Clapping hands in sKyid grong?
Logical and contextual aspects of a famous debate narrative

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“The rock of the heretics, as high as the Sumeru, was reduced to dust by the lightning of the thunderbolt of logic issued from the palace of the thunder of omniscient mercy.”

mkhyen brtse’i dbyar skyes khang bzang las // rigs tshul rdo rje’i me char gyis //
mu stegs brag ri rab mtho ba // rdul phran lla bur phyer brlag ste //
(Blo bzangchos kyi rgyal mtshan,
Chos kyi rje sa skya pandita kun dga’ rgyal mtshan gyi
rtogs pa brjod pa dri za’i glu dbyangs)

Abstract
Debate narratives found in biographical and historical materials constitute a promising source for the study of the actual practice of debate both in the Indian and Tibetan traditions. This paper investigates the account of a debate opposing the renown Tibetan Buddhist master Sa skya Pandita Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1182–1251) to a group of Indian non-Buddhist teachers based on the biography composed by one of Sa skya Pandita’s disciples, lhO pa kun mkhyen. The argumentative statements attributed to Sa skya Pandita are analyzed from a rhetorical and a logical point of view — the paper traces a plausible source for the core argument in the Madhyamakāra-dākaṭārikā and Tarkajolda — and evaluated in view of Sa skya Pandita’s theory of argumentation. In the conclusion, we discuss the likelihood that lhO pa’s narrative relates a historical event, and to what extent his account can be deemed representative of face-to-face debate in thirteenth-century Tibet.

1. Introduction
Debating is a conspicuous aspect of Tibetan Buddhist scholarly practices and handclapping undoubtedly belongs, in Western perception, to the trademarks of Tibetan monasticism. While the religious and institutional background, as well as the form and the function of modern Tibetan debate have been the object of several studies,¹ the origin and development of such a practice, whether used in actual philosophical confrontation or for didactic purposes, remains to be clarified.

Debate has played an important role in Tibetan Buddhism since the early days of the Earlier Diffusion (snga dar). Indian visiting scholars certainly were influential in this regard. It is revealing for instance that Sāntarakṣita,

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who visited Tibet twice under the reign of King Khri srng lde btsan, is
depicted in the *dBa’ bzhab* as incarnating the “logical force” in the establish-
ment of Buddhism, working in pair with Padmasambhava’s “magical” one.2
As for his student Kamalaśīla, his involvement in the Great Debate of bSam
yas speaks for itself. In addition to the direct influence exerted by such living
examples of Indian scholarship, Tibetan scholars became acquainted with
the rules of debate propounded by Indian Buddhist thinkers as Dharmakīrī’s
*Vādanyāga* and its commentary by Śāntarakṣīta were translated into
Tibetan.3 As Tibetan epistemological scholarship significantly developed in
the early centuries of the Later Diffusion (*phyi ḏar*), notably around the mon-
stastery of gŚang phu Ne’u thog, Tibetan scholars were elaborating theories
of argumentation, in particular in connection with Dharmakīrī’s discussion of
“inference-for-others” (*parāthānumāna, gzhan don rjes dpog*) in his
*Pramāṇavimśaṭya.* They appear to have also been active in its applied aspect,
debate. One learns for instance from Śākya mchog ldan that Phya pa Chos
kyi seng ge (1109–1169), whose name is closely associated in the Tibetan
tradition with the development of an indigenous epistemological system and
the elaboration of new methods of argumentation, entered a debate on
Madhyamaka interpretation with the visiting Kāśmirī scholar Jayānanda,
with the translator Khu mdo sde ‘bar acting as an intermediate between the
two.4 The *Blue Annals* mention scholars going on “debating tours” (*rtsod pa’i
grwa skor*).5 Also, the practice of using debate for pedagogical purpose, as a
tool for studying, had developed by the thirteenth century.6

The epistemological treatises by gŚang phu authors that have become available
to us in recent years include, as mentioned, considerable discussion on argumentation. They do not, however, shed much light on the

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2 In the *dBa’ bzhab*, Śāntarakṣīta addresses King Khri srng lde btsan in the following terms at the time of his second visit: “We will compete against all the Tibetan non-Buddhists (*mtṣogs*); in logic (*gtan tshigs*) they will have to vie with me, in magic they will have to vie with the mantras from U rgyan, Padmasambhava” (folio 12a3–4: *bdyod rgyun* *mtṣogs kun dang gtsan tshigs ni bdog dang ’dran la; rdzu phred ni u rgyan* *’gri> snags mkhan pad ma san bha ba dang ’dran te ...* Transl. mine; for Wangdu and Diemberger’s translation see *dBa’ bzhab* p. 55).

3 The *Vādanyāga* is already included among the “translations in progress” in the IHan ka kar catalogue. It was translated and revised around the middle of the eleventh century, while Śāntarakṣīta’s commentary was translated around 1100. Sa skya Paṇḍita and Rigs pa’i ral gri mention a second commentary, by Svākaranandana, which would have entered Tibetan thanks to Dānakūla (see Hugon forthcoming). On the influence of the *Vādanyāga* on Tibetan argumentation theories in the early centuries of the Later Diffusion, see ibid. Previous works on rdo rje, by Vasubandhu and Dignāgā, were not translated into Tibetan.

4 See *dBu ma’i byung tshul* 13b5–6: *phya pa dbu ma rang rgyud la bshad rgyan byed pa’i dus su / zla ba’i zhab s kyi brya’g dzin pa’i la dza ya a nanta zhes pa zhig bod du byon / dbu ma la ’jug pa’i ’gre bshad mznad / de’i dus su phya pas bras dons brtsad cing ...* (cf. Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 37 n. 68) and *dBu ma rgya mtsho, le’u gnyis pa, pha 53b2–4: thog mar slob dpon phya pa’i drung du rang rgyud kyi tshul la legs par shyangs pa dag go // de’i tse kha che’i pa’i la dza ya a nanda / bod du byon nas ... zla ba’i gzhung legs gsal bar mznad pa yi n la / de’i tse slob dpon phya pa dang / kha che a nanda gnyis klu lo tshla ba bar du brya’g pa’i rtsod pa byas pas phya pa rgyal lo zhes bya ba’i gham du bya ba dag kyang sngun ...* (cf. van der Kuijp 1993b: 193). Śākya mchog ldan provides in the following folios a summarized account of Phya pa’i arguments involving nine points (three threefold arguments).

5 See Hugon forthcoming, n. 2.

6 It is criticized by Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182–1251); see notably *mkhas ’jug* ad III.15 and ad III.34.
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question of actual debating practices in this early period. Indeed, the models of argumentation presented in these works are prescriptive rather than descriptive and their authors adopt a perspective on debate that concentrates on argumentative statements rather than on debate as a global event. One can, at most, reconstruct for some of them the sequence that these statements are supposed to follow.

It is thus necessary to turn to different sources in order to satisfy our curiosity regarding the more practical aspects involved in face-to-face debates in the early centuries of the Later Diffusion. In this regard, I was greatly inspired by two recent studies addressing this question with regard to India. The first, by Johannes Bronkhorst (Bronkhorst 2007), examines the modes of debate in classical and medieval India by considering a twelfth-century inscription, found near Sravana Belgola, that makes references to situations of debate involving patriarchs of the Digambara branch of Jainism. The second is an essay by José Cabezón (Cabezón 2008) based on Tibetan and Chinese debate narratives involving great Indian Buddhist thinkers. These two studies demonstrate how factual information about actual debating practices can be collected from these sources, but also, especially for the material studied by Cabezón, the heavy symbolism and conventions that lay behind narrative structures. As Cabezón points out, the account of arguments in historical and hagiographical literature, in epics and in drama, have received little scholarly attention, but are likely to constitute, when considered with due care, a promising source of information for us to gain some sense of the circumstances and processes of actual debates.

Following these scholars’ lead, I examine in the present paper the narrative of a debate involving a Tibetan master, who is no other than the famous Sa skya Pandita Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1182–1251), alias Sa paṅ. The debate between Sa skya Pandita and non-Buddhist masters that allegedly took place in sKyid grong constitutes an especially interesting case of study. First, it is a very rare instance of a debate opposing a Tibetan thinker to a non-Buddhist scholar at the time of the Later Diffusion — actually the only one I could find so far. Even though non-Buddhist thinkers remained opponents of choice in Tibetan literature, by the time of the Later Diffusion, there must have been few occasions for Tibetan Buddhists to debate with Indian non-Buddhists, and virtually none in Tibet proper. Secondly, Sa paṅ ascribes to debating an important place in Buddhist scholarship and identifies it, along with composition (rtsom) and exposition (’chad), as an essential competence that scholars should master. The third section of his mKhas ’jug, where he deals with this ideal program, is accordingly devoted to the question of correct debating, and includes elaborate discussions concerning the proper way to debate with Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist opponents. We thus have here an ideal opportunity to

7 On the argumentation theories of these early logicians see Hugon forthcoming.
8 According to Glo bo mkhan chen, this is a unique case (mKhas ’jug rnam bshad 24a4–5; nges na bo kyi panyi las phyi rol mu sogs byed kyi rgol ba bzlog pa ni / chos rje ’di kho nar zad do //). The Deb sugon (285–286) relates a debate between Buddhists and Indian non-Buddhists when listing the “four wonderful spectacles” related in the life story of Lha rje zla ba’i’od zer (1123–1182). But it is not Lha rje; but his teacher Jayasena who gets involved in this debate opposing, in Nepal, for the New Year festival, 2000 jatila (ral pa can) and 2000 Buddhist panditas and yogins. Chogy Trichen Rinpoche’s modern biographical account (Chogy 1983: 18) claims that “Sakya Pandita was the first Tibetan to defeat Indian scholars in debate.”
examine a theoretician in action by assessing the kind of argumentative strategy that is attributed to him by the authors of the various sources that mention the event. By the concluding section, we will discuss the plausibility of the encounter itself and evaluate to what extent the narrative considered gives us an accurate picture of an actual debate or of a debate as it could have taken place in these days.

2. The sKyid grong debate – sources and scenarios

2.1 Sources

Sa pan’s debate against a group of Indian non-Buddhist opponents is quite famous and provides a popular motif in pictorial representations of Sa pan.9 Accounts of the debate — varying from a few sentences to several folios — occur in various types of sources that deal with Sa skyā Paṇḍita’s life: rnam thar by his students (contemporaneous and posthumous), biographies by authors of later generations, genealogical and religious histories, political and general histories, as well as biographical sketches found in commentaries on his works.10 The earliest extant material includes biographies by IHo pa kun mkhyen Rin chen dpal and Zhang rgyal ba dpal, that cover Sa pan’s life up to his departure to Ködan’s court, and a posthumous account authored, according to its colophon, by Yar klungs pa Grags pa rgyal mtshan.11 Unfortunately, a number of other early biographies by Sa pan’s

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9 For an example, see http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm/356.html.
10 The main accessible accounts of Sa pan’s life have been listed by Jackson (1987: 23). For a list of the sources used in this paper, see the references preceded by a star in the bibliography.
11 Mekata (2009) contests this attribution and suggests that the Yar klungs rnam thar ‘bring was instead composed by Yar klungs pa Byang chub rgyal mtshan. Her conclusion is based on the study of an anonymous biography (terminus ad quem fourteenth century) that cites repeatedly from two works identified respectively as the “rNam thar rgyas pa” and the “rNam thar bsdus pa” in the text. Mekata shows in her paper that the quotations from the first are literally identical to the text of the Yar klungs rnam thar ‘bring published in the Lam ‘bras slob bshad, and suggests that the “rNam thar rgyas pa” or “rNam thar tshigs bcad ma rgyas pa” as it is called in the colophon) is none other than the Yar klungs rnam thar ‘bring. The colophon of the manuscript studied by Mekata attributes the “rNam thar tshigs bcad ma rgyas pa” to Yar lung pa Byang chub rgyal mtshan. Mekata shows that the second text cited in this anonymous biography, identified as the “rNam thar bsdus pa,” is the Chos kyi rje sa skyā paṇḍita chen po ’i rnam par thar pa in dro bsdus pa, or Chos rgyal ma. The colophon of the manuscript states that the biography is “extensive compared to the rNam thar tshigs bcad ma composed Yar lung pa Grags pa.” Mekata identifies this “rNam thar tshigs bcad ma” with the short title “rNam thar bsdus pa” used in the text, and on this basis ascribes to Yar klungs pa Grags pa rgyal mtshan the authorship of the Chos rgyal ma. Mang thos and gSang rgyas phun tshogs Ngor chen attribute a “rNam thar tshigs bcad ma rgyas pa” to Byang chub rgyal mtshan and a “rNam thar bsdus pa” to Grags pa rgyal mtshan, but some evidence would be needed in addition to the similarity of terminology to establish conclusively that, by these descriptions, they mean, respectively, the Yar klungs rnam thar ‘bring and the Chos rgyal ma. Zhu chen attributes the “Chos rgyal ma chung” to Yar klungs pa Byang chub rgyal mtshan. On the attributions to the two Yar klungs pa, see also Jackson 1987: 33, n. 5 and 6. As Mrs Mekata kindly informed me, there is no mention of the debate in the anonymous biography she studied. The Chos rgyal ma praises Sa pan for his capacities as a logician but without a specific mention of the debate in sKyid grong (Chos rgyal ma 71.7–10: tseg ge ngan pa’i rgyal ba thams cad byed // rlongs pas khangs pa’i rtog ge zil gyis gnon // mkbas pa’i grags pas sa steng thams cad khyab // ’jigs bral khyad la spyl bos phyag
students are lost, such as a biography by 'U yug pa Rigs pa’i seng ge, as well as biographies by Bi ji Rin chen grags, Dam pa Kun dga’ grags and Barston rDo rje rgyal mthshan that were known to the author of the gSung sgron ma, a biography of Sa pan included in the collected works of Ngog chen Kun dga’ bzang po (1382–1456).

Apart from works that include an account of Sa pan’s life, references to this debate are also found in texts related to the region the debate took place, namely skYid grong.

There is, in addition, a versified composition found among Sa pan’s works that bears the title “Verses of the subduing of the six non-Buddhist teachers” (Mu stegs kyi ston pa drug btul ba’i tshigs bcad). These verses themselves occur in several biographies (see below 3.V). Most of the sources that only mention the event in a very brief way actually do not give more information than what is found in the colophon of this work.

*tshal lo //*. ‘Phags pa’s biography of Sa pan does not mention the debate either. Another early account by dMar ston Chos kyi rgyal po (ca. 1198–1259), also a student of Sa pan, is found along that of other Lam ‘bras masters in his Zhig mo rdzod. dMar ston’s account covers Sa pan’s life from his birth up to his studies with Spyi bo lhas pa following his ordination. It ends on the mention of Sa pan’s mastering of the five sciences and of the three scholarly competences of the wise. It does not mention a debate in skYid grong.

See Jackson 1987: 18, who indicates that this biography is mentioned in the A mdo chos byung of dKon mchog bstan pa seng ge.

The latter’s biography also appears to have been known by the author of the biography studied in Mekata 2009, for in the colophon, the author states that his biography is smaller than the one by ‘Bri ‘tshams pa rin chen dpal (=IHo pa kun mkhyen) and “Bi ci rin chen grags pa.”

See Mekata 2006 for a study of this biography, and Jackson 1987: 19 and Mekata 2006: 63–64 on the attribution of authorship to Ngog chen. Mekata questions this attribution, pointing out that in his lhug yig rgya mtha’, Ngog chen refers to Grags pa rgyal mthshan’s Bla ma rgyud pa bod kyi lo rgyis, Bla ma dam pa’s Bla ma brgyud rnam that, and a Bla ma brgyud pa’i rnam thar zhig mtho of unidentified authorship, but does not mention the seven biographical works listed in the colophon of the gSung sgron ma. The gSung sgron ma is sometimes attributed to ‘Phags pa, as is the case for instance in the list of hagiographies of Lam ‘bras teachers compiled by Lama Cheodak T. Yuthok (http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/tib/sakya-la.htm). The account of the debate found in the gSung sgron ma repeats the one from the biography by Zhang rgyal ba dpal (Zhang rnam thar), a work also mentioned in its colophon.

See notably the texts mentioned in n. 38.

The Mu stegs tshigs bcad consists of 12 lines of 15 syllables, and of 8 lines of 8 syllables, followed by a colophon in prosa (see appendix 2). The verses themselves are non-specific; they represent a colorful description of Indian representatives of various non-Buddhist currents, and claim the superiority of the Buddhist teaching and that of Sa pan as a subduer of non-Buddhist teachers. It is the colophon that specifies: “In the center of Tshong dus”, at a place near the temple of the Äryavati in skYid grong, Mang yul, the six non-Buddhist teachers, ‘Phrog byed dga’ ba, etc., having been vanquished, converted to Buddhism [lit.: entered into the Buddha’s teaching]; this was composed at the time of their ordination.” Mu stegs tshigs bcad 220b2–3: mang yul skyid grong ‘phags pa wa ti’i gtsug lag khang dang nye ba’i sat’i cha / tshong dus kyi dBus su / ‘phrog byed dga’ ba la sogs pa / mu stegs kyi ston pa drug tham par byas nas / sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la bcug ste / rab tu byung ba’i dus su sbyar ba’o ///.

*I take “Tshong dus” to be an orthographic variant of Tshong ’dus, that is, a toponym. Tucci translates literally “in the middle of the market place” (Tucci 1949: 680 n. 36). They are, in the sources consulted, the accounts by Zhang rgyal ba dpal (Zhang rnam thar), sTag tshang rDo grong (’Gon bo viug tshang). Ngog chen Kun dga’ bzang po (gSung sgron ma, which repeats the account of Zhang rnam thar), sTag tshang Lo tsa ba, Sangs rgyas phun tshogs Ngog chen (Ngog chos byung), Zhu chen (IdDe mig). Thu’u bkwan Chos kyi ngyi ma (Grub mtha’ shel gyi me long). Sákya mchog ldan’s brief account (Chos ’khor rnam gzhag),
2.2 Place and time

The sources agree on the location of the debate, sKyid grong,18 and some locate it more precisely in the village of Tshong ’dus (sometimes spelled Tshong dus), in Mang yul, in the vicinity of the Áryavatí temple.19 sKyid grong (the name designates a district as well as a town) is situated near the present border of Nepal, about 200km north of Kathmandu (ca. 28°, 85°). Invaded by the kingdom of Ya rtse (south-west of sPu rang) in the late 30s of the thirteenth century,20 in 1267 it became part of the Mang yul gung thang kingdom, which was under Sa skya pa jurisdiction during the Sa skya-Yuan rule of Tibet.21 Since 1960, sKyid grong (吉隆) has been included in the gZhis ka rtse prefecture of the Tibet Autonomous Region. The Áryavatí temple, or Phags pa lha khang, was, until 1959, the home of the Áryavatí bzang po figure, one of the four or five “brothers Árya-Ávalokkiteśvara,” which is nowadays kept in Dharamsala.22

The event precedes Sa pañ’s departure to Kódan’s court in 1244. A few biographers specify a date for it: Sa pañ’s 51st year (i.e., 1232) according to Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen (1700–1769?); Sa pañ’s 59th year (i.e., 1240) according to Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho (1523–1594/96) and Sangs rgyas phun tshogs Ngor chen (1649–1705).23 That Sa pañ visited sKyid grong is confirmed by local sources that mention the members of local families who received teachings from him; some of these sources also mention Sa pañ’s victory over a non-Buddhist but do not appear to provide a date for it.24

on the other hand, provides original details not found elsewhere. He states for instance that the debate was held in Sanskrit (see n. 133).

