

Xuanzang's proof of idealism (*vijñaptimātratā*)^{*}

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Imagine a country that cultivated strong cultural and religious ties with ancient Greece from the beginning of the Presocratic period. The intellectuals of this country become interested in Greek philosophy and begin to translate certain Presocratic works into their own language as well as some Platonic dialogues that no longer survive in the original Greek. Imagine further that, because of some mysterious event, the philosophical link is severed and the philosophers of our imaginary country then never hear of Aristotle, Hellenistic philosophy and all the other developments that took place in Europe in the subsequent centuries. The last Greek philosopher they know of is Plato, and an indigenous tradition of logic is then developed in the form of direct or indirect comments on his early dialogues. Surely, this tradition would be a fascinating object of study.

Of course, it is clear why I made up this fable. The philosophical link between the Chinese and the Indian tradition, at least as far as the *pramāṇa* tradition is concerned, was severed exactly in the crucial period between Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. Thus, the Chinese Buddhist canon has preserved some very early dialectical-philosophical tracts that no longer exist in the original Sanskrit such as the **Upāyahādaya* (or **Prayogastāra*), **Tarkasāstra*, and the *Nyāyamukha* of Dignāga. However, no work of Dharmakīrti is known to have been translated into Chinese, and the whole tradition of Buddhist logic in China, known as the *yin ming*, or the science of logical reasoning (*hetu-vidyā*), was developed on the basis of Dignāga's *hetucakra* as preserved in the *Nyāyapraveśa*.

Nevertheless, the fascinating tradition of *yin ming* has hitherto remained largely ignored. In fact, since the pioneering studies of Tucci in the end of the 1920s very little has been done, at least in European languages. It was, therefore, with great anticipation that we were looking forward to Christoph Harbsmeier's study of Buddhist logic in China which was in the making for many years. I had the privilege of meeting Harbsmeier in Berlin in 1990, and at that time he already informed me that his voluminous work on the subject

^{*} I am indebted to my wife, Karin Preissendanz, for having read several drafts of this paper, and to Professor Shoryu Katsura for very helpful comments. I would also like to thank my student, Shinya Moriyama, for translating the relevant passages from the Chinese.

was practically finished. When the book finally appeared in 1998 as Volume 7 in the prestigious series *Science and Civilisation in China*,¹ it was, at least for me, a disappointment. The announced voluminous work on Buddhist logic had shrunk into a chapter of some fifty pages (pp. 358–408), scant in historical information,² and unfortunately displayed an astonishing lack of insight into its subject matter.

Harbsmeier's woeful error was to attempt to interpret Chinese Buddhist logic without an adequate study of the Indian logic from which it was derived. For some reason which is not clear to me, he actually believed that reading Buddhist logic in Chinese translation is easier and clearer than reading it in the original Sanskrit.³ The results, as could be expected, are not impressive. One should add, perhaps, that Harbsmeier did consult some Sanskritists. However, in what seems a puzzling procedure, he consulted only scholars who were *not* familiar with the subject matter. Thus, he writes:

"I have been reading the *Nyāyapraveśa* together with three Sanskritists who between them have spent over sixty years reading Buddhist Sanskrit texts. The Sanskrit *Nyāyapraveśa* presented considerable concrete problems of grammatical interpretation to all of us. By comparison my task of expounding the literal meaning of the Chinese translation was easier."⁴

Well, take fifty scholars of Buddhism who know nothing about Buddhist logic and you could get a thousand years of Sanskrit reading among them, but you will still not be able to understand much of the *Nyāyapraveśa*.

Let me illustrate the above criticism with the example of Harbsmeier's interpretation of Xuanzang's argument for Consciousness Only, which in Harbsmeier's own words is "the most famous historical example of the art of Chinese Buddhist argumentation."⁵ However, it should be added perhaps that

¹ Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*. Volume 7. Part I: *Language and Logic*. By Christoph Harbsmeier. Edited by Kenneth Robinson. Cambridge University Press 1998.

