sgra phan tshun shed mtshungs pa*.

⁴² gSer tog is following Ngag dbang bstan dar here. The latter had stated (p. 187): *dnegos su ma bstan kyang don gyis thob pa ga da gnyis ma 'ons pa la 'jug pa ni / dper na / gdul bya'i sems can / gzhal bya'i tshad / dbab bya'i char / dbul bya'i rdzas sogs so //*. "Applications of *g-* and *da-* [prefixes] to the future, which were not explicitly shown [in Thon mi's verse] but are obtained through the sense [of the verse's word 'both [self and other]'], are as follows: the sentient being to be disciplined, the size to be measured, the rain that is to fall (*dbab bya'i char*), the substance to be offered, etc." bsTan dar's examples are all simple cases of future thing-done (*bya 'gyur ma 'ongs pa*), with the one oddity, viz., *dbab bya'i char* ("rain that is to fall"), where *dbab* is actually the future of the verb 'bab, a verb that is intransitive and thus does not have a distinct agent. gSer tog goes a bit further than bsTan dar to include, via the sense, not only future thing-done (*bya 'gyur ma 'ongs pa*), like *gdul bya*, but also future doing (*byed 'gyur ma 'ongs pa*), and the temporally future (*dus kyi ma 'ongs pa*)—as an example of these latter two schemata he is no doubt thinking of a periphrastic, active future form such as *gcod par 'gyur* ("... will cut"). It is striking that gSer tog also allowed applications of *g-* and *d-* for some future forms *not* related to a distinct agent. Here he is probably thinking of bsTan dar's example *dbab bya'i char*. In the case of the 'a- prefix, there are numerous intransitives (*tha mi dad pa*) with attested future... *par bya* or ...*bya* forms, e.g., 'gro bar bya ("... to go"). But attested cases with *g-* or *d-* are rarer. See n. 44 on some grammarians applying the terms "self" and "other" secondarily in the case of some intransitive verbs.

⁴³ Read *byed pa po gzhan 'brel gyi dngos po bdag* instead of the text's *byed pa po gzhan 'brel gyis dngos po bdag*.

⁴⁴ On gSer tog's repeated use of the conjunction *dang* ("and") to include forms that were not explicitly mentioned by Thon mi, see n. 36. Note that gSer tog recognizes here a *byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel min gyi dngos po gzhan*—an entity other that is *not* related

done which are related with a distinct agent. As for the word *ma 'ongs pa* (“future”), the *śloka* spoke with the same force (*shed mtshungs*) of future things-done and doings, as well as the temporally future (*dus kyi ma 'ongs pa*), whether [these future forms] are related or not to distinct agents. So

with a distinct agent. In §§56-57, too, he makes it clear that he recognizes cases of self and other *not* related to a distinct agent. The point of “self” and “other” being occasionally applied secondarily to intransitives has a complicated history and needs a bit of clarification.

(a) In general, following Si tu, grammarians do *not* apply the categories of self and other to a verb that has no distinct agent and is intransitive. See AACT 5, n. 8. See dNgul chu Dharmabhadra’s *Si tu’i zhal lung* pp. 50-51 (Japanese translation in Inaba 1986, 369; text p. 444): *de yang byed pa po gzhan mi snang zhes pas / dper na / bdag ‘gro’o lta bu’i tshe / ‘gro ba de bya tshig yin kyang / ‘gro bya ‘gro byed gnyis ka bdag yin pas / ‘gro bya las gzhan pa’i ‘gro byed med pas na ‘di la bdag gzhan gyi dbye ba’ang mi byed pa yin no /*. “Now, when [Si tu] says ‘A distinct agent does not appear,’ [he means that] in cases such as ‘I am going,’ although ‘to go’ is a word for a thing-done, that which undergoes [the action of] going (*‘gro bya*) and the goer (*‘gro byed*) are both I, and thus there is no goer distinct from that which undergoes [the action of] going. Therefore, in such a case, the division in terms of self and other (*bdag gzhan gyi dbye ba*) is not made.”

(b) Nonetheless, some nineteenth century grammarians, such as dByangs can Grub pa’i rdo rje (1809-1887), felt that it was necessary to introduce a notion of *bdag don phal ba*, a “secondary sense of self,” such as the *‘gro ba po* (“goer”) who would be the subject of the verb *‘gro ba* (“to go”). This *bdag phal ba* is to be differentiated from *bdag dngos* (“the real self; self properly speaking”). See Tillemans 1991a. See also Müller-Witte 2009, 213 *et seq.* on dByangs can Grub pa’i rdo rje’s exegesis of verse twelve and a few of the quite numerous and different twentieth century positions on *bdag don phal ba*. *gSer tog* would seem to follow the idea of dByangs can Grub pa’i rdo rje, although he does not say so explicitly. See also §§15, 16. In addition, he also introduces *gzhan* forms for intransitives.

(c) In his *rTags ‘jug gi snying po don gsal*, dByangs can Grub pa’i rdo rje introduced his notion of *bdag don phal ba* specifically in connection with the prefix ‘a-, taking it as a qualification to Si tu’s assertion that Thon mi introduced the specifications of the three times to account for cases that are neither self nor other, viz., intransitives. (Cf. chapter XII, §18.) In effect, this assertion of Si tu is qualified as dealing with *bdag gzhan dngos* rather than *bdag gzhan phal ba*. The key passages from *rTags ‘jug gi snying po don gsal* pp. 133-134 are as follows: *des na dus gsum du dbye ba // bdag gzhan dbye bas ma khyab pa // bsdu ba’i don du shes dgos par // gsungs kyang sngon ‘jug ‘a yig skabs // byed las tsam dang ‘brel ba yi // dngos po bdag la’ang ‘jug pa mihong // ... // mo yig ‘a ni ‘chad pa po // ‘chad par byed dang ‘chad par ‘gyur // zhes sogs dngos po bdag dngos dang // ‘gro ba po dang ‘gro bar byed // ces sogs bdag don phal ba dang // ‘khyil*

applications [of 'a-] for present doing and for the temporally present (*dus*

lo zhes sogs da lta dang // 'khyil bar 'gyur sogs ma 'ongs 'jug //. "So, although it is said that one should understand the divisions into the three times to be for including what is not pervaded by self and other, in the context of the prefix 'a- we see that there are also applications for the entity self that is related with a mere action (*byed las tsam*). ... The feminine letter 'a- is applied for the entity self properly speaking (*dngos po bdag dngos*), as in '*chad pa po*, '*chad par byed*, '*chad par 'gyur*, and the secondary sense of self (*bdag don phal ba*) as in '*gro ba po* and '*gro bar byed*, as well as the present, as in '*khyil lo*, and the future, as in '*khyil bar 'gyur*."

(d) Finally, to round out our investigation, here is a sample of two contemporary grammarians' opinions on this controversy, those of mKhyen rab 'od gsal (1925-1997) and sKal bzang 'gyur med (?-1990s). First, mKhyen rab 'od gsal 1979, 25-26 cites the first part of the passage from dByangs can Grub pa'i rdo rje (up until '*jug pa mthong*) and then argues: *de la tshig skyon dang don skyon gnyis ka yod de / dang po tshig skyon ni / de lta na bzhugs pa po dang / bzhengs pa po sogs sngon 'jug ba yig gi skabs su'ang de ltar 'byung bas / gsungs kyang sngon 'jug 'a yig skabs / zhes 'a yig rkyang pa logs su dgar mi rigs pa dang / gnyis pa don skyon yang yod de / 'di skabs bya byed tha dad pa'i dngos po bdag gzhan gnyis kyi don ni de lta min par bdag gzhan nam / byed po dang las gnyis phan tshun ltos grub kyi tshul du gcig yod na cig shos kyang nges par yod dgos kyang / khyed kyi bdag don phal pa zhes pa ni de lta min par / 'gro ba po dang / 'gro bya gnyis ka de nyid las tha dad du 'jog tu med pas dgos pa cher mi 'dug snyam /*. "Here there are faults concerning the wording [of dByangs can Grub pa'i rdo rje's statement] and faults concerning the sense. First of all, the faults concerning the wording are as follows: In that case, in the context of the *b-* prefix, *bzhugs pa po*, *bzhengs pa po* and the like, would be like that [i.e., they would *also* be *bdag phal ba*], and thus when [dByangs can Grub pa'i rdo rje] says '*Although it is said ... in the context of the prefix 'a-*' it would be incorrect to single out just the letter 'a- [here]. Secondly, there are also faults concerning the sense: In the context of [Thon mi's verse], the meaning of 'the entities self and other,' where the object and agent are different, is not like [what dByangs can Grub pa'i rdo rje speaks of]. Self/other, or in other words, agent and object, are interdependently established, so that if one exists the other must also definitely exist, but your *bdag don phal ba* is not like that. Rather the goer ('*gro ba po*) and that which undergoes the going ('*gro bya*) are identical and not established as different. So I think that there is no great need [to introduce *bdag don phal ba*]." Second, sKal bzang 'gyur med 1981, 360-361 alludes to the secondary use of the terminology, "self/other," but stresses its important differences from self/other properly speaking: *bdag shar phyogs 'gro gnam nas char pa 'bab / lta bur cha mtshon na / 'gro ba po bdag yin zer chog kyang de la ltos pa'i 'gro bya gzhan med pa dang / 'bab rgyu char pa yin yang de la ltos pa'i 'bab pa po gzhan gtan nas yod mi srid pa de'i thog nas bya tshig 'gro dang 'bab gnyis bya byed tha*

kyi da lta ba), be they related or not to a distinct agent, were presented through the sense [of the śloka's words].⁴⁵