18 Spelt “sKyid rong” by lHo pa kun mkhyen (lHo nEt mar thar 53a6), “sKyi grong” by Bla ma dam pa (Blam ba brgyud nEt mar thar A 41a4; B 36b6), “Kyi grong” by Bo dong Pan chen (Lam bras lo rgyus 70b6), and “Khryi rong” by sTag tshang rdzong pa dpal ’byor bzang po (rgya bod yig tshang 323.3). Sakyi mchod ldan (Chos ’khor nEt mar gzha 5b4) locates the event in “sKyid pa’i grong khyer” (“the town of happy people”). According to Vitali (2007: 287, n. 3), the name sKyid grong seems to be an abridgement of “sKyid pa’i grong khyer,” or of “sKyid mi grong bdun” (“the seven villages of happy people”).

19 These four indications pertaining to the location of the debate occur together in the early biography of lHo pa kun mkhyen and in the “Verses of the subduing of the non-Buddhist teachers.” Some later sources mention only the temple (bsTan rtis, Ngor chos ’byang), some only sKyid grong (Blam ba brgyud nEt mar thar, sDom gsum legs bshad, rGya bod yig tshang, sTag tshang gzhang rabs, Grub mtha’ shel gyi me long).

20 Vitali (2003: 74) situates the first war between the Ya rtse and Gung thang kingdoms between 1235 and 1239. According to Everding (2000: 373–374), the invasion of the Ya rtse troup in Gung thang must be dated with 1238 as terminus post quem.

21 On the early history of sKyid grong, see Everding 2000 on the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century and the chronology of mNga’ ris skor gsum from the tenth to the fifteenth century in Vitali 2003. Vitali 2007 deals with the history of two noble families of sKyid grong.


23 Mang thos’s account is found in bsTan rtis 304,11–16. Cf. Everding 2000: 354, n. 903. Sangs rgyas phun tshogs’s account (Ngor chos ’byang 316,6–7) is literally identical to it. Zhu chen’s account (lDe ngt 41b3–6) is possibly based on the one by Sang rgyas phun tshogs, but it is somewhat more developed, and proposes a different date for the event.

24 See Vitali 2007: 301–302. Vitali cites from the rTen gsum gzheungs pa’i dkar chag, a text from the 17th century that mentions the debate in sKyid grong with Sa pañ’s meeting with Bla chen Nyi ma, also known as “Jam dpal gling pa.” The debate is mentioned also in the Byams pa phun tshogs kyi nEt mar thar, in connection with Sa pañ’s invitation to gNas Byang chub gling bya Khang ston ’Od zer rgyal mtshan and his brother
It remains a moot point whether the debate coincided with the visit to skYid grong of Sa pan’s nephew, ’Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280). According to Zhu chen, who situates the debate in 1232, ’Phags pa accompanied his uncle to skYid grong in his fourth year, i.e., in 1238; according to Mang thos, ’Phags pa came with him in his sixth year, i.e., in 1240. Everding argues in favor of the coincidence of ’Phags pa’s visit with the debate on the basis of Mang thos’s account, but rejects the date of 1240 and instead proposes the year 1238 in view of historical sources that mention the meeting of Sa pan with rGyal ba Yang dgon pa on his way to Khab Gung thang in 1237. The debate would thus have happened before the invasion of the Ya rtse troup in Gung thang, which Everding situates in 1238 or 1239.

2.3 Actors

The sources also agree on the identity of Sa pan’s opponent: a group of six non-Buddhist teachers, one of whom is identified by name as ’Phrog byed dga’ bo or ’Phrog byed dga’ ba. None of the Tibetan sources I consulted suggest a Sanskrit equivalent, but “Harinanda is a likely reconstruction, often met with in modern secondary literature.”

According to some versions, a few disciples of Sa pan — including ’U yug pa Rigs pa’i seng ge — were also present at this occasion. The latter’s biography of Sa pan is unfortunately not extant. Considering the inglorious role attributed to him in the versions that mention his presence at skYid grong (’U yug pa and others are said to flee as the debate becomes heated), it would have been interesting to hear his side of the story.
2.4 Scenarios

While being remarkably consistent regarding the location of the event and the identification of the opponents, the sources at our disposal display, on the other hand, a range of distinct scenarios in the narration of the debate and of its outcome. Sources of later date show a combination of elements that can, for the most part, be traced back to the earliest accounts from the thirteenth century. The sources that give a substantial account of the event can be distinguished in two groups based on the narrative lines they follow:

1. A first type of scenario, which will be fleshed out in the next section, finds its earliest portrayal in the biography composed by IHo pa kun mkhyen. IHo pa’s narrative is repeated with a few changes by Bla ma dam pa bṣod nams rgyal mtshan (1312–1375) when dealing with Sa pan’s life in a series of lives of Lam ’bras teachers, and Bla ma dam pa’s version is repeated in a work of the same type included in the collected works of Bo dong Pan chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451). IHo pa’s version also appears to be the source of the biographical accounts by sPos khang pa Rin chen rgyal mtshan (fl. early 15th c.) and Go rams pa bṣod nams seng ge (1429–1489) (in an abbreviated version for the latter) that are included in these authors’ respective commentaries on Sa pan’s sDom gsam rab dbyer. Glo bo mkhan chen’s (1456–1532) account in his commentary on the mKhas ’jug (mKhas ’jug rnam bshad 22a3–24a4) constitutes an almost literal repetition of IHo pa’s text. Glo bo mkhan chen’s account is, in turn, repeated quasi verbatim by A mes zhab sNgag dbang kun dga’ bsdod nams (1597–1659) in his Sa skya chronicles (A mes gstdung rabs 108–110). Many elements of this first scenario are also reflected in the lengthy versified biography by Rin spungs pa Ngag dbang ’jig rten dbang phyug grags pa/’jigs med grags pa (1542–1625?) composed in 1579, whose author seems to have known also the second scenario.22

2. The second type of scenario is found at the earliest in the versified biography by Yar klungs pa (Grags pa rgyal mtshan?) (Yar klungs rnam thar ’bring), but Yar klungs pa’s account is to my opinion observably a summarized version of a more elaborate one.23 Characteristic of this alternative

29 See Bla ma bgruyud rnam thar A 41a2–b5, B 36b4–37a6, and Lam ’bras lo rgyus 70b3–71b4. In what follows, I will speak of the second work as a work by Bo dong even though its author is not identified (see Jackson 1987: 20).
30 See sDom gsam legs bshad 9b4–11a3 and sDom gsam dgongs gsal 16a(‘og ma)6–17a4.
31 See the appendix 1 for an edition of the text recording the variants in these versions.
32 ’jam dbyangs legs lam 101b5ff. This manuscript includes many small explanatory notes that often refer to a “rab riog gi rgyan,” possibly an earlier work used as a source by the author.
33 On the authorship of this work, see the discussion in n. 11 above. The Lam ’bras slob bshad introduces this seven-folio text as a “medium biography” (rnam par thar pa ’bring po). The colophon, which is maybe not from the hand of the author (see Jackson 1987: 33, n. 6), also specifies that it is a version of medium length (bstda pa bar pa). Jackson (ibid.) notes that Sangs rgyas phun tshogs credits Yar klungs pa Grags pa rgyal mtshan with a short version (bsdus pa), but according to Mekata 2009, this would refer to the rNam par thar pa mdor bsdus pa or Chos rgyal ma, not to the rNam par thar pa ’bring po. Mekata argues that in spite of the term “’bring po” that suggests the existence of another, lost work of greater length, the fact that all the citations whose source is identified as “rNam thar rgyas pa” in the anonymous manuscript she studied are found in the Yar klungs rnam thar ’bring speaks against the existence of a larger version. This is, to my opinion, not a conclusive argument. On the one hand, the description “rNam thar rgyas pa” may hint to the relative size of the work (in comparison with the “rNam thar bsdus pa”) rather than to its original title. Also, one must leave open the option that there is indeed a larger version, but that it does not differ from the medium one as far as the passages cited in the anonymous manuscript are
Clapping hands in sKyid grong?

scenario are (i) the length of the debate, which is said to last thirteen days, twelve weeks during which the non-Buddhist debaters prevail, followed by a reversal on the thirteenth day; (ii) supernatural elements, in particular the intervention of Maṅjūśrī to support Sa pa; (iii) the gory death of ‘Phrog byed dga’ bo when, following his defeat and conversion, he attempts to follow Sa pa into Tibet. All or some of these elements are found also in the versified account by the First Pan chen Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570–1662), in the shorter prose version by the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) in his Annals of Tibet, as well as in ‘Jigs med nam mkha’’s (1768–1822) Hor chos ‘byung. This scenario, in particular the gruesome death of ‘Phrog byed dga’ bo, is also reflected in works associated not with Sa pa, but with the Jo bo of sKyid grong. The modern Sa skya pa compilation by Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa (Amipa 1987) also favors this second type of scenario.

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34 While Yar klungs pa merely states that “‘Phrog byed dga’ ba died in pain” (Yar klungs rnam thar ’bring 34b4: ‘phrog byed dga’ ba mngag ngsang zhab su shi), the Fifth Dalai Lama provides the key-phrase: “he spat blood from his mouth and died” (Dalai lama glu dbang: ’kha nas khrong skya’gs te shi ba). His death was, according to these sources, caused by the bstan ma, protector divinities of the Buddhist teaching acting on the behalf of Padma-sambhava. A triggering factor was, according to the First Pan chen and the Fifth Dalai Lama’s version, that ‘Phrog byed dga’ ba had not removed his non-Buddhist emblems.

In his Pan chen glu dbang: Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan adds the intervention of Phrin las lha mo (probably Ttara, also mentioned in Rin spungs pa’s ’jam dbang: legs lam 105b1: mngag skye ’kyi la mngag sgron ma). He states that ‘Phrog byed dga’ ba could not proceed into Tibet and explains why, but does not portray his death.

This episode from the Dalai lama glu dbang is translated in Tucci 1949: 626. The Fifth Dalai Lama mentions the intervention of the master ‘Da’ phyar: (;+mDar/Dar/Dar phyar ba Rin chen bzang po) to bring back ‘Phrog byed dga’ bo as he flies off in the air. The presence of this siddha in the region of Mang yul is mentioned by Brag dbar rta so s’rul sku; see Ehrhard 2004: 284, and pp. 416–417 n. 184 for further references. ’Da’ phyar is also mentioned by the third Pan chen Bla ma Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780) in his list of the previous incarnation of Emperor Qianlong in the ’Khrons rabs gsal ‘debs (see Uspensky 2002: 220 and 224–225). See also Tucci 1949: 680, n. 36.

35 The Hor chos ’chung (76,11–77,11; transl. in Huth 1896: 123–124) includes the intervention of Maṅjūṣṭhapa and of the siddha ’Dar phyar, as well as ‘Phrog byed dga’ ba’s claim that Maṅjūṣṭhapa was the one responsible for his defeat; the wording of this claim is identical to that in Yar klungs pa’s Yar klungs rnam thar ’bring, repeated with a few minor variants in Pan chen glu dbang. It does not mention ‘Phrog byed dga’ ba’s death.

36 The death of ‘Phrog byed dga’ bo on the model of the Fifth Dalai Lama’s account is recounted for instance in the Grub pa’i gnas chen brag dkar rta so’i gnas dang gdan rabs bla ma brgyud pavi t’o rgyu s mhos ldan dud pavi gsal ssel drang song dga’ ba’i dal gsum composed in 1816 by Chos kyi dbang phyug Brag dkar rta so s’rul sku (1775–1837) (the author of the rNam thar of the Jo bo of sKyid grong). The relevant passage is quoted and translated by Ehrhard (2004: 420, n. 193), who also mentions a parallel formulation occurring in the Bya bral ba chos kyi dbang phyug gi ra’ng ‘tshang lling par brjod pa’ khrul snang sgyu ma’i rol rtseg composed in 1836 by the same author.

37 Amipa 1987 mentions the intervention of Maṅjūṣṭhapa, ‘Phrog byed dga’ ba’s claim that Maṅjūṣṭhapa was the one responsible for his defeat and his flight into the air, but does not allude to his death. Amipa mentions the existence in the lhA chen temple of a statue of Maṅjūṣṭhapa as he appeared during the debate (“Maṅjuṣṭhi Vainqueur en Controverses”). Another modern Sa skya pa work by Choṣag Trichen Rinpoche (1983: 18) keeps, on the other hand, to a mere succinct account mentioning that “Sakya Pandita silenced each of them in turn through his skill in dialectical logic based on the three Pramanas.”
The present paper concentrates on the scenario presented in the earliest available biography of Sa skyā Pandita, that by IHo pa Kun mkhyen Rin chen dpal. It is indeed the most relevant for our present purpose insofar as it provides an explicit account of a verbal exchange between the two parties, an account that narrates what that for a scenario involving supernatural events commonly leave out.

IHo pa, who was born in the twelfth or thirteenth century, has been a student of Sa skyā Pandita, but also of Śākyasrijadhra, Khro phu lo tsā ba Byams pa dpal, and bKa’ gdam pa masters such as ’Brom gzhon nu blo gros. 40 He seems to have been particularly active in the field of epistemology: Glo bo mkhan chen lists him as one of the “commentators of the purport” (don gyi ’grel byed) of the Tshad ma rigs gter and author of a work entitled sDe bdun gsal ba’i rgyan. 41 He also mentions his views on several topics in his own commentary on the Rigs gter. 42 Śākyā mchog ldan indicates for his part that IHo pa was well-known among Sa paṅ’s direct students who specialized in the Pramāṇavārttika. 43

IHo pa’s biography of Sa skyā Pandita entitled dPal ldan sa skyā pandita’i rnam thar (hereafter: IHo rnam thar) has been published as part of a collection of biographies of the masters included in the Sa skyā pa lineage of Lam ‘bras teaching. It was composed while Sa paṅ was still alive, before his departure for Kōdan’s court in 1244, and after the debate, which, as discussed above, is probably to be situated between 1232 and 1240, possibly in 1238. IHo pa’s text ends with brief allusion to a meeting with Sa paṅ while the latter is residing at the hermitage (dben gnas) of dGa’ ldan, in dBus. 44 Even though IHo pa might not have been an eye-witness to the debate, his narrative provides us with a version that is close in time to the event and by someone who was close to Sa paṅ. One cannot assume that Sa paṅ read and approved IHo pa’s biography based on the allusion to their encounter in dBus, although the very allusion might well constitute an attempt at providing authenticity to the text by suggesting that he did.

The sKyid grong debate is introduced towards the end of IHo pa’s biography (53b4–54a3), after the account of Sa paṅ’s studies. It follows a

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40 Information from TBRC (ref. P6145).
41 Cf. van der Kuip 1986: 54. This mention is found in gSal byed 298,23–24: ... kun mkhyen lho pa sde bdun gsal ba ste // don gyi ’grel byed rnam byung rnam gsam byung //’. The full title of IHo pa’s work, sDe bdun gsal ba’i rgyan, is mentioned for instance in Rigs gter ngyi ma 256,7–8. According to van der Kuip (1986: 55), this work could have been, rather than a commentary on the Rigs gter, an independent work of epistemology along the same line.
42 See for instance on the topic of mānasāpraṇāyaśa (Rigs gter ngyi ma 231ff.) in Rigs gter ngyi ma 188–189. Glo bo mkhan chen cites IHo pa kun mkhyen’s views twice on this occasion. The first quote is a literal citation in verses; it is uncertain whether the second quote, in prose, is a citation or a paraphrase. Glo bo mkhan chen also gives a longer citation in verse on the topic of prasanga in Rigs gter ngyi ma 256.
43 Chos ’khor rnam gzhag 7a4–5: te ra pa byams mgon dang / ldong ston shes rab dpal dang / dkar shakya dangs dang shar pa shes rab ’byung gnas / nag po phug pa shes rab ’od zer dang / lho pa kun mkhyen la sogs dangs kyé slob ma rnam ’grel mKhas par mkhyen pa dag yin zhes grags la //.
44 IHo rnam thar 56b6–57a1: chos kyé rgyal po nying du ru’i klungs kyé shod kyé dbyun gnas dga’ ldan na brnugs pa’i tshe / de las byung phug po cu ngang zad cig byrod pa’i sa’i shar / shakya’i dge slong ’bring mthams kyé btsun pa rin chen dpal gYis bsdebs pu’o //’. Jackson (1987: 32, n. 2) transcribes “klungs skyi shod” and states on this basis that “Sa paṅ was staying at sKyid shod dGa’ ldan” (ibid, p. 28). On the reading “du ru’i klungs kyé shod kyé dbyun gnas dga’ ldan,” “Klings kyé shod” could refer to the location of the hermitage in dBus.
summarized presentation of Sa pan’s realizations and is included among the detailed accounts of his accomplishments. The debate of sKyid grong is not included in a chronological list of events, nor is it presented as an explicit illustration of Sa pan’s capacities as a debater. It is rather introduced as an episode in the long-lasting struggle of Buddhism against non-Buddhist opponents of various affiliations. IHo pa enumerates followers of the great sage Kapila (i.e., the Sāṃkhyaś), the rṣi Vyāsa (i.e., the adepts of the Veda), Kāṇḍa (i.e., the Naiyāyikas/Vaiśeṣikas), and adepts of dBang phyug (Īśvara = Śiva), Tshangs pa’ (Brahmā), Nor lhā’i bu (Vāsudeva = Viśṇu), sByin za (Agni), and of the yet unidentified Nyin mo long pa (lit. “sunrise,” i.e., Śūrya? or one of the Āśvin?). These non-Buddhist forces at work, among which Sa pan’s opponents are to be included, are said to be “roaming and wandering about in the southern regions” — that is, as Go rams pa specifies, “India.”