² The Ph.D. dissertation of Uwe Frankenhäuser is much more informative in this respect; cf. Uwe Frankenhäuser, *Die Einführung der buddhistischen Logik in China*. Wiesbaden 1996. Unfortunately, the philosophical and logical aspects of Buddhist logic in China are not Frankenhäuser's main concern and their treatment leaves much to be desired. Xuanzang's proof of *vijñaptimātrā* is discussed in some detail on pp. 73–97 (cf. also pp. 116–117), but without providing much clarity. One can only regret that Frankenhäuser did not consult any specialist on Buddhist logic for the preparation of his useful dissertation.

³ Cf. for instance, Harbsmeier, op. cit., pp. 399–400. Cf. also p. 402: "Xuanzang's Chinese translation [of the *Nyāyapraveśa*] is not only often an improvement on the Sanskrit original, it turned out – to my great surprise – to be generally easier to read as well."

⁴ Harbsmeier, op. cit., p. 402.

⁵ Harbsmeier, op. cit., p. 392.

there is really nothing Chinese about it except that it survives in a Chinese translation. Xuanzang thinks like an Indian logician. His proof was delivered in a public debate in Kanyakubja (modern Kanauj), most probably in Sanskrit, and was intended not only for Buddhists, but also for a Hindu and Jain audience.⁶

In his presentation of the argument Harbsmeier uses Arthur Waley's translation:

"Philosophically speaking, such forms of matter as are accepted by us and by you are inseparable from the eye-consciousness (Proposition). Because according to the eightfold classification that we too accept, these forms of matter are not included under the heading 'Organ of Sight' (Proof). Like eye-consciousness itself (Analogy)."⁷

Waley himself could not make head or tail of this syllogism, and said that "[i]t is certain at any rate that the famous syllogism comes perilously near to being nonsense."⁸ However, in what seems like an afterthought, he added the following footnote: "I mean, of course, nonsense from the standpoint of his own contemporaries; whether it does or does not conform to our conventions of thought is irrelevant." The fact that Xuanzang's inference could not be refuted was merely due, according to Waley, to King Harsha's intimidating authority:

"Neither during the five days of the assembly nor during a further period of eighteen days' grace did any opponent dare raise his voice. It was obvious indeed that King Harsha was not in a mood to tolerate criticism of the Mahāyāna or of Tripiṭaka [Xuanzang's monastic name] as its exponent."⁹

Nevertheless, Waley did try to make sense of this nonsense in his endnotes (pp. 271–272):

"Matter and Eye-consciousness are alike, in that they are neither of them listed under the heading 'Organ of Sight' in the enumeration of the Eighteen Groups (*dhātu*). Eye-consciousness is 'inseparable from' itself, i.e. from eye-consciousness. Therefore, matter [(which is 'like' eye-consciousness)] must also be 'inseparable from' eye-consciousness."¹⁰

⁶ The debate presumably took place in the presence of King Harsha, accompanied by eighteen vassal kings, three thousand Buddhist monks and two thousand Hindus and Jains (cf. Harbsmeier, op. cit., p. 392).

⁷ Arthur Waley, *The Real Tripiṭaka and other pieces*. London 1952, p. 64.

⁸ Op. cit., p. 63.

⁹ Op. cit., pp. 64–65.

¹⁰ Waley then continues to explain the three qualifying terms "philosophically speaking," "as accepted by us and by you" and "that we too accept," but we need not concern ourselves with these here.

Thus, according to Waley's explanation, Xuanzang's argument is based on an analogy and is patently false, for it has the following structure: *a* and *b* share the property *X*, *b* has the property *Y*, therefore, *a* has the property *Y*. In Waley's defence we must add, however, that very little was known about Dignāga's logic at the time he was writing and there was no way for him to make sense of an inference which operated according to rules that were not yet worked out by modern (Western and Japanese) research on Buddhist logic. Further, Waley could not rely on the indigenous Chinese scholarly works on *yin ming*. Chinese scholarly interest in Xuanzang's inference declined after the Song dynasty,¹¹ and consequently, when interest arose again towards the end of the Ming dynasty, some elements of the tradition, especially the immediate knowledge transmitted from teacher to disciple, seem not to have survived.

Unlike in China where interest in it waxed and waned, in Japan Xuanzang's inference seems to have been the object of uninterrupted interest and study continuing up to the present time, especially in the Hossō-school. According to Frankenhauser,¹² the scope of the qualification *zhengtu* (**paramāṛthatah*) alone was an object of intense debate for three hundred years.

