A Study of Argumentation Theory of Shākya mchog ldan

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1   The Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to clarify the characteristic features of the Sa skya pa's argumentation theory by examining both commonality and diversity of ideas of the Sa skya scholars, especially Shākya mchog ldan (1428–1507) and his predecessors. This dissertation not only analyzes the Sa skya pa's argumentation theory but also scrutinizes the argumentation theories of the Bka' gdams pa and Dge lugs pa by comparing them with the Sa skya pa's in some sections. For the Sa skya pa's argumentation theory is in sharp contrast with those of the Bka' gdams pa and Dge lugs pa scholars, such as Phywa pa chos kyi seng ge (1109–1169, hereafter "Phywa pa"), Rgyal tshab dar ma rin chen (1364–1432, hereafter "Rgyal tshab rje"), Se ra rje btsun pa (1469–1544), Kun mkhyen 'jam dbyangs bzhad pa (1648–1721), and Yongs 'dzin phur bu lcogs (1825–1901).

2   Methods

Chapter 1 analyzes the views of the Sa skya pa, including Sa paṇ, Glo bo mkhan chen, and Shākya mchog ldan, on the definition of a proper sign (*rtags yang dag*), and compares them with those of the Dge lugs pa, including Rgyal tshab dar ma rin chen, Se ra rje btsun pa, Yongs 'dzin phur bu lcogs, and Kun mkhyen 'jam dbyangs bzhad pa.

In chapter 2, the section 2.1 explores the view of Sa paṇ and Shākya mchog ldan on similar and dissimilar sets (*mthun phyogs* and *mi mthun phyogs*), and compares it with that of the Dge lugs pa scholar Kun mkhyen 'jam dbyangs bzhad pa. The section 2.2 examines two different definitions of *sapakṣa* given by Dignāga from the perspective of the epistemological theory of Sa paṇ, Shākya mchog ldan, and Rong ston.

Chapter 3 examines the views of the Bka' gdams pa, specifically, Phywa pa and Gtsang nag pa, on the signs for establishing the positive and negative (*sgrub rtags* and *dgag rtags*), and

30   compare them with those of Sa paṇ and Shākya mchog ldan.

3   The Background of Study

3.1   The Definition of a Proper Sign

In accordance with the Indian Buddhist epistemological theory, the Sa skya pa holds that inference (*rjes dpag*, *anumāna*) is a type of valid cognition based on the formulation of argument

35   consisting of three components, namely, the subject (*phyogs*, *pakṣa*)[1], what is to be established (*bsgrub bya*, *sādhya*),[2] and a sign (*rtags*, *liṅga*). Among these three components, a sign, or more strictly, a proper sign (*rtags yang dag*) is an indicator of what is to be established; and it must satisfy three modes or conditions (*thsul gsum, trairūpa*), namely, its presence in the subject, its presence in a similar set (*mthun phyogs*, *sapakṣa*) alone, and its complete absence

40   in a dissimilar set (*mi mthun phyogs*, *vipakṣa*).

As shown by Hugon (2004), the Bka' gdam pa scholar Phywa pa does not accept the "three modes" (*trairūpya*) as the definition of a proper sign since he considers *anvaya* and *vyatireka* to be equivalent. Therefore, according to Phywa pa, the *trairūpya* contains a redundancy, and what is taken as a definition is the minimal sufficient condition, that is, a *dvairūpya* ("two modes")

45   consisting of *pakṣadhama* and *vyatireka*. Phywa pa's theory, however, is criticized by Sa paṇ who defends the view of a tripartite universe, where *pakṣa*, *sapakṣa*, and *vipakṣa* are distinct bases for the three modes. Both the Sa skya pa and Dge lugs pa agree that a proper sign must satisfy the three modes, although they posit different definitions of a proper sign as will be analyzed.

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[1]Tachikawa (1971:165) remarks: "A *pakṣa* has to fulfill two conditions: It must be a property possessor, and it must be qualified by a property."

[2]Tachikawa (1971:166) remarks: "The property the arguer wishes to prove to exist in the *pakṣa* is called a *sādhya*, [...]. The relation between a *sādhya* and a *hetu* can be expressed as follows: The existence of a *sādhya* in its locus is proved by the existence of the *hetu* in the same locus."