Structure of IHo pa’s narrative

One can distinguish several steps in IHo pa’s narrative: I. a prelude that precedes the actual meeting of the opponents; II. the meeting of the two parties; III. the debate proper; IV. the unfolding of the dispute; V. the citation of the “Verses of the subduing of the six non-Buddhist teachers.”

I. Prelude

The prelude informs us about (i) the identity of Sa pan’s opponents — the six “outsider” teachers (phug rol pa’i ston pa’ drug), ’Throg byed dga’ bo, etc.; (ii) the location of the meeting — Tshong ’dus, in the vicinity of the Āryavatī-temple situated in sKyid (g)rong, Mang yul; and (iii) the circumstances or motivation that led the debaters to be present. No reason is given for Sa pan’s presence in sKyid grong, but the non-Buddhist teachers are said to have come on account of a specific resolution:

Let us go to the Land of Snow, and there we will overturn those who live there who, while pretending to be Buddhist practitioners, have taken up practices involving women (bud med kyi brtul zhung) and adhere to bad views and conducts.

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65 IHo nam thar 53a2–3: de ltar na de dag gis ni bdag cag gi ston pa’ dis gang zhi g mon g du midzad pa’i shes bya’i gnas nyo tsam zhi g brjod nas / da ni de’i phrin las kyi bye brag cung zad smod na /
66 IHo pa situates the place in relation to Bodhgaya (byang chub kyi snying po rdo rje gdan), namely 6 yojanas (dpag thad drug) to the north. This measure should be corrected to the more plausible “60 yojana” (dpag thad lcu dphre drug) found in the parallel versions of Glo bo mkhan chen and A mes zhabs (see appendix 1), as well as in Rin spungs pa’s version (Jam dbang lega lam 102b6–103a1).
67 Glo bo mkhan chen and A mes zhabs read “dge slong,” i.e., “Buddhist monks.”
68 This expression most likely hints at sexual practices. sPos khang pa’s version adds drinking to women (sDom gsum legs bshad 10a3: chang dang bud med kyi brtul zhung can). In an oral commentary on the History of the Sa skya sect (www.ihlib.org/avarch/mediaflowcat/framesets/view_transcript.php?stylesheet=2&transcriptId=1797), the expression “bud med kyi brtul zhung” is glossed as “spyod pa smad du byung” (bud med kyi brtul zhung de ni rbad de bod kyi dpe r na / dge bshes dge slong de gas de gang yin zer na / dper na spyod pa smad du byung ba de / de ni zhi zhing dul ba de’ dras pa /). The expression also occurs in the Vinayakārīkā
In lHo pa’s version (as well as the parallel versions of Bla ma dam pa, Bo dong and sPos khang pa), the addressee of this criticism bears the explicit mark of the plural. There is no suggestion that the non-Buddhist teachers were specifically looking to have a discussion with Sa pan as other biographies are hinting at.

II. The meeting

The meeting of the debaters is described briefly:

When the previously mentioned six teachers arrived, all of them paid homage neither to the Dharma-master [i.e., Sa pan] nor to the image of the Sugata; they took seats, having uttered a very few blessings and praiseworthy verses.

The first encounter takes the form of an informal confrontation in which the opponent’s behavior, i.e., the six teachers’ lack of respect for the image of the Buddha anticipates their subsequent statement that “they have not taken refuge in the Buddha’s teaching” (see below). This depiction of the opponent exhibiting conspicuous pride (an attitude repeatedly attributed to him in the various narratives) may serve a particular function in the context of the narrative: as pointed out by Cabezón (2008: 80), the pride of an opponent is generally a rhetorical sign that he is about to be defeated.

It is not clear whether this first encounter signifies the beginning of a formal debate acknowledged as such by both parties. The events that follow, however, are interpreted as such by the author of the narrative.

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(ACIP TD10165, 129b5: ‘dul ba tshig le’ur byas pa’) in a passage instructing that “one who is seized by desire upon seeing one engaged in a practice involving women, or one who has taken vows and, upon seeing a woman, is seized by desire, should not stay there longer; they should leave as soon as possible” (gang na bral med kyi brtal zhis pa can la mthong nas chags par byed dam! gang na brtal zhis pa can gis bral med la mthong nas chags par byed na der yang yun ring du gnas par ni bya ste // mshur ba kho nor de nas ’gro bar bya’o //).

See appendix 1 for the Tibetan text of this and subsequently translated passages from lHo pa’s biography.

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50 Glo bo mkhan chen and A mes zhabz have “de” instead of “de dag.”

51 Some sources indeed present the coming of the non-Buddhists as a consequence of Sa pan’s reputation in India. sTag tshang Lo ts’a ba (1405—after 1477?) attributes it even more specifically to Sa pan’s criticism of non-Buddhist teachers in the Rigs gter (or more specifically, in the introductory verses), which, according to him, had been translated into Sanskrit (sTag tshang gdung rabs 18b1–2: rigs gter bod skad las rgya skad du bya’gyur te rdo rje gdan du phibs pa’i mchod brjod kyi tshig la ma brsd pa rkya’i byas nas ri’sod du yongs pa; cf. van der Kuijp 1993a: 150). Rin spungs pa, as reported in Rhoton 2002: 15, similarly attributes their coming to the Rigs gter having been translated into Sanskrit by students of Sakyasrigchandra. Cf. ’jam dbyangs legs lam 102a1–3: khyad par pan chen <shā kya shrī> slob ma mchog rnam kyis // rtog ge’i ’khrul <pa> ’jams <par byed sa panu > nyid <khyi> gsun <shad ma> rig pa’i gter <ches bya ba de> // ’chi med <tha>’grong gi yi ger <la tisa na> ’khrugs pa’i ’am bsd pa skyes <bzung po> // ma <rgya gar bya rnam kyis> ba’i rgyan du yuns ring <po’i bar la> ma’zes par byin <ne> //.

In the modern compilation by Amipa (1987: 59), the Rigs gter is said to have been translated in Sanskrit by Sa pan himself.

52 sPos khang pa’s account sets the first meeting in a friendly atmosphere: “As they came to sKyid grong, none of the other Tibetan ‘Three-basket-holders’ (tripitakashatra) felt up to it. It was thus the Dharma-master himself [i.e., Sa pan] who made the opportunity of a debate. They said sincerely to one another “Have you been well? Welcome!” and sat down smiling.” (Tib. text in appendix 1.)
III. The debate proper

One can distinguish three steps in the process of the debate as recounted by lHos pa: [III.1] First, a dialectical exchange whose contents lHos pa makes explicit, which includes a statement by Sa pan’s opponent and a reply by Sa pan. This part of the debate will be dealt with in detail in section 4 below. This explicit argument is followed by two sequences of arguments that are merely suggested:

[III.2] As those [non-Buddhist] teachers were overwhelmed and depressed, it was the occasion for an elaborate speech: he [i.e., Sa pan] refuted and defeated the bad teachers individually, leaving them speechless. [III.3] Then, once more, he removed the filth of the pride of all the bad views.

The first sequence [III.2] is described with terms that relate to a formal debate: refutation (sun phyung) and defeating (pham par mdzad). The second [III.3] does not suggest a dialectical exchange, but rather a one-sided argumentative explanation by Sa pan.

IV. The outcome of the debate

In lHos pa’s text and other biographies that follow this first scenario, the debate ends with the conversion of Sa pan’s opponent, symbolized by the ritual shearing of his clotted hairs (ral pa’i khur bregs nas nyid kyi thad du rab tu byung). The parallel versions of sPos khang pa, Go rams pa, Glo bo mkhan chen and A mes zhabs all add that the hairs were kept in a temple in Sa skya, and were still there at the time of writing (lta da yang yod), but as these authors repeat each other (almost literally in the case of A mes zhabs), this does not guarantee that the later ones had themselves ascertained the presence of the hairs. The same caution applies with regard to similar mentions by the Fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century and in 1818 by ‘Jigs med nam mkha. In the description of a block print representing Sa pan debating with ‘Phrog byed dga’ bo, Jeff Watt — who I assume speaks on the basis of his own experience or of an eye-witness testimony — mentions that “Until 1959, the braid of Harinanda was kept before an image of Manjushri in the Utse Nying Sarma temple in the town of Sakya.”

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53 In sPos khang pa’s version, the Brahmins set forth to establish their scriptures by putting forward whatever logical reasons come to their mind, and Sa pan defeats them with logic, leaving them speechless.
54 lHos rnam thar reads phyung, but all the parallel versions read sun phyung (see appendix 1).
55 sPos khang pa uses the expression tshar bcad (see appendix 1).
56 The cutting of ‘Phrog bye dga’ bo’s hair is omitted in Bo dong’s parallel version (see appendix 1).
57 Das (1882: 20) and Bosson (1969: 4) have it that the head of ‘Phrog byed dga’ bo was tied to the pillar in the great temple of Sa skya.
58 Dalai lama gli dbangso: shi b’i ral pa’i cod pan dpal ldan sa skya’i ka b’i mdzes byed du yod do /
Her choes byung 57,5-11: ral pa rnam sgyal ba’i bsIan pa la bya ba mdzad pa’i suyan grags kyi dril rgya sgrng pa’i rten du / da la yang dpal ldan sa skya’i gtong lag khang gi ka rgyan la yod dol/.
V. Verses composed by Sa skya Panḍita

lHo pa’s narrative ends with the citation of verses that, as mentioned above (see “3.2 Sources”), also constitute an independent work among Sa pan’s writings. The verses cited by lHo pa, as well as Go rams pa, Glo bo mkhan chen and A mes zhabs correspond, with a few shared variants (see the appendix 2), to the ones found in the text of the verses published in the Sa skya bka’ bum.

lHo pa introduces the quotation by saying:

Having thought ‘should there arise any discouragement pertaining to the teaching of this King of the Śākyas, it should be disciplined once more,’ he said the following...

4. The debate

The part of the debate that I will focus on in this section is the verbal exchange that includes a statement by the non-Buddhists and a reply by Sa skya Panḍita.

4.1. The opponent’s statement

The opponent’s statement is presented as follows:

They haughtily declared: ‘Our entire caste started from the guru Brahmā. Until these days we have not relied on the teaching of Gautama, we have not taken refuge in the Three Jewels. We are the perfectly pure breed of the rṣis.’

By this statement, Sa pan’s opponent makes a claim as to (i) a genetic dependence on Brahmā; (ii) rejection, or non-reliance on Buddhism and the Buddha; (iii) the purity of his own lineage. The third claim provides, to some extent, an echo to the main theme of the non-Buddhists’ “motivation

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61 These verses are omitted in Bo dong and sPos khang pa’s parallel versions. They are also not found in biographical accounts that adopt the second type of scenario, an exception being ‘Jigs med nam mkha’ns Hor chos ʰbyang (77.4–7), which cites the first verse (in the variant form of two pādas: rgya mtsho’i gos can rgya mtsho’i mthu/ sa chen ’di na la ha chen po) and the last four pādas. Huth understands the verses to be spoken by ‘Phrog byed dga’ ba.

62 I follow here Glo bo mkhan chen and A mes zhabs’s reading “nged kyi rigs thams cad ni...” Bla ma dam pa and Bo dong read “nged kyi rigs thams cad kyi bla ma...,” namely “our caste started from the universal guru, Brahmā.” The term “rīg” that occurs twice in this statement was translated here by “caste” and “breed.” It could be read, at least in the first case, in the sense of “philosophy,” considering that Sa pan’s answer addresses the worthiness of Brahmā as a teacher. However, I deemed it more likely that the first sentence is referring to the Puranic myth of the origination of the Brahmins’ caste from Brahmā’s mouth.

63 A similar versified account is found in the nram thar by Rin spungs pa (’Jam dbyangs legs lam 1036b–104a2): de nas phrog byed ‘di skad lo // btsan ’byo’i byed po sgyur pu par // srīd pas bsksas ba’i ’kha> tshangs chen las // lhag pa’i skyabs gzhans dmigs su med // <mes po> de nyid nas brtsegs <te> drang srong <gzi> rgyud // gtsang ma’i rigs ’dzin <pa> kho bo cag // <dkor> mchog gsum <gzi> skyabs <gnas> dang gau la ma’i // ring lugs dag la lhos ma myongs <rdo zhes> //.
statement” (see 1) in which they invoked the impure conduct of Tibetan Buddhist practitioners. The second claim expresses a rejection of Buddhism both in terms of refuge and teaching. Combined with the reference to Brahmā in the first claim, one can draw an opposition both in terms of the teacher one should rely on (Śākyamuni Gautama vs. Brahmā) and the teaching to follow. In a nutshell: the pure Brahmins that originated from and rely on Brahmā are opposed to the impure Tibetan Buddhist practitioners who take refuge in the Buddha and follow his teaching.

4.2. Sa paṇ’s argument

Sa paṇ’s reply immediately follows:

At this moment, the Dharma-master [i.e., Sa paṇ] said:

[1] However clean this Brahmā may be, [2] he himself has much respect for [our] teacher; [3] but is he not overcome by slumber due to great mental confusion?

[4] As it is said:
The excellent four-armed one, whose faces are turned in the twelve-halved-sixteen [= four] directions,
Recitarator of the Rgveda, knowing the rituals of [Mantra-]recitation and expiation,
This Brahmā, whose birth-place is the spotless lotus, he, too, slumbers.

[1] I read the beginning of this sentence (ci tshangs pa de nī) as a pun on the word tshangs pa, which is not only the Tibetan name of Brahmā but also an adjective meaning “pure.” The allusion to Brahmā’s (etymologically grounded) purity echoes here the opponent’s claim as to the purity of the Brahmins issued from Brahmā.

[2] I base my understanding of this sentence on the parallel in sPos khang pa’s version: “This Brahmā, he has much respect for our teacher and he took refuge in him.” Episodes of interaction between Brahmā and Śākyamuni that might be relevant to this reference are for instance the gods’ visit to the newborn Śākyamuni, or Brahmā’s request to Śākyamuni, following his

sPos khang pa, who introduces the notion of purity in the first sentence already (“our perfectly pure caste”), repeats it in the last sentence (“is specifically pure”).

I follow here the reading of the stotra in D (see below n. 72), i.e. nges pa instead of nges pa.

The parallel versions only have minor variants. They notably differ in identifying what belongs to the verse cited by Sa paṇ and what is Sa paṇ’s own expression. sPos khang pa does not render the cited verse in a metrical form.

Another possibility is to attribute to the initial “ci” an interjective/interrogative meaning pertaining to the sentence as a whole. Bo dong and sPos khang pa omit the construction with “ci” and simply have “tshangs pa de nī” as the subject.

See also Rin spungs pa’s versified version, which expands on this sentence as follows (‘jam dbyangs legs lham 104a4–5): khyed kyi rnam ’dren <tshangs pa> gdong bzhi pa // nges par thub pa mchog la dud <pa yin le> // des na <tshangs pa> gang gi mgon po cr gyur pa i sangs rgyas de> la // khyed ci ci phyur dud <pa dang> ‘dun <pa> lhod par byed <pa yin nam> //.” “Your spiritual preceptor, the four-faced one <Brahmā>, certainly has faith in the excellent Muni. Thus, why <are you> lacking faith and devotion towards one <this Buddha> who is superior to him <Brahmā>?”
awakening, to teach what he has understood in order to help other people. A famous episode where Brahmā recognizes Sākyamuni’s superiority as a teacher is found in the Kēvaddha Sutta (Dīghanikāya 11). In this text, Brahmā is asked a question about the cessation of fundamental elements. Brahmā boasts about being the creator of the world, but must concede that he is unable to provide an answer and ends up sending the questioner to ask the Buddha.

This part of Sa paṃ’s statement brings to the fore a contrast between the Brahmins’ attitude towards the Buddha (their lack of respect is made clear both in their initial statement [see 4.1] and their behavior at the beginning of the meeting [see II. The meeting]) and Brahmā’s attitude towards the same. One can also, as does Rin spungs pa (see n. 68), identify a faulty lack of “transitivity” on the part of the opponent: the Brahmins show respect and rely on Brahmā; Brahmā himself shows respect and relies on the Buddha; but the opponent refuses to show respect and rely on the Buddha.

[3] The interrogative form of this sentence is merely rhetorical. Indeed, this statement constitutes a central point of Sa paṃ’s refutation of the opponent (the consequence to be drawn from this argument will be discussed below): Brahmā sleeps, and this slumber is caused by a state of mental confusion, or ignorance (gti mug, moha), one of the three basic afflictions (nyon mongs, kleśa). The connection between the two will be inquired into further in section 5 (“The slumber argument”).

[4] A citation is adduced at this point, whose role appears to be the support of the claim [3] that “Brahmā slumbers.” This passage enumerates well-known attributes of Brahmā: the four arms, the four faces (from which he emits the four Vedas), his birth from the lotus (which itself arises from Viṣṇu’s navel). As for Brahmā sleeping, one can trace this feature to accounts, such as the one from the Viṣṇupurāṇa, of the world’s dissolution at the end of a cosmic era (kalpa) or “day of Brahmā,” followed by its recreation after a “night of Brahmā” during which “Brahmā, who is one with Nārāyaṇa, satiate with the demolition of the universe, sleeps upon his serpent-bed — contemplated, the lotus born, by the ascetic inhabitants of the Janaloka.”

One could have imagined that this citation would find its source in Brahanical literature — Sa paṃ would thus be adducing support from the opponent’s own scriptures. One is, however, dealing here with a Buddhist

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68 sPos khang pa adds “da dang” between gti mug che bas and gnyid kyis, meaning that Brahmā is overcome both by mental confusion and slumber, without suggesting a relation between the two.

70 In the biography by Yar klungs pa, the Yar klungs rnam thar ’bring, the enumeration of the “great qualities of Lord Brahmā” is considered to precede the actual debate (Yar klungs rnam thar ’bring 34b2: dbang phyug bshungs pa’i yon tan che ba brjod // de nas bla ma chos rje slob ma’i bsongs // ’phrog byed ral pa can dang rtsod par brtseam //). Yar klungs pa does not provide an account of the argument and adopts a scenario of the second type, where magical events prevail.