Although numerous treatises in the form of *shiki* ("private illustrations") and *shō* ("compendia") were composed, the core of Xuanzang's inference seems to have remained unintelligible in Japan as well. Thus, the polymath Hajime Nakamura, who was certainly well acquainted with traditional Japanese scholarship on the subject, came to the conclusion that "Xuanzang himself does not understand Indian Logic (*Yin ming*) in its normal manner."¹³ After translating the inference, Nakamura adds:

"However, this formula [i.e., **paramāṛthatah*, from the point of view of absolute truth] is not convincing to the people who do not accept the ultimate truth beyond our senses. In other words, it is meaningless as an inference for others (*parāṛthānūnāna*). It is also meaningless to provide a reason which is acceptable only for one's own position, but not for the opponent, because the reason must be acceptable to both, i.e., opponent and proponent. This means that Xuanzang does not understand the difference between inference for oneself and inference for others."¹⁴

¹¹ Cf. Frankenhauser, op. cit., p. 75.

¹² *Ibid.* Of particular importance was the ardent debate that took place between the Nanjinhō, represented by Myōzen (789–868), and Hokkuji, represented by Zenjū (723–797).

¹³ Cf. Hajime Nakamura, *Introduction to the Nyāyapraveśa (Kokuyaku issaikyō, Wakan-seinjū 43, Ronsobu 23, Daijō Shuppan, Tōkyō 1958)*. I owe this reference to the kindness of Mr. Shinya Moriyama.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

By contrast, Gregor Paul who has spent a lifetime working on Chinese and Japanese philosophy, and to whom we owe a thorough survey of philosophy in Japan from its beginnings to the Heian period, is more respectful to Xuanzang, and is well aware that he could not solve the crux of the matter; thus, he suggests only tentatively that a possible meaning of the syllogism could be that since the organ of vision does not see, the visual consciousness would have to see.¹⁵

However, let us go back to Harbsmeier's recent study. Xuanzang's argument does not make more sense to Harbsmeier than it does to Waley, Nakamura or Paul, and Harbsmeier too feels he has to make sense of this nonsense. He begins by declaring (p. 393) that Xuanzang's argument should be expressed in the form "*esse est aestimari esse*" ('to be is to be deemed to be' and that a detailed comparison with Arthur Schopenhauer on this issue is most instructive.¹⁶ Objective existence is doomed to be exactly what it is deemed to be. We have no access to it other than deeming."

This, however, happens to be the exact opposite of what Xuanzang said, namely, objective existence is not what it is deemed to be. Things are deemed to have an objective existence, but are in fact only images in our consciousness. Let one be reminded that the purpose of the syllogism is to prove Consciousness Only, i.e., that external objects do not exist. However, let me skip the various stages in Harbsmeier's argument and go straight to his conclusion, that is, his rephrasing of the argument:

"Thesis: Speaking philosophically, and assuming the meaning of the terms ('visible things' and 'be not separable from eye-consciousness') accepted by the disputing parties: VISIBLE THINGS ARE DEFINITELY NOT SEPARABLE FROM EYE-CONSCIOUSNESS. Reason: Because, using the term ('visible things') in the opponent's sense of the term: though being in the visual sphere they are not perceived by the visual organ. Example: (Everything which, though in the visual sphere, is not perceived by the visual organ is not separated from eye-consciousness.) As for example eye-consciousness."

¹⁵ Cf. Gregor Paul, *Philosophie in Japan. Von den Anfängen bis zur Heian-Zeit*. München 1993, p. 191: Ein möglicher Sinn des Syllogismus dürfte darin liegen, dass, da nicht das Sehorgan sehe, das Sehbewusstsein 'sehen' müsse." Paul also refers in this context to critical studies of Shōhō Takemura, *Immyō-gaku*. Tōkyō 1986, but does not provide any details as to Takemura's interpretation of the inference. It would be interesting to pursue the discussion of Xuanzang's inference in Chinese and Japanese publications. A number of references are provided by Frankenhauser and Harbsmeier, but this is an area of study which lies beyond my competence.

¹⁶ Harbsmeier does not actually draw the comparison; thus it remains unclear why or how it is instructive. I am also not sure that *esse est aestimari esse* is correctly rendered by "to be is to be deemed to be," but I will not enter this matter here.