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3.2 Similar and Dissimilar Sets

As regards the similar and dissimilar sets,[3] the Sa skya pa holds that they are the basis of the second and third mode of a proper sign, respectively. As discussed by Tillemans (1990), there are restrictive and non-restrictive versions of similar and dissimilar sets in terms of their domains, namely, similar and dissimilar sets that exclude the subject, and that do not. The Sa skya pa accepts the restrictive version of the theory, where the subject is excluded from similar and dissimilar sets, while the Dge lugs pa accepts the non-restrictive of that, where the subject is included either in similar set or in dissimilar set.

The restrictive version of similar and dissimilar sets can be represented by means of the following diagram:

Abbreviation: *ps=pakṣa* (subject), *sp=sapakṣa* (similar set), *vp=vipakṣa* (dissimilar set).
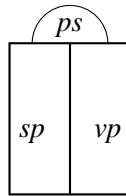
Non-restrictive version of similar and dissimilar sets can be represented by means of the following diagram:
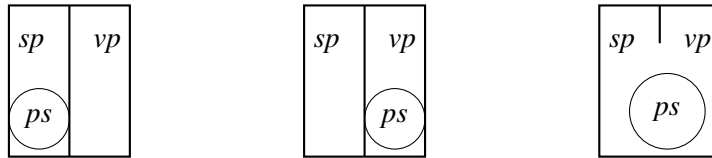
Moreover, as Hugon (2004) analyzes it, there are realistic and epistemic versions of similar and dissimilar sets, namely, similar and dissimilar sets that are independent of an opponent's cognition, and that are established based on an opponent's cognition. Phywa pa and his followers hold that similar and dissimilar sets are established independently of an opponent's cognition, while Sa paṇ and his followers hold that similar and dissimilar sets are established dependent on an opponent's cognition.

As indicated by Katsura (2004), we find in Dignāga's texts two different definitions of

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[3]Tillemans (1990) and Hugon (2004) translate *mthun phyogs* (*sapakṣa*) and *mi mthun phyogs* (*vipakṣa*) as "similar instances" and "dissimilar instances," In this paper, however, I use the term "a similar set" for *mthun phyogs* and "a dissimilar set" for *mi mthun phyogs*, following Katsura's (2004) suggestion.

sapakṣa, namely, [1] a set of objects that are **similar to the property to be proved**, which is given in the *Nyāyamukha*,[4] and [2] a set of objects that are **similar to the subject** on account of the common characteristic of a property to be proved, which is given in the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*.[5] Katsura (2004) states that the definition of *sapakṣa* in the *Nyāyamukha* does not make much sense possibly because of the textual problems of Chinese translation. However, an interpretation offered by the Sa skya scholar Rong ston shākya rgyal mtshan (1367–1449, hereafter "Rong ston") is noticeable since he suggests that a similar set need not be similar to the subject in the case of improper argument.

3.3 The Proper Signs for Establishing the Positive and Negative

The Sa skya pa scholars distinguish a proper sign for establishing the positive and one for establishing the negative[6] in terms of the property to be established. A sign that establishes an existent object, such as "smoke" for establishing existence of fire, is considered as a sign for establishing the positive, since the existence of fire is confirmed by means of the sign; and a sign that establishes the absence of an object, such as "what has the characteristic of being perceptible is not perceived" for establishing the absence of a pot in a particular place, is considered as a sign for establishing the negative, since the negation of a pot is confirmed by

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[4]See NMKh (T1628,vol. 32, 1c29-2a1)

[5]See PSV$_K$ P 130a6f.

[6]According to Indian logical theory, an affirming negative (*ma yin dgag*, **paryudāsa*), among the negation (*dgag pa*, **pratiṣedha*), is not necessarily construed with a negative particle as Kajiyama (1973: 173) remarks: "Beginning with Dignāga, all subsequent Buddhist logicians have maintained the theory of *apoha*. It is regarded as a one of the most signifiant Buddhist contribution to philosophy. The theory denies the external existence of a universal and says that the knowledge of a universal or a word is inferential and that the meaning of a word (A) is none other than the negation of the other (non-A). The problem as to which of the two kinds of negation is involved in *apoha* is discussed by Buddhist logicians. They tend to say that 'the negation of the other' (*anyāpoha*) in this case must be *paryudāsa*, since hearing the word 'cow' we do not only understand the absence of 'non-cow', but also the image of (*buddhyākāra*) of a cow." But, in terms of Indian grammatical tradition, both non-affirming negation (*med dgag*,**prasajyapratiṣedha*) and affirming negation are construed with a negative particle as Chen Hsun-Mei (2020: 188) remarks: "In the Indian tradition, grammarians often distinguish two usages of negation: *prasajyapratiṣedha* and *paryudāsapratiṣedha* (implicative negation). Syntactically, this is a distinction about to which part of a sentence the negative word is attached." However, according to many Tibetan thinkers, *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* refer to a negative thing rather than "negation" discussed in Indian grammar theory. For example, Phywa pa says that an illusion (*sgyu ma*) is an affirming negative, and his student Gtsang nag pa says that emptiness (*stong pa nyid*) is a non-affirming negative.

means of a sign in the particular place.