71 Viṣṇupurāṇa 1,3.24–25, translation by H. H. Wilson (1840: 25). See also 6.4.44ff, translated ibid. p. 634. I am grateful to Tomohiro Manabe for pointing out the Viṣṇupurāṇa to me as a source for Brahmā’s sleep.
source. The stanza that Sa pañ is citing in this narrative can be identified as a verse from the "Suprataprabhāṭastotram."

The *Suprataprabhāṭastotra*

The "Suprataprabhāṭastotram" (Tib. Rab tu snga bar nam lang pa) is a hymn of praise to the Buddha composed by the King of Kaśmir Šrīharṣadeva (ruling maybe from 1113–1125). It was translated into Tibetan by the Indian pañḍit Rājaśrīñāṇamitra and the Tibetan translator Ke’u brgad yon tan dpal before the middle of the thirteenth century. The author praises the Buddha by way of contrast with a number of figures of the Brahmanical pantheon, such as Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, the sun and moon, etc. These figures are, for the most part, not identified by name (Brahmā is one of the exceptions), but supposedly recognizable by the characteristic features mentioned in the first three pādās of each stanza.

Sixteen verses of the work follow a common model: the description of the non-Buddhist figures ends, in the third pāda (in one case the second pāda) with the mention that the figure in question sleeps (graṇḍ log gyur, graṇḍ log, graṇḍ mthug log par gyur, nyal ba gyur) — in one occasion, is drunk (miyos par gyur). The author of the hymn is obviously well acquainted with the various stories linked to the characters he describes and thus might have in mind specific passages (that I fail to identify) where they are described as sleeping.

The slumber attributed to each Brahmanical deity provides the basis for the contrast introduced in the fourth pāda: there, the Buddha, qualified in each stanza by the feature of the "ten powers" (stobs bcu, daśa[tathāgata] bālāṁ), is praised as being always, as the title of the hymn states, “rab tu

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72 Among the narratives that cite this verse, Bla ma dam pa and Bo dong (who obviously bases himself on Bla ma dam pa’s account) are the only ones who actually provide an identification of its source. The stanza in the canonical version (D239b4–5) reads: rab mchog lag pa brhi pa bcu drug phyed phyed phyeogs kyi gdong pa can // te las dang nges pa’i cho ga shes shing nges brjod rig byed ‘don pa po // dri med padma’i skye gnas tshang pa de yang rab tu graṇḍ log ‘gyur ◦ stobs bcu ngsa’ ba khyed ni rtag tu rab tu snga bar sad pa’o // The citation in PHi pa rnam thar is almost literal, but the omission of the expression “rab tu” in the third pāda makes this line non-metrical. Another difference is the reading “nges pa’i cho ga” shared by biographies that cite this verse, whereas sDe dge has “nges pa’i cho ga.”

73 Both the sDe dge (D1167, bsTod tshogs, Ka 239a4–240b5) and Peking (P2056, 280a1–281b7) versions give the Sanskrit phonetic equivalent “su pra bha ta pra bha ta sth tram.”

74 This hymn is included by bCom ldan Rig pa’i ral gri (1227–1305) in his survey of Buddhist literature that was probably written in the late 1260s or early 1270s (van der Kuip and Schaeffer 2009: 51; this text figures under the No 28.28 in ibid: 247). I am currently unable to present any hypothesis pertaining to its popularity and diffusion.

75 A list of the ten powers of the Tathāgata (daśatathāgata bālāṁ), each of which consists of a special knowledge, is provided in the Mahāyānapattī, No. 120–129: (1) knowledge of what is established and non-established (sthanāsthānajñāna); (2) of the maturation of deeds (karmavipakajñāna); (3) of the various inclinations (nādāhāmukti jñāna); (4) of the world with its various realms (nādāhāthattajñāna); (5) of the highness and lowness of the faculties (indriyāvardhavijñāna); (6) of the path wherever it goes (sarantrāgamantapajñāna); (7) of the affliction, purification, and establishment of meditations (dhyāna), liberation, contemplation (saṃādhi) and equalisations (sarvaḥdyānavimokṣasamādhiḥsamapattisamkheṣa- vyavādāndvajñāthājñāna); (8) of memory of previous lives (pūraṇavivāsasamprajñāna); (9) of death and birth (caturāgajñāna); (10) of the destruction of streams/defilements (āśīl/s) (pavakṣayajñāna). This rendering of the terms is based on the French translation in Renou and Filliozat 1996: 537 (§ 2278). Anacker (1998: 277 n. 12) lists the ten powers as follows (with slight modification of their order): “(1) one knows with insight, as it is, what can be as what can be, and what can’t be as what can’t be, (2) one knows with insight as
snga bar nam langs pa” (in 2 of these 16 verses, as well as in 2 other verses), or “rab tu snga bar sad pa,” (in 13 verses).\textsuperscript{76} As the Sanskrit version is no longer extant, it is not possible to know whether the original version used different terms, or if the translator took the initiative to make variations on the probable Sanskrit expression “suprātāprabhāṭa.” While “sad pa” literally connotes awakening from sleep, “nam langs pa,” which describes the break of dawn, can consequently be associated either with “awakening” or with “radiance.” In view of the contrast intended with “slumber” by the author, the first option is more appropriate. Although the expressions “sad pa” and “nam langs pa” are not lexically connected to “awakening” taken in a spiritual sense, one can surmise that this type of association was intended by the author, in particular if one recalls that the traditional account of the Buddha’s awakening has him attain the perfect enlightenment at dawn, in the last hours of the night.\textsuperscript{77}

[5] One can recognize in the last sentence of Sa pañ’s argument the fourth pāda of the stanza from the “Suprātāprabhāṭastotram” cited in [4]. But in the debate, this statement is not a praise addressed to the Buddha: IHo pa’s text thus has “de ni” where the original hymn has “khoyd ni.”\textsuperscript{78} One can note that the final expression in the fourth pāda of IHo pa’s version is “rab tu minga’ ba nyid du nam langs pa,” which should be corrected to “rab tu snga ba nyid du nam langs pa” (as in the parallel versions), whereas in the version of the hymn preserved in the canon, this particular verse uses the expression “rab tu snga bar sad pa.”

With [4] and [5], Sa pañ brings to the fore a contrast between a slumbering Brahmag and an awakened Buddha.

5. The “slumber argument”

The short statement [3] “Brahmag sleeps due to great mental confusion” constitutes an argument which I will refer to as the “slumber argument.” It is supplemented, in IHo pa’s narrative, with the citation of the stanza from the “Suprātāprabhāṭastotra” [4] together with the adaptation of its last pāda [5].

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\textsuperscript{76} The expression rtag pa nyid du gnyid sad occurs in the last of the sixteen verses (that lacks the expression stobs bcu minga’ ba), and rab tu nam langs in the following one where it is not opposed to “sleep.”

\textsuperscript{77} This is found in various sūtras in the Majjhimanikāya (for instance the Bhagabherava-sutta, Bodhirajakumara-sutta, etc.) and repeated in the Lalitavistāra as well as in Aśvaghosa’s Buddhacarita (xiv.86 “At the moment of the fourth watch when the dawn came up and all that moves or moves not was stilled, the great seer reached the stage which knows no alteration, the sovereign lord the state of omniscience” [transl. in Johnston 1995]). Note that the Buddha is also held to enter parinirvāṇa at dawn (cf. Dīghanikāya, Mahaparinibbana-sutta).

\textsuperscript{78} As this last sentence, although based on the same source as [4], is not a direct quotation, one can understand why other authors distinguish it from the preceding three pādas, adding “shes dang” or “ces pa dang” between [4] and [5] (see appendix 1).
Before we investigate what type of effect may have been intended by these statements, it is worth taking a closer look at statement [3]. There is indeed an Indian source which offers a relevant precedent for the association of slumber and mental confusion in an argument against non-Buddhist opponents: Bhāviveka’s Madhyamakahrdayakārikā (MHK) and its commentary, the Tarkajivāla (TJ), attributed to the same author by most Tibetans.79 Consideration of the place and role of this argument in these texts will help us drawing out a number of implications that are not explicit in the debate narrative under consideration.

5.1 The “slumber argument” in the Madhyamakahrdayakārikā and Tarkajivāla

In the ninth chapter of the Madhyamakahrdayakārikā, commented upon in the corresponding chapter of the Tarkajivāla, Bhāviveka takes up to criticize the Mīmāṃsā.80 When answering to the pūrva-pākṣa stated in MHK 9.11, which presents the “way favored (jūṣṭa) by gods and seers” as being old, good and reasonable (yuktam), Bhāviveka presents a series of arguments that arrive at the ironical conclusion that what is reasonable (yuktam) is, rather, to reject it.81 The first of these arguments, expressed in MHK 9.59, targets specifically

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79 Since the authorship of the Tarkajivāla is of no relevance in the present discussion, I will, for simplicity’s sake, adopt the Tibetan ascription and speak of both MHK and TJ as the works of Bhāviveka. For a detailed discussion of this as yet unsettled issue, see notably Seyfort Ruegg 1990 and Krasser forthcoming.

80 The ninth chapter of the Madhyamakahrdayakārikā, entitled Mīmāṃsāttatvāvayyakavatāra, has been edited in Kawasaki 1976 (together with a translation of the pūrva-pākṣas) and 1987, and translated in Lindner 2001. The commentary thereupon is found in TJ D271a2–228b5 (dpuyod pa can gyi de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa la ’jug pas le’u dgu pa’i rab tu bshed pa brtsam par bya ste). Kawasaki (1974) summarized the pūrva-pākṣas of the Mīmāṃsakas presented in the first 17 verses (commented upon in TJ D271a2–278a1) into seven points: i) the primary importance of sacrificial rites for deliverance; ii) the Vedas are the exclusive authority for the rites prescribed in the śastra; iii) the Vedas are not a human production (apurussakartiṣṭa), and were revealed by the ancient seers and uninterruptedly transmitted, hence they are free from error; iv) the eternal validity of the Vedas is based on the eternality of the word; v) the Vedas give access to knowledge of matters that are beyond human perception and cannot be inferred; vi) Scriptures are an independent means of knowledge that is never infirmed by reasoning; vii) there is no omniscient being – human beings are not free from error and cannot know suprasensorial matter.

81 MHK 9.11 reads: “This old, good and reasonable way, favored by the gods and the seers, [while] accepted by the wise, this threefold [way] is rejected by women and śūdras who are alien to the contents of the Vedas.” (dvārasajñātāṃ śeṣeśaṃ purāṇam vartma sābhāvan / vedāntasvaye śvetādhirājan yuktam yat tvajjate trāyat/). As noted by Krasser (forthcoming), five arguments, presented in MHK 9.59, 9.94, 9.120, 9.127 and 9.139, mirror the pūrva-pākṣa in using the words “yuktam yat tvajjate trāyat,” but, “yuktam” being used as an adverb, the phrase now has the meaning “it is reasonable that the threefold [way] should be rejected.” In 9.94 Bhāviveka argues that it should be rejected because the Vedas contain bad logic, in 9.120 because they contain erroneous prescriptions (for instance, that sins can be washed away with water), in 9.127 because they contain detrimental preconceptions (for instance, that one can attain Brahma’s world by jumping into a fire or, the TJ expands, by jumping off a cliff or fasting), in 9.139 because they contain erroneous teachings (such as the teaching that trees have a soul). The uttarapākṣa-section pertaining to MHK 9.11 goes on until MHK 9.151.
these gods that favor the way of the Vedas and, first of all, points to their vicious conduct.\textsuperscript{82}

Having observed the corrupt conduct of the promulgators of the threefold way (\textit{trayāmārgaprayātṛ}), Brahmā, Keśava (= Viṣṇu), Śūlīn (= Śiva), it is reasonable to reject the three [Vedas].\textsuperscript{83}

In the verses that follow — cum TJ and a number of supplementary verses in the Tibetan version — the author proceeds to illustrate these gods’ corrupt behavior and to make explicit the logical link that enables one to go from the observation of such conduct to the conclusion that the Vedas should be rejected.

5.1.1. Illustration of the gods’ corrupt conduct

“Corrupt conduct” (\textit{kleśātmikā caryā}), as the expression itself makes clear, is linked with and revealing of the presence of afflictions (\textit{nyon mongs, kleśā}). According to the Buddhist model, the three major afflictions are included in the triad of lust/desire (\textit{dod chags, rāga}), hatred (\textit{zhe sdang, dveṣā}), and mental confusion or ignorance (\textit{gti mug, moha}). To exemplify how the three gods adopt behaviors that instantiate these three, Bhāviveka draws from numerous Vedic, Puranic, and epic sources.\textsuperscript{84}

For instance, in order to demonstrate Brahmā’s affliction by lust, Bhāviveka recalls Brahmā’s incestuous attraction for Prajāpati’s daughters, hence his own granddaughters, which led him to ejaculate as they were pulling him, some by the hand, some by a tuft of his hair, towards the place where Prajāpati’s sacrifice was taking place — Brahmā’s semen, poured into the sacrificial fire, gave birth to Br̥ḍhu, Āṅgira, etc.\textsuperscript{85} MHK 9.63 further mentions Brahmā and Śiva’s passion for Tilottamā, the beautiful nymph (\textit{apsarā}) that caused Śiva to grow four heads, and Brahmā five, in order to be able to contemplate her as she circumambulated them.\textsuperscript{86}

Śiva’s hatred is illustrated by his arson of Tripura, the Asuras’ capital city, and his plucking out Pūṣṇa’s teeth and Bhaga’s eyes for, respectively,

\textsuperscript{82} Further arguments targetting the gods address the question of the unity of nature of Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu (MHK 9.90–91ab), the contradiction between their respective statements, as each claims to be the sole creator of the world (MHK 9.89), or the mere possibility of a god that is cause of the universe (MHK 9.95ff.).

\textsuperscript{83} MHK 9.59: \textit{trayāmārgaprayātṛṃ brāhmaṇaśavasālānāṃ / dṛṣṭvā kleśātmikāṃ caryāṃ yuktāṃ yat tājayate tṛaṇā}.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{84} Brahmā’s affliction with desire is dealt with in the additional Tibetan verses 14–19 (TJ D291a5–7). Further examples involving Viṣṇu and Śiva occur in the course of subsequent discussions, for instance in MHK 9.63; 9.67, etc. Hatred is illustrated principally in MHK 9.64 (TJ D293a2–6), while Brahmā’s murderous activities are recounted in TJ D291b6–7. Mental confusion, according to TJ, is the object of MHK 9.65 (TJ D293a6); see n. 89 below.

\textsuperscript{85} TJ D291b1–4. The extra Tibetan verse 19 concludes the enumeration of Brahmā’s lustful activities (transl. Kawasaki 1992: 134): “The sexual act of dog and ass is disdainfully treated by the sacred gods. But, what is their difference from such beasts, in case they also have incestuous relations?”

\textsuperscript{86} We are dealing here with another incestuous passion of Brahmā, as, according to the \textit{Skanda Purāṇa}, Brahmā actually qualifies as Tilottamā’s father insofar as he is said to have created her.
laughing and winking at him. Viṣṇu’s affliction by hate is demonstrated by the evocation of actions (such as destroying entire armies) perpetrated at the time of his incarnation as Kṛṣṇa,88 Brahmā’s hatred by the murder of various demons (TJ D291b6–7). We will come back to the issue of the “killing of enemies” below (see under 5.1.2.2.i).

Slumber as revealing of mental confusion

Lust and hatred receive significantly more attention than mental confusion. Indeed, when it comes to provide illustrations for this affliction, Bhāviveka lacks vivid anecdotes. According to the TJ, this third affliction is dealt with in MHK 9.6589:

Slayer of Brahmā, drinker of intoxicating drinks, libidinous, this is the Lord who supposedly sees the truth; what should one say of those who do not see the truth, who follow his path?90

In this verse, aside from lust and slaughter (the paragon of hateful behavior), we find the mention of the drinking of alcohol, which might be intended as an illustration of (or a metaphor for?) mental confusion. A more explicit illustration of this third affliction is provided in the TJ in a passage meant to summarize the three afflictions pertaining to Viṣṇu. One finds there, first, a list of the three afflictions (the expression “complete stupidity” [kun du rmongs pa nyid] replaces here mental confusion) and their associated behaviors:

He is subdued by lust, because he stole other people’s wives and riches.
He is subdued by hate, because he killed the Asuras Hayagriva, Sunda, Upasunda, Hiranyakasipu, Kaṃsa, etc.
He is completely stupid, because he is a follower of the Vedas who deceived Bali, was regaled by Kucela, and stole bsil byed ma (=?) (or let it be stolen?).91

Three illustrations of mental confusion are alluded to in this passage. The first one refers to the episode in which Viṣṇu tricks the Asura Bali (Tib. gtor

87 MHK 9.64. According to the gloss in TJ D293a4–6, Pūṣṇa’s and Bhaga’s amusement was due to Siva’s appearance as he showed up late at a sacrifice “his head decorated by a garland of cranes, his body anointed with ash, holding cranes in his hands, and acting infuriated.”
88 See notably the extra Tibetan verses 30–31.
89 TJ introduces this verse with the words “gtil mug drag po can yang vin te” (TJ D293a6).
90 MHK 9.65: brāhmaṇā mādopahā kāṃty āryatattvato y androidhāḥ / kā kathamāryatattvāṇām ** tathpadhitayanyugāhinām // (* Kawasaki ʻtātvo; ** Kawasaki ʻtātvāṇām). The expression brāhmaṇā means here “slayer of Brahmā,” as the Tibetan translation “tshangs bsad” suggests, and not, as translated by Lindtner, one who can “kill a priest.” This is confirmed by MHK 9.90 and TJ D295b5–4, where this epithet of Śiva is explained by the fact that the latter cut off one of Brahmā’s heads.
91 TJ D294a2–4; P332b–5: de la gzhan gyi bud med dang nor ’phrog par byed pa’i phyir chags pas zil gyis mnan pa nyid kyung yin par ’ggar ro // rta mgon dang sun du (P ’du) dang / nye ba’i sun da (P ’da) dang / hi ra nu ka sḥi bu dang / kang sa la sogs pa’i lha ma yin bsad pa’i phyir zhe sdang gis zil gyis mnan pa yang yin no // gtor ma bsus pa dang / gos rphan gyis (em: D gyis; P gyi) mgon (P ’gron) du bs pa dang / bsil byed ma phrogs (P ’phrogs) pa la sogs pa rig byed pa nyid kyi phyir kun du rmongs pa nyid kyung yin no //.
ma) at the time of his fifth incarnation as a dwarf (Vāmana). The second could refer to the meeting of Kṛṣṇa with his former fellow student Kucela (Tib. gos nγan pa, lit. “poorly clothed”) or Sudāman. Although the latter and his family are starving, Kṛṣṇa eats the rice brought by Kucela as a gift and sends him back without food. The story ends on a happy note: when Kucela comes home, he finds a palace offered by Kṛṣṇa in place of his hut. I am unable to identify a source for the third example.92

Immediately following this list, Bhāviveka introduces what appears to be a citation:

One could also say:

Nārāyaṇa is endowed with lust, because he ravished 16,000 wives, like a bad king;93 or because he was enamored with herdswomen and he enjoyed their erotic games (*rasalīḥ), like any herdsman.

