ON THE SO-CALLED DIFFICULT POINT OF THE APOHA THEORY

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A Buddhist logician, when he wishes to develop his theory about universals, concepts, identities, negations and the like being mind-created and hence fictional, is soon faced with the problem as to how these fictional pseudo-entities can nonetheless lead us to knowledge about the real world. If, for example, all logical reasons (*hetu*), properties to be proven (*sādhya*; *sādhya-dharma*), means of proof (*sādhana*) and other such terms in reasoning are mind-created universals, then how can an inference, which depends upon these terms, give us any true information about the real world of particular entities (*svalakṣaṇa*), and how can we be induced to act correctly in a world which is not just itself a fiction? Dharmakīrti and his school had a complex solution to this conundrum, a solution which for want of a better designation might be called the "theory of unconscious error", one whose essential points can, for our purposes, be characterized along the following lines:

a. What appears to conceptual thought (*vikalpa*), or is apprehended (*grāhya*) by conceptual thought, is always a fiction and a universal, one which is created by a process of exclusion (*apoha*).

b. A type of error (*bhrānti*) is always present in conceptual thought. Specifically, an essential feature of such thought is that it involves a determination (*adhyavasāya*) of the apprehended fiction as being a real particular, and thus, by an unconscious error, this thought can make us reach (*prāpaka*) a particular in the world.

These two points are brought out clearly in sources such as Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (PVin) II and Dharmottara's commentary (NBT) on Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu* (NB) I.12.

> PVin II.2,8-10 (ed. Steinkellner): *svapratibhāse 'narthe 'rthādhyavasāyena pra-vartanād bhrāntir apy arthasambandhena tadavyabhicārāt pramāṇam.* "There is error (*bhrānti*) in that [conceptual thought] practically applies by determining (*adhyavasāya*) its own representation (*svapratibhāsa*), which is not the [actual]

object, to be the object. Nonetheless, it is a *pramāṇa*, in that, by having a necessary connection (*sambandha*) with the object, it is non-deviant with regard to that [object]."[1]

NBT 71.5-72.2 (ed. Malvania) ad NB I.12: *tathānumānam api svapratibhāse 'narthe arthādhyavasāyena pravṛtter anarthagrāhi | sa punar āropito 'rtho gṛhyamāṇaḥ svalakṣaṇatvenāvasīyate yataḥ, tataḥ svalakṣaṇam avasitaṃ pravṛttiviṣayo anumānasya | anarthas tu grāhyaḥ |* ... "Similarly, inference does not apprehend the [actual] object either (*anarthagrāhin*), in that it practically applies by determining its own representation, which is not the [actual] object, to be the object. Still, because the imagined object which is being apprehended is determined to be a particular, the determined particular (*svalakṣaṇam avasitam*) is therefore the object of practical application (*pravṛttiviṣaya*) of inference, but what is apprehended [by conceptual thought] is not the [actual] object."

Now, what we find discussed regularly and in detail in Tibetan logic texts are the exact ways in which the error and the process of *adhyavasāya* inherent to conceptual thought occur. (In what follows, for the sake of a considerable economy of expression, I'll just use "thought" for *vikalpa*. It should however be understood that we will always mean thought which proceeds invariably by concepts, and not just any and every type of mental activity, or just "what is in one's mind".) Of course, for a Dharmakīrtian logician, while all such thought proceeds along the lines of points *a* and *b*, some does lead to knowledge of particulars, via *adhyavasāya*, and some does not – inferring fire on a smoky hill does, while thinking about nonexistent things like barren women's children does not, and the truth criterion here is whether the putative object possesses *arthakriyāsāmarthya* ("ability to accomplish an aim"). Equally, there is, in Dharmakīrti, a very important causal account which complements the *arthakriyā* criterion of truth: particulars cause perceptions, which leave imprints on one's mind, and these imprints in turn condition subsequent thought. Thus there can be a necessary connection (*sambandha*; *pratibandha*) of causality between particulars and thought, albeit indirect, which explains why *adhyavasāya* can work so well as to "make us reach" or "make us obtain" (*prāpaka*) the real world, and also why we can continue to say justifiably that in certain cases a conceptually created fiction, i.e. a universal, is a property of real things and in other cases that it is not.[2] Certain

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1 Cf. STEINKELLNER (1979) p. 26-27; see also PVin-*Ṭīkā* 7,1-3 in STEINKELLNER and KRASSER (1989).

2 Certain universals can be said to qualify particular entities due to an *indirect causal relation* between the particulars, on the one hand, and, on the other, the thoughts

Tibetan schools, however, developed other aspects of the process of unconscious error, supplementary and even alternative accounts, which tried to explain the fine points and sometimes the step-by-step details of the internal mechanisms of the thought process. And indeed, whatever be the merits of their answers, the interest of the questions "Just how do thought and determination actually work to reach reality?" and "What are the necessary ontological conditions for them to be able to work in this way?" was by no means exhausted by the Dharmakīrtian account.

which have these universals as their apprehended objects. The particulars cause direct perceptions, which leave imprints on one's mind, and these imprints in turn cause the thought of a universal. The process was explained by Dharmakīrti in various places. See e.g. *Pramāṇavārttika* (PV) III (*pratyakṣa*), k. 52-53. Here Dharmakīrti was faced with the problem as to how a universal (*sāmānya*) could be connected with real, particular entities like form, given that cognitions of universals arise even when the real entity is absent. PV III.53: *bhāvadharmatvahāniś ced bhāvagrahaṇapūrvakam / tajjñānam ity adoṣo 'yam* "If it is said that [universals] will lose [their status of] being properties of entities, this is not a fault, for the cognition of the [universal] was preceded by an apprehension of the entity." Devendrabuddhi, in commenting on k. 53, fleshes out the argument: a universal U is a quality of particulars p1, p2, p3, etc., because the thought of U is causally conditioned by tendencies imprinted by direct perceptions of p1, p2, p3, these perceptions being causally linked to p1, p2, p3. *Pramāṇavārttikapañjikā*, 167b8-168a1: *gzugs la sogs pa mthong bas bsgos pa'i bag chags la brten nas rnam par rtog pa skye ba na / rang nyid kyi gzung ba'i rnam pa la gzugs la sogs pa'i rnam pa nyid du zhen pas 'jug pa de ltar na gzugs la sogs pa mthong ba'i stobs kyis skye ba'i phyir dang / der zhen pa'i phyir dngos po'i chos yin no zhes tha snyad du byas pa yin pa yin no //* "When thought (*vikalpa*) arises in dependence upon karmic tendencies (*vāsanā*) which were instilled due to one's having seen [particular] forms and so forth, it determines (*zhen pa = adhyavasāya*) apprehended aspects (*rnam pa = ākāra*) of its own as being the aspects of form and so forth and thus practically applies [to forms, etc.]. In this way, [thought of form, etc., i.e. thought of the universal] arises [indirectly] due to the influence of seeing [particular] forms and so forth, and determines [its own aspects] to be those [i.e. real aspects of form], and therefore [for these two reasons] one does call [the universal] a property of the entity." Cf. Japanese transl. by H. TOSAKI (1979), p. 123. See also, e.g., PV I, k. 80-81: *sa ca sarvaḥ padārthānām anyonyābhāvasaṃśrayaḥ / tenānyāpohaviṣayo vastulābhasya cāśrayaḥ // yatrāsti vastusambandho yathoktānumitau yathā /* "Now all this [i.e. thought] is based on things being separate the one from the other. Thus, it has as object an exclusion and is the ground for reaching the real entity when it is necessarily connected with the real entity, as in the case of the inference which was just explained." See STEINKELLNER (1971) p. 189ff; FRAUWALLNER (1932) p. 269-270. For a dGe lugs pa version of the indirect causal relation with particulars and their explanation of *prāpakatva*, see n. 3 below.

dGa' ldan pa and later dGe lugs pa writers developed a very complex answer to these two questions, devoting a strikingly minimal amount of energy or ingenuity to elaborating upon the Dharmakīrtian causal account, the account of *prāpakatva* or even that of *arthakriyā*. Rather, they pursued an approach which was depicted by Tsong kha pa and rGyal tshab rje as depending, above all, upon properly seeing through a so-called obstacle (*gegs*) or difficult point (*dka' gnas/gnad*) which people have when tackling issues connected with *apoha*.[3] In what follows, we shall look at this dGa' ldan - dGe lugs approach, trying to see why it came about, and contrasting it with certain Indian and Indian-like positions, such as those of Sa skya Paṇḍita and certain Rigs gter ba's, who, as was so frequently the case in Tibetan epistemology, had complex debates on this matter with Tsong kha pa, his predecessors and his successors. (In what follows, I will, for the sake of simplicity, drop the difference between "dGa' ldan pa" and "dGe lugs pa", and speak only of "dGe lugs pa", with the caveat that this is something of a distortion which attaches Tsong kha pa and his two main disciples to a rigidified version of their thought developed by later interpreters.[4])

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3 It is telling that in *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo* f. 16a6-21b3 (p. 182-193), which is the source for most of the original developments in the dGe lugs pa theory of *apoha*, Tsong kha pa devotes about ten pages to the discussion centred around the "obstacle" (i.e. the "difficult point"), and then devotes about one line and a half to a perfectly ordinary version of the causal link between particulars and thought and the way in which we are "made to reach/obtain" particulars. His version is (f. 21b3-5, p. 193): *rtog pa la brten nas rang mtshan thob pa'i rgyu mtshan don rang mtshan 'dzin pa'i mngon sum gyis don du zhen pa'i bag chags 'jog pa'i rgyu byas | bag chags la brten nas don du zhen pa'i rtog pa skye zhing des rang mtshan la 'jug par byed cing zhugs pa las don thob nus pa yin no ||* "The reason for us obtaining particulars (*svalakṣaṇa*) in reliance on thought is as follows: the perception (*mngon sum = pratyakṣa*) which apprehends the *svalakṣaṇa* object constitutes the cause for instilling a karmic tendency (*bag chags = vāsanā*) for determining (*zhen pa = adhyavasāya*) the object. In dependence upon the *vāsanā*, a thought arises which determines the object and this makes one practically apply oneself to the *svalakṣaṇa* – due to this practical application the object can be obtained." dGe 'dun grub pa, in *Tshad ma rigs rgyan* p. 354, also shows the same minimal interest in the causal account, dealing with it in even less space: *gal te rtog pa'i snang ba dngos por med na rtog pas rang mtshan ji ltar thob ce na | dang por rang mtshan 'dzin pa'i mngon sum gyis bag chags pa bzhag pa las skyes pa'i rtog pas rang mtshan la zhen nas zhugs pas rang mtshan thob pa yin no |.*

4 On this point, see L. VAN DER KUIJP (1985) p. 33-34.

To begin with, Tsong kha pa *et al.* felt that in order for thought and inference to be able to bear upon or "contact" (*reg pa*) the real world, it was necessary that at least some universals, some *sādhya*, some *dharmin*, some reasons, some examples, some identities, some differences, etc., etc. should actually be fully real entities (*dngos po*) and particulars (*rang mtshan*). Georges DREYFUS, in important studies on the dGe lugs theory of universals, has termed their theory a type of "moderate realism" – viz. the position that real universals exist, but only "in" the particular entities (*don la gnas pa*), or in other words, that universals are substantially/essentially identical (*rdzas gcig/bdag nyid gcig*) with the particulars they qualify.[5] Now, this realism does, of course, seem to fly in the face of well-known principles of the *apoha* theory found in Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, and most later logicians, about universals being unreal, and not surprisingly, it was vociferously rejected by anti-realist exponents of the Sa skya pa Rigs gter ba tradition.[6]

5 See DREYFUS (1992), (1994), as well as the chapters on universals and *apoha* in DREYFUS (1991). The latter work, to which I am heavily indebted, goes into considerable detail on the debates between the Sa skya pa and dGe lugs pa thinkers on some of these major issues of epistemology.