This is, of course, a brand new inference which is radically different from the original inference of Xuanzang. Xuanzang's reason is: "they are not included under the heading 'Organ of Sight'"; that is, they are not the same as, or they are different from the "organ" of sight, not "they are not perceived [my emphasis] by the organ of sight." Furthermore, Harbsmeier's reason is clearly false: the property "not being perceived by the organ of sight" also applies to the "organ" of sight because it cannot perceive itself,¹⁷ and thus the reason is not absent in the *vipakṣa* which is "that which is separate from the eye-consciousness," i.e., includes the visual "organ."

As for the example, Harbsmeier explains that the addition in parentheses makes explicit what, according to the Chinese logicians, the example serves to exemplify. But this is clearly wrong, at least from both the Indian and Xuanzang's perspective. The example is, by definition, an instance of the property to be proved, in our case, "being inseparable from eye-consciousness." And it is obvious, indeed tautological, that eye-consciousness is inseparable from, i.e., identical with, eye-consciousness. As to why this, and no other example can be used here will become clear from the discussion below.

Harbsmeier probably suspects that his version of the argument also comes perilously near to being nonsense and therefore adds apologetically and descendingly: "Let us keep in mind that this is an argument belonging not to the 20th but to the +7th century" (p. 394), implying that for us, clever as we are, the inference carries no conviction, but to those guys in the seventh century this poppycock must have been good enough.

It is not my intent here to criticize and rectify every mistake Harbsmeier makes in his explanation of the argument, which runs for two more pages. Let me show instead what, I submit, is really going on here. To begin with, a literal translation of the inference is in fact simpler and clearer than Harbsmeier's:¹⁸

¹⁷ This is so not only because the sense (rather than the "organ") of sight is incapable of reflexive action, but also because it is invisible, like all the other sense faculties. Throughout the discussion Harbsmeier confuses sense organs (like the eyeball) with sense faculties (like the ability to see). Xuanzang's inference refers only to the senses, not to the organs. From the Buddhist point of view, organs, such as the eye and the nose, are classified as visible things (i.e., *dharma* 2, cf. the table below), not as senses. Cf. also *La Siddhi*, p. 42, quoted below (n. 31): "Comme l'indique leur nom *d'indriya* (Kośa, ii, p. 103) ils sont sentement des 'puissances' (*śakti*) ..."

¹⁸ I am indebted to Shin'ya Moriyama for this translation. [In his so-called "Great Commentary" 因入正理論疏 on Xuanzang's 玄奘 translation of an introduction to Dignāga's *hetuvidya* (Chin. *yin ming* 因明), Kui Ji 基撰 (632-682) renders Xuanzang's famous syllogism as follows: 真故極成色不離於眼識宗。自許初三攝眼所不攝故因。猶如眼識緣 (Taishō, vol. 44, No. 1840, p. 115). Gregor Paul.]

Thesis: From the point of view of absolute reality (**paramāṅkātā*), colour and form (**rūpa*, i.e., the visual or visible objects), which are well known among the people (**lokaprasiddha*), are not separate from the visual consciousness.¹⁹
Reason: Because while being included in the first three [*dharma*] that [we too]²⁰ accept, they are not included in the sense of vision.
Example: Like the visual consciousness.

The core of the argument is this: The "visual objects" (i.e., the objects we can see with our eyes) are in fact nothing but images in our visual consciousness ("are not separate from visual consciousness," i.e., do not exist outside our consciousness), because they are different from "the sense of vision."

Other parts of the argument, such as the statement that forms of matter are accepted by both the proponent and the opponent, as well as the statement of the example, fulfill some formal conditions required in a public debate, but they are immaterial to the logic of the argument and need not concern us here.²¹

Before I explain the argument itself, however, we need to understand the historical context in which it was employed. We do not know exactly what Dignāga's original contribution to logic was because we know so little of his predecessors. The theory of *trairūpya*, which specifies three conditions that every valid reason must fulfill, existed prior to his time, for it appears clearly in early works such as the *Tarkaśāstra*.²² However, it was Dignāga's *Hetucakraḍamanu* and other works that made the theory of *trairūpya* extremely persuasive and contributed to its dissemination among all contemporary schools of thought. Its wide acceptance must have also facilitated its usage in public debate. Indeed, Dignāga made this theory so persuasive that it almost looks like a specimen of deductive logic. Its deductive appearance is strengthened by the fact that Dignāga does not use elements of Buddhist metaphysics for his illustrations, but relies on the ontology of the Vaiśeṣika.