Nārāyaṇa is also endowed with hatred, because he constantly engages in killing, like hunters and fowlers, etc.

Nārāyaṇa is endowed with mental confusion, because he sleeps during four moons, like frogs and snakes.94

In this second passage we find mental confusion illustrated by slumber (*gnyid log). Everyone is familiar with Viṣṇu’s cosmic sleep. However, here, the specification “four moons” hints to another event: Viṣṇu’s seasonal yogic-sleep (*yoganidrā) during the monsoon period, a four-month period accordingly called Caturmāsa that runs from the last week of July to the last week of November. The comparison with frogs and snakes (which, in itself, is probably not very flattering) certainly refers here to the hibernating habits of these animals, although, contrary to Viṣṇu, frogs hibernate during the dry season (and for more than four months) and wake up at the beginning of the monsoon, as pictured in the famous “Frog-hymn” of the Rg-Veda.95

Why associate slumber with mental confusion? There is more to this than the simple popular association of a slow mind or lesser intelligence with slumber, a figurative association also reflected in the Buddhist context by

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92 In the third illustration, bsil byed ma, literally “the cooling one,” could be the name of someone (“ma” possibly indicates a feminine figure) or something (such as a jewel). TJ D295a7–b1 states that Viṣṇu created “Marana” (i.e., “Death”), who ravished bsil byed ma, and that at some point of the story bsil byed ma had “entered into the earth” (sa’i nang du zhungs par gyur pa).

93 This is an allusion to the 16,000 girls enraped by the demon Nāraka, which Viṣṇu (as Kṛṣṇa) married, supposedly to protect the reputation that they had remained virgins. The story is recounted for instance in the Mahābhārata.

94 TJ D294a4–6; P332b5–7: sred med kyi bu ni ’dod chags dang bcas pa yin te / bud med stong phrag bcu drug ’phrog par byed pa’i phyur rgyal po nγan pa bzhin zhes bya ba’ann / phyugs rdzī (D rjī) mo dang lhan cig kun du chags (P cig tu chags) shing ’dod pas rtse ba nyams su myong bar byed pa’i phyur ba lang rdzī dzhan bzhin no // sred med kyi bu ni zhe sdang dang bcas pa yin te / rtag tu srog gcod pa la zhungs pa yin pa’i phyur / rtag pa dang / bya ba (D pa / ba) la sogs pa bzhin no // sred med kyi bu ni gti mug dang bcas pa yin te / zla ba bzhī i bar du gnyid log pa’i phyur sbral pa dang sbral la sogs pa bzhin no / . It is possible that this passage, like many others in this section, is issued from a non-Brahmanical source criticizing the gods and refuting the Vedas. TJ D290b3–4) names the “Bhraspatitantra (Hhr’i bla ma phur bus bstan pa’i rgyud) as being one such source.

95 See Bender 1917: 187ff. on the frogs’ hibernation habits. Bender notes (ibid., p. 188) that “In the Harivamśa, Viṣṇuparvan 95.23–8803 the frogs croak after having slept eight months. In RV.7.1031.8, and 9 the frogs raise their voices after having lain silent for twelve months.”
Clapping hands in skYid grong?

expressions such as mohanidrā (“the sleep of mental confusion”).96 Sleep is also found in association with mental error in Buddhist philosophical texts: the mental states that take place in sleep are delusive insofar as what appears as their object is in fact not existent. Dharmakīrtī explains for instance in PVin 1.29 that people who sleep — just like people deluded by lust, fear, etc. — see things that do not exist as if they were there.97 For philosophers of idealist persuasion, the dream provides an analogy par excellence as a state where objects seem to appear that do not exist in reality.98 Moreover, in addition to constituting pseudo-perceptions in this sense, dream-states also do not allow an awareness of the objects that are actually present, for sleep prevents the unobstructed sensorial perception of these objects. Hence, one who is “sleeping,” whether he is dreaming or lethargic, is one who does not apprehend reality correctly.

There is, however, a difficulty with regard to this explanation. To anticipate our discussion of the rationale behind the slumber argument, one can note already that the relation that is postulated by Bhāviveka between the three afflictions (kleśa) and the corresponding corrupt conduct (kleśātmikā caryā) is a causal one. The presence of afflictions causes one person to act in a certain way, and from the observation of a certain type of conduct, one can infer the presence of the relevant affliction that is its cause. This premise, as we will see, is not unproblematic. In the case of mental confusion and its illustration by the state of slumber, one can raise the question whether some slumber-states might not have another source than mental confusion. Unfortunately, neither the MHK nor the TJ venture an explanation. The Abhidharmakośa (AK) does provide some ground for the association of certain kinds of states comparable to slumber with afflictions and further with a lack of understanding: In particular, sthūna (apathy, torpor) and middha (sloth, languor) are classified among the “manifestly active defilements” (paravyavasthāna) in AK 5.47–48a. Both sthūna and middha have the same action, namely, making the mind lackadaisical, and are nourished by the same five factors: tiredness (tandrā), dullness (arañī), yawning (viññbhāka), drowsiness after eating (bhākta ’samatā), mental languidness (cetaso līnatva). In AK 5.59 and Bhāṣya, both are described as obstacles (nīvaraṇa) among the defilements (kleśa) and secondary defilements (upakleśa), insofar as they destroy the element of discrimination (praṇāśkandhā) and thereby generate doubt about the Truths. The Bhāṣya specifies that middha can be good, bad or neutral (but it is either bad or neutral in the Kāmadhātu), and is only a manifestly active defilement in the second case.99

There is thus a background in Buddhist literature for treating slumber as a negative state associated with the absence of mental clarity. Whether a

96 For instance, the sGra sbyor bימ pa gnis pa (D133a1–2) explains the “sangs” of sangs rgyas (buddha) in terms of awakening from the sleep of mental confusion (gî muk gi gnys sams pa, mohanidrāprabuddhañī). David Higgins, whom I thank for this reference, also informed me that many rNyiny ma sources build on the association of sleep/ignorance and waking/wisdom; an illustration can be found for instance in Klong chen Rab ’byams’s Theg mcchog mthod (I, 1026.6): kun gzhi gnys lta ba ’khrul stang gi rmi lam thams cad ’char ba’i rtsen du gyur pa las sams pur byed dgos....


98 See as an example the analogy with sleep in Vasubandhu’s Vīmāsikā.

99 The various sorts of middha are discussed in AK 2.30cd and 5.52cd with reference to the Kāmadhātu.
non-Buddhist opponent would be ready to accept this association is another matter. An investigation of the value attributed to sleep in non-Buddhist systems would exceed the scope of the present paper, but let us just note that if sleep is on occasion negatively connoted in the Brahmanical tradition, it may also constitute an opportunity to access higher truths.

5.1.2. The rationale behind the Madhyamakahṛdayakārikā/Tarkajvāla’s argument

5.1.2.1 Ad personam accusation

The observation of a lustful, hateful, or mentally confused conduct certainly provides the ground for an ad personam accusation. Such an accusation may be used per se, in order to discredit the person. For instance in the case under consideration, Viṣṇu’s sins certainly undermine his reputation of “Great man” (puruṣottama). But there is usually more at stake behind an ad personam accusation. Such accusations, in a form termed “ad hominem argument,” are often used in disputation as a means to dismiss the opponent’s thesis, attacking the person of the opponent rather than the thesis that she professes or the evidence that she presents. In the case under consideration, the direct opponent of Bhāviveka are the proponents of the Mīmāṃsā, but the target of the accusation are the gods that they recognize as teachers and leaders. By underlining the truth of these gods’ teaching, one can expect that the implicit thesis of the direct opponent, namely, that these gods’ teaching should be followed, is refuted as well.

Ad hominem arguments are generally classified as argumentative fallacies. They are rhetorically advantageous for sidetracking the opponent, leading him to a self-justification process that has nothing to do with the matter at hand. They are especially effective in influencing the subjective perception that the audience has of the speaker, for they cast doubt on the credibility of the opponent. They often do so by way of putting doubt on the opponent’s respectability rather than on his intellectual capacities — accusations or insinuation thus frequently bear on conducts that deviate from social or legal norms of morality (sexual practices, consumption of drugs, alcohol abuse, etc.). From a logical point of view, however, the assumption that a person’s statements are incorrect on account of this person’s actions, immoral as they may be, is unfounded. Still, in informal logic, criticism of the person is deemed appropriate if the accusation directed to the person establishes either a biased disposition towards the issue at

100 The Viṣṇapurāṇa (2.6.29) mentions for instance that sleeping during the day may lead religious students to fall into hell. But this unhappy fate is not linked so much with sleep itself than with its side-effects, namely, the emission of seminal fluid amounting to an involuntary breach of their vows of chastity. Parallel passages are found in the Garudapurāṇa, Brahmaṇapurāṇa and Vaiṣṇapurāṇa (I thank Marc Tiefenauer for this information).
101 For instance, Śaṅkara states in the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya that the nature of Brahman is experienced in deep sleep (Potter 1998: 173).
102 See MHK 9.73 (rāgadvēdātisvāvālam kīṃ tṛṭkarcitam hāreḥ / anātyacaritaś caivaṁ katham sa puruṣottamayā) and TJ D295a3–4.
hand, linked with a possible willingness to deceive, or the lack of capacity to make a correct statement regarding the subject matter of the discussion.104

In the religious context, the question is whether the accusation of immoral conduct is pertinent insofar as the subject matter touches precisely morality itself, a vast issue that the present paper does not intend to unravel. In the Indian context, one must take into consideration the important concept of “person of authority” (āpta) attached to persons who promulgate or reveal religious truths, who are characterized by a number of qualities, notably moral ones.105 One can mention for instance,106 the five epiteths with which Dignāga qualifies the Buddha in the salutatory verse (māñgalaśloka) of the Pramāṇasamuccaya, and Dharmakīrti’s commentary thereon in the Pramāṇasiddhi—chapter of the Pramāṇavārttika107; the characteristics of the āpta described by Vātsyāyana in the Nyāyaśāstra108, or the discussion on the “good man” (sad, sādhu) in Kumārila’s Tantra-vārttika.109 Personal authority established on this basis generally serves as a ground to derive scriptural authority.110 In such a model, ad hominem argumentation is thus especially

104 Groarke (2008) summarizes: “One may, for example, reasonably cast doubt on an arguer’s reasoning by pointing out that the arguer lacks the requisite knowledge to make appropriate judgments in the area in question, or by pointing out that the arguer has a vested interest.”

105 On this topic, see Eltschinger 2007: 75ff. Eltschinger points out three aspects of the āpta’s qualities shared across philosophico-religious schools: knowledge, moral purity, compassion (ibid. p. 79).

106 For more references, see Eltschinger 2007: 76 n. 28.

107 The interpretation of these five epiteths and their relation has given rise to many discussions. See for instance Franco 1997: 15–43. A list of earlier publications on the subject is provided by Franco on p. 15, n. 2.

108 Those are discussed in Franco 1997: 30–31, who surmises an influence of this text on Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇasiddhi—chapter. Franco also points out the similarity of Vātsyāyana’s argument with that of the Tantric author Sadyoṣyoti for Śiva’s reliability.

109 Although the Mīmāṃsā ascribes authority to scriptures devoid of an author, they share in the discussion on persons of authority when it comes to the smṛti and to practical issues of carrying out rituals not described in Vedic texts by calling to the example of the “good men.” For a discussion of the “good man” by Kumārila (in the section of the Tantra-vārttika [TV] commenting on Mīmāṃsāsūtra I.3.5–7 [transl. Jhā 1998: 169–203]) and in the Manusmṛti and Medhātithi’s commentary, see Ganeri 2004: 214–216. I am extremely grateful to Jonardon Ganeri for pointing out to me that Kumārila is facing an ad personam accusation targetting the putative “good men,” an accusation that draws from evidence of vicious conduct that recalls (but without replicating them) the examples given by Bhāviveka. Eleven cases of alleged transgressions of the dharma (dharma-vyaktikrama) are enumerated in TV 124,15ff. (transl. Jhā 1998: 182–183). The last one concerns “people of our own days”; the first ten episodes relate to famous figures: Prajāpati, Indra and Nahuṣa, Vasīṣṭha and Pūruravas, Viśvāmitra, Yudhīṣṭhira, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana, Bhīṣma, Dīrgharāstra, Vāsudeva (Viṣṇu as Kṛṣṇa) and Arjuna. After a general answer to the issue that “among good men also, we find some behaving contrary to the Law, just like Doctors leading unhealthy lives” (TV 126,11; transl. Jhā 1998: 184ff.), Kumārila answers each of the eleven cases individually (TV 129,20ff.; transl. Jhā 1998: 189–201). In TV 129,16 (transl. Jhā 1998: 189) Kumārila distinguishes four ways to deal with the problematic passages, invoking linguistic ambiguities and the possibility of re-interpretation, and drawing out the specificity of Vedic rules with regard to the subject of the prohibition. A full comparison of the models presupposed by Kumārila and Bhāviveka is beyond the scope of the present article, but I intend to return to it on another occasion.

110 As noted by Eltschinger (2007: 92ff.), Dharmakīrti distantes himself from the other schools by reversing the attribution of authority: the authority of the person cannot be established on the basis of her mental properties (those cannot be apprehended by common sentient beings) and must be derived from the authority of the scriptures, which is itself to be established via a number of criteria and tests of coherence, etc.
pertinent, and one that targets morality is bound to be effective. Bhāviveka’s argument goes yet one step further, for it suggests that the relation between the nature of the teacher and the rejection of the teaching can be established logically. His resort to an ad personam accusation against the gods, who both profess and personify the Vedic teaching, thus aims at a conclusion that necessarily follows from the evidence.

5.1.2.2 Logical grounding

Commenting on MHK 9.59, Bhāviveka sets out to present the logical grounding of the argument:

What is said by one who is endowed with undefiled wisdom precisely on account of being devoid of afflictions, this corresponds to reality. But the words of those who indulge in desires endowed with afflictions, having fallen under the influence of negative forces, those words do not correspond to reality. Since it is the deed of someone endowed with afflictions, it is only correct, not incorrect, that the triple view should be discarded. Let us unpack this explanation, which introduces the central element of Bhāviveka’s argument: the notion of wisdom. Bhāviveka’s essential claim is that (i) afflictions prevent wisdom, in other words, correct apprehension of reality, and (ii) a correct teaching requires that the teacher has a correct understanding of what he teaches.

i. Afflictions and wisdom

The presence of afflictions is repeatedly presented as a ground for rejecting someone’s wisdom. For instance in MHK 9.63, Brahma and Śiva’s passion for Tilottamā is invoked as a ground to refute that their mind is one that sees the truth (tattvārthadarśanī buddhiḥ); in the same way, Viśṇu’s thefts and murders mentioned in MKH 9.66 and 9.67 contradict the notion that he is one who sees the truth (dyṣṭatattva). The relation between the lack of afflictions and wisdom and the converse relation between the lack of wisdom and the presence of afflictions (or corrupt conduct) is mainly

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111 Eltschinger (2007: 80) illustrates the feature of the āpta’s eradication of moral faults in a variety of texts: “Yāpta de la Y[uktī]D[pikā] est «affranchi [des passions] de concupiscence, etc. » (rāgādivīyukta), «possède un esprit [moralement] immaculé» (adusṭāmanas); celui de Kundakunda et de Candrakṛtri est dénué de toutes les fautes morales sans exception; le Brahma du P[ādārtha]D[harma]S[angraha] est “pourvu de dépassionnement” (vairīgva...samparnna); le Vyaśa du M[aḥa]B[hara] « possède une âme purifiée» (bhavāṭittamā); Yāpta de la C[araṇa]S[amhitā] est immaculé (adoṣaṇa), affranchi du rajas et du tamas, a vu disparaître peur (bhaya), concupiscence (rāga), haine (dvesa), convoytise (lobha), hébétude/erreur (moha) et orgueil (māna).” (Additions within curly brackets are mine.)

112 TJ D291a3–5; P329a3–5 nyon mongs pa dang bral ba nyād kyis sgrih pa (P la) med pa’i ye shes dang ldan pa’i gsum ni don ji lta ba (P ji lta) bzhiin yin par ’gyur gyu ’// gang yang gdon gis sin pa bzhiin du nyon mongs pa dang bcas pa’i ’dod pa’i rjes su zhus pa rnams kyis tshig gi don ji lta ba bzhiin ma yin te / nyon mongs pa (P om. pa) dang bcas pas byas pa yin pa’i phyur lta ba gsum po nyād ni spang bar rigs pa kho na yin gyu mi rigs pa ma yin no /
described in terms of positive and negative concomitance. For instance in TJ’s commentary on MHK 9.65:

For those who are not stupid, there do not arise lust, hate, and mental confusion.113

Or when commenting on MHK 9.66 that describes Viṣṇu’s corrupt conduct:

On the one hand, due to such manners he is not one who understands the ultimate, and on the other hand if he did see the ultimate, it wouldn’t be correct that he is endowed with such a behavior.114

The relation that afflictions might have with wisdom is transparent in the case of the affliction of mental confusion. It seems undisputable indeed that ignorance is incompatible with wisdom. But what about lust and hate? The only hint of an answer that Bhāviveka provides is when commenting on MHK 9.87; there he mentions that afflictions are “obfuscators” or “defilements” (sgrīb par byed pa, āvarana) of wisdom,115 which is reminding of the discussion in the Abhidharmakosa about primary and secondary afflictions that are obstacles (nīvaraṇa) to understanding the truth,116 and more generally of the notion of klesāvaraṇa. This matches the contrapositive formula that we have seen in the commentary on MHK 9.59, namely “endowed with undefiled wisdom precisely on account of being devoid of afflictions.”