6 Thus, Go rams pa, in his *Rigs gter dka' gnas* f. 55a1-5, criticizes some "Tibetans" (*bod dag*) who reject real universals (*spyi dngos po ba*), but accept that there can be a common basis (*gzhi mthun = samānādhikaraṇa*), between "universal" (*spyi*) and "real entity" (*dngos po*). This position, which is *exactly* like the dGe lugs pa account of universals in their *bsDus grwa* texts, comes down to saying that "universal itself" is unreal, but that there are universals which are real entities. In short, this is the ubiquitous dGe lugs pa-gSang phu move of making a separation between an unreal *A* itself and real *A*'s which we discuss in detail below. Go rams pa dismisses the move as verbal obscurantism (*tshig gi sgrib g.yogs*), and cites a passage from Śākyabuddhi's commentary on PV, "There is no real entity at all which is said to be a universal", concluding with the caustic admonition, "Think about whether or not they are in contradiction with this proposition!" (*Śākya blos / spyi zhes bya ba'i dngos por gyur ba ni cung zad kyang yod pa ma yin no zhes gsungs pa'i don dang 'gal mi 'gal soms shig*). Surprisingly enough, however, Sa skya Paṇḍita's disciple, 'U yug pa Rigs pa'i seng ge, was on the realist side of the debate, and seems to have played a significant role in developing the Tibetan "moderate realist" view that there are "universals which exist in the [real] objects" (*don la yod pa'i spyi*) – see DREYFUS (1992), p. 39-40. Note that there was also a *Rigs gter* commentary by rGyal tshab, the *Rigs gter rnam bshad*, which attempted, with rather unconvincing arguments, to explain the *Rigs gter* from the realist standpoint of the gSang phu tradition. See DREYFUS (1994). See also JACKSON (1987), p. 157, n. 68, who mentions that according to Śākya mchog ldan "many of the major seminaries maintained the study or class of the 'Summaries' [Phya pa's *bsDus pa*] in accordance with the *Rigs gter.*" There were therefore also *syntheses* of Rigs gter ba and Phya pa traditions.

Go rams pa bSod nams Seng ge and gSer mdog Paṇ chen Śākya mchog
ldan, for example, dismiss it as a Tibetan invention, in other words, as being
completely without basis in Indian texts. Indeed, Sa skya Paṇḍita himself
was very aware of various Buddhist realist positions – he attributes them,
contemptuously, to "Tibetans" (*bod rnams*), the term by which he generally
refers to the rNgog and Phya pa traditions developed in gSang phu sNe'u
thog monastery – and we can be confident that much of the dGe lugs pa's
tradition of realism was nothing fundamentally original on their part, but
was inspired largely by gSang phu positions, especially based upon the
Tshad ma'i bsDus pa of the early 12th century thinker, Phya pa Chos kyi
Seng ge.[7]

All that said, Go rams pa and other Sa skya pas may well have been a
bit too harsh in accusing "Tibetans" and their "later followers" of *completely*
inventing things, for there probably was also a weakening, in later Indian
Buddhist logic, of the stricture that all universals must be unreal. As I had
briefly shown in an article some years ago, Śaṃkarananda seems to be one
plausible candidate for being an Indian Buddhist realist, and indeed the dGe
lugs pa frequently cite a passage from his commentary on *Pramāṇavārttika*
(PV) I.40 (= PVin II, 29) as their prime Indian source on the question.[8]
DREYFUS (1992) has looked at other potential Indian sources in much more
detail, examining *inter alia* some aspects of Dharmottara's writings. We
also need to take very seriously the possibility of realism or realistic trends
being present in Kashmir and being communicated to Tibet by rNgog lo tsā
ba, as seems to be indicated by passages in Go rams pa's *Tshad ma rigs gter
dka' gnas*, which describe Bhavyarāja, the Kashmiri paṇḍit and co-translator
of *Pramāṇavārttika* and numerous other *pramāṇa* texts with rNgog, as
promoting the position of *spyi dngos po ba* ("real universals").[9] The history

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7 The *bsDus pa* tradition of Phya pa enjoyed considerable prestige for its sophisti-
   cation and subtleties even up until around the 15th century, whereas the interest in
   Rigs gter had comparatively faded in the 13th and 14th centuries, only to be revived
   by g.Yag ston Seng ge dpal and Śākya mchog ldan – see JACKSON (1987) p. 137-
   138. On gSang phu sNe'u thog, Phya pa and the complex influence of this tradition
   on the dGe lugs pa and Sa skya pa, the research is developing rapidly and the
   references are becoming numerous: besides the pioneering publications of VAN DER
   KUIJP (1978), (1983), see ONODA (1992a), especially chapter 2, (1992b), DREYFUS
   (1991), (1994) and JACKSON (1987).

8 See TILLEMANS (1984) p. 64-65, n. 5.

9 See VAN DER KUIJP (1983) p. 46 and p. 286, n. 173. On Bhavyarāja, see also NAUDOU
   (1968) p.183ff.

of the often roundabout ways in which Indian currents influenced the formation of Tibetan theories of universals is complex and murky, and still needs much investigation. Suffice it to say here that the dGe lugs pa probably did have some Indian antecedents for a *general* view of realism. Nonetheless, the details of their own position and their actual arguments or the route which they took to "resolve" prima facie contradictions with Dignāga and Dharmakīrti and arrive at their own version of moderate realism, turn on a curious ensemble of ideas which has no parallel that I know of in Indian thought. This is what is involved in the so-called difficult point.

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The basic source for the dGe lugs pa position on the "obstacle" / "difficult point" and many other aspects of *apoha* seems to have been Tsong kha pa's *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo*, a work which is described as being rGyal tshab's recording of Tsong kha pa's lectures on *pramāṇa* (*rGyal tshab chos rjes rje'i drung du gsan pa*). The key passages from this work are taken almost verbatim by such authors as dGe 'dun grub pa and lCang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje, while rGyal tshab rje and mKhas grub rje's philosophical debts to the position laid out in the *Tshad ma'i brjed byang*, are also clear, even if the textual passages are not borrowed word by word. On the other hand, a proviso is in order to avoid giving the mistaken impression that all dGe lugs pas routinely use the term "difficult point" / "obstacle" in this connection. It is just Tsong kha pa who speaks of the "obstacle", and it is rGyal tshab rje in *rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed* who speaks somewhat bombastically of "the supreme main point of our difficulties of understanding in this tradition" (*gzhung lugs 'di'i rtogs dka' ba'i gnas* [or *gnad*] *kyi gtso bo dam pa*). True, besides rGyal tshab, textbook (*yig cha*) writers such as Paṇ chen bSod nams grags pa and Se ra rJe btsun Chos kyi rgyal mtshan do also use the term *dka' gnas / gnad* (with interchangeable spellings) in this connection, but this is nothing very remarkable because they are simply directly commenting on rGyal tshab's *rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed*.[10] In short, the terms *gegs*, and

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10 Paṇ chen bSod nams grags pa, *rNam 'grel bka' 'grel* f. 70b (p. 192): *gnyis pa* [*i.e. dogs pa skye ba'i rgyu mtshan rtogs dka' ba'i gnas kyi gtso bo*] *yod de* / *rtog pa la bum pa ma yin pa las log par snang ba rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa bkag na* / *rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa'i bum pa ma yin pa las log pa yang 'jog mi shes la*

dka' gnas / gnad are not actually themselves all that frequent in discussions on these matters, but, as will become clear, the doctrine is almost omnipresent in the dGe lugs pa's *apoha*-based philosophy of language and logic and in their *apoha*-dependent ontological positions.

We begin with some passages from *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo*. The parallel passages from rGyal tshab rje will be given in the notes. Tsong kha pa, first of all, speaks of a "point of doubt which arises amongst the knowledgeable" (*rtogs ldan la skye ba'i dogs pa'i gnas*):

> *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo* f. 16b-17a (p. 183-184): *dang po [rtogs ldan la skye ba'i dogs pa'i gnas 'god pa] ni / spyi dang bye brag dang rtags dang bsgrub bya dang dpe dang / dgag pa dang / sgrub pa dang gcig dang tha dad la sogs pa rnams rtog pas sgro btags su bshad pa'ang mthong zhing / spyi yin na sgro btags yin pas khyab pa dang de bzhin du rtags sogs la'ang khyab na / 'bras bu don gnyer la nye bar mkho ba'i don byed nus pa phal pa rnams dang / mngon par 'dod pa'i don gyi gtso bo kun mkhyen la sogs pa'i rnam gzhag bya sa med par 'gyur la / de ltar na mi rung ba chen por 'gyur bas / rnam gzhag de dag ma 'chol bar khas blangs pas chog pa dang spyi gzhi mthun sogs dngos po'i de kho na nyid du grub pa khegs pa'i gnyis tshogs de ji lta yin snyam pa dang / khyad par du bum 'dzin rtog pa dang kun mkhyen nges pa'i rtog pa la sogs pa'i nges yul rang mtshan du grub na rtog pa de dag ma 'khrul bar 'gyur bas dgag sgrub thams cad cig car bya dgos pa dang nges yul rang mtshan du grub pa bkag na rang mtshan de dag nges pa'i yul du 'jog tshul de dag shin tu dka' zhing nges pa'i yul du ma gyur na yod nges su mi rung bas rnam gzhag thams cad byar mi rung bar 'gyur te / ...* "The first [viz. the presentation of the points of doubt which arise amongst the knowledgeable] is as follows: we see that universal (*spyi = sāmānya*), particular (*bye brag = viśeṣa*), logical reason (*rtags = liṅga*), what is to be proved (*bsgrub bya = sādhya*), example (*dpe = dṛṣṭānta*), negative phenomenon (*dgag pa = pratiṣedha*), positive phenomenon (*sgrub pa = vidhi*), one (*gcig = eka*), different (*tha dad = bhinna; nānā*) and so forth are explained to be superimpositions (*sgro btags pa = samāropa; samāropita*) due to thought (*rtog pa*), and yet if it is so that when something is a universal it is pervaded by being a superimposition and similarly that logical reasons and the like are so pervaded,

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/ bum pa ma yin pa las log pa rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pas / rtog pa la bum pa ma yin pa las log par snang ba yang rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub par khas len dogs snyam pa ni dogs pa skye ba'i rgyu mtshan yin pa'i phyir /. Note that, if one compares this passage with rGyal tshab's text (see n. 14), then it is clear that bSod nams grags pa on occasion speaks of *bum pa ma yin pa las log pa* where he should have spoken of *bum pa ma yin pa las log par snang ba*. For Se ra Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, see *rNam 'grel spyi don* f. 105a et seq. He cites rGyal tshab, but with the spelling *dka' gnad* rather than *dka' gnas*.

then one can account for neither the secondary abilities to accomplish an aim (*don byed nus pa phal pa*) which are required if we are to seek [certain] fruits, nor the main points which we strive after, such as omniscience and so forth. So then there will be enormous inappropriate [consequences]. Therefore, one wonders how to combine both, viz. being able to accept these accounts [of omnisciences, karmic fruits, etc.] as not being muddled, and [yet] rule out that universal, common basis (*gzhi mthun* = *samānādhikaraṇa*), and so forth are established as having the quiddity (*de kho na nyid*) of real entities (*dngos po*). Specifically, if the ascertained objects (*nges yul*) of thought apprehending vases or thought ascertaining omniscience, etc. were to be established as particulars (*rang mtshan* = *svalakṣaṇa*), then these thoughts would be non-erroneous (*ma 'khrul ba* = *abhrānta*), and thus all [the object's] positive and negative [qualities] would have to be established simultaneously; if the ascertained objects are ruled out from being particulars, then it becomes extremely difficult to account for the particulars [in question] being objects which are ascertained (*nges pa'i yul du*). And if they are not objects which are ascertained, then they cannot be ascertained to exist, so therefore all accounting [for Buddhist doctrines, like omniscience, etc.] would become absurd."[11]

Tsong kha pa then goes on to list a number of other wrong positions and confusions and concludes that the obstacle (*gegs*) to our understanding the logicians' version of conventional and ultimate truths, and hence all the other points, is as follows:

> *rtog pa'i yul rang mtshan ma yin pa dang rang mtshan rtog pa'i yul yin pa gnyis 'gal bar 'dzin pa nyid yin no* "it is precisely to grasp as contradictory the pair [of propositions] that the object of thought (*rtog pa'i yul*) is not particular and that particulars are the objects of thought."[12]

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11   Cf. *Tshad ma rigs rgyan*, p. 350, which is very close to this passage.

