

Proving emptiness – The epistemological background for the “neither one nor many” argument and the nature of its probandum in Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge’s works*

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1. Introduction

The Tibetan thinker Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109–1169)¹ lived at a pivotal period for the development of Tibetan Madhyamaka, a time when new interpretations based on Candrakīrti’s works spread by Pa tshab nyi ma grags started to attract a growing interest from Tibetan scholars.² Up to this time, interpretations of Madhyamaka doctrines had relied principally on the works of the so-called “three Madhyamaka [teachers] from the East” (*dbu ma shar gsum*),³ namely, the *Madhyamakālaṅkāra* of Śāntarakṣita, the *Madhyamakāloka* of Kamalaśīla and the *Satyadvayavibhaṅga* of Jñānagarbha, translations of which had been available since the 9th century.⁴ Phya pa must have been familiar with these texts since his studies and early teaching duties in sTod lung with rGya dmar pa Byang chub grags,⁵ who had been a student of Khyung Rin chen grags and Gangs pa She’u Blo gros byang chub, two of the foremost students of rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109), the “Great Translator,” leading exegete and second abbot of the monastery of gSang phu Ne’u thog.⁶ Although not a direct student of rNgog Blo ldan shes rab, Phya pa was thereby trained in the interpretative tradition later termed the “*rngog lugs*.” rNgog Blo ldan shes rab himself is reported by his biographers to have composed commentarial works on the three treatises of the “Madhyamaka [teachers] from the East,” none of

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¹ For biographical references, see van der Kuijp 1978.

² See Vose 2009 for a detailed account of the historical and philosophical background associated with the diffusion of Candrakīrti’s Madhyamaka interpretation in Tibet.

³ On the expression *dbu ma shar gsum* see Tauscher’s introduction to the edition of *sNying po*, p. ix. On Śākya mchog ldan’s use of the expression *rang rgyud shar pa’i bstan bcos gsum*, see van der Kuijp 1983: 47. mKhas grub uses the expression *rang rgyud shar gsum* in his *rGyud sde spyi’i rnam par gzhas pa rgyas par brjod* (see Lessing and Wayman 1998: 90,7–11).

⁴ The *Madhyamakālaṅkāra-vṛtti* and the *Satyadvayavibhaṅga* and *°vṛtti* were translated by Śīlendrabodhi and Ye shes sde (the root text of the *Madhyamakālaṅkāra* by Surendrabodhi and Ye shes sde), the *Madhyamakāloka* by Śīlendrabodhi and dPal brtsegs rakṣita.

⁵ In the *Blue Annals*, ’Gos lo tsā ba reports that in his 20th year (i.e., 1129) the first Karma pa Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110–1193) was instructed by rGya dmar pa and Phya pa at Se/Sa thang, in the sTod lung district, in the “[Five] Dharmas of Maitreya” and the “Three [works of the] Madhyamaka [teachers] from the East” (*dbu ma sher* (sic) *gsum*). *Deb sngon* 565,8–11: *nyi shu pa la stod lungs se thang du phebs | stod lungs rgyad mar pa* [read: *rgya dmar*] *dang | de’i slob ma bod skad rigs gcig pa la mkhas pa slob dpon phywa pa gnyis la byams chos dang dbu ma sher gsum gsan zhing mkhas par bslabs*. Cf. van der Kuijp 1983: 60.

⁶ On rNgog Blo ldan shes rab’s (aka rNgog Lo tsā ba) life and works, see van der Kuijp 1983: chapter 1, Kano 2006, Kramer 2007. It is in particular Khyung who is mentioned in the lists of rNgog’s disciples (see van der Kuijp 1983: 47). The extent of these authors’ influence on Phya pa’s views remains to be examined. Unfortunately, no works by Khyung or Gangs pa She’u are currently available. As for rGya dmar pa, a commentary on the *Bodhisattvacaryāvatāra* has been published (*bKa’ gdams gsung ’bum*, vol. 6), as well as a work on Madhyamaka entitled *dBu ma’i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa* (*bKa’ gdams gsung ’bum*, vol. 31; see *dBu ma de kho na nyid* in the bibliographical references).

which have yet surfaced.⁷ He did not, however, revise existing translations or produce new translations of these works.⁸ It is on these three treatises as well that Phya pa's Madhyamaka contribution appears to concentrate. Among the eighteen recovered works of Phya pa published in the *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum* one finds commentaries by Phya pa on each of these three texts, as well as an independent work on Madhyamaka entitled *dBu ma de kho na nyid kyi snying po* (hereafter: *sNying po*). This is the same work that was published in 1999 by Helmut Tauscher on the basis of a different manuscript, whose first folio identified the text as *dbu ma shar gsum gyi stong thun*. This might well be a later appellation of the text. Indeed, the colophon in both manuscripts gives the title *dBu ma de kho na nyid kyi snying po*, and it is with this name also that Phya pa refers to it in his commentary on the *Madhyamakāloka* (*sNang bshad*).⁹ As noted by Tauscher, this work might be identified as one of the summaries of Madhyamaka (*dbu ma bsdus pa che chung*) listed in A khu ching Shes rab rgya mtsho's (1803–1875) list of rare works, which also includes the three abovementioned commentaries and a commentary on the *Uttaratantra* (see *Tho yig, dbu ma* section, 11317–11321), all of which are now available in the *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum*.