This claim must be put into relation with the notion of wisdom that is considered here. In MHK 9.87 cum TJ, wisdom is explained in terms of knowledge of the cause of samsāra (i.e., the afflictions) and of liberation (i.e. the cutting of the afflictions).117 But Bhāviveka’s understanding of wisdom also involves the idea that wisdom is the result of a change in the mental continuum. In MHK 9.61 Bhāviveka characterizes a “learned man” by his capacity to burn away the afflictions (kleśadāhāna); this is, comments TJ, precisely what it means to have wisdom: not to collect afflictions, or if one has collected them, to have pacified them.118 We can note in addition that it is not wisdom, and in particular the understanding that afflictions are the cause of samsāra, that prompts the wise to pacify his afflictions; on the contrary, the pacifying of afflictions is presented as a condition for wisdom. This excludes the option that a teacher would have wisdom, and thus satisfy the conditions for providing a correct teaching, and still would be demonstrating a corrupt behavior.

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113 TJ D293a7; P331b6: rmongs pa ma yin pa la ni ’dod chags dang / zhe sdang dang / gti mug ’byung bar mi ’gyur ro //.
114 TJ D293b2–3; P332a1–2: lugs ’dis don dam pa rtags par ’gyur bo yang ma yin la don dam pa mthong na ni ’di lla bu’i spyod pa dang ldan par yang rig pa ma yin no //.
115 TJ D298b3; P338a4–5: don dam pa’i ye shes la sgrīb par byed pa ’dod chags dang / zhe sdang dang / gti mug rnam s yod par gyur pa gro lha ga la ’gyur //.
116 See under 5.1.1 our discussion of the background for the association of slumber with mental confusion.
117 TJ D298b3–4; P338a5–6: des na ’dod chags la sog pa ni ’khor bu’i rgyu yin la / ’dod chags zad pa la sog pa ni thar pa’t rgyu yin no zhes bya bu’i rgyu la rmbogs pa ni kgiyed kho na yin gzi kho bo cagy mi ma yin no //.
118 TJ D293b3–4; P330a7: gang nyon rongs pa rnam sog par (P gsog par) mi byed cing / nyon rongs pa bsags pa rnam kyung zhi bar byed pa yin pas.
Afflictions and corrupt conduct are often used interchangeably by Bhāviveka in this context. As mentioned in the previous section, the relation between the two is conceived as a causal one. This is made clear in MHK 9.61 cum TJ: a learned man — one who is endowed with wisdom — does not commit evil acts (pāpa) because he lacks the cause of the latter, namely the three afflictions.¹¹⁹

If it could be accepted that some evil acts result from the presence of afflictions, it is questionable to identify all sins — killing being a prototypic example — as the effects of afflictions. In MHK 9.68, an opponent argues that killing, in some cases, is not even a sin; for instance, the gods’ killing of their enemies is in fact prompted by their desire to protect the dharma (dharma-gupti). This suggests that killing might have another cause than the affliction of hatred. Bhāviveka’s answer consists in showing that the gods cannot in fact qualify as “protectors of the dharma.” In MHK 9.69, he argues that the gods’ alleged “desire to protect the dharma” would be in conflict with other corrupt actions that they perform, such as theft, adultery, deceit, etc., so many actions that cannot be explained to be for the benefit of the dharma. In MHK 9.68, he characterizes the “protection of the dharma” in terms of either realizing the true dharma oneself or teaching it to others. The first option is denied to the three gods precisely by the argument that refutes that there can be correct understanding, or wisdom, when afflictions are present. As TJ ad MHK 9.87 concludes: “Therefore, the claim that ‘These [gods] know the truth’ is to be negated: Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva do not understand the ultimate, because one observes that their behavior is lustful, etc. (rāgādisamudācāra), like gangs of robbers and hunters, etc.”¹²⁰ The second option, as we will see below (ii.), is refuted as well for it relies on the first.

In summary, afflictions both cause corrupt behaviors and prevent wisdom. In view of the relationship between these terms, one could thus characterize the logical model that Bhāviveka is suggesting along the lines of these logical reasons that Dharmakirti assimilates to logical reasons qua effect insofar the logical reason and the probandum, although they are not properly speaking cause and effect, both result from the same sufficient complex of causes.¹²¹ In the case under consideration, since corrupt behavior and defiled wisdom are the result of the same sufficient complex of causes — the presence of afflictions — one can legitimately infer the second from the observation of the first.

¹¹⁹ See MHK 9.61cd: nāthā prakurile pāpam jīhata taddhetvasamhāvati / and TJ D292a4–5; P330a7–8: shes pa dang ldan pa rnam s ni sroṅ gcod pa la sogs pa’i sde’i las ni byed de ’/ ’dod chags dang / zhe sdmang dang / gti mug ces (b’zhes) bya ba’i sde’i rgyu rnam med pa’i phyir ro / ’dod chags sam / zhe sdmang nγam / gti mug gis ni sde’i las byed par ’gyur te..

¹²⁰ TJ D298b4–5; P228a6–7: de’i phyir ‘di dag nyid de kho na nyid rig pa yin no zhes zer ba de dgog par bya ba yin te / tshangs pa dang / khnyab ’jug dang / dbang phyug chen po ni don dam pa rig pa ma yin te / ’dod chags la sogs pa kun du spyod pa nthang ba’i phyir / ri brag pa dang rgyon pa la sogs pa’i tshogs brj招生 no /

¹²¹ See Iwata 1991. This case is otherwise illustrated by the inference of taste from shape, or of rain from the fidgeting of the ants. Note that Bhāviveka himself does not attempt to characterize his argument as a specific type of inference relying on a specific logical reason.
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ii. Wisdom and teaching

The second part of Bhāviveka’s reasoning relies on the premise that to be correct a teaching must be the verbal expression of a correct understanding, thereby excluding an ignorant teacher professing what are merely “lucky guesses” or parroting someone else’s words without personal understanding. Lack of correct understanding prevents one from giving a true teaching, and therefore to lead others in a meaningful way. In MHK 9.93, an ignorant teacher is thus compared to a guide attempting to lead others while having himself fallen into a precipice. On the contrary, someone who knows the truth is able to guide others. Teaching on liberation, thus, can only come from someone who is liberated, and whose behavior testifies to their liberated state. In brief, true religious teachers necessarily practice what they preach.

From i. and ii., there is only one conclusion to be reached: the gods’ teaching should be rejected, as should be the teaching of any putative teacher who does not see the truth, for these cannot lead one to liberation.

5.2 The “slumber argument” in IHO pa’s narrative of the sKyid grong debate

Let us go back to sKyid grong. As seen in our analysis of Sa pan’s statement, the notion of “slumber” appears twice: first associated with mental confusion in the short statement [3] “BrahmA slumbers because of great mental confusion,” then in the third päda of the verse from the “Suprāṭa- prabhūtastotra” [4], where it stands in contrast to being awake.

The two statements certainly support each other rhetorically. The force of the argument from the hymn is one of contrast and depreciation: contrast, as it opposes Brahmā and the Buddha in terms of slumber vs. awakened state; depreciation, because this contrast presupposes a positive pole — being awake — and a negative one — slumbering. Statement [3] provides a justification for this polarization by associating slumber with the affliction of great mental confusion (gti mug ’chen, *mahāmoha). Reciprocally, the hymn provides support to the argument in [3] by implying that Brahmā’s slumber is a fact that is well-established in the opponent’s Scriptures from which the author of the hymn draws his descriptions.

The specificity of the association of “slumber” with “mental confusion” strongly suggests that the author of the argument is relying on a precedent for this type of argumentation. MHK/TJ would then appear as a likely

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122 The same conclusion is pointed out in TJ D293b1 (P331b7–8) ad MHK 9.65: de’i phyir na re zhi de nyid la yang de kho na nyid mthong ba yod pa ma yin na yang de’i nyed bar bstan pa’i lam nas ’jug pa la lha grol ba yod par ji ltar ’gyur te ni ’gyur ro/. See in parallel the passage cited in n. 115, and TJ D298b6 (P338b1) and MHK 9.88: de dog ni bdag nyid kyang phyin ci log tu sgrub pa la gnas pa yin na (P om. na) / ji ltar gzhain dag yang dag pa’i sgrub pa la ’god (P dgod) par nus par ’gyur /.

123 His lack of afflictions, one that he could add, would guarantee that he has no motivation for lying or deceiving his audience. Bhāviveka, who concentrates on the case of the one who does not know the truth, does not address the question whether one who knows the truth would not, due to the absence of afflictions, also lack the motivation to teach at all. For a recent treatment of Dharmakirti’s discussion of the question whether the Buddha, if devoid of desires, could still have the motivation to teach, see Pecchia 2008.
candidate. If one presumes that the association of slumber and mental confusion in [3] is indeed intended as in Bhāviveka’s argument against the Mīmāṃśā, Sapan’s statement goes beyond the ad personam contrastive and depreciative effect, as it now implies a logical argumentative structure leading to its conclusion — the rejection of the opponent’s teaching — by way of an inferential process.

One can wonder, in such a case, why the enunciator of the argument chose to concentrate on “slumber,” which is, after all, not very spectacular in terms of corrupt behavior. Also, as discussed in the preceding section, slumber is one of the illustrations of corrupt conducts whose connection with the intended corresponding affliction, mental confusion, is disputable. Aside from this difficulty, one can see two advantages for this choice. First, mental confusion is the affliction whose connection with the absence of correct understanding is the most readily acceptable. Second, in combination with the "Suṣrūṭaprabhāśatattra, the argument from slumber gains both support for its premise (the fact that Brahmā sleeps) and rhetorical efficacy as its intended logical impact is combined with an informal type of argumentation.

The hypothesis that the author of the argument is indeed intending a MHK/Tj-like line of argumentation has further implications for the way this statement stands in regard to the opponent’s “motivation statement” (I in section 3) and initial statement (4.1).

For one thing, the claim that Brahmā is guilty of some type of corrupt behavior works as a tu quoque against the claim that Tibetan Buddhists adopt depraved conduct. It is true that slumber and sexual practices do not exactly generate the same shock-effect when discussing morality, but for someone familiar with the line of argumentation used by Bhāviveka, the mention of slumber would probably recall the associated accusations pertaining to lust and hate. If this is assumed, it is not only the authority of Brahmā and of the Vedic teaching that is discarded by this argument; Brahmā’s purity, and thereby indirectly the purity of the Brahmins of his descent, also becomes an implicit target.

As analyzed in section 4.2, the slumber argument is only one part of Sapan’s argument. Parts [1] and [2], as I have argued, can also be read as informal arguments that address respectively the question of purity and that of the respect due to the Buddha. Taken as a whole, these statements constitute a multifaceted attack on Brahmā and a defense of the respect due to the Buddha. The statements representative of the slumber argument can be taken without presupposing a formal structure, or on the contrary by supposing an elaborate logical background. The argument attributed to Sa pan may actually have served precisely such a double role of confronting non-Buddhist masters with a formal logical argument, while providing also an effective way to address an audience of non-specialists, maybe including some arrogant passing-by Indian Brahmins failing to pay respect to the renowned Jo bo of sKyid grong.

124 The question whether this text itself could have been used as a source is discussed in section 6.2. So far I have not been able to find a similar argument in another Indian or Tibetan source predating lhGo pa’s narrative.
125 The depraved aspect of promiscuity with women touches in particular practitioners who have taken monastic vows.
5.3 Theory and practice

As discussed above, one can distinguish in Sa paṇ’s argument layers of formal and informal arguments. What needs to be investigated in view of our initial questioning is whether the form of these statements matches a known type of proof-statement. In particular, can the steps of the narrative that we have detailed in section 3 be mapped onto Sa paṇ’s prescriptions concerning the correct unfolding of a debate and the presentation of a correct argument?

The model of debate that Sa paṇ presupposes in the mkhas ’jug\(^\text{126}\) relies on the one hand on Dharmakīrti’s discussion of “inference-for-others” in the Pramāṇavārtti and Pramāṇaviniścaya and on the other on his discussion of points of defeats in the Viśākhāyāga. According to Sa paṇ, a proper philosophical debate also requires two debaters who affirm tenets worthy of examination and disagree with each other.\(^\text{127}\) One of them, the proponent, presents a proof-statement that enunciates a triply characterized reason, while the other, the respondent, attempts to refute him by pointing out faults pertaining to the probans. According to Sa paṇ, Dharmakīrti’s texts would support the idea of an additional step between the presentation of the logical reason by the proponent and the respondent’s refutation, namely, the proponent must “remove the thorns,” that is, he must show that the three characteristics are indeed established.\(^\text{128}\)

In the narrative of the dialogue between Sa paṇ and his opponent, it is possible to map their respective statements with a pūrvapakṣa/uttara-pakṣa-model. Namely, the non-Buddhists’ initial claim constitutes their pūrvapakṣa (as discussed in 3.1, a threefold claim), which Sa paṇ attempts to refute by means of an argument (uttarapakṣa).

What is the form of a correct proof-statement according to Sa paṇ? Sa paṇ’s opinion is that the proponent should make explicit the triply characterized reason by expressing its pervasion by the property to be proven (“whatever is R is Q, like E”) and the fact that it qualifies the subject (“S is indeed qualified by R”). Following Dharmakīrti, Sa paṇ denies that the statement of the thesis (or conclusion of the argument) should be part of the proof. Indeed, as it does not contribute as a means of proof, it would count as a superfluous expression and make the proof statement fallacious. While any supplement to the expression of the pervasion and the paksadharma (the qualification of the subject by the logical reason) is ruled out, Sa paṇ concedes, on the other hand, that it is not always necessary to state both these members. Relying on a passage from Dharmakīrti’s Svāvyrtti,\(^\text{129}\) Sa paṇ defends the idea that when the opponent is “knowledgeable” or “learned”

\(^{126}\) Note that in this text Sa paṇ only discusses problematic issues, without presenting the steps of debate in a systematic way. For a sketch of the later Sa skya pa system based on Śākyamchog ldan’s explanation, see Jackson 1987: 197–199.


\(^{129}\) PV 1.27 cum Svāvyrtti PVSV 17.13–19.22 (translated in Steinkellner 2004: 238ff., where the verse is numbered k.29): “Surely in the example (the fact) is conveyed to (someone) who does not know (either of) these (two facts), (namely) that [the property to be proven] is [in reality nothing but] that (reason) or (its) cause. To those, on the other hand, who are already familiar with (the fact that that which is to be proven) is [in reality] this (reason) or (its) cause, (i.e.) For to those who know (this), only the mere reason needs to be mentioned. The purpose for which an example is stated, that is (already) achieved. Thus, of what avail is its formulation then?”
(mkhas pa), the statement of the pervasion is not required.\textsuperscript{130} For instance, to prove that sound is impermanent to a knowledgeable opponent, one who is well aware that whatever is produced is impermanent, it would suffice to state: “Sound is produced.”

Considered in this light, statement [3] can be interpreted as the presentation of a logical reason — “slumber” — to a knowledgeable opponent. The proponent, in this case, only expresses the paksadharmatā, namely “Brahmā sleeps,” and presumes that the opponent does not need to be reminded of the pervasion, namely, that slumber entails that the teaching of such a teacher ought to be rejected. This entailment, as discussed in section 5.1, can be made to rely on the idea that the affliction of mental confusion — which is hinted at since the full statement reads “Brahmā sleeps because of great mental confusion” — is both the cause of slumber and the sufficient cause for an incorrect understanding of reality, and hence the incapacity to give a teaching relevant to liberation. In short, it is possible to interpret Sa pan’s statement as a proof-statement following rules he himself prescribes. But to do so, a background similar to the one found in MHK/T] is to be presupposed.

If “Brahmā sleeps” is a proof-statement (in the short version that is appropriate for knowledgeable opponents), what is the role of the citation from the “Suprātaphāhātotsātra? This citation may be interpreted as an attempt to remove the thorns pertaining to the paksadharmatā, that is, here, to counter the eventual objection that Brahмā does not sleep. The passage cited by Sa pan is not actually a scriptural passage taken from the opponents’ scripture. It refers, however, to a feature that is indeed associated with Brahмā in the opponents’ literary corpus (Brahmā sleeps inbetween the dissolution and the re-creation of the world), and would thus play a role equivalent to a citation from a Brahmanical source.

This brings up, however, another issue: even if the opponent recognizes the source as genuine (i.e., as repeating elements from his own scriptures), scriptures are not accepted in Buddhist logic as a valid means of cognition. They can be invoked, however, when it comes to suprasensorial matters. This appears to be case here, for how could one ascertain the state of affairs “Brahmā sleeps” if it was not for the scriptures giving us this information? One could wonder, in this case, if the logical reason of the argument would not in the first place qualify as an appeal to scriptures, namely: “your scriptures state that Brahмā sleeps.” When commenting on mkhas ’jug III.37ff., Sa pan qualifies debate on the scriptural teachings in a way that would indeed match the stakes of the sKyid grong disputation:

When debating on the scriptural teachings, it is proper to inquire and it is not an occasion for laughter if one asks questions ... about [completely] hidden phenomena not taught in the Śūtras or Tantras concerning places of refuge other than the Three Jewels, such as Īśvara, or concerning [theories] different from the [four] “seals” which are the marks of the doctrine for theory, such as a theory of a

\textsuperscript{130} See Rigs gter XL31d (mkhas pa la ni gtan tshigs nyid) cum rang ’gre. Sa pan’s position on this theme and the difference with that of his predecessors are discussed in Hugon forthcoming.
self or person, or concerning modes of conduct different from the Middle Way, such as physical pleasures and mortifications.\(^{131}\)

If one takes for granted that Sa pañ and his opponents are thus discussing "completely inaccessible" matters — such as Brahmā as a place of refuge — what kind of argument is considered proper? Sa pañ prescribes two kinds of answers when debating on scriptures: "One should refute that [argument] by means of [quotations from] scripture or by means of reasoning based on scripture."\(^{132}\) The example Sa pañ deals with in the nkhas 'jug (III.20ff.) is the famous Vedic claim that "who performs ablutions on the shore of the Ganges will not be born again." Insofar as followers of the Veda agree with the Buddhists on the cause of Cyclic existence — actions produced from desire, hatred and confusion — and its cessation — freedom from these evils — such a passage reveals an internal contradiction because the washing of the body is unrelated to the mental factors that the three poisons imply. Citing this passage provides a suitable argument in this context.

In the case of the skyid grong debate, the citation from the hymn, which states that "Brahmā sleeps," is not directly revealing of an internal contradiction. However, once the link between afflictions and the incapacity of seeing the truth is assumed (and in the case of the affliction of mental confusion, the link is obvious), the opponent is placed in the self-defeating position that he accepts scriptures that themselves present their teacher as showing signs that he is unworthy of being a teacher.