§46. In the stated root śloka [Thon mi] [just] says, via a broad-termed explanation (*rags bshad*), that the focus or act to be done (*bya ba'i yul lam las*) related with a distinct agent is the entity other, the act-qua-doing (*byed pa'i las*) is the entity self, accomplished thing-done (*bya ba byas pa*) is the past, what one is doing (*byed bzhin*) is present, what is to be done (*bya 'gyur*) and what one will do (*byed 'gyur*) are future. Nevertheless, in [Thon mi's] later six treatises there surely would have been some finely detailed explanation (*zhib bshad*) of such things, i.e., the particular ways one applies the various prefixes to show each individual point, viz., self, other, and the three times, be they related or not with a distinct agent.

mi dad pa yin par gsal por 'phrod pa red / rgyu mtshan de'i dbang gis bya byed tha mi dad pa'i bya tshig de rigs la gong dang mi 'dra bar dngos po bdag gzhan gyi dbye ba med la / de bzhin 'gro ba po bdag dang 'bab rgyu char pa gnyis ka la'ang rnam dbye'i rkyen gang yang sbyar du mi rung / "If one considers [examples] such as 'I am going to the East' or 'Rain is falling from the sky,' then although one can say that the goer is 'self' (*bdag*), there is no 'other object' relative to that [goer] which undergoes the going. And although the rain is what is to fall, there can never be an 'other faller' relative to that [rain]. Thus, it is clearly ascertained that verbs [such as] 'to go' or 'to fall' are ones where the object and agent are not different. For this reason, contrary to the previous [type of verb, viz., transitives], the class of verbs where the object and agent are not different does not have any divisions in terms of the entities self and other. Similarly, one cannot join any case-endings [such as the ergative, *kyis*, *gis*, and *gyis*] to the goer, i.e., oneself, and that which is to fall, i.e., the rain."

⁴⁵ See §44 and our notes to §44. The two passages turn on the same exegetical strategies. Again, there is a close connection with Ngag dbang bstan dar's commentary. bsTan dar, like Si tu, corrects Thon mi'i text to read *mo ni bdag da* [instead of *dang*] *ma 'ongs phyir*. See §42 and our notes. He can therefore unproblematically say that, besides the future, the corrected verse explicitly specifies applications for present forms like *skud pa 'khal bzhin pa*, *gdan la 'khod bzhin pa...* 'jug, 'don, 'thor, 'gog, 'bul, 'tshol, etc. gSer tog, on the other hand, is aware of this amendment (see §42). He himself explains the verse as is but says that it indirectly, or through the sense, applies to the present. Note that there are many intransitives, i.e., verbs without distinct agents, that have present forms with 'a- prefixes. bsTan dar cites *gdan la 'khod bzhin pa* ("...is settled now on the seat")—gSer tog would no doubt accept this.

However, nowadays the [six later] texts are no longer extant, and hence we must depend upon antique textual sources from the earlier [two] texts.⁴⁶

§47. This explanation is how we comment on the meaning of the [root] text according to our understanding. Thus, whatever I have explained correctly, may later fresh intellects, equally fortunate as me, [152] keep this well in the auspicious knots (*dpal be'u*) of their minds and not lose it to the hands of the thief of forgetfulness.

§48. Suppose we corrected [Thon mi's] text in accordance with the thought of the two commentaries [viz., those of Si tu Paṇ chen and A lag sha Ngag dbang bstan dar]. If we construed it as

pho ni 'das gzhan bsgrub ma 'ongs
ma ning gnyis ka da ma 'ongs
mo ni bdag gzhan da ma 'ongs

“The masculine is [for] the past, other, establishment [i.e., act-qua-thing-done], [and] future;

The neutral [prefixes] are [for] both [self and other], present, future;

The feminine is [for] self, other, present, future.”⁴⁷

there would be universal pervasion (*spyi khyab*) of [all verbal forms] that are or are not related to a distinct agent, and so this would seem to me completely correct.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ I.e., the *Sum cu pa* and *rTags kyi 'jug pa*. There are, indeed, no other texts of Thon mi extant or recorded traces of them. The eight texts of Thon mi are referred to frequently in the *phyi dar* (“second propagation”) period by authors such as Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290-1364), Zha lu lo tsā ba, Si tu and others. It is sometimes even hypothesized, by e.g., Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899), that six disappeared during the time of the anti-Buddhist king Glang dar ma (r. circa 838-841). See Verhagen 2001, 325, n. 578-579 for several references. The much maligned Glang dar ma, more likely, had nothing to do with it, and the cliché of Thon mi's lost corpus of six texts may well have never been anything more than a later legend.

⁴⁷ The last line of śloka twelve stays as is. For Ngag dbang bstan dar's position see n. 48 and n. 34. For Si tu's amendments to the verse, see n. 34. See also Tillemans 1988, n. 27; AACT, 18-19.

⁴⁸ gSer tog's discussion in §48-§55 is closely connected with an important passage from Ngag dbang bstan dar. bsTan dar summarizes his own position on p. 188.2-189.3 of his *sum rtags* commentary: *mdor na ba yig ni dus gsum gyi nang nas 'das pa dang ma 'ongs pa gnyis ka dang / bdag gzhan gnyis kyi nang nas gzhan 'phul zhing / da ltar ba*

dang bdag gnyis ka gtan nas mi 'phul lo // ga da gnyis ni dus gsum gyi nang nas da ltar ba dang ma 'ongs pa gnyis ka dang / bdag gzhan gnyis ka 'phul zhing 'das pa mi 'phul / 'a yig ni dus gsum gyi nang nas da ltar ba dang ma 'ongs pa gnyis ka dang bdag gzhan gyi nang nas bdag 'phul zhing 'das pa dang gzhan gnyis ka mi 'phul lo // de'i phyir 'das tshig gi sngon 'jug yin na ba yig yin pas khyab / da ltar ba'i tshig gi sngon 'jug yin na ga da 'a gsum gang rung yin pas khyab / ma 'ongs pa'i tshig gi sngon 'jug la dngos bstan gtso bo'i dbang du byas na 'a yig kho na dang (/) bya ba yul la yod pa'i las la ma 'ongs pa yang yod pa ltar na sngon 'jug bzhi ga 'jug cing / bshad ma thag pa rnams kyang ma yig dang ming rkyang ma the ba'i dbang du byas pa yin zhing / ming rkyang la nges pa med de / dper na / bstod bzhin pa lta bu da ltar ba dang / bstod par 'gyur ro lta bu ma 'ongs pa dang / bsngags pa po lta bu bdag po'i tshig la'ang sngon 'jug ba yig thob pas so / de bzhin du 'a yig gis 'das tshig gtan nas mi 'phul mod mya ngan las 'das pa lta bu'i 'das pa ni ming yin pas skyon med pa'i tshul dang nges mtshon ming rkyang kun la rigs 'gre'o //. “In sum, the letter *ba-* is prefixed [in the following way]: (1) for both the past and the future from among the three times; (2) for other from among self and other; (3) it is never prefixed for the present or for self. *ga-* and *da-* are prefixed for: (1) both the present and the future from among the three tenses; (2) both self and other; (3) they are not prefixed for the past. The letter *'a-* is prefixed for: (1) both the present and the future from among the three times; (2) for self from among self and other; (3) it is not prefixed for the past and other. Thus, if something is a prefix for an expression for the past, it is necessarily the letter *b-*; if something is a prefix for an expression for the present, it is necessarily either *g-*, *d-* or *'a-*. If we based ourselves principally on what [Thon mi] directly taught [in śloka twelve] about the prefixes [used] for future expressions, then there would only be the letter *'a*. [But] just as future does occur amongst acts pertaining to the focus of the action, so all four prefixes [*b-*, *g-*, *d-*, *'a-*] are applied [for the future]. What was just explained, however, was taken from a perspective that excludes the [prefixed] letter *m-* and simple nouns (*ming rkyang*). There is no [such] certainty in the case of simple nouns. This is because we do also get the *b-* prefix in [verbs] like *bstod bzhin pa*, which is present, in *bstod par 'gyur ro*, which is future, and in an agentive expression (*bdag po'i tshig*) like *bsngags pa po*. Similarly, the letter *'a-* is indeed never the prefix of an expression for the past. The [word] *'das pa* (“... has gone past/beyond,” “the past”) in something like *mya ngan las 'das pa* [= *nirvāṇa*] is a noun. So, in all [other] cases of simple nouns (*ming rkyang*), there will be an analogous reasoning [to show] how [our position on the prefixes] is faultless and to demonstrate that it is [in fact] certain.”

