The Sa skya pa and Dge lugs pa's Views of the Definition of a Proper Sign

Ma jiu jie

1 Introduction

The study of *pramāṇa* (Tib. *tshad ma*) in Tibet begins with translating the main Indian Buddhist texts by Dignāga (ca. 480–540), Dharmakīrti (ca. 600–60), and their successors. Most of the Tibetan translations of *pramāṇa* works were done in the eighth century (known as the period of "earlier dissemination" or *snga dar*) and later in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (known as the period of "later dissemination" or *phyi dar*). The study of *pramāṇa* was established in collaboration with Indian scholars in those periods. There are two lineages of the Tibetan *pramāṇa* study. The first is the tradition of Rngog (*rngog lugs*)[1] that derives from the eleventh century scholar Rngog lo tsā ba blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109) and is surviving in the later Dge lugs pa school; the second is that of Sa paṇ (*sa lugs*) that derives from Sa skya paṇḍita kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251, hereafter "Sa paṇ")[2] and is succeeded by his followers such as Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507). Although the scholars belonging to these two traditions share the same opinion in many respects, there are fundamental disagreements about the definition of a proper inferential sign (*liṅga*, *rtags*) or a logical reason (*hetu*, *gtan tshig*).

The Indian Buddhist logician, Dignāga mentions the definition of the triple modes (*trirūpa*, *tshul gsum*) of a logical reason in his *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, and so does Dharmakīrti in his *Pramāṇavārttika*. In commenting on the relevant passages from these texts, most of the Dge lugs pa scholars assert that a proper sign is defined as "that which is each of the three modes" (*tshul gsum yin pa*), while the Sa skya scholars, including Shākya mchog ldan, assert that it is defined as "that which is endowed with the three modes" (*tshul gsum tshang ba*). Thus, we see that the Indian concept of *trirūpa* is understood differently by the Dge lugs pa and Sa skya pa. However, the difference of opinions between these two schools has not yet been clarified by the previous surveys. In what follows, this paper first discusses the Indian Buddhist logician's view of a proper sign, then considers the Sa skya pa's and the Dge lugs pa's interpretations of it, and finally clarifies the difference of opinions between these two schools.

2 Dignāga and Dharmakīrti on the Definition of a Proper Sign

As regards the three modes (*trirūpa*) of an inferential sign, Dignāga states in his *Pramāṇasamuccaya* as follows:

> *anumeye 'tha tattulye sadbhāvo nāstitā ||* (PS II 5cd, cf. Katsura 1985: 163)

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[1]Hugon (2019: 52): "Beside the treatises of gTsang nag pa and mTshur ston, numerous other works have now fortunately become available. The observable family resemblance between them allows one to speak of a mainstream "rNgog lineage" or "gSang phu tradition" of epistemology. One should not, however, succumb to the illusion of a monolithic entity over the manifold individual contributions of the various authors, the in-depth study of which will occupy researchers for many decades."

[2]van der Kuijp (1983: 100): "While the exact date of his collaboration with Śākyaśrī on the retranslation of the *Pramāṇavārttika* does not seem to be known, it does mark the first stirrings of what later came to be known as the 'system of Sa-skya paṇḍita [or Sa-skya-pa]', the so-called Sa-lugs."

rjes dpag bya dang de mtshungs la | | yod dang med la med pa'o | | (PSv N 5a4 = P 4b2)[3]

"[A sign must be] existent in the object of inference as well as in that which is similar to it, and nonexistent in that which is not similar to it."[4]

Dignāga further gives an explanation of the definition of a proper sign in his autocommentary as follows:

"An inferential sign endowed with the three modes, which is mentioned above, will be explained.

[A sign must be] existent in the object of inference and in that which is similar to it, and nonexistent in that which is not similar to it.

The object of inference is a subject that is qualified by a property [to be established]. [The sign] is that which is observed in it [i.e., the subject] either by a perception or an inference, and which is established as present in what is similar to it either entirely in a general manner or partially."[5]

Dignāga's verse is quoted by Dharmakīrti in his *Pramāṇaviniścaya* with a significant modification:

anumeye 'tha tattulye sadbhāvo nāstitāsati | niścitā [...] || (PVin 50.1–2. Cf. Steinkellner 1973: 31)

tshul gsum pa ni | rjes dpag bya dang de msthungs pa | | yod dang med la med par ni | | nges pa | (PVin D168b7)[6]

"[A proper sign] is that which is ascertained to be existent in the object to be inferred as well as in what is similar to that, and nonexistent in the absence of that."