We have thus so far identified two ways to make sense of the argument in lHo pa’s narrative: (i) it consists in the statement of the pākṣadharmatā of the logical reason “slumber” for the subject “Brahmā,” a pākṣadharmatā which is, if not formally established, presumed to be accepted by the opponent on account of his own scriptures; (ii) it consists in an appeal to scriptures whose contents include the claim that “Brahmā sleeps,” to demonstrate the contradiction, for the opponent, to accept both these scriptures and Brahmā as a teacher. Both these interpretations presuppose an argument addressed at a knowledgeable opponent, one who is aware of the causal relation between the three types of afflictions and corresponding behaviors, and of the way afflictions prevent the understanding of the truth.

If the opponent’s pūrvapākṣa is summarized as “Brahmā should be followed as a teacher,” the formal aspect of the slumber argument provides an adequate reply, as the inference leads to the conclusion that Brahmā is not worth as a teacher, and that his teaching should hence be rejected. As to the other aspects of the opponent’s claim, in particular the claim of purity, we have seen in 5.2 that it is indirectly addressed by the association, in the original argument, of slumber with the other illustrations of vicious conduct.

6. Conclusion — from narrative to facts

We can, at this point, address the question whether lHo pa’s narrative provides us with anything like a factual account, be it of an actual debate between Sa pañ and a non-Buddhist in skyid grong, or a plausible picture of

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what a debate might have looked like at that time. One question that is
obviously linked with this one, although secondary in view of the purpose
of the present enquiry, is whether the sKyid grong debate is a historical
event. Its occurrence is taken for granted in the Tibetan tradition and, so far I
know, has not been questioned by modern scholars who, at most, argue on
its date. The reason I pose the question is not that there is strong evidence
that the sKyid grong debate did not take place. There are, on the other hand,
good reasons that can be invoked for the insertion of such an event in Sa
pan’s biography even if it did not take place. I suggest, therefore, that rather
than readily accept any of the related accounts at face value, one should
examine carefully what stands in favor of its actual occurrence.

6.1 Did the sKyid grong debate ever take place?

Why would biographers recount such an event if it did not take place? One
has to take into account the fact that the earliest sources that mention the
event belong to the genre of “rnam thar.” Although loosely translated as
“biography” or “biographical account,” Tibetan rnam thar are often better
described, as the Tibetan term connotes, as accounts of an exemplary life
leading to liberation. Sa pan was a renowned logician, and also a
theoretician who ascribed an important place to debating among the
competences expected of a learned scholar. The mention of a debate to
illustrate Sa pan’s embodiment of the very qualities he put forward in his
program therefore does not come as a surprise. One can even note that
several biographers (for instance Zhang rgyal ba dpal, Bla ma dam pa, Go
rams pa, Bo dong, etc.) precisely organize their description of Sa pan’s deeds
and qualities according to the triad of exposition, composition and debate,
the three skills of the wise according to the mkhas ’jug.

Why would Sa pan be made to debate with a tirthika? Two reasons could
be invoked: first, being exhaustive. For instance, Zhang rgyal ba dpal has Sa
pan vanquishing in debate both Buddhists — among whom Tibetans and
non-Tibetans — and non-Buddhists. Another reason is Sa pan’s specific
dedication to refute tirthika views, principally in his epistemological work,
the Rigs gter. Additionally, Sa pan’s knowledge of Indian languages and of
non-Buddhist treatises are also put to the fore in Sa pan’s biographies – a
live debate against a tirthika provides a perfect event combining these
elements.133

Why, then, locate such a debate in sKyid grong? One can find, as well,
several good reasons to do so. First, it is a plausible place for the encounter.
Sa pan’s presence in the region, on several occasions, is attested by sources
that describe the people he met and the teachings he gave at these times. The
location of sKyid grong and the function of this township as a market-place
on a trade-road coming from the Khamdun valley make it a likely place for
Tibetans to meet tirthikas of Nepalese or Indian origin. There are,
additionally, layers of symbolism that are associated with sKyid grong as a
frontier location, both in religious and lay history, that make it an especially

133 Śākyamihog Idan mentions in his biographical account that Sa pan debated with his
opponents in Sanskrit. Cf. Chos ’khor rnam gzhag 5b4: sam skri la'i skad kyis de dang brtsad pa
na.
suitable place for a confrontation with an opponent who is neither Tibetan nor Buddhist.\footnote{134}

One can add to these considerations that several accounts of the debate, principally those following the second type of scenario, include a number of events that a modern reader is bound to classify as poetic elaboration. But even a down-to-earth account of the event as in lHo pa’s narrative contains elements that bear too much symbolic significance to be entirely trusted at first sight. For instance, the number “six” given for Sa pan’s opponents immediately brings to mind the famous six non-Buddhist teachers (whose views are presented for instance in the Samaññaphalasutta) whom the Buddha defeated in Śrāvastī, as recounted in the Prāthīrghasūtra of the Divyāvadāna. It is also curious that the name of the chief disputant, ‘Phrog byed dga’ ba/bo, is not given in a phonetic adaptation of the original Indian name, whereas other Indian names usually are (for instance the names of the Indian pandits Sa pan studied with). This leaves the impression of a customized name, if not a customized opponent.

The mention of a debate involving Sa pan in the latter’s biography is thus something that is expected by the reader, and is likely to be inserted by a biographer even if the latter has neither witnessed the event himself nor heard about it from a reliable source. One cannot say that the author commits thereby an intended historical lie; rather, he is making pious additions of facts that are so likely to have happened that they can just as well be considered to have happened.

What, then, speaks in favor of the debate as a historical fact? The best argument, it appears, is that of the proximity of the redaction of the earliest biographies that mention the event to its presumed date of occurrence, and the proximity of their authors to Sa pan. There is, however, no indubitable indication that Sa pan would have read and approved their account. As for local sources that mention Sa pan’s stay in sKyid grong and the debate, their late date of composition (Vitali mentions seventeenth-century works) raises the question whether their authors rely on a local tradition or mix several sources, among which biographical accounts of Sa pan of external origin. The “Verses for the subduing of the non-Buddhist teachers” would be a pertinent support provided that the part in prose that follows the verses, which identifies the occasion of their composition, was indeed written by Sa pan. As for the clotted hairs hanging on a pillar in Sa skya, that have been claimed to be seen from the early fifteenth to the twentieth century, they can hardly be taken as material evidence for the sKyid grong debate, although the presence of such an item in Sa skya is certainly telling about the importance of this episode associated with Sa pan for the Sa skya pa collective memory.

\footnote{134 I intend to deal in a forthcoming study with this aspect of the location of the debate, which becomes especially relevant when one considers narratives that follow the second type of scenario. One can mention, among the points that can be taken into consideration, that the temple of Byams sprin in sKyid grong belongs to the border temples whose construction is attributed to Srong btsan sgam po; the region, more precisely mTshams (lit. “border”), north of sKyid grong, was also declared a border-place by Padma-sambhava; further, the invasion of Mang yul gung thang by the Ya rtse kingdom took place in the same period, leading to the death of the king of Mang yul in mTshams.}
As I will argue in the next section, the position one adopts on the issue of the historicity of the debate does not prevent one from drawing some conclusions as to debating practices based on lHo pa’s narrative.

6.2 What can one learn from lHo pa’s narrative?

There are, I would suggest, three main options to take into consideration to evaluate lHo pa’s narrative:

a. A debate involving Sa pan and a non-Buddhist did take place, in skYid grong or at another location. lHo pa may have witnessed it himself or have heard about it from an eye-witness or a secondary source.

b. lHo pa is not aware of any contemporaneous debate of Tibetan scholars against non-Buddhists.

c. A less likely alternative is that no such debate involving Sa pan took place, but lHo pa witnessed or heard about some debate involving another Tibetan scholar and a non-Buddhist teacher.\(^{135}\)

Although we are not in the position to determine which of these options is the correct one, there is, I suggest, one fact that can help us answering our initial questions — how debates were conducted in these days and whether lHo pa’s account gives us a plausible account of such practices. This fact is that lHo pa was both Sa pan’s disciple and an expert in epistemology (see section 3). He was thus certainly aware of the theoretical aspect of argumentation rules as discussed in epistemological works, and in particular Sa pan’s model in the Rigs gter and mkhas’ jug. One can also expect that he had some experience of what debates actually were like in the practice.

In the first case of possibility (a), the basis for lHo pa’s narrative would be an actual event. As lHo pa was well-versed in logic, he was in a position to understand the unfolding of the argument conveyed by the various statements of the debaters.\(^{136}\) That lHo pa was recounting a real event does not preclude that the author arranged the facts when putting it in writing. No account is ever purely objective and exhaustive. Abbreviation and paraphrase must be presupposed, reformulation as well, for there was little chance that the non-Buddhist opponent would have been conversant in Tibetan. In other words, even in lHo pa’s account is based on a real event, we are still dealing with a narrative. The rhetoric of debate narrative must thus be taken into consideration when evaluating the status of the various statements. For instance, the opponent’s “statement of intention” is more likely an addition of the author than a reflection of something that was said before or during the debate. It is also conceivable that the alleged conversion of the opponent following his defeat is simply a literary convention.

In the case of figure (b), as lHo pa would be attributing an argument to Sa pan in order to illustrate his skills in debate, one can expect that he would

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\(^{135}\) This option is less likely in view of the apparent rarity of debates between Tibetan Buddhists and Indian non-Buddhists; see n. 8. The inclusion of such an episode in Sa pan’s biography in cases (b) or (c) can be explained in view of the reasons discussed in 6.1.

\(^{136}\) I come back below to the question of the plausibility of lHo pa’s familiarity with MHK/Tj’s line of argumentation.
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take special care to put into the mouth of his teacher an argument that is not only pertinent, but also formally valid. In brief, he would construct or recycle (in case c) an argument suitable to be attributed to the renowned Sa pañ, and that would have been recognized as a clever logical argument against non-Buddhists by contemporaneous readers familiar with debates. One would, in this case, presume that IHo pa addresses a readership who is familiar with the argument from MHK/TJ cryptically hinted at and would possibly recognize the citation of the hymn, and that the form of the reported argument matches quite precisely the prescriptions of theoretical treatises. The form of the argument found in IHo pa’s narrative — a one-member proof-statement — shows that even if IHo pa constructed the argument, he did not settle for a stereotyped version of a proof-statement.

Whichever of the above three options prevails, we can draw the conclusion that IHo pa’s narrative is representative of debate argumentation as it did or could have taken place in these days, but that his narrative is not a mirror-account of actual events.

An unsettled question in both cases is that of the familiarity IHo pa might have had with the line of argumentation developed in MHK/TJ and thereby recognized (in case a) or put forward (in case b) the mention of slumber as a pertinent and logically grounded argument.137 That Sa pañ might have drawn from this source is plausible. Sa pañ certainly knew MHK and TJ, which had been available in Tibet since the eleventh century (they were translated on the request of rNgog legs pa’i shes rab by Atiśa and the translator Nag tsho). They are not mentioned by Sa pañ’s biographers among the texts enumerated when accounting for his studies,138 but Sa pañ refers to TJ for instance in the mKhas ’jug when enumerating the various kinds of non-Buddhist views.139

The “slumber argument” in the sKyid grong debate is composed of the association of slumber with mental confusion, presumably based on a MHK/TJ-like background, in combination with the contrastive claim of the “Suprātāprabhātastotra. It remains a question whether one is dealing with an original combination — by Sa pañ, by IHo pa, or by another scholar — or if Sa pañ or IHo pa is drawing from a pool of well-known ready-made arguments against non-Buddhist opponents that the learned audience, respectively readership, would be expected to recognize. In such a case, one could expect the slumber argument to surface in other Tibetan works when it comes to refuting non-Buddhists. I have not as yet identified any such instance. The only possible echo to the MHK/TJ argumentation that I have

137 The mention, in IHo pa’s narrative, of subsequent steps in the debate [5] is not in itself a decisive element. It may admittedly indicate that IHo pa himself considered that Sa pañ’s explicit statement was not the best way to illustrate Sa pañ’s capacity as a logician, and that this addition was meant to secure Sa pañ’s status of renowned logician by mentioning a follow-up, involving logical arguments, to the first exchange. But on the other hand, it is quite plausible that the debate did not stop at this first exchange of views and that the discussion went further, maybe in a less remarkable way; i.e., the first argument was held as most representative of a logician’s prowess, which then did not need further exemplification. Zhu chen mentions that the opponent is defeated by “logic and scriptures” (lDe mig 11b4: lung rigs khyis tshar bdal), which is not in itself indicative of his perceiving the first argument as “scriptural” insofar as the formula pairing the two is a locus classicus. Several biographers only mention logic.

138 They also do not appear in the list of Madhyamaka works studied by earlier Sa skya pas. See Jackson 1985.

139 mKhas ’jug ad III.43. See Jackson 1987: 344.
found so far (apart from IHo pa’s narrative and other narratives adopting the same scenario) occurs in annotations to the biography of Sa pan composed in 1579 by Rin spungs pa Ngag dbang ’jigs med grags pa, although not in the chapter where this author deals with the debate of sKyiid grong. In the fourth chapter (pp. 179–190) that deals with Sa pan’s studies with Indian and Tibetan masters, Rin spungs pa mentions the three gods Brahmā, Viśṇu and Śīva. Anonymous annotations added to the versified text associate each god with one of the “three poisons” (dug gsum, the expression occurs in the following verse) or basic afflictions: Brahmā with mental confusion, Viṣṇu with hatred, and Śīva with lust. No mention is made there of behaviors associated with these afflictions, but these annotations strongly suggest knowledge of the passage of MHK/TJ that we discussed.

As for the citation from the *Suprātāprabhāhāstotra*, Bla ma dam pa, writing a century after IHo pa (his work dates from 1344), identifies it by name; so does Bo dong (who obviously bases himself on Bla ma dam pa). But in sPos khang pa’s account (dating from 1427), although the author mainly repeats the elements of IHo pa’s version (or of a like version), his rephrasing of Sa pan’s statement suggests that he did not recognize it as a citation from the *Suprātāprabhāhāstotra*. sPos khang pa does not, either, reproduce the logical articulation between the notion of “slumber” and that of “mental confusion.”

What can we learn from IHo pa’s narrative about the practice of debate in Tibet? In spite of IHo pa’s down-to-earth approach, there is not much that we can learn from his text pertaining to the practical aspects of a debate in the broad sense of the term. IHo pa’s narrative hints at the possibility that one party, that of the non-Buddhists, is seated at the beginning of the debate (see section 3, II). It is explicit about the consequence of defeat, namely, the conversion of the opponent, but, as indicated above, such an outcome may reflect the rhetoric of debate narratives rather than what actually transpired. In his study of the third chapter of the mKhas ‘jug, Jackson notes that if this treatise would appear at first sight to be a practical guide to debating, it actually deals with quite particular theoretical or technical points. The reason for this, Jackson suggests, is that “the basic steps of debating were apparently so well known that he considered them not to require a detailed separate exposition.” We might be facing a similar phenomenon when it comes to debate narratives: by the simple evocation of a “debate,” familiar images and situations would come to the mind of the readers, making the description of well-known practical details superfluous.

As far as the form of proof-statements is concerned, it is interesting that the argument (insofar one agrees to interpret it as a formal proof-statement)

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141 Note that Rin spungs pa also has a version of the sKyiid grong debate involving a slumber argument, which is stated as follows: tshangs <pa de nyid kyi> kyung rmongs <pa> chen <po> ’khor ba yi // mngal gyi rgya las thar <par> ma gyur <pa de i phyir> // gti mug mun pa’i dra ba che<en pos> // bcings nas muul <pa ste gnyid do song> ba ma yiin nam // (‘jam dbyangs legs lam 104a5).
142 ’jam dbyangs legs lam 90b3-4: braM ze’i slob dpun dpal ’dzin sdes // phyi ba’i ’grel par bcas pa dang // <gti mug can> tshangs dang <zhe sdang can> khub’ ’jug <’dod chags can> nam mkha’i skra can <te dbang phyug> gyi // rkang sen zla ris spui bor blangs pa’i mod // dug gsum rgya mtshor ’phyur ba byang grol nyid // thob byed nger len rgyu ru khas ’ched pa //.
143 See n. 72. I take the dates of composition from Jackson 1987: 23.
constitutes an instance of a one-member proof-statement, a form that is acceptable in Sa ḍān’s system, but rejected by several other thirteenth-century authors. If I Ho pa is reporting faithfully this aspect of the debate, this would indicate that such “short versions” of proof-statements were indeed used in debates and not a mere theoretical possibility. If he is customizing an argument, the fact that he chose a one-member proof statement rather than a two-member one might be indicative that this form was not exceptional.

If the present study may not have elicited any definitive answers to our questions pertaining to the details of debating processes — despite the allusion contained in the title of this paper, we still do not know whether debaters clapped hands when debating in skYid grong\(^\text{144}\) — it did reveal an original argument that was deemed effective against Indian non-Buddhists, however rare their presence would have been in thirteenth-century Tibet.

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TJ
Bhāviveka. *Tarkajvalā*. Tib. in D3856 Dza 40b4–329b1, P5256 Dza 43b7–380a7. PV1/PVSV


PVIn 1

MHK

*Suprātisphutātastotra (Kab tu snga bar nam lang pa)*
Śrīharṣadeva. Tib. in D1167, *bsTod tshogs*, Ka 239a4–240b5; P2056, 280a1–281b7.

\(^{144}\) The only clapping of hands that is mentioned takes place in Amipa’s version. It causes ‘Phrog byed dga’ ba to fall back from his escape in the sky. Amipa 1987: 59: “Le Sakyapa’ndita frappa dans ses mains et Harinanda retombe au sol.”
TV

*Viśnupurāṇa*
References are to the Sanskrit text as inputted by members of the SANSKNET-project based on the 1910 Bombay edition: Venkatesvara Steam Press, consulted at [http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/](http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/). See Wilson 1840 for the translation.

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(Abbreviations preceded by a star are sources used in this paper for their account of the sKyid grong debate)

*mKhas ‘jug*

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sgra sbYor baM po gnyis pa

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Theg mchog mdzod

★ Dalai lama gli dbyangs
Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho. Annals of Tibet: Song of the Spring Queen – Gangs can yul gyi sa la cphod pa'i mtho ris kyi rgyal blon gtsos bor brjod pa'i deb ther rdzogs ldan gzhon nu'i dga' ston dp'yid kyi rgyal mo'i gli dbyangs. E-text by THDL.