bsTan dar is, however, on shaky ground in saying that *'das pa*, in *mya ngan las 'das pa* (“has gone past suffering”), is the noun “the past,” rather than the past stem of the verb *'da' ba* (“go beyond,” “go past”), and hence is *not* a counterexample to his statement that *'a-* prefixed verbs are never past stems. See *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo s.v. 'da' ba*. Other statements of bsTan dar seem doubtful too, notably, his view that *g-*, *d-* are not

§49. Let us explain some example statements, adopting the perspective that these points [i.e., self, other, acts, three times] do not pertain to simple nouns (*ming rkyang*). While the prefix *b-* is applied to show the past, it is not so that all expressions for the past need to be prefixed [by *b-*]. There are many [pasts] such as, for example, *drangs zin* (“... has been pulled”) [and] *mnand tshar* (“...has already been pressed”). Similarly, although [*b-*] is applied for future thing-done (*bya* ‘*gyur ma* ‘*ongs pa*) and the entity other, there are [examples of the entity other without the *b-* prefix], like *drang bya* (“what is to be pulled”) [and] *gsad bya* (“what is to be killed”). And it is not applied for the temporally present (*dus kyi da lta ba*), self, or doing (*byed pa*).

§50. While the prefixes *g-* and *d-* are applied for both the entities self and other, there are cases [of self without *g-* and *d-*] such as ‘*ding byed* (“means of spreading”) and *sel byed* (“means of removing”) and [cases of other] such as *bsam bya* (“what is to be thought”) and *bri bya* (“what is to be written”). And although [*g-*, *d-*] are applied for the present and future, it is easily understood by analogy with the previous [examples] that they are not needed in all cases [of present and future]. And [*g-*, *d-*] cannot possibly be prefixes in expressions for the past.⁴⁹

§51. The prefix ‘*a-*’ is applied for the entity self, but there are cases [of self without ‘*a-*’] such as *dpyod byed* (“means of analyzing”) [and] *stsol byed* (“means of bestowing”). And although it is applied for the present and future, there are [future forms without ‘*a-*’] such as *gding bya* and *myang bya* (“what is to be experienced”). There are no applications [of ‘*a-*’] for the past and the entity other.⁵⁰

prefixes for the past tense. There are some examples of *d-* being applied for the past—e.g., *dpyad pa* (“... has analyzed”), *dpags pa* (“... has reasoned”), and *dpyangs pa* (“... has suspended”). Finally, note that gSer tog will elaborate upon bsTan dar’s idea that simple nouns, like *sngags* and *stod* (“praise,” “eulogy”), can take the *b-* prefix to make present and future verb phrases, like *bstod bzhin pa* and *bstod par* ‘*gyur*, respectively, or agentive expressions like *bsngags pa po* (“praiser”), all seemingly in violation of the first line of verse twelve. See §54 and n. 51 below.

⁴⁹ gSer tog is following bsTan dar here and could also be confronted with relatively rare counterexamples, such as the *d-*-prefixed past stems *dpyad*, *dpags*, and *dpyangs* or the *g-*-prefixed past *gdams* (“... has instructed”). See n. 48.

⁵⁰ Note that in §40 he did, nonetheless, give an ‘*a-*’-prefixed form, i.e., ‘*bud bya*, as an example of the entity other (*dnegos po gzhan*). The simplest explanation is that gSer tog again, for better or worse, just reproduced bsTan dar’s position here. See n. 48.

§52. These, then, are the ways that the prefixes are applied for the points directly taught in the [root] text, i.e., the triad actions, agents, and objects, as well as self and other. They also constitute the principal points when it is said, “For what purpose are [the prefixes] applied (*dgos pa ci phyir ‘jug pa’*)?” Thus, here is what we really need to do: with guidance, debate, and so forth, promote understanding that is certain about [matters such as] (a) when one does or does not apply which prefix to which radical (*ming gzhi*) because of thing-done, doing, etc. (*bya byed sogs*) and (b) the meaning and particularities of such applications.

§53. [153] Now, in [A lag sha Ngag dbang] bsTan dar’s commentary, it is said that simple nouns (*ming rkyang*) should not be stated as examples in this context [i.e., when one is interpreting Thon mi’s verse]. However, because he thought that it was important to bring forth the principal certainties about how orthography (*yig sdeb*) differs when prefixes are applied to nouns to [convey] the senses of thing-done, doing, etc., he made a specially penetrating explanation. We should just learn that first.⁵¹

⁵¹ See n. 48 to §48 for a translation of the complete passage from bsTan dar.

(a) gSer tog and bsTan dar’s point is not that prefixes cannot be applied to nouns. It is rather that *when* they are applied, the rules as laid down in verse twelve, or even in the amended version of verse twelve, will not hold strictly. Thus, for example in §54, gSer tog (elaborating upon bsTan dar) tells us that the nouns *sngags* (“praise”) and *stod* (“eulogy”) can take *b-* prefixes to make present verbal forms *bsngags byed* and *bstod byed*. The fact of there being present forms with *b-* would thus seem to run counter to the first line of verse twelve. The verbs *bsngags* and *bstod* are, however, invariable for self, other, and the three times. See the Verb Tables in *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, s.v. *bsngags* and *bstod*. An obvious problem in this line of reasoning is that all invariable verbs would, *in any case*, have to be disregarded when giving examples of how Thon mi made differentiations in tense and voice in function of a verb’s *different* prefixes.

(b) Si tu himself had inveighed against early grammarians who cited simple nouns (*ming rkyang*) as examples of the uses of the prefixes. See AACT pp. 10-11. Whereas Ngag dbang bstan dar and gSer tog are dealing with the applications of prefixes to existent nouns to *make* verbs (e.g., *sngags* → *bsngags*), Si tu is arguing against taking nouns like *gcan gzhan* (“carnivore”) as being *themselves* examples of the use of the *g-* prefix to show something about self and other. (The prefix seems to be an integral part of the noun, rather than an addition to **can zan*). We see that, indeed, Si tu must have been exasperated with his predecessors’ confused presentations of examples for self, other, and the three times. Si tu’s *bête noire* here was, no doubt, rNam gling Paṇ chen dKon mchog chos grags (1648-1718), who, in *rNam gling sum rtags*, gives numerous, seemingly arbi-

§54. Let us, therefore, understand correctly how the prefixes are applied to nouns. Whether [the actions] are related or not with a distinct agent, we need to know how the prefixes are also applied to simple nouns in order to show meanings such as thing-done and doing. So I'll briefly say the following.⁵² Now, there are boundless cases of simple noun entities (*ming rkyang gi dngos po*, like *yan lag* ("limb"), *yul* ("place"), *yod* ("existent"), *med* ("nonexistent"), *tshad ma* ("means of knowledge"), *'dra* ("likeness"), *rgyun* ("continuum"), etc., to which one never applies prefixes in order to convey thing-done and doing. Therefore, to take the simple nouns that [can] take prefixes, there are many cases such as *sngags* ("praise"),⁵³ *stod* ("eulogy"), *dor* ("abandonment"), *thob* ("acquisition"). They are, for instance, as follows: (1) [in the case of the nouns *sngags* and *stod*] the orthography [of the resultant stems] does not differ at all [when one adds a prefix to the nouns and shows self, other, the acts, or tenses], as in, for instance, *bsngags bya* ("what is to be praised") *bsngags byed*, *bsngags zin*, *bsngags shig*, *bstod bya* ("what is to be eulogized"), *bstod byed*, *bstod do*, *bstod cig*; (2) [in the case of *dor* and *thob*], the orthography changes a bit [to show self, other, etc.], as in *dor bya*, *'dor byed*, *dord zin*, *dord cig*, *thob bya*, *'thob byed*, *thob zin*, [and] *thob cig*.