The components of above argument are in the following table:

Subject	The property to be established	Reason
A smoky mountain	Existence of fire	Smoke
A particular place	Absence of a pot	What has the characteristic of being perceptible is not perceived

4 The Structure of Thesis

This dissertation consists of three parts: introduction, an examination of the Sa skya pa's argumentation theory, and a partial translation of Shākya mchog ldan's small treatise on epistemology, *Rtog ge'i snying po*.

Part 1: Introduction

> **1.1** Shākya mchog ldan's Contribution to the Study of *pramāṇa*
>
> **1.2** An Overview of the Sa skya pa's Argumentation Theory
>
> **1.3** The Purpose and Methods

Part 2: Examination of Argumentation Theory

> **Chapter 1** The Definition of a Proper Sign
>
> **Chapter 2** Similar and Dissimilar Sets
>
> > **2.1** Shākya mchog ldan's View of Similar and Dissimilar Sets
> >
> > **2.2** Re-examination of Dignāga's Definitions of *sapakṣa*
>
> **Chapter 3** The Proper Signs for Establishing the Positive and Negative
>
> **Conclusion**

Part 3: A Partial Translation of the *Rtog ge'i snying po*

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5   The Main Points of Each Chapter

5.1   The Definition of a Proper Sign

Chapter 1 discusses the definition of a proper sign. After examining Dignāga's and Dhar-
makīrti's ideas of the definition of a proper sign, it discusses the Sa skya pa's view that a proper
sign is **separable** from its three modes. By analyzing the controversy between Shākya mchog
ldan and 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa, it reveals that the Dge lugs pa asserts that a proper sign and its
three modes are **inseparable**. The Sa skya pa logicians, Sa paṇ and Glo bo mkhan chen, insist
that the three modes are separable from a sign, because they think 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 they 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 a similar set,
and the third mode as the fact that it is ascertained to be completely nonexistent in a dissimilar
set. 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 three.

However, according to the Dge lugs pa logicians, a proper sign and the three modes are
inseparable. For example, [1] "being a product" for establishing sound's impermanence is iden-
tical 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 a similar set**
(*rjes khyab*), and also that it is ascertained by him to be present only in a similar set, namely,
the impermanent; [3] it is identical to the third mode in the sense that it is **the pervaded prop-
erty excluded from a dissimilar set** (*ldog khyab*), and also that it is ascertained by him to be
completely absent in a dissimilar set, 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 prod-
uct" entails that of the three modes, but it means that, as 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa says, they are
distinguishable in the **epistemic context**, even though they are inseparable at the **ontological
level**.

5.2   Similar and Dissimilar Sets

The first section of Chapter 2 examines Shākya mchog ldan's view of the definitions of similar
and dissimilar sets. In accordance with Sa paṇ's theory, Shākya mchog ldan accepts the idea that

similar and dissimilar sets in their strict sense are dependent on an opponent's cognition. For instance, a pot that is ascertained to be impermanent is a member of a similar set for establishing sound's impermanence. Nevertheless, he also accepts similar and dissimilar sets that are posited independently of an opponent's cognition, in accordance with the Dge lugs pa's view. For instance, a pot that is not ascertained as such by an opponent is a member of the similar set that actually exists. Likewise, a dissimilar set that serves as the basis of determining negative concomitance must be something ascertained to be absent in the domain of a dissimilar set, and one that is absent in the domain of a dissimilar set in actuality is not always ascertained to be absent by an opponent. Contrary to this, the Dge lugs pa logicians hold that similar and dissimilar sets are not supposed to be recognized by an opponent but rather are external objects that possess, or do not possess, the property to be established.