12   *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo* f. 19a (p. 188): *yang rtog pa'i nges yul rang mtshan du grub pa 'gog pa skad byas pa dang rang mtshan rtog pa'i nges yul du bsgrub ma bde nas rtog pas rlom pa tsam nam sel ngor yod ces khas len pa ma gtogs don dam bzhag sa med pas don dam pa'i phyogs la skur pa btab par 'gyur bas kun rdzob mtha' dag rtog btags tsam du rang lugs la tshad mas legs par grub pa dang dngos po thams cad rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub par 'jog shes pa'i bden gnyis kyi rnam dbye 'jog shes pa'i gegs ni rtog pa'i yul rang mtshan ma yin pa dang rang mtshan rtog pa'i yul yin pa gnyis 'gal bar 'dzin pa nyid yin no* // "Also once one has said that it is ruled out that the ascertained object (*nges yul*) of thought (*rtog pa*) is a particular, and when one has difficulties establishing that particulars are ascertained objects of thought, then one can only accept that [*sādhya, sādhana*, etc.] are just mere inflated misconceptions (*rlom pa tsam* = (*abhi*)*mānamātra*) due to

The initial doubt expressed in the passage from *Tshad ma'i brjed byang* is naturally unfounded for Tsong kha pa himself – the passage begins with a *pūrvapakṣa*. Tsong kha pa himself maintains a classic "Tibetan" position, which (as we shall see below) is very widespread in *bsDus grwa* logic and must stem from the gSang phu *bsDus pa* tradition, that although universal, reason, *sādhya*, etc. are mentally created, it does not follow that if *x* is a universal, etc., *x* is mentally created. In Tibetan: *spyi sgro btags pa yin, spyi yin na sgro btags yin pas ma khyab,* literally translated as, "Universal is [a] superimposition, if [something] is [a] universal, it is not pervaded by being a superimposition." This notion and others like it, such as *sādhya*, logical reason, etc., behave in this way in keeping with a general principle, which is what Tsong kha pa refers to in the passage concerning the "obstacle" to understanding the two truths: although objects of thought, such as universal, *sādhya* etc., are themselves no more than mind-created appearances / representations (*snang ba* = *pratibhāsa*) or exclusions (*ldog pa* = *vyāvṛtti*), it does not follow that if *x* is such an object of thought, *x* is mind-created – real particulars can be said to be the ascertained objects (*nges yul*), or equally, to use the words of dGe 'dun grub pa and lCang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje, they are the explicit objects (*dngos yul*) of thought; elsewhere in Tsong kha pa and virtually all other dGe lugs pa writers on the matter, it is routinely mentioned that they actually appear (*snang ba*) to thought.[13]

thought or that they exist qua exclusions (*sel ngor yod*), but there is no way to account for them as ultimate, and so one denigrates the side of the ultimate. Therefore, the obstacle to understanding how to account for the division of the two truths, where one knows how to account for [the facts] that all conventional things are established correctly by a *pramāṇa* in this tradition as merely imagined by thought (*rtog btags tsam*) and that all real entities are established by their own characters (*rang gi mtshan nyid* = *svalakṣaṇa*), is as follows: it is precisely to grasp as contradictory the pair [of propositions] that the object of thought (*rtog pa'i yul*) is not particular and that particulars are the objects of thought."

13 See *Tshad ma rigs rgyan* p. 357, *rang mtshan rtog pa'i dngos yul yin yang* ...; for *lCang skya grub mtha'* see our quotation in the next section of this article. "Explicit" (*dngos*) is to be understood in the context of the Tibetan opposition between *dngos su rtogs pa* and *shugs la rtogs pa* ("explicit and implicit knowledge / realization"), which figures so frequently in dGe lugs epistemology. KLEIN (1986) p. 135 gives 'Jam dbyangs bzhed pa's definition of *dngos rtogs*: "[an awareness] realizing [its object] from the viewpoint of the aspect of that object appearing to the awareness". To say that *svalakṣaṇa* is the explicit object of thought means that it is the object whose aspect appears. For additional quotations showing the important dGe lugs

rGyal tshab rje, in *rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed*, has a longer version involving several examples of apparent paradoxes or oppositions, including our thinking that there must be contradiction in saying that appearance (*snang ba*) to thought is not a particular and that there are particulars which are appearances (or do appear) to thought. He then says that the difficult point is that we are reluctant to accept both poles in the apparent oppositions as being equally established – if we assent to one, we negate the other. The consequences of not understanding this compatibility are, according to rGyal tshab rje (who faithfully echoes Tsong kha pa), serious indeed. We will create a false dilemma: either, in order to preserve thought's ability to "contact" (*reg pa*) particulars, we will give up the *apoha*-principle that thought apprehends fictions, applies by exclusion (*sel 'jug*) and does not apply positively (*sgrub 'jug*), or we will end up saying that thought cannot "contact" (*reg pa*) particulars at all and applies just by its own inflated misconceptions (*rlom pa tsam* = [*abhi*]*mānamātra*).[14] The rest of the account

idea that *svalakṣaṇa* appears to thought, see n. 28 and n. 14: "When one has [correctly!] established that there is a *svalakṣaṇa* which appears as excluded from non-vase ... (*bum pa ma yin pa las log par snang ba'i rang mtshan yod par bsgrub pa na ...*)." See also *Tshad ma'i brjed byang* f. 19b3 (p. 189): *gser bum bum par 'dzin pa'i rtog pa la gser bum bum par snang zhing ...* Finally, see also the discussion in KLEIN (1991) p.29-36 for bsTan dar lha ram pa's additional scholastic distinctions between explicit objects of expression (*dngos gyi brjod bya*) and explicit expressions (*dngos su brjod pa*), as well as between explicit apprehensions (*dngos su 'dzin*) and explicit realizations (*dngos su rtogs pa*). I think, however, that it will become clear that these are somewhat sterile distinctions, made to preserve an extremely difficult dialectical situation.

14 Here is the passage from rGyal tshab in full (*rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed*, I, p. 76): *gnyis pa* [*see ibid p. 74.7*: *dogs pa skye ba'i rgyu mtshan rtogs dka' ba'i gnas kyi gtso bo ngos bzung ba*] *ni / dper brjod na / rtog pa la bum pa ma yin pa las log par snang ba rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa bkag pa na rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa'i bum pa ma yin pa las log par snang ba yang khegs nas 'jog mi shes par 'gyur la / bum pa ma yin pa las log par snang ba'i rang mtshan yod par bsgrub pa na rtog pa la bum pa ma yin par snang ba yang rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa mi khegs shing rang gi* [*text: gis*] *mtshan nyid kyis grub par khas len dgos la rtog pas btags pa tsam du 'jog mi shes par 'gyur / spyi mtshan dngos po yin pa bkag na / dnos po nyid kyang khegs nas tshad mas sgrub mi shes par 'gyur zhing / dngos po khas blangs na spyi mtshan yang dngos por khas len dgos pa kun rdzob tsam du yod pa dang don dam du yod pa'i chos gnyis / gcig tshad mar bzung nas ci shos sun 'byin pa'i 'gal 'du 'ba' zhig tu 'gyur ba 'di / gzhung lugs 'di'i rtogs dka' ba'i gnas kyi gtso bo dam pa yin no // 'di ma rtogs par rang mtshan rtog pa'i yul du khas blangs na sgrub 'jug tu song nas tshad ma gzhan don med par 'gyur ba dang sgra*

in Tsong kha pa, rGyal tshab, dGe 'dun grub, lCang skya *et al.* speaks about

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dang rtags la sogs pa sel 'jug tu khas blangs na | de dag rang mtshan la ye ma reg par 'jug tshul rnams rlom pa tsam 'ba' zhig go snyam pa'i log rtog rnams 'byung bar 'gyur ro || mdor na rtog pas btags tsam gyi chos la tshad ma'i gzhal bya skyon med rang mtshan dang mtshungs par 'jog mi shes na | spyir lugs dam pa 'di'i gnad legs par rtogs pa mi srid cing | khyad par tha snyad tsam du yod pa'i kun rdzob kyi don ma rtogs par 'gyur la | de nyid dang don byed nus pa'i gzhi mthun khas blangs na lugs 'di'i thun mong ma yin pa'i don dam gyi tshul mi rtogs par 'gyur ||. "Secondly [the recognition of the main point which is difficult to understand and is the reason for doubts arising] is as follows. Let's take some examples. When one has ruled out 'appearance to thought as excluded from non-vase, [where this appearance is] established by its own characteristics' (*rtog pa la bum pa ma yin pa las log par snang ba rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa*), one would also rule out and then be unable to account for 'appearance to thought as excluded from non-vase [where the vase is] established by its own characteristics' (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub pa'i bum pa ma yin pa las log par snang ba*). When one has established that there is a *svalakṣaṇa* which appears as excluded from non-vase (*bum pa ma yin pa las log par snang ba'i rang mtshan yod par bsgrub pa na*), one would then also not rule out 'appearance to thought as excluded from non-vase, [where this appearance is] established by its own characteristics', and one would [feel he] was obliged to accept that it [i.e. this appearance] was established by its own characteristics (*rang gi mtshan nyid kyis grub par*), so that one would be unable to account for it being merely imagined by thought (*rtog pas btags pa tsam du*). When one has ruled out '*sāmānyalakṣaṇa* which is a real entity' (*spyi mtshan dngos po yin pa*), one would thereby rule out real entityness (*dngos po nyid*) too and be unable to establish it by means of a *pramāṇa*, and when one has accepted 'real entity' (*dngos po*) one would [feel he] was obliged to accept that the *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* was also a real entity. The two [sorts of] dharmas which exist ultimately and those which exist merely conventionally would become just a collection of contradictions so that when one was established by a *pramāṇa* the other would be refuted – this constitutes the supreme main point which is difficult to understand in this tradition (*gzhung lugs 'di'i rtogs dka' ba'i gnas kyi gtso bo dam pa yin*). When one doesn't understand it, then wrong views will arise, such as thinking that if one accepted that *svalakṣaṇa* was an object of thought, then [thought] would apply positively (*sgrub 'jug*) and then other *pramāṇa*s would be useless, or if one accepted that words, logical reasons, and so forth applied by exclusion (*sel 'jug*), they could not contact *svalakṣaṇa* at all and the way they applied would just be by mere inflated misconceptions (*rlom pa tsam*). In short, if one is unable to account for *dharma*s which are just imagined by thought being similar to the *svalakṣaṇa* which are faultless objects of *pramāṇa*s, then in general one cannot understand well the points of this supreme tradition and, in particular, one will not understand conventional states of affairs which exist simply by *vyavahāra*. But if one accepts [that there is] a common basis (*gzhi mthun = samānādhikaraṇa*) between that [i.e. the conventional] and what is able to accomplish an aim, one will not understand the special way of the ultimate in this tradition."

particulars appearing as mixed up (*'dres nas*) with the mind-created appearances / representations (*snang ba*). And the result of all this is that the dGe lugs pa will diagnose the unconscious error inherent in thought as being that a conceptually created fictional representation and the particulars *appear* (*snang ba*) to thought as being one (*gcig tu*) and *indistinguishable* (*so so dbyer med pa*), although they are, in themselves, very different, the former being unreal the latter real (see n. 28 below).