trarily chosen nouns as examples of self, other, and the three times—Si tu characterizes such earlier writers (p. 207) as "obscurantists widely disseminating rash [statements] that have not been [properly] thought out" (*ma brtags pa'i bab col mang du spros pa'i rdzob rnams*). Note that *rNam gling sum rtags* p. 124 gives, *inter alia*, the following examples of *g-* prefixed forms covered by verse twelve: *gcan gzan*, *la gcan pa* ("toll collector for a [mountain] pass"), *gnyug ma'i gshis* ("primordial/innate character"), *gnyug mar gnas* ("abiding in the primordial"), *chu'i gting* ("the depths of the water"), *nor gyi gter* ("mine of jewels"), *gdod nas dag pa* ("original purity"). Cf. Si tu, 207: *ga yig bya ba gzhi la yod pa'i las la 'jug pa'i dper yang / gcan zan / la gcan pa / sgra gcan / rus kyi gnyos / dud 'gro gnyan sogs phal cher ming rkyang kho nar bkod pa /*. "He just presents for the most part simple nouns as examples of the letter *ga-* being applied for acts that belong to the basis of the action, such as 'carnivore,' '[the demon] Rāhu,' 'clan,' 'the animal, the [Himalayan] sheep,' and so forth." All the examples of simple nouns being self, other, etc. (as well as earlier ones) are found in *rNam gling sum rtags* p. 124. It is difficult *not* to side with Si tu in his righteous exasperation with early grammarians on these points.

⁵² From here on, gSer tog is giving his own views rather than reproducing those of bsTan dar.

⁵³ H. Jäschke's *Tibetan-English Dictionary* gives "praise," "encomium" as a secondary sense of *sngags*, besides its usual sense of "*mantra*," "incantation."

§55. Furthermore, even when no prefix is applied to the noun, there are also many cases which show the meanings of thing-done, doing, and so forth, whether related or not to a distinct agent: for instance [to take the nouns *len pa* “acquisition” and *myong ba* “experience”], the orthography changes completely in, for instance, *blang bya*,⁵⁴ *len byed*, *blangs zin*, *longs shig*, *myang bya*, *myong byed*, *myangs zin*, *myongs shig*; and [to take the nouns *spyod pa* “practice” and *rbod pa* “setting loose”⁵⁵] there are a few changes, like *spyad bya*, *spyod byed*, *spyad zin*, *spyod cig*, *rbad bya*, *rbod byed*, *rbad zin*, *rbod cig*.

§56. Turning now to the extremely feminine prefix, the letter *m-*, its applications for both the entities self and other related to a distinct agent, for act-qua-doing and act-qua-thing-done, and for all three times, were spoken of [directly] in [Thon mi’s] śloka [when the latter said, “the extremely feminine is for all alike” (*shin tu mo ni mnyam phyir ro*)]. So the applications for self, other, and so forth *not* related to a distinct agent⁵⁶ are gotten through the sense, with the result that [*m-*] will be applied to the radical to show all these things alike, i.e., without any differences.

§57. To state some examples of applications [of *m-*] for the entity self:

mkhas pa po (“one who becomes learned”)
mthol ba po (“one who confesses”).

Applications [of *m-*] for the entity other:

mkhas bya’i gnas (“an area in which one is to become learned”)
mthol bya’i tshig (“the words to be confessed”).

Applications for doing (*byed pa*):

mkhas par byed (“... makes [someone] learned”)⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Note that the *b-* is not a prefix here but rather a superscribed letter.

⁵⁵ *rbod pa* is at most an educated guess on my part. In §55 (contrary to §54) *gSer tog* doesn’t tell us which nouns he is thinking of.

⁵⁶ On applications of the terminology “self” and “other” to intransitive verbs, i.e., those that do not have a distinct agent, see n. 42 and 44.

⁵⁷ *mkhas* is intransitive (*tha mi dad pa*; *byed med las tshig*), while *mthol* is transitive. Note that *mkhas* does, nonetheless, figure in phrases with *bya* and *byed*—*gSer tog* clearly

mkhas byed (“means of becoming learned”, “means of making learned”)
mkhas (“... is learned”)
mthol bar byed (“... confesses”)
mthol byed (“means of confessing”)
mthol (“... confesses”).

Applications [of *m-*] for the focus of the action or the act-qua-thing-done:⁵⁸

mkhas par bya (“... is to become learned”, “... is to be made learned”)
mkhas bya (“that in which one is to become learned”)
mkhas (“... will/should be learned”)
mthol bar bya (“... is to be confessed”)
mthol bya (“what is to be confessed”)
mthol (“... will/should be confessed”)[155].

Applications [of *m-*] for past accomplished [action]:

mkhas par byas (“... has become learned”)
mkhas zin (“... has become learned”)
mkhas (“... has become learned”)
mthold par byas, *mthold zin*, *mthold* (“... has confessed,” “... has been confessed”).

Applications specially (*dmigs kyis*) for doing (*byed pa*) or the temporally present (*dus kyid dus da lta ba*):

mkhas kyin (“... is becoming learned”)
mthol gyin (“... is confessing”).

does not shy away from using the terminology of “self” and “other” in this case, although presumably in the secondary (*phal ba*), rather than actual (*dnegos*), sense. See n. 44. In the case of involuntary verbs (*bya tshig gzhan dbang can*), like *mkhas pa*, however, the form in ... *par byed* typically has a causative sense. Cf. *gnyid nyal bar byed* (“... he puts him to sleep”).

⁵⁸ Here it seems that we must read the word *las* in *bya ba'i yul lam las la 'jug pa* as also going with the word *bya ba'i*, so that the *las* is the act-qua-thing-done, i.e., *bya ba'i las*. Certainly, half of the examples are of act-qua-thing-done (*bya ba'i las*), and gSer tog's own description of the uses of *m-* (see §56) would demand that he also give examples of act-qua-thing-done if he is to give examples of all the uses.

Applications specially for the temporally future (*dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa*):

mkhas par 'gyur (“... will be learned”)
mthol bar 'gyur (“... will confess”).

§58. The fact that applications for imperatives (*bskul tshig*), which are included in act-qua-doing (*byed las*), were not directly spoken about in the root [text] was because prefixes do not apply in the case of imperatives.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, earlier commentators did make it clear that [imperatives] belonged to the initial stream of teaching [i.e., that of the *rTags kyi 'jug pa*]. To take some examples:

snod khongs shig (“Fill the vessel!”)
chu khog cig (“Stop the water!”)
me tog thord cig (“Scatter the flowers!”).

And there are also applications to nouns (*ming 'jug pa*):

rten la mjold cig (“Look at the statue!”)
tshad 'jold cig (“Measure the size!”).⁶⁰[156]

There is no difference in the imperative whether it takes *cig*, *zhig* [or] *shig*, but [imperatives] like *phyed shig* (“Divide!”) do appear on occasion in correct textual sources (*dpe khungs dag pa*). Thus, it seems that for expressing an imperative, using *shig* has greater power (*nus pa che ba*) than *zhig*.⁶¹

⁵⁹ A kya Yongs 'dzin had the view that imperatives showed act-qua-doing. For him “the present and the imperative belong to act-qua-doing” (*da lta ba dang bskul tshig gnyis byed pa 'i las su gtogs la*). It seems *gSer tog* does likewise. See AACT, p. 54, §21. *gSer tog*'s statement in §58 that prefixes do not apply in the case of imperatives might be taken as representing the statistical majority, but it admits of several important exceptions. Ironically, the examples he gives later are precisely such exceptions: *mjod* is an *m*-prefixed imperative of *mjal* (present, past, future), while *'jold* is the *'a*-prefixed imperative of *'jal* (present), *gzhal* (future), *bcal* (past).

⁶⁰ The nouns are presumably *mjal* (*kha*) and *'jal* (*kha*).