The second section of Chapter 2 examines the Sa skya pa's view of different definitions of *sapakṣa* (similar set) given by Dignāga. Sa paṇ and Shākya mchog ldan only accept the definition of *sapakṣa* that is given in the *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, and assert that *sapakṣa* is a set of objects that are **similar to the subject** on account of possessing the property to be established either in actuality or conceptually. In the case of some improper arguments, such as "Sound is permanent because it is an object of cognition," a set of objects that are permanent is not similar to the subject in actuality, but a set of things that are permanent is hypothetically said to be similar to the subject "sound" from the perspective of a certain opponent.

1. **The definition of *sapakṣa* given in NMKh:** A set of objects that are similar to the property to be proved.

2. **The definition of *sapakṣa* given in PSV:** A set of objects that are similar to the subjects on account of the common characteristic of a property to be proved.

However, according to Rong ston, *sapakṣa* that occurs in improper arguments is to be distinguished from one that occurs in proper arguments, since *sapakṣa* that occurs in improper arguments need not be similar to the subject, but rather it is a set of objects that have the property to be established. Therefore, this implies that another definition of *sapakṣa*, namely, "a set of objects that is **similar to the property to be established**," given in the *Nyāyamukha* is also justifiable in the case of improper arguments such as "Sound is permanent because it is an object of cognition." Nevertheless, he makes a slight modification to this definition in the following manner: A set of objects that have the property to be established.
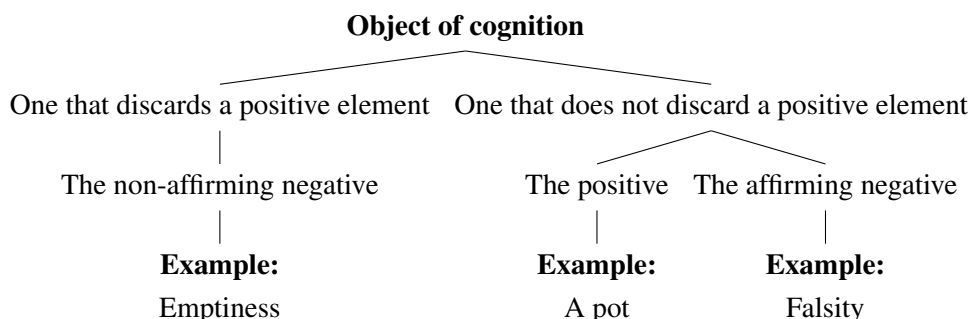
The components of above improper argument are in the following table:

Subject	The property to be established	Reason
Sound	Being permanent	Being an object of cognition

5.3 The Proper Signs for Establishing the Positive and Negative

Chapter 3 discusses two types of proper signs, namely, a proper sign for establishing the positive and one for establishing the negative. The Bka' gdams pa scholars, Phywa pa and his follower Gtsang nag pa, assert that every object of cognition is divided into two categories, i.e., that which does not discard a positive element and the one that discards it. The former includes the positive and an affirming negative, which are exemplified by "a pot" and "falsity," respectively. A sign that establishes those two is considered as one that serves as a means of establishing the positive. The latter only includes a non-affirming negative, which is exemplified by "emptiness." Whatever a sign that establishes a non-affirming negative is one that serves for establishing the negative.

The classification of an object of cognition, in accordance with the Bka' gdams pa tradition, is presented by the following tree structure:

Object of cognition

One that discards a positive element One that does not discard a positive element

The non-affirming negative The positive The affirming negative

Example: **Example:** **Example:**
Emptiness A pot Falsity

In contrast, Sa paṇ suggests that an affirming negative can be either the positive or the negative. And his follower Shākya mchog ldan divides an affirming negative into two kinds, i.e., an affirming negative characterized merely by negation and a combination of the positive and negative. Moreover, he holds that an affirming negative characterized merely by negation and a non-affirming negative are established by a sign for establishing the negative. For example, the sign "not being endowed with the characteristic features of a Brahmin" can establish that the man on the street is not a Brahmin, and the sign "not being observed by a valid cognition" can establish nonexistence of a son of a barren woman.

The components of above argument are in the following table:

Subject	The property to be established	Reason
The man on the street	Absence of a Brahmin	Not being endowed with the characteristic features of a Brahmin
A son of a barren woman	Nonexistence	Not being observed by a valid cognition

An affirming negative that is a combination of the positive and negative also can be divided into two kinds: one that is not construed with a negative particle (*dgag tshig ma sbyar ba'i ma yin dgag*) can be established by a sign for establishing the positive, such as sound's impermanence that is established by the sign "being a product."