Deb sgon
‘Gos lo tsā ba gZhon nu dpal. Bod gangs can yul du chos dang chos smra ji ltar byung ba'i rim pa bstan pa'i deb ther sgon po. Chengdu, 1984: Si khrons mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

★ lDe mig

★ sDom gsum gongs gsal
sDom gsum legs bshad

Pab chen glu dbyangs
Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan. Chos kyi rje sa skya pad tsan kun dga’ rgyal mtshan gyi rtogs pa brjod pa dri za’i glu dbyangs. E-text no. S5884 from ACIP.

Bla ma brgyud rnam thar
Bla ma dam pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan. Bla ma brgyud pa’i rnam par thar ngo mtshan snang ba. (A) In: gSung ’bum — bSod nams rgyal mtshan, vol. 3 (ga), pp. 329–442 (folios 163b–171b). TBRC Library No. W00KG02390. (B) 50-folio dbu med manuscript. TBRC Library No. W11860.

dBa’ bzhed.

dBu ma rgya mtsho

dBu ma’i byung tshul

Mu stegs tshigs bcad

Zhang rnam thar

Zhib mo rdo rje

Yar klungs rnam thar ‘bring
Yar klungs pa (according to the colophon: Yar klungs pa Grags pa rgyal mtshan). Chos kyi rje sa sky a 5an 5ita kun dga’ rgyal mtsan dpal bzang
Clapping hands in sKyid grong?


Rigs gter

Rigs gter nji ma

★ Lam 'bras lo rgyus

gSal byed

★ gSung sgros ma

★ Hor chos 'byung
'Jigs med nam mkha'. Chen po hor gyi yul du dam pa'i chos ji ltar byung ba'i tshul bshad po rgyal ba'i bstan pa rin po che gsal bar byed pa'i sgron me. Ed. in Huth 1892. Transl. in Huth 1896.

★ IHo rnam thar

★ Amipa 1987

★ A mes gdung rabs
A mes zhab Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams. Sa skya'i gdung rabs ngo mtshar bag mdzod – 'Dzam gling byang phyogs kyi thub pa'i rgyal tshab chen po dpal ldan sa skya pa'i gdung rabs rin po che ji ltar byon pa'i tshul gyi rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar rin po che'i bag mdzod dgos 'dod kun 'byung. Beijing, 1986: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.
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Clapping hands in sKyid grong?

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Clapping hands in sKyid grong?


Seyfort Ruegg 2000


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Uspensky 2002


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van der Kuijip 1993b


van der Kuijip and Schaeffer 2009


Vitali 2003


Vitali 2007


Wilson 1840
Appendix 1

This appendix contains the portion of IHo pa’s biography dealing with the sKyid grong debate, supplemented by variants and parallels in later biographies that adopt this version of the event.

Abbreviations:

Lho=IHo pa kun mkhyen. dPal ldan sa skya paṇḍita’i rnam thar.
Bla=Blag ma dam pa bSod namgs rgyal mtshan. Bla ma brgyud rnam thar.
Bla A = gSung ’bum version; Bla B = dbu med mss.
sPos=sPos khang pa Rin chen rgyal mtshan. sDom gsun legs bsdad.
Bo=Bo dong Pan chen Phyo gsas las rnam rgyal. Lam ’bras lo rgyus.
Go=Go rams pa bSod namgs seng ge. sDom gsun dgon gsal.
Glo=Glo bo mkhyan chen bSod namgs lhun grub. mKhas jug rnam bsdad.
A=A mes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga’ bSod namgs. A mes gdüng rabs.

Text:

Bla, Bo add: de’ang chos rje nyid skyi (Bo: kyi) grong na bzhus pa’i tshe
Glo, A add: ‘di nyid rig (A: rigs) pa’i dbang phyug (A add gam) chen por gyur pa’i (A: par) grangs pa’i ’od dkar rgya mtshos ’i mtha’i ya (A: mthas) klas pa’i sa’i dkyil ’khor kun du ’phro bar gyur pa na /
snson skye dgu rnam s kyi tshe lo bsam gyis mi khyab pa thub pa’i dus su byung ba /
Bla, Bo, sPong, Go, Glo, A om.
thub pa chen po ser skya dang / drang srong rgyas pa dang / gzegis zan la 
sogs pa’i rjes su ’brang ba (Glo: ’brang ba’i; A: ’brangs pa’i) grangs can dang / 
rig byed pa (A om.) dang / rigs pa can zhes grangs shing / dbang phyug dang / 
tshangs pa dang / nyin mo long (Glo: longs) pa dang / nor lha’i bu 
dang / byin (Glo: spyin) za la sogos pa (Glo, A add cher) mug ba (Glo, A add dang) / 
lho phyogs kyi rgyud du kun du (Glo, A om.) rgyu zhing rnam par 
phyan pa /
Bla, Bo: dbang phyug dang tshangs pa la (Bla B om. la) lhar byed pa’i drang srong rgyas 
pa dang ser skya dang gzegis zan la sogos pa’i rjes su (Bla B om. su) ’brang ba’i 
sPos: chos rje ’di’i snyan pa’i grags pas ’phags pa’i yul du khyab par gyur te / lho phyogs 
bram ze’i rigs tshangs pa dbang phyug dang khyab ’jug dang nor lha’i bu la sogos pa 
skyabs su ’dzin par rig byed bzhis dang / grangs can dang rig can gyi grub pa’i mtha’ la 
mkhas par sbyangs shing lta ba log par ’dzin pas sems khongs pa /
Go: ’gro ba’i bla ma ’di nyid kyi stan pa’i grags pas rgya gar shar nub kun tu khyab pa’i 

tshe /

[II] ’phrog byed dga’ bo (Bla, Bo, Glo: ba) la sogos pa’i phyi rol pa’i ston pa 

drug gis dam bcas pa ni (Glo, A om. ni; Bla, Bo om. dam bcas pa ni) /

u bu cag (Bla, Bo, Glo, A: kho bo cag) kha ba can gyi lhongs su song la / de na 
gnas pa’i skye bo (Bla A, Bo: bu) gau (Bla, Glo: go’u; Bo: go) ta ma’i dge sbyang 
(Glo, A: dge slong) du khas (Glo add du) ’che ba / bud med kyi brtul zhugs ’dzin 
zhing (Bla, Bo, A: cing) lta ba dang sphyod pa ngan pa la zhen pa de dag (Glo, A: 
de) bzLog (Bo: zlog) par bya’o zhes
Clapping hands in sKyid grong?

sPos: ’phrog byed nga’ ba la sogs pa’i phyi rol pa’i ston pa drug gis / ’di skad ces kho bo cag rnam byang phyogs kha can gyi ljongs su song la / de na yod pa’i skye bo dge sbyong go’u ta ma’i slob mar khas ’che zhing / chang dang bud med kyi brtal zhugs can de dang sun dbyang bar bya’o zhes
Go: rgya gar lho phyogs pa’ phrog byed nga’ bo la sogs pa phyi rol pa’i ston pa drug gis rt sod par brtsums te
glengs (A: gleng) te mthar gyis (Glo, A om.) song ba dang /
sPos: glengs nas mthar gyis ’ongs te
Bl, Bo, Go om.
bdag (Glo, A: bdag cag) gi bla ma rgol ba ngan pa’i khyu mchog gi spyi gtsug rnam par gnon pa’i seng ge ’di byang chub kyi snying po rdo rje gdan las byang phyogs su dpag tshad buc phrag drug (Glo, A; lHo: drug) bgrod pa na (Glo, A om.) /
Bl, Bo, sPos, Go om.
mang yul skyid grong (lHo: rong) (Go add gi) ’phags pa wa ti’i gtsug lag khang dang ’dab (Go, Glo: ’dabs) ’byor ba’i tshong ’dus (Go: dus) kyi grong (Go, Glo, A om. kyi grong) na bzhugs pa’i tshe /
Bl, Bo, sPos om.
sgnar smos pa’i ston pa drug po der lhags pa na /
Bl, Bo: dam bcas pa de dag der lhag nas sPos om.
Go: ston pa drug po dag lhags pa na

III de thams cad (Go, Glo om. de; Bla, Bo, A om. de thams cad) chos kyi rje (Glo, A: chos rje) nyid dang / bde bar gshegs pa’i rten (Bl, Bo: sangs rgyas pa’i rten (Bo: brten) dang chos rje nyid) la phyogs mi ’tshal bar bde legs dang bsnags (Bo: snags) par ’os pa’i tshigs su bcad pa (Bl, Bo: tshigs bcad) re re tsam bton (Bo: gton; Glo, A: brjod) nas gras la ’khod pa nas (Bl, Bo: nas; Bl, Bl: pa la; Bo, Glo, A; na pa; Go: de)
sPos: mang yul skyid grong du ’ongs pa’i tshe / bod yul gyi sde snod ’dzin pa gzhun san yang spro bar ma gyur te / de’i tshe chos rje nyid kyi rt sod pa’i skabs physe nas phan tshun bde bar byon rnam (read nam) ’ongs pa legs so zhes gsong por smra zhing bzhin ’dzum pas ’khod pa dang /

III di skad smra (Bl, Bl, Bo, A: smras) ste /
sPos: ral pa can dag na re
Go om.

III.1 nged kyi rigs thams cad ni (Go, Glo, A; Bla, Bo: thams cad kyi; lHo: thams cad kyi) bla ma tshangs pa (sPong add nyid) nas brtsums (Bo: tsums) te deng sang (Bl, Bo: A; deng sang; Go: deng song) gi bar du gau (Bl, Bo, Go: gau; Glo: gau’u) ta ma’i bsthan pa (Bo om.) la mi llos (Glo: bltos) / dkon mchog gsum la skyabs su ’gro ma myong bas (Bo: ba’i; Glo: ba) drang srong gi (Bl, Bo: gyi) rigs rnam par dag pa kho bo cag (Glo: dag pa kho na; Go: dag pa’o) yin no (Bl, Bo, Go om.) /

zhes dregs shing (Bl, Bo, Go om.) smra bar byed do /
sPos: nged cag gi rigs rnam par dag pa ’di ni bla ma tshangs pa nyid nas ding sang gi bar du go’u ta ma’i lugs dang ma ’dres shing de la skyabs su ’gro ma myong ba’i gtsang ma khyyad par can yin no zhes zer ro /

de’i dus su (Bl, de dus; Bo: de du; Glo, A om. su) chos kyi rje ’dis (Bl, Bo: chos rje) gsungs pa ni /
sPos: de la chos rje nyid kyi
Go: de’i tshe chos rje ’dis

[1] gi (Bl, Bo om.) tshangs pa de ni [2] ston pa la shin tu (lHo, Go, A; Glo: shin du; Bl, Bo om.) gua pa yin ng (Go: no) /
Bl: tshangs pa de ni kho bo’i ston pa la shin du gua shing skyabs su song ba yin mod kyi
[3] on kyang de (sPos, Bo om.) gti mug che bas (sPos add da dung) gnyid kyi
non pa ma yin (Bl, Bo, A: min) nam /
[4] ji (sPos: ‘di; Go: ci) skad du / 
rab mchog lag pa bzhi pa bcu drug (Bla B add ni) phyed phyed phyogs (Bla B om.) kyi gdong pa can // 
bzlas (Bo: zlas) dang nges pa’i cho ga shes shing nges brjod (Bo: rjod) rig byed ‘don pa po (Bla B: pas so) // 
dri med padma’i skye (Bla B: skyes) gnas tshangs (Bla B om.) pa de yang (Bla B, Glo: de’ang) gnyid log gyur / 
sPos: rab mchog lag pa bzhi pa bcu drug phyed phyed gdeng bas rig byed ‘don mkhas nges brjod smra ba po / gser gyi mngal dang dri med padma’i skyes gnas tshangs pa de yang da dung gnyid log gyur pa yin / 
Go: rab mchog bzhi pa zhes sogs kyi tshigs bcad gsungs pas 

Blu, Bla, Glo, A: zhes dang 
sPos: ces pa dang 

[5] kha bo’i (Bo: kho bo) ston pa stobs bcu mnga’ ba de ni rtag tu (sPos: rtag par; Bo: brtag tu) rab tu (Bla B om. tu) snga (Bla, Bo, sPos, Glo, A; IHo: mnga’) ba nyan du (Bla B: ba nyan tu; sPos: bar) nam langs (sPos: nam langs gyur) pa’o // 
zhes gsungs pas / 
sPos: zhes smras pa dang / 
Blu, Bo: zhes rab tu snga (Bo: mnga’) bar nam langs pa’i bstod pa las phyung (Bla B: ‘byung; Bo: byung) ba’i tshig de dag (Bo tshig de) gsungs pas 
Go om 

[III.2] de dag (Go, Glo, A add shin tu; Glo add shin du) ma bzod cing ma rangs pas ‘bel ba’i gam gyi skabs nyan du (Go, A: rnyed de; Glo: rnyed) rgol ba ngan pa de (Go, A add thams cad) re re nas phyung (Go, Glo, A: sun phyung) zhing pham par mdzad de / mi smra ba’i brtul zhugs la bkod nas / 

[III.3] slar yang de thams cad kyi ita ba ngan pas (A: pa’i) bsnyems (Go, Glo, A: snyems) pa’i dri ma med par mdzad de 
Blu, Bo: de dag ma rangs nas rtso de pa’i gam (Bo om. gam) rgya cher byed pa’i skabs de nyan du rgol ba de dag re re nas sun phyung bas mi smra ba’i brtul zhugs la (Bo: las) bkod de (Bla B, Bo: pas) khungs pa (Bo: khongs) drungs nas phyung ste lta ba ngan pa’i sems kyi dri ma bsal nas 
sPos: shin tu ma bzod par grub pa’i mtha’ gzhung ‘dzugs pa la zhugs te rang rang gi blo la nus pa ci yod pa’i gta tshigs kyis gtan la phab pa’i mju gtu lta ba log pas dregs pa’i bram ze de dag yang dag pa’i rigs pas tshar bcad cang (read: cing) mi smra ba’i brtul zhugs la bkod nas 

[IV] ral pa’i khur bregs nas nyan kyi thad du rab tu byung ste / 
Blu, Bo: bstan (Bo: stan) pa la rab tu byung ste (Bla B: phyung ste; Bo: phyung te) 
sPos: ral pa’i khur rams bregs shing rab tu byung bar mdzad do // 
nges par ‘byung ba rin po che’ (Glo: chena’i) ‘byor ba dang ldan par (A: pa) mdzad (Go om. par mdzad) pa’i skabs su / shakya’i rgyal po de’i bstan (Go, Glo, A; IHo: bstan) pa la rma ‘byin pa gang dag byung ba na slar yang (Go, Glo, A add de bzhin du) ‘dul (Go, A: gdul) bar bya’o zhes dgongs te (A: snyam du dgongs nas) ‘di gsungs pa / 

Blu, Bo, sPos om. 

[V] 
rgya mtsho’i ... ’dzin par shog {=} the “verses of the subduing of the six non-
Buddhist teachers”; see Appendix 2 |
ces gsungs te’i rgyas par mdzad do (Go, Glo, A om.) // 

Blu, Bo, sPos om. 

sPos add: ral pa dag ’jam pa’i dbyangs kyi lha khang du phul nas da lta yang yod do // 
Go add: de’i ral pa’i khur bregs nas rab tu byung ste / ral pa rams dpal ldan sa skya’i gtsug lag khang na da lta yang yod do // 
Glo, A add: de dag gi ral pa dpal ldan sa skya’i dbyul rtsa rnyes na ma da lta’ang (A: yang) yod do //
Clapping hands in sKyid grong?

Bla, Bo add: slar rgya gar du log pas rgya gar shar nub kun du chos kyi rje la (Bo om. la) smra ba’i mchog tu grags so /

Appendix 2

The text below is based on the sDe dge edition of Sa pa’ns works (see Mu stegs tshigs bcad in the bibliography). Variant readings from the biographies where these verses are cited are given in footnotes (see appendix 1 for the abbreviations).

Mu stegs kyi ston pa drug btul ba’i tshigs bcad bzhugs

om svasti siddham

rgya mtsho’i gos can rgya mtsho’i\textsuperscript{145} mhas\textsuperscript{146} klas sa chen ’di na lha chen po // ‘phrog byed dran\textsuperscript{147} byed de dag mchod\textsuperscript{148} byed thub pa drang srong garga\textsuperscript{149} sog\textsuperscript{s} // rgyas pa grog mkhar ba dang gzegs zan\textsuperscript{150} rkang mig ser skya’i rjes ’jug pa // thor tshugs\textsuperscript{151} shing shun lo ma ’i gos can thal ba dbyu\textsuperscript{152} gu ku sha thogs // ral pa’i khur ’dzin mun’dzas\textsuperscript{153} legs dkris ri dags\textsuperscript{154} gyang gzhi’i stod g’yogs can // so’\textsuperscript{s} ris gsom mthshan rtse mo can mchod tshangs skud mchod phyir thogs pa ’chang // rig byed kun sbyangs\textsuperscript{155} nges brjod ’don mkhas sgra dang sdeb sbyor mthar son pa //

bdag tu lta’i lta ba la lta\textsuperscript{157} rgyun tu dka’ spyad\textsuperscript{158} nga rgyal can // de lta’i tshul can nu ste’g glang chen rtag tu\textsuperscript{159} myos pa’i glad\textsuperscript{160} gebs\textsuperscript{161} pa // dpal ldan smra ba’i seng ge blo gros stobs ldan rigs\textsuperscript{162} pa’i mche ba can // brda spro byed gzhung yan lag rab rdzogs bde gshegs bstan pa’i ral pas brjid // legs sbyar nga ro snyan tshig\textsuperscript{163} gad rgyang shtag chod\textsuperscript{164} sun ‘byin mig bgrund\textsuperscript{165} pa //

de lta’i ri dags\textsuperscript{166} rgyal po de // dpal ldan sa skya’i gangs rir gnas // blo gsal rnam s kyis\textsuperscript{167} ri dags\textsuperscript{168} skyong //
rgol ba ngan pa’i wa tshogs ’joms //
da dung du yang mu ste gs byed //
thams cad chos kyis pham byas nas //
bsd bar gshegs pa’i bstan pa’i tshul //
kun dga’i rgyal mtshan ’dzin par shog //

mang yul skyid grong ’phags pa wa ti’i gtsug lag khang dang nye ba’i sa’i cha / tshong dus kyi dbus su / ’phrog byed dga’ ba la sogz pa / mu ste gs kyi ston pa drug pham par byas nas / sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la bcug ste /
rab tu byung ba’i dus su sbyar ba’o //

\*