⁶¹ When *gSer tog* says there is “no difference in the imperative,” he means that whether we add *cig*, *zhig*, or *shig*, the verbal form remains an imperative and conveys a command. Following the usual rules, *cig* is added after final *g*, *d*, *b*, and *da drag*; *zhig* is added after final *ng*, *n*, *m*, *'a*, *r*, *l*, and the absence of a final consonant (*mtha' med*); *shig* is only

Tibetan text

§1. [137] bzhi pa dgos pa ci yi phyir du 'jug par byed pa la gnyis / bya byed [138] las gsum sogs kyi don mdo tsam bshad pa / ci phyir 'jug tshul dngos bshad pa'o //

§2. dang po ni / bya byed las gsum dang bdag gzhan dang 'das ma 'ongs da lta ba zhes pa'i don rnams la blo kha legs par ma phyogs phyin *rTags kyi 'jug pa*'i don dpyis phyin par mi go ba'i phyir cung zad bshad na / bya byed las gsum du phye ba'i don la / byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ma 'brel gyi dbang gis khyad par mi 'dra ba cung zad re yod mod / gtso cher byed pa po las su bya ba gang bya rgyu de bgyi ba la bya ba dang / bya ba de byed pa po gtso bo dang byed pa phal ba gnyis la byed pa dang / las gang bya ba'i yul la las zhes bya'o //

§3. de yang dper brjod kyi steng nas bshad na /

phyug por 'gro ba'i ched du dbul pos 'bad pas nor btsal /

zhes brjod pa'i tshe / phyug por 'gro ba de bya ba'i yul yin zhing / dbul po ni byed pa po gtso bo dang / 'bad pa ni byed pa phal ba dang / nor ni las dngos dang / btsal ba ni bya ba dngos yin no //

§4. dbang bskur ba'i ched du lag pas bum pa 'dzin /

ces pa'i tshe / dbang bskur ba bya ba'i yul / lag pa byed pa / bum pa las / 'dzin pa bya ba yin zhing /

§5. khrus kyi phyir bum pa gzung bar bya /

zhes pa'i tshe / khrus bya ba'i yul / bum pa las / gzung ba bya ba / byed pa shugs las rtogs dgos pa dang /

§6. bum pa 'dzin par byed /

ces pa'i tshe / bum pa las / 'dzin pa bya ba / byed ces pas byed pa ston pa lta bu'o //

after final *s*. Cf. *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs*, p. 879. Clearly a case such as *phye shig*, where *phye* ends in a vowel, would be anomalous by these rules. gSer tog, however, (perhaps unconvincingly) hypothesizes that it *is* correct and represents a stronger imperative than the more usual *phye zhig*.

§7. bdag gzhan gnyis su phye ba'i don la / 'di'i skabs kyi bdag dang gzhan zhes pa ni / spyir bdag gzhan gnyis su phye ba'i bdag dang gzhan tsam la go bar mi bya bar / las gang gi byed pa po dang byed pa dang byed pa'i las la bdag ces pa dang / gang bya ba'i yul dang bya ba dang bya ba'i las [139] la gzhan zhes bya ba'o //

§8. de yang dbul pos 'bad pas nor btsal ba na / nor 'tshol bzhin pa'i las ni / skabs 'di'i las la bya rgyu'i las dang byed bzhin pa'i las gnyis yod pa las / byed bzhin pa'i las yin pas / de la bdag gzhan gnyis kyi nang nas dngos po bdag ces pa dang / byed pa po la yod pa'i las dang / da lta ba'i las dang / 'tshol bar byed pa'i las zhes bya ba yin la / nor 'tshol ba na rnyed pa de bya rgyu'i las yin pas / de la bdag gzhan gnyis kyi nang nas dngos po gzhan zhes pa dang / bya ba yul la yod pa'i las dang / bya 'gyur ma 'ongs pa'i las dang / btsal bya'i las zhes bya ba yin no // des na byed pa po la yod pa'i las dang / bya ba yul la yod pa'i las gnyis la bdag dang gzhan zhes pa'i don thob pa yin par shes dgos so //

§9. de dag gi don bsdu na / dngos po dang / las gnyis su 'dus pa yin te / dngos po la ni / dngos po bdag dang / dngos po gzhan dang las kyi dngos po gsum yod de / dbul po dang / des 'bad pa gnyis ni / bdag gzhan gnyis las dngos po bdag dang / bya byed las gsum las byed pa zhes bya zhing / btsal bya'i nor ni / bya ba bsgrub pa'i yul yin pas bdag gzhan gnyis las dngos po gzhan dang / bya byed las gsum las las kyi dngos po zhes bya la / nor btsal ba'i bya ba ni / gang bya ba'i dngos po yin pas bdag gzhan gnyis las dngos po gzhan zhes bya'o //

§10. las la ni byed pa'i las dang / bya ba'i las gnyis yod de / dbul pos 'bad pas nor 'tshol ba ni / byed pa po dbul po dang 'brel ba'i las yin pas byed pa'i las zhes bya la / 'bad pas nor 'tshol ba'i bya ba ni / 'bad pa dang 'brel nas ngo bo gcig tu yod pas byed pa po dang 'brel ba'i las dang / bdag dang 'brel ba'i las zhes bya zhing / nor btsal nas rnyed pa'i cha ni / bya ba'i yul nor dang 'brel ba'i las yin pas bya ba'i las dang / gzhan dang 'brel ba'i las zhes bya'o // [140]

§11. bya ba la yang gnyis yod de / nor 'bad pas btsal ba'i rtsol ba ni / byed pa po dbul po la yod pas byed pa po la yod pa'i bya ba zhes bya la / btsald zin rnyed pa ni / bya yul nor gyi steng du yod pas bya ba yul la yod pa'i bya ba zhes bya ba yin no //

§12. dus gsum du phye ba'i don la / nor btsal bya'i las ni / bya 'gyur dang / 'tshol ba'i las ni / byed 'gyur yin pas ma 'ongs pa dang / nor 'tshol bzhin pa'i las ni / byed bzhin yin pas da lta ba dang / btsald zin phyug por song ba ni / bya ba byas zin yin pas 'das pa zhes bya zhing / nor tshold cig ces pa ni / byed las su gtogs pa'i bskul tshig yin pas ma 'ongs pa zhes bya'o //

§13. 'on kyang bya byed las kyi dus gsum dang / spyir dus gsum gyi
'jog tshul la khyad par cung zad re yod de / dper na /

gdul bya'i sems can /

zhes pa lta bu la mtshon na / las sgra de yi 'jug yul rnam pa gsum du yod
de / gdul bya zhes pa las sgra dngos ma 'ongs pa dang / sems can ni las
/ 'dul ba ni byed pa da lta ba / btuld pa ni byas zin 'das pa / gdul bar bya
zhes pa ni bya ba'i las ma 'ongs pa zhes bya zhing / sems can de gdul ba'i
bya bas slar 'dul dgos pa ni / dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa dang / 'dul bzhin pa
ni / dus kyi dus da lta ba dang / btuld zin pa ni / dus kyi dus 'das pa'i don
yin par go dgos so //

§14. 'dir byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ma 'brel zhes pa'i don ni / las
dang bya ba gang zhig byed pa po gzhan gyis dngos su sgrub par byed pa
zhig yin na / de la byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba'i las zhes bya ste / dper
brjod na / gser 'gyur rtsi yis lcags gser du bsgyur ba / lta bu la /

gser du bsgyur bya'i lcags /

sgyur pa po /

gser du sgyur bar byed /

gser du bsgyurd zin /

gser du sgyurd cig /

ces pa dang /

gnas nas dbyung bya'i gte po /

'byin pa po /

gnas nas 'byin par byed /

gnas nas phyung zin /

gnas nas phyungs shig /

ces pa lta bu bya byed kyi dbang gis yig gzugs mi 'dra ba thob tshul dang /

§15. las dang bya ba gang zhig byed pa po gzhan dngos su med par
rang gi ngang gis 'grub par snang ba lta bu yin na / de la byed pa po gzhan
dang ma 'brel ba'i las zhes bya ste / dper brjod na / skyes bu zhig gi mdun
du lcags gong ril ril ba zhig glo bur du rang gi ngang gis gser du 'gyur ba
/ lta bu la /

gser du 'gyur bya'i lcags /

gser du 'gyur bzhin pa /

gser du gyurd zin /
gser du 'gyur zhig /

ces pa dang /

gnas nas 'byung bya'i dge slong /
gnas nas 'byung bzhin pa /
gnas nas byung zin /
gnas nas 'byung zhig /

ces pa lta bu bya byed las kyi rnam gzahag thob kyang de'i dbang gis yig
gzugs mi 'gyur bar don thob kyi yig gzugs mi 'dra ba thob tshul te gnyis
yod do //

§16. de la lcags rang nyid gser du 'gyur ba'i tshe / lcags rang gi 'byung
ba rnams kyi⁶² byed pas [142] yin yang rang gi 'byung ba las byed pa po
gzhan gyis min pa ste / skyes bu de'i bsod nams kyi byed pas kyang yin
mod byed pa po lta bu'i bsod nams nyid gzhan yin yang dngos su mi snang
ba'i phyir dang / gnas nas 'byin pa po med par dge slong zhig rang nyid
gnas nas 'byung ba'i tshe / rang nyid byed pa po tsam las byed pa po gzhan
dngos su med pa lta bu la legs par dpyad na / bya byed las gsum dang byed
pa po gzhan dang 'brel ma 'brel dang bdag gzhan gyi don la nges pa 'khrul
med skye bar 'gyur ro //