In brief: following Tsong kha pa and rGyal tshab, there are two closely related key elements which we supposedly have to understand to correctly grasp the difficult point and hence avoid falling into a seductive dilemma:

I. The separation between unreal *A* itself and the various real *A*'s: Something like universal or *sādhya* itself is unreal, but not all universals, etc. are. In other words, universal, *sādhya*, etc. are not in opposition (*'gal ba = viruddha*) with real entities, i.e. particulars, but have a common basis (*gzhi mthun = samānādhikaraṇa*) with particulars (see n. 6). Strange as it will probably seem to one used to Indian texts, in this Tibetan ontology, the various universals (e.g. sound, tree, etc.), *sādhya*s (e.g. impermanent things), *sādhana*s (e.g. products), and so forth are also particulars! The result is that the dGe lugs pa are obliged to make an extremely difficult to defend split between *sāmānya* (*spyi* "universal") and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* (*spyi mtshan*), the latter being only fictional and completely in opposition with particulars, so that there are no *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* which are also real and particular. Whether we think all this is elegant or not, or philologically sound or not, is another matter, let us just stress for now that what we have described is an essential feature of the dGe lugs pa system.[15]

15 The "fictions" (*brtags pa / btags pa*) of which we are speaking are *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, and are generally termed object-universals (*don spyi = arthasāmānya*). The term figures prominently in Tibetan texts stemming from the gSang phu tradition: its use by "Tibetans" (*bod rnams* = the followers of Phya pa) is discussed polemically in *Rigs gter* I and *Rigs gter rang 'grel*, where Sa skya Paṇḍita argues extensively against the Phya pa tradition's position that *don spyi* is an object of thought; Sa paṇ considered this *don spyi* not to be an object (*yul*) at all, just like nonexistent things. See FUKUDA *et al.* (1989) p. 10ff. Sa paṇ was also very aware of Indian uses of the terms *śabdasāmānya* and *arthasāmānya* in the Sāmmitīya tradition; this Śrāvaka school (contrary to Phya pa and his followers) took the two *sāmānya* to be established as substances (*rdzas su grub pa*). See *Rigs gter rang 'grel ad* I.1; FUKUDA *et al.* (1989) p. 34. The pair *śabdasāmānya* (*sgra spyi*) and *arthasāmānya* (*don spyi*) also has definite antecedents in Dignāga's *apoha* theory; see the very lucid article by

II. What we shall term the "appearance principle": real particulars must actually appear to thought, be apprehended (*'dzin pa*) by it, and even be its explicit object (*dngos yul*), all be the appearance of particulars "mixed up" (*'dres pa*) with that of fictions.

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First of all, turning to point *I*, it seems quite clear that Tsong kha pa thought that the unreal *A* versus real *A*'s separation in the case of *sāmānya, sādhya,* etc. was to be *explained* by the general statement that "the object of thought is not a particular but particulars are the objects of thought." A very similar formulation is to be found in lCang skya, who first cites the cases of *sāmānya, sādhya* and the like, and then gives what he takes to be the *reason* (*rgyu mtshan*) why these terms admit a separation between unreal *A* itself and real *A*'s:

> lCang skya grub mtha' p. 100 ed. KLEIN; p. 71 ed. rDo rje rgyal po : *de'i rgyu mtshan yang rtog pa'i dngos yul gyi rang ldog rang mtshan ma yin kyang rang mtshan rtog pa'i dngos yul du 'gyur ba mi 'gal bas /* ... "The reason for this, moreover, is that there is no contradiction [in the fact] that the **svavyāvṛtti* (*rang ldog* "own exclusion") of (an) explicit object of thought (*rtog pa'i dngos yul*) is not a particular, but that particulars are explicit objects of thought".

PIND (1991) in which he examines passages from PS V and from Dignāga's lost text, the *Sāmānyaparīkṣā*, to show how Dignāga construed the *vācyavācaka* ("signified-signifier") relation as holding between two types of universals, *śabdasāmānya* and *arthasāmānya*, rather than between particular words and objects (*śabdaviśeṣa* and *arthaviśeṣa*). As PIND points out, Dignāga's views are similar on this score with those of Bhartṛhari – only the word-type or *jāti* signifies – and go back to Kātyāyana. Dharmakīrti, however, adopted a somewhat different position in which *śabdasāmānya* had a lesser role. PIND p. 277 argues that although the terms do figure every once in a while in subsequent Indian texts (e.g. Vinītadeva's *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* on NB I.5's definition of *kalpanā*, ed. Louis de LA VALLÉE POUSSIN p. 41), "the concepts of *arthasāmānya* and *śabdasāmānya* no longer play any role in post-Dharmakīrti Buddhist epistemology." I think it is important to note that this is true, but only for the major Indian authors: *somehow or another, the Phya pa tradition resurrected these terms – possibly from Dignāgean sources or from a minor figure like Vinītadeva – and used them constantly to interpret Dharmakīrti.* It is ironic that this comparatively minor technical term *arthasāmānya* (*don spyi*), which seems to have largely fallen out of favour in India after Dignāga, came to be used virtually everywhere in dGe lugs pa philosophy in the sense of a "mental image" or "conceptual representation".

In fact I think that this quintessential formulation of the difficult point, inspite of using a phrase like *de'i rgyu mtshan,* does not actually *explain* why *sāmānya,* etc. are unreal but *sāmānya*s, etc. can be real. What it and other similar formulations do is much more like restating the problematic *A-A*'s separation in a different, more general form, but our puzzlement will probably remain. Thus, universal itself (*spyi kho rang*) is unreal but universals may not be; appearance to thought (*rtog pa la snang ba*) itself is unreal, but the various appearances (or alternatively those things which appear) may not be (= *rtog pa la snang ba yin na, de yin pas ma khyab*)[16], object of thought (*rtog pa'i yul*) itself is unreal, but objects of thought may not be (*rtog pa'i yul yin na, de yin pas ma khyab*), etc. etc. Whether we're dealing with universals, appearances or objects of thought, the logic is the same and turns on being able to speak of unreal *A* itself (*kho rang*) or mere *A* (*tsam*), or the "own exclusion of *A*" (*rang ldog*), in contrast to the various real and particular *A*'s.

Now, this differentiation between an *A* itself and the various *A*'s is extremely foreign to us and seems absent in Indian Buddhist logic. Moreover, for many Tibetans too it must have seemed a mysterious, paralogical or even completely sophistical move, as we see by Go rams pa's characterization of it as just "verbal obscurantism" (*tshig gi sgrib g.yogs*) (see n. 6). A tempting way to dismiss the strangeness, would be to say that we are dealing with *no more* than language-based problems. In keeping with Go rams pa, we too might think that all this is no more than word-play, of about the same level of interest as the numerous *bsDus grwa* tricks turning on features of Tibetan like ambiguities in the use of the genitive, etc. – in short, a bad joke which, as usual, does not translate very well. Or, more charitably, one might wonder, in a Whorfian vein, if the position in question were not somehow a reflection of metaphysical features internal to Tibetan itself. I think that both these explanations would be unsatisfactory. True, there are

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16   *rtog pa la snang ba yin na* (or *snang na*) *rang mtshan yin pas ma khyab* admits of two translations which are quite different for us: *a.* "If something is an appearance to thought, it is not pervaded by being particular"; *b.* "If something appears to thought, ...". There is an often an ambiguity in Tibetan between nouns and verbs, and this is the case here with *snang ba* ("something which appears"; "appearance"). The result is that this specific example presents an *additional* problem of imprecision, one which does not occur in the case of "object of thought" (*rtog pa'i yul*), "universal" (*spyi*), "reason" (*gtan tshigs*), etc. which do not have the possibility of being taken as verbal forms.

serious problems of clarity in that a sentence like "universal is mind-created" is plainly bad English – we cannot meaningfully say in a language like English, which has to use articles for count nouns, that "'universal' or 'logical reason' is mind-created". In Tibetan, which does not use articles, nor generally singular and plural, one can and does say these things – the result is that our translation problems become acute and we naturally feel a need to know whether a Tibetan is speaking about "a universal", "the universal(s)", "some universals", or "all universals". That said, I don't think we are dealing with mere sophisms or tricks, nor an incommensurable metaphysic inherent in the structure of Tibetan or Sanskrit, for in general we can and do manage to translate very satisfactorily the articleless nouns in ordinary Tibetan, in Sanskrit, in medieval logic in Latin or in Mohist logic in Chinese by ourselves supplying the "a", "the", "some", or the generic "the", where necessary.[17] The real sticking-point is rather that the dGe lugs pa's *own* peculiar explanation of the use of nouns to designate *A* itself as different from *A*'s is very difficult for us to comprehend.[18] This, as we shall see, is not at all an explanation which every Tibetan school adopted, and as such, it

17 I don't want to rule out the possibility of someone doing a study on how fundamental Tibetan notions of being, existence, instantiation, predication, etc. are conditioned by features inherent in the Tibetan logical language. Here one would have to take account of the blurring in the count noun vs. mass noun distinction. It would indeed be valuable to do a study along the philologically rigourous lines of A.C. GRAHAM's *Disputers of the Tao* (1989), *Later Mohist Logic, Ethics and Science* (1978) and his earlier "Being in Western Philosophy Compared with *Shih/Fei* and *Yu/Wu* in Chinese Philosophy" (*Asia Major* 7, 1959), or one in the same vein as Chad HANSEN's work on Chinese in *Language and Logic in Ancient China*, 1983. Moreover, such a study would have to take very seriously the Quinean ideas of ontological relativity and indeterminacy of translation. That said, however, the specific feature we are speaking of now, i.e. the *A*-*A*'s separation, is probably too theoretical and philosophically inspired to be good material for this sort of approach.

18 An overly facile way out would be to say that Tibetan locutions along the lines of "*A* itself" are actually expressing *A*-ness or "being an *A*". Thus, on this scenario, there would be little difficulty in saying that *A*-ness or "being an *A*" is mind-created, but that the individual *A*'s are not. Unfortunately, this move would only work in a very limited number of cases. If we applied the same interpretation to *bum pa kho rang* ("vase itself") and most other such banal cases, we would go against what the dGe lugs pa themselves accept: for them, *bum pa kho rang* is *not* to be taken as mind-created, nor is it to be taken as the same as vaseness or "being a vase", two notions which figure regularly in Tibetan and which would be better expressed by *bum pa nyid* and *bum pa yin pa* respectively.

does not seem to be due to the features of Tibetan itself. I think it is worth stressing that we are not faced with the "internal logic" of Tibetan, but rather a choice by one school as to how to formulate a semantic and metaphysical system on the basis of possibilities offered by the Tibetan language. In brief: although Tibetan makes a dGe lugs pa position possible – it would probably never be entertained in English – it does not make it inevitable. We are forced to adopt strange solecistic uses of English in our translations in order to be able to avoid distorting the dGe lugs pa's peculiar and dead serious theoretical views on *apoha* and the semantics of his own language.