Here we see that the term *niścita* ('ascertained')[7] is added by Dharmakīrti to the original sentence of Dignāga.[8] Dharmakīrti's statement implies that the ascertainment of the three modes of a sign—the logical pervasion (*vyāpti*),[9] namely, both the positive and negative concomitance (*anvaya* and *vyatireka*)

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[3]This sentence slightly differs from the one which is found in PSVv D 29a4f.: *rjes dpag bya dang de **mthun** la | | yod dang med **nyid** med pa'o | |*

Katsura (1983: 540): "In conclusion, I would like point out that anvaya-vyatireka of Dignāga's trairūpya has a kind of double function. (i) It expresses an inductive process of discovering proper evidence and establishing a logical nexus. For this purpose, the restriction by *eva* is not necessary. Anvaya and vyatireka have their own raison d'etre and are not logically equivalent. (ii) Anvaya-vyatireka with *eva*-restriction expresses the logical nexus which is the result of the above inductive process. Anvaya and vyatireka in this case are logically equivalent and one is implied by the other."

[4]Katsura (1983: 543): "(A proper indicator must be) present in the object of inference and in what is similar to it, and absent in what is not (similar to it)."

[5]PSv 29a4f.: *tshul gsum pa'i rtags zhes gang brjod pa de brjod par bya ste | rjes dpag bya dang de mthun la | | yod dang med nyid med pa'o | | rjes su dpag par bya ba ni chos kyi khyad par du byas pa'i chos can no | | de la mngon sum mam rjes su dpag pas mthong gi rjes la de'i rigs dang mthun pa la yang spyi'i tshul gyis phyogs thams cad dam phyogs gcig la yod par grub pa'o | |*

[6]This sentence appears in the Tibetan translation of the *Hetubinduṭīkā* by Arcaṭa with variant readings. HBṬ D323a2f.: *rjes dpag bya dang de msthungs **la** | | yod dang med **pa** la med par | | nges pa **ni** [...] | |*

[7]Both Dharmottara (ca. 740–800) and Jñānaśrībhadra (ca. 1000–1100) clarify that the ascertainment of the three modes of a sign is done only through a valid cognition (*pramāṇa*), namely, either perception or inference. See PVinṬ$_{Dh}$ D 82b5f.; PVinṬ$_J$ D 204a6f.

[8]Steinkellner (1988: 1435): "It is clear that the first two *pādas* of the verse are taken from Dignāga's PS II 5cd. To these words of Dignāga, Dharmakīrti not only added a new attribute (*ṅes pa, niścite*), but also supplied an explanatory subject (*tshul gsum pa*) in order to introduce the verse. Finally, the Tibetan translation accounts for the additional word by changing the predicative construction of the PS in *...med pa'o* into *med par ni*."

[9]There are some different translations of the term *khyab pa* (Skt. *vyāpti*): Tillemans (1999: 49): "As for the proof of the pervasion (*vyāpti*), there are the following two [subsections]: proving *anvaya* and proving *vyatireka*."

that hold between the sign and the property to be established, and the sign's being the property of the subject (*pakṣadharmatva*)—is the means of generating an inference to know the validity of the thesis. To take an example of the argument: "Sound is impermanent because it is a product," [1] the sign "being a product" must be ascertained to be the property of the subject; [2] the sign must be ascertained to be present only in similar instances (*sapakṣa*) i.e., the impermanent; and [3] the sign must be ascertained to be completely absent in dissimilar instances (*vipakṣa*) i.e., the permanent.

Thus, according to Dharmakīrti, ascertainment of each of the three modes constitutes a necessary condition for being the three modes.[10]

3   The Definition of a Proper Sign according to the Sa skya pa

The Sa skya pa and the Dge lugs pa have conflicting opinions as regards the definition of a proper sign.[11] While many Dge lugs pa scholars, especially after Rgyal tshab dar ma rin chen (1364–1432), define it as that which is each of the three modes (*tshul gsum yin pa*), the Sa skya pa scholars, such as Sa paṇ, Shākya mchog ldan, and Go rams bsod nams seng ge (1429–1490), define it as that which is endowed with the three modes (*tshul gsum tshang ba*). Whereas the Dge lugs pa asserts that a proper sign is not separable form being the three modes, the Sa skya pa emphasizes the distinction between the sign and its modes on the grounds that the three modes are the attributes (*khyad chos*) of the sign and the sign is their substratum (*khyad gzhi*). Let us look at the definition of a proper sign given by the Sa skya pa scholars. First of all, Sa paṇ defines it as follows:

> "That which is endowed with the three modes is a logical reason. For example, 'being a product' [is a logical reason that is endowed with the three modes for establishing sound's impermanence]. Likewise, 'smoke' is also that which is endowed with the three modes [for establishing the existence of fire on the mountain]. [...] That which is endowed with the three modes with regard to establishing an object to be established is a logical reason for establishing that object. For example, [consider the logical reason] for establishing [sound's] impermanence. 'Smoke' is also endowed with the three modes with regard to establishing the existence of fire on the mountain."[12]

According to Sa paṇ's account, "smoke" is a proper reason, or sign, for establishing the existence of fire on the mountain, and "being a product" is a proper reason for establishing that sound is impermanent,