The components of above argument are in the following table:

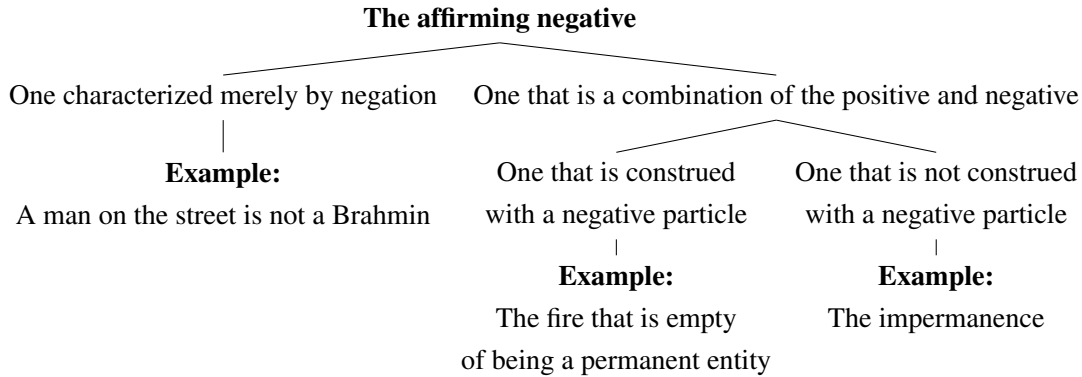| Subject	The property to be established	Reason
Sound	Being impermanent	Being a product

And the one that is directly construed with a negative particle (*dgag tshig dngos su sbyar ba'i ma yin dgag*), must be established either by a sign for establishing the positive or by one for establishing the negative. For instance, "fire that is empty of being a permanent entity." In this case, a sign "smoke" must be determined as either one for establishing the positive or one for establishing the negative in accordance with an opponent's different conceptual levels, because when he wishes to know the existence of fire, "smoke" is a sign for establishing the positive; and when he wishes to know that fire is empty of being a permanent entity, it is one for establishing the negative.

The components of above argument are in the following table:

Subject	The property to be established	Reason
A smoky mountain	Fire that is empty of being a permanent entity	Smoke

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The classification of an affirming negative, in accordance with Shākya mchog ldan, is presented by the following tree structure:

The affirming negative

One characterized merely by negation   One that is a combination of the positive and negative

Example: One that is construed   One that is not construed
A man on the street is not a Brahmin   with a negative particle   with a negative particle

                                            Example: **Example:**
                                            The fire that is empty   The impermanence
                                            of being a permanent entity

5.4   Conclusion

In conclusion, what emerges from these observation is some fundamental points of disagreement of argumentation theory among the Tibetan scholars. In terms of a proper sign, Shākya mchog ldan follows Sa paṇ's idea and he denies the Dge lugs pa thinker Rgyal tshab rje's idea, namely, a proper sign and its three modes are one and the same. With regard to similar and dissimilar sets, Shākya mchog ldan not only accepts that similar and dissimilar sets are dependent on an opponent's cognition, in accordance with the Sa skya pa's traditional tenets, but also, from a different point of view, he emphasizes the point that they are not dependent on an opponent's cognition, as conceived in the Bka' gdams pa and Dge lugs pa traditions. As for the definition of a similar set, Shākya mchog ldan's idea differs from that of his teacher Rong ston, since he, unlike Rong ston, considers a similar set as factors that must be similar to the subject. In terms of the signs for establishing the positive and negative, he denies the Bka' gdams pa's idea that an affirming negative must be established by a sign for establishing the positive, since he thinks that an affirming negative, such as the place where a pot does not exist, can be either the positive or negative. As shown above, in most cases Shākya mchog ldan follows the Sa skya pa traditional tenets, but in some cases he partially follows the Dge lugs pa tenets in favor of the Indian Buddhist theory of argumentation as understood by him. In fact, he is a follower of reasoning, not a follower of faith. Therefore, the study of Shākya mchog ldan's argumentation theory is important not only for clarifying the diversity of argumentation theories of the Tibetan thinkers, but also for reconsidering the Indian Buddhist theory of argumentation.

10

Abbreviation and References

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NMKh *Nyāyamukha* (Dignāga). The Chinese translation: *Yinming zhengli men lun ben* (trans. Xuanzang). Taishō 1628, vol. 32.

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

PV *Pramāṇavārttika* (Dharmakīrti): Y. Miyasaka ed. "*Pramāṇavārttika-kārikā* (Sanskrit and Tibetan)." *Acta Indologica* 2: 1–206. 1971–72.

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