Why then did the dGe lugs pa accept this theoretical view that one had to make distinctions between an unreal entity A itself and real A's? I think that the most satisfactory explanation we can give is that the dGe lugs pa, and probably the gSang phu-based tradition in general, seem to have been genuinely unable to find any *other* way out of the dilemma described above, where one is supposedly caught between, on the one hand, contradicting Dignāga and Dharmakīrti by accepting real universals just like any non-Buddhist heretic, or, on the other hand, having to say that thought operates only on its own unreal things and cannot contact particulars at all. In short, it was primarily the inability to overcome this dilemma *in any other way* that launched dGe lugs pa and their predecessors on the tortuous path of differentiating universal, *sādhya*, *vyāvṛtti,* reason, example and so forth from universals, *sādhyas vyāvṛttis*, reasons and examples. What we see in the opposing arguments of the Sa skya pa Rigs gter ba is precisely that this type of separation between unreal A and real A's is avoided by means of a very different exegesis of Indian texts, one which allows them to say that *all* universals, reasons, examples etc. are indeed unreal (there is no distinction here between A and A's), but that we can nonetheless use them to contact real entities. The essential points of their explanation turn on Sa skya Paṇḍita's distinction, in *Rigs gter* V, between theoretical explanation (*'chad pa*) and practical application (*'jug pa*) – when we critically explain what it is, then a term in a reasoning or an object of thought is indeed *only* a mentally created universal, but from the practical point of view, we do, due to unconscious error, "speak about" *svalakṣaṇa*.[19] There is thus, according to the Sa skya

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19 *Rigs gter* f. 8b6 (ed. Nor bu p. 120): *'chad dang 'jug pa'i gang zag gi || dbye bas gnyis gnyis rnam pa bzhi || 'chad tshe rnam par phye bas mkhas || 'jug tshe gcig tu 'khrul bas thob ||* "There are two [types of significata (*brjod bya* = *vācya*)] and two [types of signifiers (*brjod byed* = *vācaka*)], in other words, four sorts, according to

pa Rigs gter ba, no need to subscribe to the fundamental dGe lugs pa idea of universals like *byas pa tsam, shing tsam* ("mere product", "mere tree") and so forth really existing in the full-fledged sense, but being "in" or "substantially identical with" particulars – this odd position is considered to be a just gross hypostatization, like saying that besides our two hands or two eyes, we also have a really existent "hand" (*lag pa*) or "eye" (*mig*).[20]

There is also, of course, a historical dimension to this *A-A*'s separation. Indeed, as we mentioned earlier, we can be confident that the dGe lugs pa did not invent the major features of their logic on their own; they were no doubt following some broad lines already developed by earlier gSang phu scholars. The *A-A*'s separation, and in fact much of the "dilemma" in the so-

whether one classifies a person as explaining critically (*'chad pa*) or as practically applying (*'jug pa = pravṛtti*). When explaining critically, one is an expert [on modes of being (*gnas lugs*)] due to making distinctions. When practically applying, one erroneously takes [the *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*] to be identical and thus [by using agreed-upon symbols (*brda = saṃketa*)] one obtains [the *svalakṣaṇa* object]." Additions follow the *Rigs gter rang 'grel* f. 43b4-6 (ed. Nor bu p. 120). See e.g. *Tshad ma rigs gter dgongs rgyan smad cha* f. 56a, p. 111: *des na grub pa'i don ni | 'chad tshe'i rnam gzhag la brjod byed sgra'i brjod bya dang | rtog pas bzung ba dang 'dzin pa dang rtogs pa yin na rang mtshan min dgos la | 'jug pa'i tshe na sgra'i dngos kyi brjod bya dang rtog pas dngos su bzung ba sogs yin na rang mtshan min mi dgos zhes zhib cha sbyar bar bya'o ||* "Thus the point which is proven is as follows: In an account where one explains things critically, then the significata (*brjod bya = vācya*) of signifying words, or the things which are apprehended by thought and which thought apprehends or knows, must not be particulars, but in the context of practical application, the explicit significata of words and the things explicitly apprehended by thought need not be non-particulars. One should be careful about this." An equally very important distinction, found extensively developped in Śākya mchog ldan's account of terms in reasonings, is that between an *x* in terms of what it is (*song tshod*) and in terms of the inflated misconceptions about it (*rlom tshod*), the former being a mind-created *apoha* and the latter being a *svalakṣaṇa*. Thus e.g. *Tshad ma rigs gter dgongs rgyan smad cha* f.79a, p. 149 on *samānādhikaraṇa, viśeṣa*, etc.: *yang song tshod kyi gzhi 'thun dang bye brag ni shing dang tsan dan gyi ldog pa gnyis tshogs pa'i gzhan sel de nyid yin la | rlom tshod ni tsan dan rang mtshan pa de nyid do | de ltar rlom pa rtog pa de yang tsan dan gcig nyid du mar med bzhin du sgro btags nas 'dzin pa'i phyir log pa'i shes pa kho na'o | de lta na yang shing la ltos pa'i spyi dang gzhi 'thun 'dzin pa'i rtog pa chos can | shing gsal rang mtshan la mi bslu ba yin te | de la rgyud nas 'brel zhin de yul du byed pa'i phyir | nor bu'i 'od la nor bur zhen pa'i blo bzhin no ||*. See DREYFUS (1991) p. 246, 248 *et passim*.

20 See *Tshad ma rigs gter dgongs rgyan smad cha* f. 76b-77a, p. 152-153.

called difficult point, was already described by Sa skya Paṇḍita in his
critique of certain views on the conceptually created exclusions (*ldog pa* =
vyāvṛtti) which Buddhist logic took to be the pseudo-universals directly
expressed by words. Sa paṇ attacked the (absurd) views professed by "most
Tibetans" (*bod rnams phal cher*) and "most of the [thinkers] of the land of
the snows who pride themselves on being logicians" (*kha ba can gyi rtog ge
bar rlom pa phal che ba rnams*), his polemical shorthand for gSang phu-
inspired schools. There are a number of variations in the presentations of
these views being attacked, but they have the same essential structure of *A*
versus *A*'s: the *vyāvṛtti* itself is conceptually created, but the *x* which is the
vyāvṛtti may not be. Glo bo'i mkhan chen speaks of one variant as being
that of the later followers of the *bsDus pa* (of Phya pa), and not surprisingly,
it does indeed correspond quite precisely to what we find in dGe lugs pa
bsDus grwa texts.[21]

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21 See *Rigs gter* IV (in roman letters below) and the *Rigs gter rang 'grel*, f. 7b4-5 and
    38b3-5 (ed. Nor bu p. 11 and 109): gal te khyed kyi ldog pa de // dngos po yin na
    spyi dang mtshungs // dngos med yin na dgos nus med // des na ldog pa mi dgos lo //
    *ldog pa'ang gzhan sel de dngos po yin na spyi dngos por 'dod pa la brjod pa'i skyon
    mtshungs la | dngos med yin na ci'ang med pas dgos nus med do zhe na | 'di'i lan la
    gnyis las gzhan gyi lan dgag na | 'di la bod nams phal cher ni // dngos po'i ldog pa
    dngos por 'dod // kha ba can gyi rtog ge bar rlom pa phal che ba rnams dngos med
    kyi ldog pa dngos med yin yang dngos po'i ldog pa dngos po yin te dngos po dang
    ngo bo dbyer med pa'i phyir ro zhes zer ro //.* "[Objection:] *If* vyāvṛtti*s are real
    entities* (dngos po = bhāva; vastu) *for you then they will be like universals. If they
    are unreal, then they won't be of any use. Thus, it would follow that* vyāvṛtti*s would
    be unnecessary.* Suppose it is said that if a *vyāvṛtti* or an *anyāpoha* is a real entity,
    then the faults will be like those which were stated when it was accepted that universals
    were real entities, but if they are unreal, then they won't be of any use whatsoever.
    To this there are two replies. First, let us refute the reply of some adversaries. *In this
    vein, most Tibetans accept the* vyāvṛtti *of real entity to be (a) real entity.* Most of the
    [thinkers] of the land of the snows who pride themselves on being logicians say that
    although *vyāvṛtti* of non-entity (*abhāva*) is non-entity, the *vyāvṛtti* of real entity
    (*bhāva*) is real entity, because the former is essentially indistinguishable from real
    entity." Śākya mchog ldan sums up these views (*Rigs gter dgongs rgyan smad cha*
    p. 152.) *Bod snga phyi thams cad na re | shing tsam de shing gi ldog pa yin zhing |
    rdzas su grub pa yang yin no zhes zer ro* "All earlier and later Tibetans say that mere
    tree is the *vyāvṛtti* of tree and that [mere tree] is established substantially (*rdzas su*

Secondly, how did the dGe lugs pa (and probably some earlier followers of the gSang phu traditions) come to hold that real particulars actually appear to thought?[22] This "appearance principle" was trenchantly criticized by the

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grub pa)." Note too that Glo bo'i mkhan chen distinguishes between two variants of the "Tibetan" view: *1*. that the *vyāvṛtti* of *bhāva* is *bhāva*, and *2*. that only *bhāva* (*dngos po nyid*) is the *vyāvṛtti* of *bhāva*. He attributes the latter view to latter exponents of the *bsDus pa* (i.e. the *Tshad ma'i bsdus pa* of Phya pa). Indeed this second variant is precisely the view which we find in the dGe lugs pa's *bsDus grwa* texts. See Glo bo'i mkhan chen (*Tshad ma rigs gter gyi 'grel pa*) p. 118: *'di'i lan la / kha ba can gyi rtog ge par rlom pa snga phyi phal mo che rnams na re / dngos med kyi ldog pa dngos med yin yang / dngos po'i ldog pa dngos po yin te / dngos po dang dngos po'i ldog pa dbyer med pa yin pa'i phyir ro zhes zer ro // yang phyi rabs kyi bsdus pa smra ba rnams ni dngos po nyid kyang dngos po'i ldog pa yin no zhes zer ro //* .

22 Cf. KLEIN (1991) p. 29-36. What is at stake in the dGe lugs pa theory is not just the (banal) idea of one thing *seeming* to be another, but the idea of both things actually appearing, but mixed up – this idea looks un-Indian. A possible factor in the dGe lugs-gSang phu tradition adopting the idea of particulars actually appearing indistinguishably mixed up with fictions may have been their very confused understanding of Dharmakīrti's definition of conceptual thought (*kalpanā*). Their version of this definition and an indigenous *bsDus pa* or *bsDus grwa*-style adaptation of it may have led them to think that Dharmakīrti himself regularly had recourse to the notion of "mixed or indistinguishable appearances" or of "two things which appear mixed up as one and which are indistinguishable from the point of view of appearance" (*de gnyis gcig tu 'dres nas snang zhing snang ngor so so dbyer med pa*). See *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo* p. 189. See also *Tshad ma rigs rgyan* p. 353 and *lCang skya grub mtha'* p. 100, where virtually the exact same passage from Tsong kha pa is cited. (It is noteworthy that someone like lCang skya discusses the "difficult point" with its use of the idea of *'dres nas snang* and then proceeds directly to a discussion of the definition of thought which uses *'drer rung tu 'dzin pa* and *'drer rung tu snang ba*). The definition of thought given in Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya* and *Nyāyabindu* I.5 reads: *rtog pa ni brjod pa dang 'drer rung ba snang ba'i shes pa*. The Sanskrit admits of two versions depending upon whether we read the *tatpuruṣa* compound °*pratibhāsapratītiḥ*, or a *bahuvrīhi*, °*pratibhāsā*, qualifying *pratītiḥ*: *abhilāpasaṃsargayogyapratibhāsapratītiḥ kalpanā* or *abhilāpasaṃsargayogyapratibhāsā pratītiḥ kalpanā*. Choosing the *tatpuruṣa* version, we should have a translation like that of HATTORI (1968) p. 85: "a cognition of [a] representation which is capable of being associated with a verbal designation" (KAJIYAMA [1966] p. 41 is identical apart from translating *abhilāpa* as "words"). If, however, we follow Dharmottara's *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* and read °*pratibhāsā*, we would have something like "*kalpanā* is a cognition in which a representation is capable of being associated with a verbal designation."

First of all, we should note that *'drer rung ba snang ba'i shes pa* corresponds to *saṃsargayogyapratibhāsapratītiḥ* (taking HATTORI's reading) and that *'dre = saṃsarga*

Sa skya pa opponents, and especially so by Śākya mchog ldan, who did not

does not have the sense here of being "indistinguishably mixed up", nor is it at all commented upon in that way by Dharmottara: rather it simply means "being associated". Secondly, the natural tendency in Tibetan is to read *snang ba* (= *pratibhāsa*) as a verb beginning a relative clause, i.e. "to which appears ....", rather than the correct way, which is as the noun "representation"/"image". Thirdly, Tibetan texts often, but not always, read *rung bar*, rather than *rung ba*, and thus further change the sense radically. The result of all this is that the frequent Tibetan misinterpretation of this definition becomes something like "thought is a cognition to which [something] appears as capable of being mixed up with an expression". Apart from a perhaps somewhat doubtful rendering of *snang ba'i* by "perceives", KLEIN (1991), p. 138 is quite faithful to this misunderstanding when she translates: "a thought consciousness is a consciousness which perceives [a meaning-of-a-term] as suitable to be mixed with an expression."