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Hugon (2019: 359): "Though in many scholarly works these two terms, *khyab pa* and *vyāpti*, are translated with the English noun "pervasion," we have used the translation of "entailment," which is much more common in contemporary logic. When expressed as verbs in logical contexts, the terms "entails" and "pervades" actually carry converse meanings. In particular, to say that "item A *entails* item B," means the same thing as "item B *pervades* item A." "

[10]Steinkellner (1988: 1432): "Dignāga, in this way, uses the term *niścaya/niścita* in what can best be called a natural manner. It is, in fact, "natural" that a logical reason can serve as a cognition-constituting factor only when cognised itself; so its cognition need not be mentioned separately as one of its characteristics. In the context of the theory or description of proof, however, the fact that it is acceptable through an ascertainment to both disputants (*ubhaya niścita*!) represents a discussion-related feature of the reason which is useful in defining the reason as valid in discussions, but does not determine its primary nature."

[11]Dreyfus (1997: 26): "The conflict of interpretations may have started with the criticism directed against Sa paṇ by Bo dong and others. This prompted Yag-stön and Rong-stön to propose a defense of Sa paṇ's *Auto-Commentary*. This in turn prompted Rgyal-thap and Kay-drup to propose their own interpretations of the "true meaning of Sa paṇ's thought." The most detailed Sa-gya answer to this challenge came at the end of the fifteenth century, when Go-ram-ba and and Śākya Chog-den developed their critique of Gyel-tsap's and Kay-drup's interpretations."

[12]*Rigs gter rang 'grel* 103b6f.: *tshul gsum tshang ba de gtan tshigs yin te byas pa bzhin du ba yang tshul gsum tshang ngo | | [...] gang bsgrub bya gang bsgrub pa la ltos nas tshul gsum tshang ba de gang bsgrub pa de'i gtan tshigs yin te mi rtag pa bsgrub pa bzhin | | du ba la'ang la me ldan bsgrub la ltos nas tshul gsum tshang ngo | |*

because "smoke" and "being a product" satisfy the following conditions: [1] The reason is present in the subject. [2] The reason is present only in similar instances, namely, those having the property to be established. [3] The reason is completely absent in dissimilar instances, namely those lacking the property to be established. Furthermore, Sa paṇ says:

> "That which is endowed with the three modes is the reason.
> (Question:) Why is it so?
> (Answer:) Whatever has the three modes (*tshul gsum dang ldan pa*) is to be named by the term 'reason', just like the case in which whatever has branches is to be named by the term 'tree'."[13]

What emerges from this discussion is [1] that, the reason is that on which its three modes exist, as exemplified by a tree on which its branches exist, and [2] that its three modes are dependent on the reason, as exemplified by branches that are dependent on a tree. Of course, the reason and its three modes are not ontologically separable, just like a tree and branches. But Sa paṇ seems to stress the point that the reason and the three modes are distinguishable at the conceptual level, for the reason is a substratum (*khyad gzhi*) and the three modes are attributes (*khyad chos*). In other words, one can never say that the reason is equal to the three modes, just as one cannot say that branches are equal to a tree.

Shākya mchog ldan defines a proper sign in three different ways in his two extensive works on *pramāṇa*. He says in his *Rtog ge'i snying po* as follows:

> "X's (*khyod*) being a proper sign for establishing sound's impermanence is defined as: [1] the sign which has the three modes (*tshul gsum pa can*), or alternatively, [2] that in which the mode of being a property of the subject for establishing sound's impermanence by means of the sign x is established and in which the valid cognition ascertaining the relation between x and impermanence is established."[14]

In the *Lugs ngan pham byed*, he says:

> [3] "X's (*khyod*) being a proper sign for establishing that is defined as: that which is endowed with the three modes (*tshul gsum tshang ba*) for establishing that by means of the sign x."[15]

As indicated by the Tibetan words, *tshul gsum pa can* in the first definition as well as *tshul gsum tshang ba* in the third definition, Shākya mchog ldan thinks that the sign is that in which the three modes exist, and that the three modes are dependent on the sign. It is therefore clear that he also makes distinction at the conceptual level between the reason and the three modes. Furthermore, we may say that the second definition also presupposes the distinguishability between the sign and its modes, for it says: "that in which the mode of being a property of the subject [...] is established (*phyogs chos kyi tshul grub*)." It seems to imply that the first mode of the sign (namely, being a property of the subject) is something included within the sign. It is only when one can distinguish at the conceptual level between the sign and its mode that one can say that the mode is established in the sign.[16]

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[13]*Rigs gter rang 'grel* 104a1f: *tshul gsum tshang ba de gtan tshigs yin te ci'i phyir zhe na | gang tshul gsum dang ldan pa de la gtan tshigs kyi brda sbyar ba yin te yal ga dang ldan pa la shing gi brda sbyar ba bzhin [...] |*