§17. gzhan yang skyes bu'i rtsol ba la dngos su ltos kyang mtha' nas
nang du bsdu ba lta bu la /

bsdu bya /
sdud pa po /
sdud byed /
sdud bzhin /
bsdus zin /
sdud par 'gyur /
sdus shig /

ces pa dang / thor bu phyogs gcig tu sdud pa lta bu la /

btu bya /

⁶² Ego kyi: Text kyis. See chapter XII, n. 16.

sdud pa po /
 sdud par byed /
 sdud bzhin /
 btus zin /
 sdud par 'gyur /
 sdud cig /

ces pa lta bus mtshon pa'i yig gzugs mi 'dra ba thob tshul mang du yod pas
 zhib cing mtha' chod par bslab sbyor byed pa gal che'o //

§18. gzhung 'dir byed pa po dang bya ba'i yul gyi sgra rnams bsdu ba'i
 ched du bdag gzhan gyi dbye ba mdzad cing / de la byed bzhin da lta ba
 dang / bya 'gyur dang byed 'gyur ma 'ongs pa dang / bya ba byas zin 'das
 pa yod pa dang / bdag gzhan gyi dbye bas ma khyab pa rnams kyang bsdu
 ba'i ched du dus gsum gyi dbye ba mdzad pa yin no //

§19. des na dus gsum gyi dbye bas ni byed las dang 'brel ba'i ngag gi
 sbyor ba thams cad la khyab cing / bdag gzhan gyi dbye bas ni de tsam du
 khyab pa min pa'i tshul dang / byed las dang 'brel ba'i bya byed kyi tshig
 phan tshun shed mthungs rnams kyang bdag gzhan gyi dbye bar bsdu ba'i
 tshul sogs kyi khyad par phyed shes dgos pa ni skabs 'dir med mi rung ba
 yin no //

§20. gnyis pa ci phyir 'jug pa dngos bshad pa ni / sngon 'jug rnams
 ming gzhi'i yi ge rnams la dgos pa ci zhiig gi don ston pa'i phyir du 'jug
par byed ce na brjod par bya ste / sngon 'jug gi yi ge lnga las pho ba yig ni
 / dus gsum gyi nang nas byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba'i bya ba'i [143]
 las byas zin 'das pa ston pa'i phyir du 'jug pa yin te / dper brjod na /

snod bkang /
 chu rgyun bkag /

ces dang /

bkang /
 bkag /

ces pa lta bu'o //

§21. dang sgra'i nus pas byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba'i bya 'gyur
 ram bya las ma 'ongs pa la 'jug pa yin te / dper brjod na /

bklag par bya /

bklag bya /
 bklag /
 bskor bar bya /
 bskor bya /
 bskor /

zhes pa lta bu dang /

§22. bdag gzhan gnyis kyi nang nas dngos po gzhan te byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i gang bya ba’i yul la ‘jug pa yin te / dper brjod na /

bzhog bya’i shing /
 bskul bya’i chos /

zhes pa lta bu dang /

§23. bya byed las gsum gyi nang nas byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i bya ba’i las bsgrub par bya ba’i phyir du ‘jug pa yin te / dper brjod na /

nor brku bar bya /
 gzugs blta bar bya /
 brku bya /
 blta bya /
 brku /
 blta /

zhes pa lta bu’o //

§24. gzhan yang / brjod bya / brjod zin / bshad bya / bshad zin lta bu bya ba yul gyi sgra dang byas zin ‘das pa gnyis yig gzugs gcig gis ston pa dang / bcib pa / bza’ ba lta bu bya tshig gis gsal mi dgos par dngos po gzhan la ‘jug pa dang / ‘chad ‘gyur ma ning gi skabs su / gzung ba / gzhal ba lta bu bya tshig med kyang yul gyi sgra ston pa dang /

§25. brgyan par bya / bskor bar bya lta bu dngos po gzhan la da drag mi thob pas slar bsdu’am bya tshig [144] gi tshig sna bsdu tshe / brgyan no / bskor ro zhes thob pa las / brgyan to sogs mi thob pa dang / btsald bya lta bu da drag gtan du ‘jug pa yin yang da drag ni bya yul dang ‘das pa thun mong du ston pa mi srid pas dngos po gzhan la don gyis thob kyang btsal bya zhes yig gzugs la da drag ‘dor dgos pas / gzhan nam bya ba’i yul la da drag mi thob pa dang / ‘chad ‘gyur ma ning dang mo’i skabs su / ‘dzind / gsold lta bu dngos po bdag la da drag ‘jug kyang / slar bsdu’am tshig sna bsdu tshe / ‘dzin no / gsol lo lta bu da drag dor ba ni byed pa da lta ba gsal

byed dang / 'dzind to / gsold to lta bu da drag thob pa yang byed pa zin
pa'i nyams dod pa rnams so sor 'byed shes dgos shing /

§26. bshad pa dang 'chad 'gyur skabs su /

bsten par bya /
bsten bya /
bsten /
gtang bar bya /
gtang bya /
gtang /
dpyad par bya /
dpyad bya /
dpyad /
mchod par bya /
mchod bya /
mchod

lta bu las sam bya las ma 'ongs pa'am dngos po gzhan la 'jug pa dang /

§27. sten pa po /
sten par byed /
sten byed /
sten /
gtong ba po / gtong bar byed / gtong byed / gtong /
dpyod pa po / dpyod par byed / dpyod byed / dpyod /
mchod pa po / mchod par byed / mchod byed / mchod

lta bu dngos po bdag gam byed pa la 'jug pa dang /

§28. bstend par byas /
bstend zin /
bstend /
btang bar byas / btang zin / btang /
dpyad par byas / dpyad zin / dpyad /
mchod par byas / mchod zin / mchod

lta bu bya ba byas zin dang dus kyi dus 'das pa dang /

sten /
gtong / dpyod / mchod

lta bu byed bzhin dang dus kyi dus da lta ba dang /

bsten /
gtang / dpyad / mchod

lta bu bya ‘gyur dang dus kyi dus ma ‘ongs pa rnams thun mong du ston
pa yin zhing /

§29. ‘dir bstan bdag gzhan gyi dbye bas ma khyab pa’i dus gsum las /

grub /
‘dus /
byung / [145]

lta bu ‘das pa dang /

‘grub bzhin /
‘grub /
‘du bzhin /
‘du /
‘byung bzhin /
‘byung

lta bu da lta ba dang /

‘grub par ‘gyur
‘grub ‘gyur /
‘grub /
‘du bar ‘gyur / ‘du ‘gyur / ‘du /
‘byung bar ‘gyur / ‘byung ‘gyur / ‘byung

lta bu ma ‘ongs pa la ‘jug pa rnams te / de dag la tshig sna bsdu ma bsdu
gang byas kyang yig gzugs gcig pa thob pa rnams ni so so’i bab dang snga
phyi’i tshig gi nus pa la dpags te shes dgos pa sogs mang du yod kyang /
mtha’ dag par bri bar ma langs shing shog snag gron pa las dgos pa lhag po
med pa’i phyir / rnag smin pa rtol ran pa / shing tog smin pa za ran pa lta
bu phis ‘byung gi gdul bya skal ldan rnams yod na rnam par dpyod pa’i
sgo dod pa tsam las so //

§30. **bsTan dar pa**’i ‘grel bar / ras de sang nyin bkru bar bya / yi ge
de da dung bklag par bya’o zhes pa lta bu ma ‘ongs pa la ‘jug pa yod par

gsungs pa ni bam bshad nam snyam ste / dper brjod dngos bstan ltar na sang nyin dang da dung zhes pa'i tshig gis dus kyi dus ma 'ongs pa bstan gyi / bkru bar bya dang bklag par bya zhes pa bya las ma 'ongs pa nyid las ma 'das pa'o //

§31. spyir yang bya ba gzhi la yod pa'i las la / bklag bya lta bu bya las ma 'ongs pa dang dus kyi ma 'ongs pa dang las kyi sgra dngos la'ang 'jug cing / bklags zin lta bu dus kyi dus 'das pa dang bya ba byas zin 'das pa gnyis ni bya ba'i gzhi dang 'brel ba dang / klog par byed lta bu byed pa'i las dang byed bzhin da lta ba dang dus da lta ba ni byed pa po dang 'brel ba yin no //