To conclude: My argument is admittedly speculative, but I think it is worthwhile to consider if the Tibetans may have started on a wrong track due to some fairly rudimentary philological errors. They may well have come up with a notion of *'dres nas snang ba*, based on a misinterpretation of *Pramāṇaviniścaya* and *Nyāyabindu*'s term *saṃsargayogyapratibhāsapratīti* (= *'drer rung ba[r] snang ba'i shes pa*) as "a cognition to which [something] appears as capable of being mixed up with ..." The misconstrual of *snang ba'i* coupled with *'drer* in *Nyāyabindu* and *Pramāṇaviniścaya* might well, therefore, have created (already in the earlier gSang phu schools?) a kind of pseudo-precedent for an Indian source which spoke of two things actually appearing to thought, or *x* actually appearing to thought as indistinguishably mixed up with *y*.

Finally, note that the dGe lugs-gSang phu tradition came up with their own definition of thought, *sgra don 'dres rung tu 'dzin pa'i blo* "a cognition which apprehends a *śabdasāmānya* and an *arthasāmānya* as fitting to be mixed up", as a reworking of Dharmakīrti's definition in PVin. See n. 15 on the bona fide Indian terms *śabdasāmānya* and *arthasāmānya*. While rGyal tshab and dGe dun grub pa took *sgra don* as *sgra spyi* and *don spyi*, mKhas grub rje protested that this was impossible, and he, as well as lCang skya, came up with a different definition (*sgra don 'dzin pa'i blo*) in order to be able to take *sgra don* as the equivalent of Dharmakīrti's use of *śabdārtha* ("object of a word") in PV III.287. See *Tshad ma rigs rgyan* p. 36ff. (definition of *rtog pa*); *sDe bdun yid kyi mun sel* ff. 56b-57b (p. 114-116); *lCang skya grub mtha'* p. 100ff; KLEIN (1991) p. 129-140. mKhas grub, for example, argued, *inter alia*, that rGyal tshab's version of *sgra don 'dres rung tu 'dzin pa'i blo* was absurd because "it is contradictory to accept that the meaning of 'mixed up' would be that name and object would appear as identical; if we did, then one would have to accept that the meaning of 'being fitting to be mixed up' was also that the name and object were fitting to appear as identical" (f. 57a: *'dres pa'i don ming don gcig lta bur snang ba la 'dod pa'ang 'gal ba yin te / de lta na / 'drer rung ba'i don kyang ming don gcig lta bur snang du rung ba la 'dod dgos /*). This turns on the misunderstanding of *saṃsargayogya / 'drer rung ba* as "fit to be indistinguishably mixed up", the misreading *rung tu* and the reading of *snang ba* as a verb rather than as the noun *prati-*

accept that real particulars appeared to thought, were apprehended by thought, or were explicit objects of thought at all. For him, *adhyavasāya* leads to knowledge of particulars by unconscious error; we call (*tha snyad byas pa*) the pseudo-sounds, etc. which appear to thought "substances", but when we critically explain (*'chad pa'i tshe*) the process, it is only unreal *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* which actually appear or which are apprehended.[23] In this he was in keeping with the mainstream position of Buddhist logic, as found in Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccayavṛtti* (PSV) ad I.2:

> *svalakṣaṇaviṣayaṃ hi pratyakṣaṃ sāmānyalakṣaṇaviṣayam anumānam iti prati-pādayiṣyāmaḥ* "We will show that perception has [only] *svalakṣaṇa* as it object and inference has [only] *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* as object".

Note that word "only", which is very important here, is not just our doing: it figures in Jinendrabuddhi's commentary as well as in the non-Buddhist writers' Mallavādin and Siṃhasūri's version of this passage. It does no doubt reflect the usual Indian understanding of the passage.[24]

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bhāsa "representation". In conclusion, I think that we can safely say that this discussion (and especially the "refutations" in mKhas grub and lCang skya) was a confused debate, where a misreading of PVin's definition and its equally doubtful transformation into an indigenous Tibetan version, led to a long, but woolly and useless controversy.

23 Cf. e.g. *Tshad ma rigs gter dgongs rgyan* (*smad cha*) f. 51b-52a, p. 102-103: *'di dag la* [*i.e. rdzas, log pa, gsal ba, dngos po la sogs pa la*] *gnyis gnyis te | don la gnas pa'i rdzas sogs dang | sel ngo'i rdzas la sogs pa'o | dang po ni | don la gnas pa'i sgra rang mtshan pa lta bu'o | gnyis pa ni | rtog pa la snang ba'i sgra la sogs pa'o || 'di ni gzhan sel kho na yin gyi | rdzas la sogs pa mtshan nyid pa min kyang rtog pa la snang ba'i sgra sogs la | don rang mtshan gyi sgra sogs su zhen nas zhugs pas | mthar de rang mtshan la mi bslu ba'i phyir | rdzas la sogs pa'i tha snyad byas pa yin no ||*. Ibid. f. 55b-56a, p. 110-111: *sgra mi rtag rtogs kyi rjes dpag tshad mas sgra mi rtag pa rang mtshan rtogs so zhes tha snyad byas pa de ni 'jug tshe gcig tu 'khrul pa'i rnam gzhag la yin gyi | 'chad tshe rnam par phye ba'i rnam gzhag la min te | 'chad pa'i tshe rtog pas rang mtshan 'dzin na ji skad bshad pa'i rigs pas gnod pa'i phyir | 'di la bod phyi ma rnams rtog pas rang mtshan dngos su 'dzin na zhes pa'i zhib cha sbyor mod | gzhung gi don ma yin te | rang mtshan 'dzin na dngos su 'dzin dgos te | rang mtshan gyi gzhan sel 'dzin pa'i blo yin na rang mtshan 'dzin par 'gal ba'i phyir |*.

24 For Dignāga's PSV, see HATTORI (1968), p. 24 and n. 1.14. Significantly, HATTORI takes *svalakṣaṇaviṣayaṃ pratyakṣam* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇaviṣayam anumānam* as "perception has *only* the particular for its object and inference *only* the universal" (my italics). Mallavādin and Siṃhasūri speak of *svalakṣaṇaviṣayaniyatam* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇaviṣayaniyatam* and Jinendrabuddhi's *Pramāṇasamuccayaṭīkā* adds *kho na = eva*.

Śākya mchog ldan was also in keeping with statements from Dharma-kīrti (see PVin II.2,8-10 above) Dharmottara (see above), and with those of later writers like Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti.[25] Indeed, I think it's safe to say that the Sa skya pas have an overwhelmingly strong case, for it is almost impossible to defend an interpretation of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti which allows particulars actually to appear to thought, and what is perhaps worse, to be the explicit objects (*dngos yul*) of thought. Interestingly enough, the idea of thought applying by *rlom pa tsam* or *abhimānamātra*, an idea which the dGe lugs pa are criticizing as a disastrous consequence of misunder-standing the "difficult point", may well have Indian antecedents, as it seems to be alluded to by Durvekamiśra in his sub-commentary on the phrase *sva-lakṣaṇam avasitam* in the passage from the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā* which we cited above; Śākya mchog ldan's development of the distinction between *rlom tshod* as opposed to *song tshod* may also be related to this idea.[26] But, on the other side of the debate, the dGe lugs pa's idea of real particulars actually appearing to thought does not seem to be present in other Indian writers, although of course one cannot rule out that there may yet be some or another source to be discovered. At any rate, there were later thinkers, like Mokṣākaragupta who, following Jñānaśrīmitra and Ratnakīrti, had allowed that universals could appear to perception, but none that I know of that allowed that particulars could appear to thought or actually be apprehended by thought.[27]

Although the dGe lugs pa do, of course, have interpretations of Dignāga's and Dharmakīrti's key statements about only *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* being the objects of thought, in the end it is quite apparent that this textual exegesis is

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25 Jñānaśrīmitra, *Apohaprakaraṇa*, 226.2: *adhyavasāyas tv agṛhīte 'pi pravartana-yogyatānimittaḥ*. See the discussion of Jñānaśrī's position in KATSURA (1986). KATSURA p. 176 sums up the usual Indian position: "Thus, roughly speaking, an external particular object (*svalakṣaṇa*) is the indirect object to be determined and acted upon by conceptual knowledge, and a mental image (which is *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*) is the direct object to be grasped by conceptual knowledge."

26 *Dharmottarapradīpa* p. 72.20-21: *svalakṣaṇam avasitam ity etad apy abhimānād abhidhīyate / na punaḥ svalakṣaṇam avasāyasya gocaraḥ /* "When [Dharmottara] speaks of the 'determined particular', this too is said because of inflated misconception: the particular is not, however, the object of the determination.' For Śākya mchog ldan's terms *song tshod* and *rlom tshod*, see n.19 above.

27 See *Tarkabhāṣā* §7.1 and also KAJIYAMA (1973) p. 166.

intertwined with the other key element of the so-called difficult point, viz.
the separation between unreal *A* and real *A*'s. In brief: thought's appearing
object (*rtog pa'i snang yul*), its apprehended object (*rtog pa'i gzung yul*)
and the appearance or representation itself (*rtog pa'i snang ba*) are said to
be indeed *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*s, but not everything which appears or is appre-
hended by thought is: *rtog pa'i snang yul* [*or snang ba*] *spyi mtshan yin*;
rtog pa la snang na spyi mtshan yin pas ma khyab. And we are more or less
back to where we started, once again faced with the peculiar talk about an
unreal *A* in itself, as opposed to real *A*'s, being used to save consistency
with Indian texts.[28]

28 Cf. the debate in *Yongs 'dzin blo rigs* f. 4b: *kho na re / bum pa chos can / rang 'dzin
rtog pa'i 'dzin stangs kyi yul yin par thal / bdag med yin pa'i phyir / khyab pa khas /
'dod mi nus te / rang 'dzin rtog pa'i snang yul yin pa'i phyir te / de la snang ba'i
phyir na ma khyab* / In the last line of this argument the opponent says that the vase
must be the appearing object (*snang yul*) of the thought of vase because it appears to
that thought. The reply is short and swift: "That does not follow" (*ma khyab*). rGyal
tshab gives the usual explanation in all its details in *rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed*
Vol. I, p. 104-106: *shing ma yin las log par snang ba de phyi rol gyi gsal ba rnams
la rjes su 'gro ba'i spyi yin nam / blo'i snang ba kho na la rjes su 'gro / dang po ltar
na / shing gsal rang mtshan pa rnams rtog pa la shing ma yin las log par snang ba
de yin dgos pas / rang mtshan rtog pa'i snang yul du mi rung bar khyod kyis khas
blangs pa dang 'gal la / gnyis pa ltar na yang khyed kyis shing gsal rnams 'bras bu
mtshungs shing / shing ma yin las log par yang mtshungs pas shing ma yin las log
pa dang / shing ma yin las log par snang ba gnyis de dag gi spyir khyed kyis bzhag
pa dang 'gal lo // mi rtag pa dang bdag med la sogs pa de dag kyang rtog pa'i
snang ba tsam kho nar zad pas / blo'i snang ba tsam las tha dad pa'i mi rtag pa
dang bdag med sogs dngos po'i gnas tshod kyi chos ma yin zhing de dag mi rtogs
par 'gyur la / de lta na khyed kyis bstan bcos su spyi dang gzhi mthun dang bsgrub
bya sgrub byed la sogs pa'i rnam gzhag du ma zhig byas pa dgos pa cung zad kyang
med par 'gyur ro zhe na zhes pa'o //*
    *lan ni / shing ma yin las log par snang ba rtog pas btags shing don byed mi nus
kyang shing gsal rang mtshan pa rtog pa la shing ma yin las log par snang ba yin pa
la 'gal ba cung zad kyang med pas de dag spyi gsal du 'thad la / de lta na yang rang
mtshan rtog pa'i gzung yul du thal bar mi 'gyur te / rtog pa la shing gsal rang
mtshan yang shing ma yin las log par snang / rang la rgyangs chad du snang ba'i
shing 'dzin rtog pa'i gzung bya de yang rtog pa la shing ma yin las log par snang
bas shing ma yin las log pa yin pa dang ma yin pa gnyis / rtog pa la shing ma yin las
log par 'dres nas snang zhing so sor mi snang bas de ma yin bzhin du der snang ba
des bsgribs nas shing ma yin las log pa'i thun mong ma yin pa'i ngo bo de / gzhan
dang ma 'dres par mthong mi nus pas shing rang mtshan gzung yul du thal bar ga la
'gyur / spyi gzhi mthun dang / bsgrub bya sgrub byed sogs kyi rang ldog rnam par
rtog pa'i snang ba kho nas zad kyang de dag gi gzhir dngos po'i chos rnams kyang*