[14]*Rtog ge'i snying po* 6a2ff.: *dang po ni | de sgrub kyi tshul gsum pa can gyi gtan tshigs sam | yang na khyod kyi rtags kyis sgra mi rtag par sgrub pa'i phyogs chos kyi tshul grub cing | khyod dang mi rtag pa la 'brel ba nges byed kyi tshad ma grub pa de | khyod sgra mi rtag par sgrub pa'i rtags yang dag yin pa'i mtshan nyid do ||*

[15]*Lugs ngan pham byed* 15b7f.: *khyod kyis rtags kyis de ltar sgrub pa'i tshul gsum tshang ba de | khyod de sgrub kyi rtags yang dag yin pa'i mtshan nyid do ||*

[16]The germ of the second definition of a proper sign stated by Shākya mchog ldan is found in Sa paṇ's *Tshad ma rigs gter*. See *Rigs gter* 168a1f.

This idea is articulated by Glo bo mkhan chen pa bsod nams lhun grub (1441–1525) since he says in his commentary on the *Rigs gter* as follows:

> "One and the same reason is considered (*blos 'dzin pa*) to be that which has the three modes (*tshul gsum pa can*): [the reason] has positive concomitance (*rjes 'gro*) in terms of its property accompanying the similar instances; [the reason] has negative concomitance (*ldog 'gro*) in terms of its property excluded from the dissimilar instances; and [the reason] has the property of the subject (*phyogs chos*) in terms of its property observed in the subject. Therefore, the reason is a substratum (*khyad gzhi*) and its three modes are the attributes (*khyad chos*) [of it.]"[17]

Glo bo mkhan chen says that a proper sign is a substratum (*khyad gzhi*) that has the attributes (*khyad chos*), namely, the three modes. This implies that a proper sign is neither supposed to be identical to each of the three modes nor is it supposed to be a common locus of three modes (*tshul gsum gyi gzhi mthun*).

4   The Definition of a Proper Sign according to the Dge lugs pa

Although the Sa skya pa's view of a proper sign is also found in the early Dge lugs pa's works on epistemology, such as the *Sde bdun yid kyi mun sel* by Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419) and the *Sde bun rgyan* by Mkhas grub dge legs dpal bzang (1385–1438), many Dge lugs pa scholars, like Rgyal tshab rje and his followers, tend to believe that a proper sign is a common locus of three modes, which means that a proper sign is inseparable from the three modes. Rgyal tshab rje says in the his commentary on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya*:

> "The first [namely, the definition of a proper sign] is: that which *is* each of the three modes (*tshul gsum yin pa*)."[18]

According to this sentence, Rgyal tshab rje thinks that a proper sign is each of the three modes. Moreover, in his commentary on the *Pramāṇavārttika*, he posits that "being a product" is a proper sign which is the three modes for establishing sound's impermanence.[19] Later Dge lugs pa thinkers, such as Kun mkhyen 'jam dbyangs bzhad pa (1648–1722), Se ra rje btsun pa (1469–1544), and Yongs 'dzin phur bu lcogs (1825–1901), explain in more detail how a proper sign, like "being a product," satisfies the condition of *being* the three modes. Let us look at the comments on the definition of a proper sign by Yongs 'dzin phur bu lcogs:

> "That which is each of the three modes is the definition of it [i.e., a proper sign]. [...] 'Being a product' is each of the three modes, namely, the property of subject (*phogs chos*), the pervaded property accompanying similar instances (*rjes khyab*) and the pervaded [property] excluded from dissimilar instances (*ldog khyab*) for establishing sound's impermanence by means of the sign 'being a product'."[20]

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[17]*Rig lam gsal ba'i nyi ma* 205b2f.: *gtan tshigs gcig nyid mthun phyogs la rjes su 'go ba'i cha nas rjes 'go | mi mhtun phyogs las ldog pa'i cha nas ldog 'gro | chos can la mthong pa'i cha nas phyogs chos te tshul gsum pa can du blos 'dzin pa yin pas gtan tshigs ni khyad gzhi yin la | tshul gsum ni khyad chos yin [...]*

[18]*Dgongs pa rab gsal* 166b4f.: *dang po ni | tshul gsum yin pa'o ||*

[19]See *Thar lam gsal byed* 8a4f.