§32. sngon 'jug gi ma ning ga da ni / ming gzhi la byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba'i bdag gzhan gnyis las⁶³ gang byed pa po dngos po bdag dang de 'brel gyi byed pa'i las dang / gang bya ba'i dngos po gzhan dang de 'brel gyi bya ba gnyis ka la 'jug pa yin te / ga yig dngos po bdag la 'jug pa dper brjod na /

khirms gcod pa po /
sbyin pa gtong ba po /

zhes pa dang / bdag 'brel gyi byed pa la 'jug pa / [146]

gcod par byed /
gcod byed /
gcod /
gtong bar byed /
gtong byed /
gtong /

zhes pa dang / dngos po gzhan la 'jug pa /

gcad bya'i shing /
gtang bya'i nor /

zhes pa dang / bya ba la 'jug pa /

⁶³ Ego ming gzhi la byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba'i bdag gzhan gnyis las. Text reads ming gzhi la byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ba'i las. See chapter XII, n. 26.

gcad par bya /
 gcad bya /
 gcad /
 gtang bar bya /
 gtang bya /
 gtang /

zhes pa lta bu dang /

§33. da yig dngos po bdag la ‘jug pa dper brjod na /

gting dpog pa po /
 dka’ gnas dpyod pa po /

zhes pa dang / de ‘brel gyi byed pa la ‘jug pa /

dpog par byed /
 dpog byed / [147]
 dpog /
 dpyod par byed /
 dpyod byed /
 dpyod /

ces pa dang / dngos po gzhan la ‘jug pa /

dpag bya’i lkog gyur /
 dpyad bya’i don /

zhes pa dang / de ‘brel gyi bya ba la ‘jug pa /

dpag par bya /
 dpag bya /
 dpag /
 dpyad par bya /
 dpyad bya /
 dpyad /

ces pa lta bu’o //

§34. byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i dus gsum las da lta ba gtso bor
 ston pa’i ched du ‘jug ste / ga yig da lta ba la ‘jug pa dper brjod na /

shing gcod /
 sbyin pa gtong /
 ‘og tu gnon /
 sman gdu /

zhes pa lta bu dang / da yig da lta ba la ‘jug pa dper brjod na /

rig pas dpyod kyin / [148]
 zho dkrog gin /
 logs su dgar gyin /
 skud pas dkri yin ‘dug /

ces pa lta bu’o //

§35. ma ning dang ‘chad ‘gyur mo dang shin tu mo rnams kyī skabs su shes par bya rgyu zhig yod de / gcad bya / gcod byed / dpag bya / dpog byed ces pa lta bu ga da gnyis yig gzugs mi ‘dra bas bdag gzhan gnyis car la ‘jug pa na / bya byed kyī tshig dang tshig grogs ma sbyar yang / des bya las ma ‘ongs pa dang byed pa da lta ba yin par go nus mod kyang / gsub bya / gsub byed / dkri bya / dkri byed ces pa lta bu ga da gnyis yig gzugs gcig gis bdag gzhan gnyis ka la ‘jug pa’i tshe / byed tshig gis ma gsal ba rnams la / gsub kyin / dkri yin lta bu tshig grogs kyin gin gyin yin bzhi bo las gang rung sbyar bas byed pa da lta ba ston tshul gcig dang / ga da gnyis yig gzugs gcig gis bdag gzhan gnyis ka la ‘jug pa na / dmigs kyis dus la ‘jug pa’i tshe / gsub kyin / dkri yin lta bu dus kyī dus da lta ba dang / gsub par ‘gyur / dkri bar ‘gyur lta bu tshig grogs sbyar bas dus kyī dus ma ‘ongs pa gsal bar ston pa’i tshul gcig ste tshul gnyis yod pa’i gnad kyis / rtsa gzhung ‘dir bdag gzhan dang dus gsum so sor gsungs dgos byung ba yin no //

§36. Si tu’i ‘grel bar yang / bshad ma thag pa’i bdag gzhan gnyis po der mi gtogs pa’i dus da lta ba la ‘jug par gsungs pa / gzhung du dus gsum gyi ‘jug pa gsungs pa’i don dang ‘byor bas legs bshad mchog tu bdag ‘khums so //

§37. de’i tshig grogs la ‘grel bshad mang por / gsub bzhin / dkri bzhin zhes sbyar ba yod kyang / skabs ‘di’i tshig grogs zhes pa mdza’ bshes bsdebs pa lta bu ma yin par / tshig gi phrad nus pa can sbyor ba’i don yin pas kyin sogs bzhi da lta ba dang ‘gyur ma ‘ongs pa’i grogs su sbyar gyi / bzhin sgra ni rang nyid da lta ba ston pa sogs don du mar ‘jug pas tshig gi grogs su mi [149] ‘gyur ram snyam mo //

§38. bdag gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i bya byed las kyi sgra rnams da lta ba yin par mkhas pa mang pos bzhed pa ni / sta res shing gcod pa’i tshe gcod pa’i bya ba byed bzhin yin pas byed pa’i las dang / shing dum bur ‘gro bzhin pa de la bya ba’i las zhes btags pa yin pas da lta bar bzhag pa yin zhing / **Zha lu lo chen** gyis bya ba’i las ma ‘ongs par gsungs pa bya ‘gyur ma ‘ongs pa la dgongs pa yin no //

§39. sngon ‘jug gi mo ‘a yig ni / ming gzhi la byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i bdag gzhan gnyis las dngos po bdag dang / byed pa’i las la ‘jug ste / dngos po bdag la ‘jug pa / dper brjod na /

grub mtha’ ‘gog pa po /
gnas su ‘jog pa po /

zhes pa dang / byed las la ‘jug pa /

‘gog par byed /
‘gog byed /
‘gog /
‘jog par byed /
‘jog byed /
‘jog /

ces pa lta bu’o //

§40. dang sgra’i nus pas byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i dngos po gzhan la’ang ‘jug ste / dper brjod na /

‘khod par bya /
‘khod bya /
‘khod /
‘bud par bya / [150]
‘bud bya /
‘bud /

ces pa lta bu’o //

§41. byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i dus gsum gyi nang nas dus ma ‘ongs pa dang / de ‘brel yin min gyi bya ‘gyur dang byed ‘gyur ma ‘ongs pa ston pa’i phyir du ‘jug ste / dus kyi dus ma ‘ongs pa la ‘jug pa dper brjod na /

‘thab par ‘gyur /
 ‘khod par ‘gyur /

zhes pa dang / bya ba’i las la ‘jug pa /

‘thab par bya /
 ‘thab bya /
 ‘thab /
 ‘khod par bya /
 ‘khod bya /
 ‘khod /

ces pa lta bu’o //

§42. **Si tu Paṇ chen** dang **bsTan dar lha rams pa**’i ‘grel bar / mo ni bdag da ma ‘ongs phyir / zhes rtsa tshig gi sdeb bcas nas gsungs pa blo dman rnam go sla phyir dgongs dag par snang yang / gzhung tshig gi don slar yang bsdus te bshad na / pho ni ‘das dang gzhan bsgrub phyir // zhes pa’i ‘das zhes pa ni / dus kyi ‘das pa’ang yod mod bye brag tu byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ba’i bya ba byas zin pa bstan cing / dang ni tshigs bcad kha skong tsam ma yin par sdud pa’i don te / dus ‘das pa’am byas zin tu ma zad bya ‘gyur ma ‘ongs pa la’ang ‘jug ces pa’o //

§43. gzhan zhes pa ni / byed po gzhan ‘brel gyi gang bya ba’i dngos po gzhan la ‘jug cing / bsgrub [151] ces pa ni bya ba’i las bsgrub pa la ‘jug pa yin zhes pa ste / pho ba yig ni / bya byed las gsum las bya ba’i yul lam las / bdag gzhan gnyis las dngos po gzhan / dus gsum las byas zin ‘das pa gtso bor ston pa la ‘jug go //

§44. ma ning gnyis ka da lta rched // ces pa’i ma ning ni ga da gnyis dang / gnyis ka zhes pa ni / byed po gzhan ‘brel gyi dngos po bdag dang gzhan gnyis la ‘jug pa tshig gis zin pas / bya byed las gsum nang nas bdag ‘brel gyi byed pa’i las dang / gzhan ‘brel gyi bya ba’am las la ‘jug pa don gyis thob cing / da lta zhes pa ni / byed po gzhan ‘brel gyi dus gsum las byed pa da lta ba dang dus kyi da lta ba gnyis shed mtshungs su bstan nas / byed po gzhan ‘brel yin min gyi bya ‘gyur dang byed ‘gyur ma ‘ongs pa dang / dus kyi ma ‘ongs pa la ‘jug pa don gyis thob pa yin no //