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¹⁹ Following Waley and Harbsmeier I use the word "consciousness" as equivalent to *vi-jñāna*. Note, however, that this term is more commonly translated as "cognition" or "awareness."

²⁰ So also Waley's translation quoted above. Harbsmeier, however, has: "using the term ('visible things') in the opponent's sense of the term."
²¹ The reason for these qualifications is that Xuanzang's inference refers to forms of matter, which ultimately, that is, from the Yogācāra point of view, do not exist as such. This may seem to violate the requirement of *ubhayaśiddha*, but Xuanzang thwarts a possible objection by pointing out that the Yogācāras too accept the visible etc., but unlike the realists they do not accept them as distinct entities, but as aspects in consciousness.

²² Cf. *Tarkaśāstra* p. 13 (in Guiseppe Tucci, *Pre-Dhīnāga Buddhist Texts on Logic from the Chinese Sources*. Repr. Madras 1981): *asmābhis tritaksarṇo hetuḥ śhāpītiḥ tad yathā pakṣadharmāḥ sapakṣasatvaṃ vipakṣavyāvṛtiś ca*.

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The same operation should be followed in the interpretation of Xuanzang's inference. The terminology of the argument clearly refers to the 18 *dhātus*. These are:

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| 1. <i>cakṣus</i> (sense of vision) | 2. <i>rūpa</i> (the visible) | 3. <i>cakṣurvijñāna</i> (visual consciousness) |
| 4. <i>śrotra</i> (sense of hearing) | 5. <i>śabda</i> (sound) | 6. <i>śroturvijñāna</i> (auditory consciousness) |
| 7. <i>ghrāṇa</i> (sense of smell) | 8. <i>gandha</i> (odour) | 9. <i>ghrāṇavijñāna</i> (olfactory consciousness) |
| 10. <i>jihvā</i> (sense of taste) | 11. <i>rasa</i> (flavour) | 12. <i>jihvāvijñāna</i> (gustatory consciousness) |
| 13. <i>kāya</i> (sense of touch) | 14. <i>spraṣṭavya</i> (the tangible) | 15. <i>kāyavijñāna</i> (tactile consciousness) |
| 16. <i>manas</i> (sense of mental objects) | 17. <i>dharma</i> s (non-sensuous objects) | 18. <i>manovijñāna</i> (non-sensuous consciousness) |

Now, in Xuanzang's inference, the property to be proved is "not being separate from visual consciousness." This can be simplified as meaning "being visual consciousness." Accordingly, our inference divides the world as follows:

subject of inference (visual objects): *dhātu* no. 2
sapakṣa (visual consciousness): *dhātu* no. 3²⁸
vipakṣa (all the rest): *dhātus* no. 1, 4–18

Thus, our inference could also be formulated as follows:

dhātu no. 2 (*rūpa*) is not separate from (i.e., is identical with) *dhātu* no. 3 (*cakṣurvijñāna*), because it is not *dhātu* no. 1 (*cakṣurindrīya*).

Now what we have to do next is see whether the reason, namely, "not being the sense of sight," i.e., not being *dhātu* no. 1, i.e., being *dhātus* nos. 2–18, fulfills the three conditions. The first condition is fulfilled because the property of not being *dhātu* no. 1, which occurs in (or which extends over) *dhātus* nos. 2–18, is present in *dhātu* no. 2. The second condition is also fulfilled because the property which occurs in *dhātus* nos. 2–18 is present in *dhātu* no. 3. However, the third condition is obviously not fulfilled. The property which occurs in *dhātus* nos. 2–18 is obviously not absent in *dhātus* nos. 4–18.

So the inference in this form is clearly false, and indeed does seem nonsensical. However, it is clear that the reason has a qualification (*viśeṣaṇa*). It is a conspicuous feature of the Indian syllogism that the reason is usually ex-

pressed in the form of a single property. If two properties are needed, the second property is expressed in the form of a qualification of the first property. The qualification appears in the discussion and Harbsmeier's translation, but he fails to realize its function and implications:

"THOUGH BEING IN THE VISUAL SPHERE THEY ARE NOT PERCEIVED BY THE VISUAL ORGAN."