[20]*Yongs 'dzin rtags rigs* 329.9ff: *tshul gsum yin pa | de'i mtshan nyid | [...] | byas pa de byas pa'i rtags kyis sgra mi rtag par sgrub pa'i phyogs chos | rjes khyab | ldog khyab gsum ka yin |*

What we can notice in this passage is that each of the three modes in this formulation is exemplified by one and the same instance, namely, "being a product." It means that the proper sign "being a product" is inseparable from each of the three modes. To put it another way, "being a product" is what an appropriate opponent ascertains to be existent in the subject "sound" as well as in the similar instances, "the impermanent" (*mi rtag pa*), and what he ascertains to be nonexistent in the dissimilar instances, "the permanent." Another important point to be noticed is that the Tibetan terms *rjes khyab* and *ldog khyab* are taken not in the sense of positive and negative concomitance but in the sense of "the pervaded property accompanying similar instances" and "the pervaded property excluded from dissimilar instances," respectively. The following statement given by Se ra rje btsun pa explicates how "being a product" is considered to be identical to each of the three modes for establishing sound's impermanence:

> "The statement from the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*: '[a proper sign] is what is ascertained to be existent in the object to be inferred as well as in what is similar to that...' indicates the definitions of the property of the subject (*phyogs chos*), the pervaded property accompanying similar instances (*rjes khyab*), and the pervaded property excluded from dissimilar instances (*ldog khyab*). Furthermore, this statement clearly indicates that [1] "being a product" is the property of subject (*phogs chos*) for establishing sound's impermanence in the sense that an opponent, for whom "being a product" serves as the three modes for establishing sound's impermanence, ascertains through a valid cognition "being a product" to be existent in the [subject] "sound" in keeping with the mode of formulation; [2] that "being a product" is the pervaded property accompanying similar instances (*rjes khyab*) for establishing sound's impermanence in the sense that such an opponent ascertains through a valid cognition "being a product" to be existent only in the similar instances for establishing sound's impermanence; and that [3] "being a product" is the pervaded property excluded from dissimilar instances (*ldog khyab*) for establishing that [sound's impermanence] in the sense that he ascertains through a valid cognition "being a product" to be completely absent in dissimilar instances for establishing sound's impermanence."[21]

According to this account, "being a product" is the proper sign, which *is* each of the three modes for establishing sound's impermanence, namely, the property of the subject, the pervaded property accompanying similar instances, and the pervaded property excluded from dissimilar instances; for it is ascertained by an appropriate opponent to be present in the subject "sound" as well as in the similar instances, namely, the impermanent, and ascertained by him to be absent in the dissimilar instances, namely, the permanent. Thus, Se ra rje btsun pa suggests that the sign "being a product" is identical to each of the three modes for establishing sound's impermanence.

5   A Controversy between Shākya mchog ldan and 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa

The Sa skya scholars insist that a proper sign can never be each of the three modes because they assert that the three modes are completely incompatible with one another. Such a view is accepted by the Sa

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[21]*Rje btsun rnam 'grel* 89b5ff.: *tshad ma mdor | rjes dpag bya dang de mtshungs la | | zhes sogs gsungs pa | byas rtags kyis sgra mi rtag par sgrub pa'i phyogs chos rjes khyab ldog khyab gsum gyi mtshan nyid bstan pa yin pa'i phyir dang | lung 'dis byas pa sgra mi rtag par sgrub pa'i tshul gsum du song ba'i rgol bas | byas pa sgra'i steng du 'god tshul dang mthun par yod par tshad mas nges pa'i cha nas byas pa sgra mi rtag par sgrub pa'i phyogs chos dang | de 'dra'i rgol bas byas pa sgra mi rtag par sgrub pa'i mthun phyogs kho na la yod par tshad mas nges pa'i cha nas | byas pa sgra mi rtag par sgrub pa'i rjes khyab dang | des byas pa sgra mi rtag par sgrub pa'i mi mthun phyogs la med pa kho nar tshad mas nges pa'i cha nas byas pa de sgrub kyi ldog khyab tu gsal pa'i phyir |*

skya pa, but not acceptable to the Dge lugs pa scholars who hold that the proper sign *is* each of the three modes. According to Shākya mchog ldan, the three modes are defined and illustrated as follows:

> "The mode of the property of the subject (*phyogs chos kyi tshul*) is defined as the mode of the sign that primarily depends on the subject, the basis of relation of that [sign]. It is illustrated by the fact (*cha*) that "being a product" is ascertained to be existent in the sound, which is the subject of inquiry, by the inferential cognition of an appropriate opponent. The mode of positive concomitance (*rjes 'gro'i tshul*) is defined as the mode of a sign that primarily depends on the similar instances, the basis of relation of that [sign]. It is illustrated by the fact that "being a product" is ascertained to be existent only in similar instances for establishing that by the valid cognition of an appropriate opponent. The mode of negative concomitance (*ldog pa'i tshul*) is defined as the mode of a sign that is included within the category (*rigs su gnas pa*) of what primarily depends on the dissimilar instances, the basis of relation of that [sign]. It is illustrated by the fact that "being a product" is ascertained to be completely absent in dissimilar instances for establishing that by the valid cognition of an appropriate opponent."[22]

Shākya mchog ldan never says that one and the same item, such as "being a product," is each of the three modes. Instead, he asserts that the fact (*cha*) of the sign's satisfying each condition is the three modes, namely, the mode of the property of the subject (*phyogs chos kyi tshul*), the mode of positive concomitance (*rjes 'gro'i tshul*), and the mode of negative concomitance (*ldog pa'i tshul*). Furthermore, he refutes the Dge lugs pa's concept of the three modes as follows:

> "The mode of the property of the subject (*phyogs chos kyi tshul*), the mode of positive concomitance (*rjes 'gro'i tshul*), and the mode of negative concomitance (*ldog pa'i tshul*) are definitely incompatible with one another. If one and the same item, "being a product," were the common locus (*gzhi mthun*) of the three modes of that formulation [i.e., 'Sound is impermanent because it is a product'], you would have to unwillingly admit only one mode [instead of the three modes] of that formulation because [according to you] "being a product" is an illustration of either of the three modes for establishing sound's impermanence, and because any other illustration of either of the three modes, which are different isolates from "being a product," is not apprehended."[23]

What Shākya mchog ldan means to say is as follows. The three modes, namely, the property of the subject (*phyogs chos kyi tshul*), the mode of positive concomitance (*rjes 'gro'i tshul*), and the mode of negative concomitance (*ldog pa'i tshul*), are incompatible with one another. If someone asserts that one and the same item, "being a product," were the common locus of the three modes—which means that it is each of the three modes for establishing sound's impermanence—, he would have to unwillingly admit

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[22]*Rtog ge'i snying po* 4b56ff.: *rang gi ltos gzhi phyogs la gtso bor ltos pa'i rtags tshul de | phyogs chos kyi tshul gyi mtshan nyid | mtshan gzhi ni | byas pa de shes 'dod chos can du gyur pa'i sgra'i steng du yod pa nyid du skabs kyi rgol ba'i tshad mas nges pa'i cha lta bu'o | | rang gi ltos gzhi mthun phyogs la gtso bor ltos pa'i rtags tshul de | rjes 'gro'i tshul gyi mtshan nyid | mtshan gzhi ni | byas pa de sgrub kyi mthun phyogs kho na la yod par skabs kyi rgol ba'i tshad mas nges pa'i cha lta bu'o | | rang gi ltos gzhi mi mthun phyogs la gtso bor ltos pa'i rigs su gnas pa'i rtags tshul de | ldog pa'i tshul gyi mtshan nyid | mtshan gzhi ni | byas pa de sgrub kyi mi mthun phyogs la med pa kho na skabs kyi rgol ba'i tshad mas nges pa'i cha lta bu'o | |*

[23]*Lugs ngan pham byed* 45a7ff.: *phyogs chos kyi tshul dang | rjes 'gro'i tshul | ldog pa'i tshul gsum ni 'gal ba kho nar nges te | byas pas sgra mi rtag par sgrub pa'i rtags kyi sthul dang po dang | gnyis pa dang gsum pa rnams pan tshul 'gal ba'i phyir | ci ste | byas pa nyid sbyor ba de skor gyi tshul gsum ka'i gzhi mthun du 'dod na | sbyor ba de skor gyi rtags kyi tshul de gcig kho nar mi 'dod bzhin du nges par khas len dgos par 'gyur te | byas pa de byas pa'i rtags kyis sgra mi rtag par sgrub pa'i tshul gsum gang rung gcig gi mtshan gzhi yin la | byas pa las ldog pa tha dad pa'i des skor gyi tshul gsum gang rung gi mtshan gzhi gzung rgyu mi snang ba'i phyir ro |*

only one mode instead of the three modes for establishing sound's impermanence. This is because there is no other instance of the three modes for establishing sound's impermanence than "being a product."

What Shākya mchog ldan says is tantamount to saying that, if the Dge lugs pa's assertion were true, only the cognition of "being a product" would be enough for generating the ascertainment of the three modes. Against this, Kun mkhyen 'jam dbyang bzhad pa states that, even though "being a product" is actually both the pervaded property accompanying similar instances (*rjes khyab*) and the pervaded property excluded from dissimilar instances (*ldog khyab*) for establishing sound's impermanence, it does not necessarily mean that, when one cognizes "being a product," he understands that "being a product" satisfies the conditions of these two, as can be seen in the following quotation:

> "(Obection:) Even though a pot is not established as an external object, it does not necessarily mean that, when one cognizes the pot, he understands that it is not established as an external object. But in order to understand that a pot is not existing as an external object, one must understand that a pot is not established as an external object.
>
> (Answer:) Then, the following things are to be accepted similarly: Even though "being a product" is both the pervaded property accompanying similar instances (*rjes khyab*) and that excluded from dissimilar instances (*ldog khyab*) for establishing that (i.e., sound's impermanence), it does not necessarily mean that, when one cognizes "being a product," he understands the twofold concomitance, [namely, the positive and negative concomitance] for establishing that. But when one understands how "being a product" accompanies [the similar instances] and how it is excluded from [the dissimilar instances] for establishing that, he can understand the twofold concomitance."[24]

According to Kun mkhyen 'jam dbyang bzhad pa, "being a product" is both the pervaded property accompanying similar instances and the pervaded property excluded from dissimilar instances. But a person who cognizes "being a product" is not necessarily the one who understands that "being a product" satisfies the condition of both positive and negative concomitance. This is because, in oder to realize that "being a product" satisfies the condition of the second mode of the sign, one must understand how "being a product" accompanies the similar instances, the impermanent. Likewise, in order to realize that "being a product" satisfies the condition of the third mode of the sign, one must understand how it is excluded from the dissimilar instances, the permanent.