Part of the dGe lugs pa's motivation for insisting that real particulars must actually appear to thought was an aprioristic reasoning about what is needed to preserve a distinction between valid thoughts, like inferences, and

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'gyur bas | spyi chos la 'jus nas lkog gyur gyi rang mtshan rnams go bar byed pas | de dag ni gnas skabs dang mthar thug gi don rtogs pa'i thabs su byas pas dgos pa med par mi 'gyur ro ||

"Objection: This 'appearance as excluded from non-tree' (*shing ma yin las log par snang ba de*), is it a universal (*spyi = sāmānya*) which is co-present in the external instances, or is it co-present only in mental appearances (*blo'i snang ba kho na*). In the first case, the particular tree-instances would have to appear to thought as excluded from non-trees, and thus, granted that [according to your position] a *svalakṣaṇa* cannot be thought's appearing object (*rtog pa'i snang yul*), there would be a contradiction with what you accept. In the second case, too, for you the tree-instances would have similar effects and would also be similar in being excluded from non-tree, and thus there would a contradiction with your having posited 'excluded from non-tree' (*shing ma yin las log pa*) and 'appearance as excluded from non-tree' (*shing ma yin las log par snang ba*) as both being universals of those instances. Since impermanence, selflessness and the like would also be nothing more than mere appearances to thought, then impermanence, selflessness, etc. different from these mere mental appearances would not be qualities belonging to the real being of entities and the latter [qualities] would not be understood. In that case, there would no point whatsoever for you to formulate, in treatises, numerous accounts concerning *sāmānya, samānādhikaraṇa, sādhya, sādhana*, etc.

The reply is as follows. Although 'appearance as excluded from non-tree' (*shing ma yin las log par snang ba*) is imagined by thought and is not capable of accomplishing an aim (*don byed mi nus*), still there is absolutely no contradiction for the particular tree-instances to appear to thought as excluded from non-trees (*shing gsal rang mtshan pa rtog pa la shing ma yin las log par snang ba yin pa*). Therefore, it is logically correct for these to be [respectively] universals and instances. And in that case, there would not be the absurd consequence that a *svalakṣaṇa* would be thought's apprehended object (*rtog pa'i gzung yul = grāhyaviṣaya*). The particular tree-instances appear to thought as excluded from non-tree; what is apprehended (*gzung bya*) by thought grasping trees and appears to it to be something separate also appears to thought as excluded from non-tree; so, both what is and is not excluded from non-tree are mixed up and then appear (*'dres nas snang*) to thought as being excluded from non-tree, and do not appear separately; and therefore due to this appearance as such [i.e. as excluded from non-tree] all the while not being so [i.e. excluded from non-tree], it [i.e. thought] is obscured and cannot therefore see the special nature of 'exclusion from non-tree' in a way which is not mixed up with anything else. Thus, how could there be the absurd consequence that the particular tree would be the apprehended object (*gzung yul = grāhyaviṣaya*)? Although the **svavyā-vṛtti* (*rang ldog*) of *sāmānya, samānādhikaraṇa, sādhya, sādhana* and so forth are nothing more than just appearances to thought (*rtog pa'i snang ba*), dharmas which

utterly wrong thoughts (*log shes*), like thinking that sound is permanent. As we saw in the initial passages quoted from Tsong kha pa, the idea that all thought just worked by "inflated misconceptions" (*rlom pa tsam* = *abhimānamātra*) was taken to be a catastrophe: this was so for him because if all thought were mere inflated misconceptions (*rlom pa tsam*), no distinction between right and wrong would be possible, and every thought would be simply wrong. Thus a hierarchy of error was deemed necessary, and the dGe lugs pa felt that there had to be some point which distinguished the two sorts of error, viz. valid thought, which is only erroneous in a very specific way about what appears, and utterly wrong thought, where nothing real appears at all and error occurs on the level of determination.

Not suprisingly, perhaps, this idea of a twofold hierarchy of error has only a very strained grounding in Dharmakīrti, who repeatedly stresses the complete similarity of the psychological processes of valid and utterly wrong thoughts and just relies upon the criterion of *arthakriyā* and upon indirect causal connections (*sambandha*) with particulars to make the necessary distinctions. (See e.g. PV I, k. 81.). Śākya mchog ldan does not bother with the hierarchy of error at all, and actually speaks of valid thought about *samānādhikaraṇa*, *viśeṣa*, etc. as being nothing other than wrong cognitions (*log shes kho na*), "because they apprehend them by superimposition" (*sgro btags nas 'dzin pa'i phyir*) (see n. 19 above.)

The dGe lugs pa arguments are, I think, so strikingly weak on this score[29], that one is tempted to look for other explanations. Do all these

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are real entities (*dngos po*) are also the bases (*gzhi*) of these [notions, i.e. of *sāmānya*, etc.], and so by grasping dharmas which are universals (*spyi'i chos*), one makes understood imperceptible (*lkog gyur* = *parokṣa*) particulars, and for this reason because these [*sāmānya*, *sādhya*, etc.] are therefore means for understanding states of affairs which are real conditions and are ultimate, they will not be pointless."

29 See Tsong kha pa, *Tshad ma'i brjed byang chen mo* f. 20a-b (p. 190-1) on the way in which some thought is in error concerning its appearing object (*snang yul*), but is *not* utterly wrong: *gser bum bum par snang ba de nyid phyi rol gyi don dang bum ma yin las log pa ma yin bzhin du de gnyis gcig lta bur snang bas snang yul la 'khrul ba yin no || yul la 'jug pa'i tshe gser bum bum par snang ba phyi rol gyi don du med pa la phyi rol don du zhen nas 'jug pa yin yang | blo'i 'dzin stangs la gser bum bum pa'o snyam du 'dzin gyi sgra don bum pa'o snyam pa dang gser bum gyi snang ba 'di nyid bum pa'o snyam du zhen pa sogs med pas zhen yul la 'khrul ba'i skyon med do ||. lCang skya grub mtha'* (p. 100 ed. KLEIN, p. 71 ed. rDo rje rgyal po) is a condensed version of the same and is translated in KLEIN (1991) p. 129. See also ibid. p. 129 for the standard dGe lugs pa view, which is summarized by a

"solutions" of dilemmas come down to a case of the fascination which philosophers have notoriously had with rhetorical parallelisms and inversions, thinking that they somehow embody profundity?[30] Alas, this is probably part of what's going on when Tsong kha pa and rGyal tshab put forth a long series of inversions along the lines of "objects of thought are not particulars, but particulars are objects of thought". However, some remarks of KLEIN, which I have also frequently heard from Tibetans, lead me to think that we are not dealing so much with arguments couched in potent rhetorical figures, as with, above all, a certain fixed idea or dominant metaphor of how *sāmānya-*

Tibetan informant: "*1*) appearance (the actual object) and imputation (the mental image) appear undifferentiably mixed, and *2*) the image of pot appears to *be* a pot but is not. Although an image and a pot *appear* to be one, thought does not actively *conceive* them to be one. Thus, it is not a wrong consciousness (*log shes*) even though it is a mistaken consciousness (*'khrul shes*)." (The italics are those of KLEIN herself.) Similar explanations by Tibetan informants are found in NAPPER (1986) p. 132ff; see also KLEIN (1986) p. 15-6.

The central idea of Tsong kha pa *et al.* can be paraphrased as follows: *1.* Thought practically applies by determining a fictional representation to be the external object. *2.* However, in its way of apprehension (*blo'i 'dzin stangs la*) it does not consciously entertain the proposition: "a fiction is a particular". Thus one is not deceived with regard to the *adhyavaseya*, in that one does not explicitly or consciously hold that the fictional representation is the particular. (Indeed, if in thinking, one constantly had before one's mind absurd propositions like "the *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is the particular", it would be impossible to distinguish valid thought, like inferences, from utterly wrong conceptions (*log shes*). It's hard to see that anyone would want to contest this idea of Tsong kha pa, as it looks like little more than a restatement of the central idea of thought proceeding by *unconscious* error. On the other hand, it's also extremely difficult to see that this truism about not consciously and explicitly thinking "the *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is the particular", would prove that the error in thought had to be on the level of appearances and not determinations.)

30 Cf. William JAMES' pronouncement that the rational statement is that we feel sorry because we cry, not that we cry because we are sorry, cited in Saul KRIPKE's *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language*, 1982 (Blackwell reprint, 1989) p. 93, n. 76. KRIPKE gives a list of these surprisingly frequent inversions and parallelisms in philosophy, including examples from James, Hume and Wittgenstein. The statement "the object of thought is not a particular, but particulars are objects of thought" is, however, in all fairness, not quite the same thing as what Kripke is describing, in that Kripke's examples all involve a "because"-clause and work their effect by reversing philosophical priorities. Nonetheless, the phenomenon of an inversion seeming to be "subtle" and to undo a conceptual knot is there too.

lakṣaṇa operates in thought.[31] The dGe lugs model, as KLEIN very correctly states, is something like mirroring (a variant on the mirror metaphor which I have often heard is glass or crystal) – a vase actually appears to thought via a *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, just like an object might actually appear via a mirror or crystal. Moreover, since thought must understand its object via this "medium", then if the vase did not appear in this mirror or crystal-like *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, we would not know anything about it all – our ideas would be *just* inventions and misconceptions. Representations, appearances, etc. thus end up being taken as very faithful duplications, rather than as *constructed proxies* which represent only an extremely limited and partial picture of the object and even involve various distortions. Undoubtedly, however, it is the latter idea of constructions, rather than that of *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*-as-mirrors or *sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*-as-crystal, which better captures the sense of invention / creation and imagination in the term *kalpanā* and which squares with the funda-mental idea of Dignāga's *apoha* theory that thought functions by exclusion (*sel 'jug*) to focus on a very limited number of the object's otherwise many qualities. *Sāmānyalakṣaṇa*-as-mirrors, if we stick to this metaphor, looks more like a transformation of thought into a type of positive application (*sgrub 'jug*), like perception, where *everything* about the object must appear. In short, appearance of an object in a mirror would be a meaningful metaphor only if conceptual representations were also more or less directly caused by their objects and were not partial in the way all Buddhist logicians say they actually are.[32]

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31 See KLEIN (1986) p. 136: "In other words, just like looking in a mirror can cause one to realize something about the reflected image, so through the image of an object thought can correctly realize something about the actual object."