The qualification is clearly "though being in the visual sphere."

What Harbsmeier calls the visual sphere²⁹ comprises *dhātus* nos. 1–3, that is, the sense of vision, the visible object and the visual consciousness. Consequently, we can reformulate the inference as follows:

dhātu no. 2 (*rūpa*) is not separate from *dhātu* no. 3 (*cakṣurvijñāna*), because it is not *dhātu* no. 1 (*cakṣurindrīya*) though it is included in *dhātus* nos. 1–3.

If we now combine the two statements (not being *dhātu* no. 1 and being included in *dhātus* nos. 1–3), it is clear that the reason consists of a property which occurs in *dhātus* no. 2 and 3. Therefore, it is present in the *sapakṣa* and it is absent in the *vipakṣa*. For the distribution of the *sapakṣa* and the *vipakṣa* was as follows:

sapakṣa (being visual consciousness): *dhātu* no. 3
vipakṣa (all the rest): *dhātus* nos. 1, 4–18

Thus, the reason is valid.

This implies, of course, that one could transpose any of the three *dhātus* and say, for instance: the visual sense is not separate from the visual consciousness because, while it belongs to the visual sphere, it is not the visual object.

In this case the subject, *dhātu* no. 1, is not separate from *dhātu* no. 3 because it is not *dhātu* no. 2, although it is included in *dhātus* nos. 1–3.

The property "not being *dhātu* no. 2" is present in *dhātus* nos. 1–3 and cannot be found in *dhātu* no. 2, which means that it is found in *dhātus* nos. 1 and 3 only.³⁰ Thus the distribution into *pakṣa*, etc., would be as follows:

Subject: no. 1
sapakṣa: no. 3
vipakṣa: nos. 2, 4–18

²⁹ I am not aware of an equivalent term in Sanskrit that would comprise the three visual *dhātus*. The Chinese version of Xuanzang's inference does not use such a term.

³⁰ Should one say that the property must be no. 3 because it cannot be no. 1, since no. 1 is the *pakṣa*? Probably not, because the requirement is that the *pakṣa* is excluded from the domain of the *sapakṣa*, not from the domain of the *hetu*.

²⁸ We can understand now why the example of the inference ("like eye-consciousness itself") was chosen: the *sapakṣa* contains a single entity (or better: a single type of entity). Thus, nothing else could be used as an example.

The first condition holds because the property “not being *dhāru* no. 2” which occurs in *dhāru* nos. 1 and 3 is present in *dhāru* no. 1; the second condition holds because the same property is present in *dhāru* no. 3, and the third condition holds because, owing to the qualification of the reason, being included in *dhāru* nos. 1 and 3 is absent in *dhāru* nos. 2, 4–18.

Could the opponent contest Xuanzang’s position by formulating a competing inference? He could not, because any re-arrangement of the three visual elements is acceptable to Xuanzang: If the visible object is not separate from visual awareness (because it is not the visual sense), then visual awareness is (tautologically) also not separate from the visual object (for the same reason). Even if one takes the visual sense as the subject of inference, inferring that the sense of vision is not separate from visual awareness because it is not the visual object, or that it is not separate from the visual object because it is not visual awareness, the inferences will merely prove the *Yogācāra* position that the senses are nothing but seeds in the awareness.³¹ Moreover, if the opponent were to suggest such an inference, he would be guilty of contradicting his own position (*siddhāntavirodhā*), for the opponent,³² being an adept of Conservative Buddhism, does not admit that any *dhāru* is inseparable from or identical with any other *dhāru*.