What follows from all of this is that "being a product" and its three modes are to be distinguished in the epistemic context no matter that the sign and its modes are ontologically one and the same. This is exemplified by the following case: Even though a pot is not established as an external object, a person who cognizes the pot is not necessarily the one who cognizes that the pot is not established as an external object. Therefore, a pot and its nature of not being established as an external object should be distinguished in the epistemic context, though they may be indistinguishable at the ontological level. The point at stake here is that, if such and such thing x has the nature of y, it is not always the case that x is understood as having y by a certain individual, which implies that the concept of x and that of y are to be distinguished from each other.

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[24]*Rnam 'grel mtha' dpyod* 177b3ff.: *bum pa phyi don du ma grub kyang de rtogs na phyi don du ma grub pa rtogs mi dgos la | bum pa phyi don du med par rtogs pa la | bum pa phyi don du ma grub pa rtogs dgos zer na | 'o na | byas pa yang de sgrub kyi rjes khyab dang ldog khyab yin yang byas pa tsam rtogs pas de sgrub kyi khyab pa gnyis rtogs pa'i go mi chod kyi | byas pa de sgrub la rjes su 'gro tshul dang ldog tshul gyi don rtogs na khyab pa gnyis rtogs par 'dod pas khyab pa shin tu 'grig go |*

6 Conclusion

So far, we have examined two different views of the definition of a proper sign. While many Sa skya pa scholars define it as "that which is endowed with the three modes" (*tshul gsum tshang ba*), most of the Dge lugs pa scholars define it as "that which *is* each of the three modes" (*tshul gsum yin pa*). The Sa skya pa logicians, Sa paṇ and Glo bo mkhan chen, insist that the three modes are separable from a sign, because they assume that a sign is a substratum and the three modes are the attributes of it. Shākya mchog ldan not only affirms that the three modes are separable from a sign but states that the three modes are incompatible with one another; for he identifies the first mode as the fact (*cha*) that "being a product" is ascertained to be existent in the sound, the second mode as the fact that it is ascertained to be existent only in the similar instances, and the third mode as the fact that it is ascertained to be completely nonexistent in the dissimilar instances. Therefore, Shākya mchog ldan argues that a proper sign can never be identical with each of the three modes, for otherwise it would absurdly follow that one must admit only one mode of the sign, instead of the three modes.

According to Dge lugs pa logicians, however, a proper sign and the three modes are inseparable. For example, [1] "being a product" for establishing sound's impermanence is identical to the first mode in the sense that it is the property of the subject, sound, and also that it is ascertained by an appropriate opponent to be present in the subject; [2] it is identical to the second mode in the sense that it is the pervaded property accompanying similar instances (*rjes khyab*), and also that it is ascertained by him to be present only in the similar instances, namely, the impermanent; [3] it is identical to the third mode in the sense that it is the pervaded property excluded from dissimilar instances (*ldog khyab*), and also that it is ascertained by him to be completely absent in the dissimilar instances, namely, the permanent. This does not mean that there is only one mode of the sign, nor does it mean that the knowledge of the sign "being a product" entails that of the three modes. For, as 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa says, the three modes are to be distinguished in the epistemic context even though they are inseparable at the ontological level.

Abbreviation and References

(1) Indic Sources

PVin II *Pramāṇaviniścaya* Chapter 2 Svārthānumāna (Dharmakīrti): E. Steinkellner ed. *Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇaviniścaya, Chapters 1 and 2*. Beijing—Vienna: China Tibetology Publishing House—Austrian Academy of Sciences Press. 2007.

PVinṬ$_J$ D *Pramāṇaviniścayaṭīkā* (Jñānaśrībhadra): Tibetan Sde dge ed. *Tshad ma*. Tshe. Tohoku no. 4228.

PVinṬ$_{Dh}$ D *Pramāṇaviniścayaṭīkā* (Dharmottara): Tibetan Sde dge ed. *Tshad ma*. Dze. Tohoku no. 4229.

PSv N *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (Dignāga): Tibetan Snar thang ed. *Tshad ma*. Ce.

PSv P *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (Dignāga): Tibetan Peking ed. *Tshad ma*. Ce. Otani no. 5701.

PSVv D *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* (Dignāga): Tibetan Sde dge ed. *Tshad ma*. Ce. Tohoku no. 4204.