§45. mo ni bdag dang ma ‘ongs phyir // zhes pa’i mo ni ‘a yig dang / bdag ces pa ni / byed po gzhan ‘brel gyi⁶⁴ dngos po bdag dang / dang ni sdud pa ste byed po gzhan ‘brel yin min gyi dngos po gzhan dang / byed po gzhan ‘brel gyi byed pa’i las dang bya ba’i las la ‘jug cing / ma ‘ongs zhes pa ni / byed po gzhan ‘brel yin min gyi bya ‘gyur dang byed ‘gyur ma ‘ongs pa dang dus kyī ma ‘ongs pa gnyis shed mtshungs su tshig gis zin pas / byed po gzhan dang ‘brel ma ‘brel gyi byed pa da lta ba dang dus kyī da lta ba la ‘jug pa don gyis bstan pa yin no //

§46. rtsa ba’i tshig zin la byed po gzhan ‘brel gyi bya ba’i yul lam las la dngos po gzhan dang / byed pa’i las la dngos po bdag dang / bya ba byas pa ‘das pa dang / byed bzhin da lta ba dang / bya ‘gyur dang byed ‘gyur ma ‘ongs pa zhes rags bshad kyis gsungs kyang / de’i zhib bshad byed po gzhan ‘brel yin min gyi bdag gzhan dang dus gsum so so’i don ston pa la sngon ‘jug rnams ji ltar ‘jug tshul khyad par dang bcas pa / bstan bcos phyi ma drug tu yod nges yin yang deng sang dpe rgyun mi bzhugs pas sngon gyi dpe rnying khungs dag la brten dgos so //

§47. bshad pa ‘di ni kho bo’i go yul gyi gzhung don ‘grel tshul yin pas bshad pa don mthun du yod phyin rang dang skal mnyam gyi phyis ‘byung [152] blo gsar rnams sems kyī dpal be’ur legs par chongs la brjed ngas kyī rkun po’i lag tu ma shor ba gyis shig //

§48. ‘grel ba gnyis kyī dgongs bzhed ltar sdeb bcas na /

pho ni ‘das gzhan bsgrub ma ‘ongs //
ma ning gnyis ka da ma ‘ongs //
mo ni bdag gzhan da ma ‘ongs //

zhes sbyar na byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel ma ‘brel spyi khyab la shin tu rung bar snang ngo //

§49. dper brjod de dag gi don ming rkyang ma the ba’i dbang du byas te bshad na / sngon ‘jug ba yig ni / ‘das pa ston pa la ‘jug kyang / ‘das tshig yin tshad ‘phul mi dgos te / dper na / drangs zin / mnand tshar lta bu mang po yod do // de bzhin du bya ‘gyur ma ‘ongs pa dang dngos po gzhan la ‘jug kyang / drang bya / gsad bya lta bu yod la / dus kyī da lta ba dang bdag dang byed pa la ‘jug pa ma yin no //

⁶⁴ Ego gyi: Text has gyis.

§50. sngon 'jug ga dang da yig ni / dngos po bdag gzhan gnyis ka la 'jug kyang / 'ding byed / sel byed ces pa dang / bsam bya / bri bya lta bu dang / da lta ba dang ma 'ongs pa la 'jug kyang yin tshad la mi dgos pa sngar gyi rigs 'gres shes sla zhing / 'das tshig 'phul ba mi srid do //

§51. sngon 'jug 'a yig ni / dngos po bdag la 'jug kyang / dpyod byed / stsol byed lta bu dang / da lta ba dang ma 'ongs la 'jug kyang / gding bya / myang bya lta bu yod la / 'das pa dang dngos po gzhan la 'jug pa med do //

§52. de rnams ni gzhung gi dngos bstan gyi bya byed las gsum dang bdag gzhan sogs kyi don la sngon 'jug rnams 'jug tshul yin zhing / dgos pa ci phyir 'jug pa gsungs pa'i don gyi gtso bo yang yin pas / bya byed sogs kyi dbang gis ming gzhi gang la 'phul yig gang 'jug mi 'jug dang / 'jug pa'i don dang khyad par rnams la mdzub khrid dang brgal lan sogs kyis nges shes drongs thag chod [153] dgos so //

§53. **bsTan dar pa**'i 'grel bar yang / ming rkyang rnams skabs 'di'i dper brjod du mi rung gsungs pa yang / ming la bya byed sogs kyi don du 'phul 'jug pas yig sdeb mi 'dra bar 'gyur ba'i tshul la nges shes rnal ma drongs pa gal che bar dgongs nas dmigs phug pa'i bshad pa mdzad pa yin pas de kho na dang por bslab dgos so //

§54. de ltar ming la 'phul 'jug tshul legs par shes pa na / byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ma 'brel gang yin rung ming rkyang la yang sngon 'jug rnams bya byed kyi don sogs ston pa'i phyir ji ltar 'jug pa shes dgos pas na mdo tsam brjod de / de yang ming rkyang gi dngos po / yan lag / yul / yod / med / tshad ma / 'dra / rgyun sogs mtha' yas pa rnams la bya byed kyi dbang gis 'phul nam yang mi 'jug go // des na 'phul 'jug pa'i ming rkyang ni / sngags / stod / dor / thob sogs mang po yod pa rnams yin te / dper brjod na / bsngags bya / bsngags byed / bsngags zin / bsngags shig / bstod bya / bstod byed⁶⁵ / bstod do / bstod cig ces pa lta bu yig sdeb gtan nas mi 'gyur ba dang / dor bya / 'dor byed / dord zin / dord cig / thob bya / 'thob byed / thob zin / thob cig lta bu sdeb cung zad 'gyur ba lta bu yin no //

§55. der ma zad ming la 'phul yig ma zhugs kyang byed pa po gzhan dang 'brel ma 'brel gyi bya byed la sogs pa'i don ston pa'ang mang po yod de / dper brjod na / blang bya / len byed / blangs zin / longs shig / myang bya / myong byed / myangs zin / myongs shig ces pa lta bu yig sdeb gtan 'gyur dang / spyad bya / spyod byed / spyad zin / spyod cig / rbod bya / rbod byed / rbod zin / rbod cig lta bu cung zad 'gyur ba rnams yod do //

⁶⁵ Ego bstod byed: Text bstod byad.

§56. sngon ‘jug gi shin tu mo ma yig ni / byed pa po gzhan dang ‘brel
 ba’i dngos po bdag gzhan gnyis ka dang / byed pa dang bya ba’i las dang
 / dus gsum kar ‘jug pa tshig la zin pas / byed po gzhan ‘brel min pa’i bdag
 gzhan sogs la ‘jug pa don gyis thob pa yin pas / de thams cad [154] la
mnyam pa ste khyad par med par ston pa’i phyir du ming gzhi la ‘jug par
 ‘gyur ro //

§57. dngos po bdag la ‘jug pa dper brjod na /

mkhas pa po /

mthol ba po /

zhes pa dang / dngos po gzhan la ‘jug pa /

mkhas bya’i gnas /

mthol bya’i tshig /

ces pa dang / byed pa la ‘jug pa /

mkhas par byed /

mkhas byed /

mkhas /

mthol bar byed /

mthol byed /

mthol /

zhes pa dang / bya ba’i yul lam las la ‘jug pa /

mkhas par bya /

mkhas bya /

mkhas /

mthol bar bya /

mthol bya /

mthol /

zhes pa dang / [155] byas zin ‘das pa la ‘jug pa /

mkhas par byas /

mkhas zin /

mkhas /

mthold par byas /
 mthold zin /
 mthold /

ces pa dang / dmigs kyis byed pa'am dus kyis dus da lta ba la 'jug pa /

mkhas kyin /
 mthol gyin /

zhes pa dang / dmigs kyis dus kyis dus ma 'ongs pa la 'jug pa /

mkhas par 'gyur /
 mthol bar 'gyur /

zhes pa lta bu'o //

§58. byed las su gtogs pa'i bskul tshig gi 'jug pa rtsa bar dngos su ma
 gsungs pa ni / bskul tshig la 'phul yig mi 'jug pas yin yang / dang po'i
 khrid rgyun las 'ongs pa 'grel bshad mkhan po snga ma rnams kyis gsal
 bar mdzad pa ste / dper brjod na /

snod khongs shig /
 chu khog cig /
 me tog thord cig /

ces pa lta bu yin la /

rten la mjold cig /
 tshad 'jold cig / [156]

lta bu ming 'jug pa'ang yod do // bskul tshig la cig zhig shig gang thob
 kyang khyad par med mod dpe khungs dag par / phye shig ces pa lta bu
 'ga' re snang bas bskul ba gsal byed du zhig las shig sbyar ba nus pa che
 bar snang ngo //

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A = agent.

AA = *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*. In E. Obermiller and T. Stcherbatsky (eds.), *Abhisamayālaṅkāraprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa-śāstra, The Work of Bodhisattva Maitreya*. Bibliotheca Buddhica 23, St. Petersburg, 1929 (reprinted Tokyo, 1977).

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