Still, Xuanzang’s inference may seem to be merely a clever trick. Reduce the world of discourse into three entities – in practice this is what the qualification does by excluding the reason from being present in *dhāru* nos. 4–18 – and you could say: Entity no. 1 is (not separate from) entity no. 2 because it is not entity no. 3 (and if one needs an example, one may add: like entity no. 2). Since our world has only three entities, the reason does not need a qualification in order to be valid. The distribution into *pakṣa*, etc., is:

Subject: no. 1
sapakṣa: no. 2

³¹ Cf. L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi. La Siddhi de Huan-Tsang*. Paris 1928, p. 42: “Comme l’indique leur nom d’*indriya* (Kośa, ii, p. 103) ils sont seulement des ‘puissances’ (*śakti*), non pas des choses extérieures constituées par la matière dérivée des quatre grands éléments (*upādāyarūpa*, *bhautikarūpa*, Kośa I, p. 21). Un *Rūpa sapratigīha* extérieure à la pensée est rationnellement inadmissible: donc les cinq organes, comme leurs cinq objets, en un mot les dix *āyatana*s, ne sont que le développement-manifestation du *Vijñāna*.” Cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 230–231.

³² According to Frankenhäuser, *op. cit.*, pp. 76 and 78, Xuanzang’s inference was the central part of a larger treatise and was directed against a certain *Prajñāgupta*, a *Saṃmitīya* from South India, who wrote a treatise refuting the *Mahāvāna* in seven hundred *śloka*s. Others, however, are of the opinion that Xuanzang’s opponent was a *Sarvāstivādin*. In fact, Xuanzang’s inference could be used against any representative of Conservative Buddhism.

vipakṣa: not no. 2, i.e., nos. 1 and 3, but it cannot be no. 1, because no. 1 is the *pakṣa*, thus it must be no. 3.

The reason, “not being no. 3,” is present in the subject (no. 1) and in the *sapakṣa* (no. 2), but absent in the *vipakṣa* (no. 3).³³

What could be the response of the realist Buddhist opponent to Xuanzang’s inference? As Harbsmeier points out “nobody dared raise any objections against the formidable Xuanzang on that occasion in India in the year +642.”³⁴ However, the Korean patriarch Wŏnhyo (618–686) is supposed to have challenged Xuanzang’s inference with the following one:

“*Thesis*: Philosophically speaking, and taking the term visible thing in the commonly accepted meaning: Visible things are separate from eye-consciousness.

Reason: Because, using the term ‘visible thing’ in the proponent’s sense, though in the visual sphere, they are not perceived by the eye.

Example: (Everything which, though in the visual sphere is not perceived by the eye, is separate from eye-consciousness.) Like the eyeball.”³⁵

Something seems to have gone seriously wrong in this translation: Visible things are by definition those things that are perceived (or more precisely, are capable of being perceived) by the “eye.” How could visible things not be perceived by the “eye”?

Again, the literal translation kindly prepared by Mr. Moriyama is simpler and clearer; it is also radically different from Harbsmeier’s:

“From the ultimate point of view, colour and form, which are well known among the people, are separate from visual consciousness.”

³³ To make the argument less abstract, imagine a world with only three classes of things in it: apples, strawberries and bananas. Following the above mentioned rules of inference (*trairūpya* plus the exclusion of the *pakṣa* from *sapakṣa* and *vipakṣa*) one should be able to make the following inference:
Thesis: An apple is not separate from a strawberry.
Reason: Because it is not a banana.

Example: Like a strawberry.

The distribution into the domains of *pakṣa*, etc., would be as follows:

pakṣa: apple

sapakṣa: a strawberry

vipakṣa: not a strawberry, i.e., an apple and a banana, but also not an apple because apple is the subject of the inference, therefore, only a banana.

The first condition applies because the property “not being a banana” is present in the apple. The second condition applies because the same property is present in a strawberry. The third condition applies because the property “not being a banana” is absent in a banana.

³⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 396. The point, however, is not that nobody dared to contradict Xuanzang, but that his inference was perfectly correct.

³⁵ Harbsmeier’s translation, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

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Because while included in the first three [*dhāms*] that [we] accept, they are not included in the visual consciousness, like the sense of vision.”