32 The general question of the Buddhist use or rejection of a mirror theory of cognition is of interest to comparative philosophy, especially in the light of R. RORTY's theses in his *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Now, it is well-known that the Sautrāntika Sākāravādins hold that perceptual knowledge (*pratyakṣa*) of external objects comes about because the objects leave an image or likeness (*ākāra*) on the mirror of con-sciousness. See KAJIYAMA (1965) p. 429f. MOOKERJEE (1935) p. 77f. and MIMAKI (1976) p. 72. Glass / crystal (*sphaṭika*) is often used as a metaphor for *perceptual knowledge* in non-Buddhist schools, like the Sāṃkhya, who take *buddhi* or the "inner organ" (*antaḥkaraṇa*) as being like glass which is "coloured" by the substances underneath it. See *Nyāyabhāṣya* ad *Nyāyasūtra* 3.2.9 (*sphaṭikānyatvābhimānavat*

Finally, it remains to ask how important for dGe lugs pa philosophy was their "solution" to the dilemma-like difficult point? How much of a role did it actually play in their *apoha*-related doctrines? In other words, was it really the key point for them that they said it was? I think the answer to the latter question must be a strong "Yes". For better or for worse, they were right when they spoke about it being, for them, the supreme difficult point of the logicians' tradition, or the principal obstacle to understanding the logician's version of the two truths – *for them* it was very important, as is clear from even a quick perusal of the list of key concepts which Tsong kha pa mentioned in the passage from *Tshad ma'i brjed byang* which we cited earlier on. Indeed, this "difficult point" was not just important in usual *apoha*-related problems, such as questions of universals and semantics, but

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tadanyatvābhimānaḥ) and also *Bai lun* T. 1569 *shang* 171c 22-25; see TILLEMANS (1990), endnote 344. Depictions of conceptual thought (*vikalpa*) in terms of mirroring or glass, however, seem rarer, although they do seem to have some limited support in Indian texts. Dharmakīrti in PV III.164 and 165 does speak of *vikalpa-pratibimba* "the representations / reflections belonging to thought" and "the representation/reflection of the object" (*arthapratibimbaka*). (Note that *pratibimbaka* = *pratibimba*, see BÖHTLINGK *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch* s.v. *pratibimbaka*.) Moreover k.165 specifies that *arthapratibimbaka* appears in a cognition which arises due to words – the most we can say is that the cognition with this representation is very indirectly caused by *svalakṣaṇa*. Accordingly, the *pratibimba* is still better taken as a purely fictional *constructed* representation, rather than as a reflection in a stricter causal sense where a *svalakṣaṇa* would actually appear in thought via mirroring. The representation involved in thought, thus, does not seem to be at all of the same type of "mirroring" as that in a Sautrāntika theory of perception where external objects are said to be mirrored as *ākāra*. Finally, we should note that there are Indian Buddhist contexts in which glass / crystal and mica (*abhraka*) are used as similes to explain the degrees of vividness of the representation in thought. This is notably the case in NBT *ad* NB 1.11 (*bhūtārthabhāvanāprakarṣaparyantajaṃ yogijñānam*), where Dharmottara discusses "yogic perception" (*yogipratyakṣa*) of reality as arising right after the utmost vivid stage of conceptualisation of this reality, namely, after the very last moment before conceptual meditation becomes non-conceptual yogic perception, the *bhūtārthabhāvanāprakarṣaparyanta* "limit of the superior stage of meditation on the truth". The superior stage (*prakarṣa*) is when the object begins to become clear; at the limit, it is as if one sees via mica, and finally in perception, it is as if via crystal (*amalaka*). I think, however, that here we are just dealing with illustrations of *degrees of clarity* (*sphuṭābhatva*) in a rather special case, the transition to yogic perception: the NBT passage is not, as far as I can see, citing the example of crystal and mica in the context of a general cognitive model for all mundane conceptualisation, thus supplanting the model of construction and imagination.

elements of this doctrine crop up in numerous other areas of dGe lugs pa philosophy. A few examples should suffice to show what I mean.

1. The quirky character of *bsDus grwa* logic.

The differentiation between A and A's is extremely widespread in this system of logic, and does not just involve logical terms like *sādhya, sādhana,* etc. One very frequently finds statements along the lines of *shes bya chos can rtag pa yin* ("knowable thing, the topic, is permanent, [i.e. unreal]") and *shes bya yin na rtag pa yin pas ma khyab, dper na gser bum bzhin* ("if something is a knowable thing, it need not be permanent [i.e. unreal], like a golden vase.").[33] This and very many other statements like it turning on the A/A's separation are at the core of many of the seemingly paradoxical examples which M. GOLDBERG (1985) gave in a list of "puzzles" found in *bsDus grwa.* What GOLDBERG also correctly noticed was that A itself is sometimes an A and sometimes not, and that it is very difficult to give any-thing other than *ad hoc* or merely intra-systemic explanations as to when one outcome is to be endorsed rather than the other.[34] The word "quirky", as I am using it here, doesn't mean "formally deviant" in the technical sense intended by W.V. QUINE or Susan HAACK, namely, a logic which would reject key classical theorems. Formally speaking, *bsDus grwa* is a coherent, functional and even quite a sophisticated system of logic, having analogues to variables, rather unusual quantifiers and a number of classically behaving formal structures of implication, contradiction and so forth.[35] But, in its semantic aspects, it is quirky or unpredictable, in that we simply have a hard time saying convincingly when and why a number of statements should be true and others false. And this quirkiness is very often due to the recurring problematical distinctions between A and A's.[36]

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33 Cf. *Rwa stod bsdus grwa,* f. 4a2 (p. 7) *shes bya chos can | dngos po ma yin par thal | dngos med yin pa'i phyir | ma grub na | de chos can | der thal | rtag pa yin pa'i phyir.* ibid. f. 4a3: *gzhi grub na rtag pa yin pas khyab zer na | gser bum chos can | der thal | de'i phyir. gzhi grub* and *shes bya* are coextensive. See TILLEMANS (1989) p. 277-282.

34 For some of the *ad hoc* decisions, see GOLDBERG (1985) p. 178-180. See also e.g. her p. 171: "In the absence of a contradictory condition an entity is considered to be an instance of itself."

35 See TILLEMANS (1989) and (1992).

36 I should stress here that this diagnosis is not a dismissal of *bsDus grwa* as being

2. Parallels between the difficult point in *apoha* and the two truths in Madhyamaka.

In *rNam 'grel thar lam gsal byed*, Vol. I. p. 110, we find the following passage:

> *bsgrub bya sgrub byed sogs tha dad pa'i cha dang de dag gi rang ldog rtog pas btags (brtags?) par ston pa yin gyi / de dag yin na rtog pas brtags pas khyab par ston pa ni rnam pa kun tu mi rung ste / lugs gzhan du bden stong don dam pa'i bden pa yin yang bden stong yin na des ma khyab par bshad pa bzhin no //* "One teaches that the fact of there being a difference (*tha dad pa'i cha*) between *sādhya* and *sādhana*, as well as the 'own exclusions' (*rang ldog* = *svavyāvṛtti) of these [terms, *sādhya* and *sādhana*], are things imagined by thought. However, it is totally wrong to teach that if something is one of these [i.e. if it is the *sādhya* or *sādhana*, etc.] it must be imagined by thought (*rtog pas brtags pa*). It is like in another tradition [i.e. the Madhyamaka] where it is said that 'void of truth' (*bden stong*) is the ultimate truth (*don dam bden pa*), but that if something is void of truth, it need not be the latter [i.e. it need not be ultimate truth]."

I think that the structure which we have discussed under the problem of the difficult point, namely *A* itself being unreal, but *A*'s being real, is so obvious here with regard to *sādhya*, etc. as to need few further remarks.[37] What is

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irrational or incoherent, or as *only* being a kind of word-game, as some Tibetan adversaries would depict it – far from it. Interestingly enough, *bsDus grwa*, in it quirkiness but formal orthodoxy, reminds one significantly of the complicated but largely *ad hoc* schemata for classifying Chinese discourse which A.C. GRAHAM and others have investigated in the Mohist canon. (My point is a logical one, and not one of historical relations.) This *ad hoc* character is not very prominent in the Indian logic to which *bsDus grwa* is (very uneasily) related. A comparison with structures in Mohist logic is well beyond the scope of our present paper, but suffice it to say here that such comparisons have yet to be made and they will, I'm confident, contribute to demystifying some of the peculiar logical features at stake. An interesting first attempt at comparing Buddhist *hetuvidyā*, Aristotelian and Later Mohist logic is found in PAUL (1994).

37 The Indian doctrine being explained here is generalisable to span not just *sādhya* and *sādhana*, but also *dharma* and *dharmin*, and has its source in one of the earliest works attributable to Dignāga, the mysterious *Hetumukha* which is cited in *Pramāṇa-vārttikasvavṛtti* (PVSV ed. GNOLI, p. 2.22) and elsewhere: *sarva evāyam anumānā-numeyavyavahāro buddhyārūḍhenaiva dharmadharmibhedena na bahiḥ sadasattvam apekṣate.* "Absolutely all this convention concerning *anumāna* [i.e. the reason (*liṅga*)*] and *anumeya* [i.e. the *sādhyadharmin* and *sādhyadharma**] is due to the distinction between *dharma* and *dharmin*, which [in turn] is just dependent upon our thought (*buddhyārūḍhenaiva*); [the convention] does depend upon [this difference in fact]

however noteworthy is that, following the dGe lugs pa, the Madhyamaka gets drawn into using a similar type of logical structure where one makes a general separation between A and A's. In short, elements of the so-called difficult point in *apoha* also become key elements in the dGe lugs pa understanding of Madhyamaka.

3. Continua and gross objects.

The fundamental unreal A versus real A's separation is also largely present in the dGe lugs formulations of an ontology of real continua (*rgyun* = *samtāna*) and gross (*rags pa* = *sthūla*) objects extended in space. The dGe lugs pa came up with a peculiar interpretation of these two notions so that *samtāna* and *sthūla* themselves are unreal, but if something is either of these it need not be unreal. DREYFUS (1991), p. 173ff. has explained these positions in mKhas grub rje. What is relevant for us here is that the passage of mKhas grub rje which DREYFUS cites makes a very clear connection between the A versus A's structure as applied to universals and the same structure applied to continua and gross objects. In short, the argument is a pure case of the so-called difficult point.

> *sDe bdun yid kyi mun sel* f.34a1-2: *spyi dang rags pa dang rgyun zhes bya ba ni sgro btags rdzas su ma grub pa'i spyi mtshan yin kyang spyi dang rags pa dang rgyun yin na rdzas su grub pa dang rang mtshan la sogs pa yin par mi 'gal zhing / spyi mtshan yin pas ma khyab bo / de'i phyir bum pa lta bu spyi yang yin rags pa yang yin rgyun yang yin rang mtshan yang yin la spyi mtshan ma yin no zhes shes par gyis shig /* "When one speaks of universal, gross object and continuum, they are imagined *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* which are not established as substances. However, it is not contradictory for something which is a universal, a gross object or a continuum to be established as a substance and to be a particular; it does not have to be a *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*. Therefore, know that something like a vase is a universal and a gross object as well as a continuum and a particular, but is not a *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*."

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existing or not outside [of the mind] ." *These additions follow Karṇakagomin's *ṭīkā* on PVSV. There is, however, absolutely no reason to believe that Dignāga himself wished to distinguish here between unreal *anumeya/ anumāna* itself, and possibly real *anumānas/anumeyas*. See FRAUWALLNER (1959) p. 104; STEINKELLNER (1971), p. 199-200 on this passage from the *Hetumukha*.

It is high time to draw some conclusions. The above discussion shows, if there is really still need to show such a thing, the necessity for a *critical* historico-philological approach to dGe lugs pa philosophy, an approach which takes seriously both the Indian and purely Tibetan aspects of this complex system. Equally, I think that Paul WILLIAMS (1994) is quite right in saying that this type of material cries out for sensitive and in-depth philosophical treatment. And that must also mean logical analysis. Notwithstanding the admirable work of KLEIN and others, the whys and wherefores of the logic of the dGe lugs pa system still remain very obscure – we cannot in future just translate or paraphrase dGe lugs pa texts and oral traditions on *apoha* and yet hope to navigate satisfactorily through the very complex, and often paralogical, Tibetan arguments. There is, in being "faithful" in this way, the real danger of an illusory understanding, one where we have essentially just learned to think adroitly in the same language as rGyal tshab *et al.*, viz. Tibetan *apoha*-ese. Lastly, as the dGe lugs pa's own major contribution to *apoha*-theory, the so-called difficult point, turns inextricably on two rather marginal positions probably having little to do with Indian thought, we should definitively lay to rest the seductive idea of the dGe lugs-gSang phu tradition being a kind of extremely subtle "magic key" (*'phrul gyi lde'u mig*) for understanding this vital aspect of Dharmakīrtian epistemology.[38]

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38 Of course, much of the dGe lugs pa explanation of the various *apoha* sections in the texts of Dharmakīrti *et al.* is indeed very valuable in understanding Indian Buddhism, and in other areas of *pramāṇa* these commentaries are also very useful. But that's not my point. I'm speaking about the dGe lugs pa's *own* colouring of the *apoha* theory (not their paraphrases of Dharmakīrtian *kārikā*s or other aspects of their commentarial duties) stemming from the ensemble of doctrines called "the difficult point".

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