HBṬ D *Hetubinduṭīkā* (Arcaṭa): Tibetan Sde dge ed. *Tshad ma*. We. Tohoku no. 4235.

(2) Tibetan Sources

Dgongs pa rab gsal *Bstan bcos tshad ma rnam nges kyi ṭik chen dgongs pa rab gsal* (Rgyal tshab dar ma rin chen). In *Collected Works by Gyaltsab Je Darma Rinchen*, vol. 7. Zhol par khang. 1982.

Thar lam gsal byed *Tshad ma rnam 'grel gyi tshig le'ur byas pa'i rnam bshad thar lam phyin ci ma log par gsal bar byed pa* (Rgyal tshab dar ma rin chen). In *Collected Works by Gyaltsab Je Darma Rinchen*, vol. 6. Zhol par khang. 1982.

Rje btsun rnam ’grel　*Rgyas pa’i bstan bcos tshad ma rnam ’grel gyi don ’grel rgyal tshab dgongs pa rab gsal* (Rje btsan chos kyi rgyal mtshan). In *Collected Works by Rje btsan chos kyi rgyal mtshan*, vol. 1. Dga’ ldan par khang. 1995.

Rtog ge’i snying po　*Tshad ma mdo gzhung lugs sde bdun gyi de kho na nyid bsdus pa rtog ge’i snying po* (Shākya mchog ldan). In *Collected Writings of Gser-mdog Pan-chen Shākya-mchog-ldan*, vol. 18. Delhi: Jayyed Press. 1988.

Rnam ’grel mtha’ dpyod　*Tshad ma rnam ’grel gyi mtha’ dpyod thar lam rab gsal tshad ma’i ’od brgya ’bar ba las le’u dang po’i mtha’ dpyod blo gsal mgul rgyan skal bzang ’jug ngogs* (Kun mkhyen ’jam dbyangs bzhad pa’i rdo rje ngag dbang brtson ’grus). In *Collected Works by Jamyang Zhepai Dorje Ngagwang Tsondru*, vol. 14. Bla brang bkra shis ’khyil par khang. 1997.

Yongs ’dzin rtags rigs　*Tshad ma’i gzhung don ’byed pa’i rnam par gzhag pa rigs lam ’phrul gyi lde mig ces bya ba las rtags rigs kyi rnam par bshad ba* (Phur bu lcog blo bzang tshul khrims byams pa rgya mtsho). In *Rigs lam ’phrul lde* (pp. 139–386). Kan su’u mi rigs dpe skrun khang. 1982.

Rigs gter rang ’grel　*Tshad ma rigs pa’i gter gyi rang ’grel* (Sa skya paṇḍita kun dga’ rgyal mtshan). Sakya centre. 1983.

Rig lam gsal ba’i nyi ma　*Sde bdun mdo dang bcas pa’i dgongs ’grel tshad ma rig pa’i gter gyi rnam bshad rig lam gsal ba’i nyi ma* (Glo bo mkhan chen bsol nams lhun grub). In *Collected works by Lowo Khenchen Sonam Lhundrub*, vol. 2. Sde dge rdzong sar dgon. 2012.

Lugs ngan pham byed　*Tshad ma rigs pa’i goer gyi dgongs rgyan lung dang rigs pa’i ’khor los lugs ngan pham byed* (Shākya mchog ldan). In *Collected Writings of Gser-mdog Pan-chen Shākya-mchog-ldan*, vol. 9. Delhi: Jayyed Press. 1988.

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(Ma jiu jie, Ph.D. candidate, Hiroshima University [Indian philosophy])

The Sa skya pa and Dge lugs pa's Views of the Definition of a Proper Sign

MA JIU JIE

This paper examines the Sa skya pa and Dge lugs pa's views of the definition (*mtshan nyid*) of a proper sign (*rtags yang dag*) and clarifies the difference of opinion. On the basis of the statements of Indian Buddhist logicians, Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, both the Sa skya pa and Dge lugs pa schools agree that a proper sign must satisfy the three conditions or modes (*tshul gsum*) but they present different definitions of a proper sign. The Dge lugs pa defines a proper sign as "that which is each of the three modes" (*tshul gsum yin pa*), while the Sa skya pa defines it as "that which is endowed with the three conditions" (*tshul gsum tshang ba*). According to the Sa skya pa, a proper sign can never be identical to each of the three modes since it is separable from its three modes. Moreover, it is argued by the Sa skya scholar, Shākya mchog ldan, that if the Dge lugs pa's assertion were true, there would be only one mode instead of three modes. The Dge lugs pa scholar, Kun mkhyen 'jams dbyangs bzhad pa, asserts that, although a proper sign and its three modes are inseparable at the ontological level, they are distinguished from one another in the epistemic context, and hence Shākya mchog ldan's criticism that there would be only one mode does not apply to the Dge lugs pa's tenets.