What Wōnhyo is trying to do here is clear: He does not so much attempt to prove his own thesis, but rather to make Xuanzang’s inference invalid by using a reason called *viruddhāvayvhiāṛṇ*, i.e., construing a contradictory inference whose reason also fulfills the three conditions.³⁶ For according to the rules of debate, if two contradictory inferences fulfill the three conditions (*trairūpya*), both inferences are invalid. So does Wōnhyo’s inference fulfill the three conditions? As far as I can see, we can interpret the inference in two ways. Either one takes “being separate” in the thesis and “not being included” in the reason as synonymous, in which case the inference fulfills the three conditions, but is tautological (that is, the *sādhyā* and the *hetu* are identical; the inference amounts to stating that colour and form are separate from visual consciousness, because ... they are separate from visual consciousness). Or, what seems much more probable to me, “being separate” and “not being included” are not synonymous; for instance, one may understand “not included” as “not included [by the Buddha in his enumeration of the *dhāms*]”. In this case, the reason “not being included by the Buddha in visual consciousness” is present in the subject (colour and form), is also present in the *sapakṣa* (sense of vision), and it is also absent in the *vīpakṣa* (visual consciousness).³⁷

Thus, at least as far as the three characteristics are concerned, it seems that Wōnhyo succeeded, after all, to annul Xuanzang’s brilliant inference.³⁸

³⁶ The *Nyāyapraveśa* gives the following example of two contradictory inferences that fulfil the three conditions: 1) Sound is impermanent because it is produced, like a pot. 2) Sound is permanent because it is audible, like soundness (or: like the universal “being a sound”). Cf. *The Nyāyapraveśa*. Part I: Sanskrit Text with Commentaries. Ed. A.B. Dhruva. Baroda 1968, p. 4.21f.

³⁷ One formal point for which Wōnhyo’s inference may be criticized is that the qualification in the reason is superfluous. Wōnhyo has certainly included it as an allusion to (perhaps even parody of) Xuanzang’s reason. Of course, one may raise at this point further questions concerning the nature of inclusion and whether a *dhānu* can be said to be included in itself. However, as far as I can see such questions were not raised in the present context.

³⁸ In the discussion that followed the reading of this paper, Professor Shoyu Katsura raised the question whether Dignāga would have accepted Xuanzang’s inference and argued that Dignāga’s statements on *pakṣābhāsa* preclude such sophisms. Unfortunately, I am unable at present to undertake a detailed investigation of this question, but I hope to return to this issue on a future occasion. It is interesting to note that according to the biography of Wōnhyo, the expert logicians did not consider the inference to be contrary to Dignāga’s doctrine; we read (as translated by Frankenhauer, op. cit., p. 74) that “Als [Xuanzang] danach die allgemein akzeptierte Inferenz im Sinne höchster Wahrheit aufstellte und das Hinayāna widerlegte, machten die Śāstrameister der Westgebiete keine Erklärungen zu der Inferenz. Sie alle sagten, ‘nur Dignāga könnte diese Inferenz erklären.’”

Insight into reality (*tattvajñāna*) as defined in 6th Century Indian Madhyamaka

Annette L. Heimann

Preliminary remarks

Valuable sources prove to be such not necessarily because they provide answers but because they pose questions. That this is true for many of those sources philologists as well as historians of art and related disciplines work with, is a statement which needs no further elaboration in the context of the present discussions. A variety of traditional and current methods are applied to historical, philosophical and similar sources that go back to antiquity as well as to those of more recent origin in order to seek answers to such questions.

Considering the extremely narrow field of sources that philologists work with, textual evidence in form of texts and inscriptions, their very best of methods of *higher criticism*, applied here to extract valuable and verifiable data for the topic of discourse “Insight into Reality as Defined in 6th Century Indian Madhyamaka”, offers only tentative results within its limited framework of applicability.

Research material

The research undertaken for formulating the conception of what is known as *tattvajñāna*, translated as *insight into reality*, relates to recensions of very well known and historically significant Indian Buddhist texts of the Madhyamaka tradition, the *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā* [MH] by Bhāvaviveka (ca. 500–560 A.D.) and its *Yrti*, the *Tarkajvālā* [TJ]. Both texts evidence an outline of a dialectical hierarchy of philosophical tenets as an appreciation of Indian sophistication in a phase of an already solidified development of Indian philosophy resulting in doxographical writing inspired by its immediate precursors, Dignāga’s *Pramāṇasamuccaya* and its *Yrti*, and pointing back to the message which can be extracted from the root of the tradition, Nāgārjuna’s *Mūlāmadhyamakakārikā*. Their particular importance lies in the wealth of information they offer as an indispensable source for the study of Indian philosophical polemics.