Phya pa was reportedly opposed to the new Candrakīrti-oriented Madhyamaka interpretations that were adopted by a number of his own students, notably rMa bya Byang chub brtson 'grus and gTsang nag pa brTson 'grus seng ge. He is held to have composed many refutations of Candrakīrti and to have engaged in debate with Candrakīrti's commentator Jayānanda.¹⁰ He is consequently frequently classified as a “svātantrika” — a qualification whose legitimacy, as discussed in Tauscher 2003, depends on the criteria one wants to apply in distinguishing *rang rgyud pa* from *thal 'gyur ba*. Biographical lists do not hint to specific works of refutation by Phya pa, and no such work is included either among the texts recovered so far, but the confrontation is explicit in *sNying po*, where Phya pa criticizes Candrakīrti and his epigones (*zla ba grags pa la sogs pa*) regarding the method for refuting ultimate entities and cites the *Madhyamakāvātāra* several times to present Candrakīrti's position.¹¹

Phya pa was not only active in Madhyamaka exegesis, but also stands out among gSang phu scholars as the foremost contributor to the development of Tibetan epistemology (*tshad ma*). These two

⁷ See Kano 2006: 126 for a list of Madhyamaka works attributed to rNgog by Gro lung pa, Bu ston and Śākya mchog ldan. See also Kramer 2007: 109–113 and 126–127. rNgog's other compositions on Madhyamaka include commentarial works on Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakakārikā*, Bhāviveka's *Prajñāpradīpa*, Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (the translation of which he revised with Tilakakalaśa), and Atiśa's *Satyadvayāvātāra* and *Madhyamakopadeśa*, as well as two unidentified works presented as “*dbu ma spyi'i don bsdus*” and “*de kho na la 'jug pa'i gzhung bsdus pa/don bsdus pa*.” The latter, which is, according to its title, a synopsis of a **Tattvāvātāra*, may possibly have to do with the *Tattvāvātāravṛtti* (D3892, Ha 39b4–43b5) composed by Śrīgupta, an author who is held by Tāranātha to have been Jñānagarbha's teacher (see Ruegg 1981: 68–69). I owe this hint to Kevin Vose.

⁸ His involvement with Madhyamaka texts as a translator appears to be limited to a revision of the translation of the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*.

⁹ See *sNang bshad* 47a6: 'di rnam kyi don gyi cha ni kho bos de kho na nyid kyi snying por rgya cher gtan la dbab pas 'dir ma spros te || legs par rtogs par 'dod pas de las blta bar bya'o ||. I am grateful to Jongbok Yi for pointing out this passage to me.

¹⁰ See van der Kuijp 1983: 69 and Ruegg 2000: 37 n. 67 and 68.

¹¹ See *sNying po* §125.111 (*gzhan gyi lugs dgod pa*) and §125.112 (*de sun dbyung ba*). These sections are translated in Vose 2009.

domains present a specific interaction in Phya pa’s works. The present paper intends to elucidate some aspects of this interaction by examining Phya pa’s view on the proof of emptiness by the so-called “neither one nor many” argument. This famous inference aimed at proving the absence of intrinsic nature (*niḥsvabhāvatā*) of all things is discussed by Phya pa prominently in the Madhyamaka context, but also comes up repeatedly in his epistemological works as an illustration of an inference based on a logical reason qua non-apprehension (*mi dmigs pa’i rtags, anupalabdhihetu*). I will focus here on one specific aspect of this proof that becomes one of the typical points of discussion in later Tibetan Madhyamaka: the nature of the probandum (*bsgrub bya, sādhyā*). In his study of the proof of emptiness in the *Madhyamakāloka*, Ryūsei Keira mentions a remark by Tsong kha pa (1357–1419) in the *dBu ma rgyan gyi zin bris*, that some previous Tibetan scholars (*sngar gyi bod kyi mkhas pa kha cig*) accept that in this proof the probandum can have two forms: that of a *med dgag* or that of a *ma yin dgag*.¹² Keira identifies Tsong kha pa’s target as Phya pa based on *sNying po* (87,13–18). As Phya pa’s commentaries on the *Madhyamakālaṅkāra* and *°āloka* have now also surfaced, additional information can be gathered regarding Phya pa’s views on this issue. In what follows, I will start by considering Phya pa’s treatment of this question in his Madhyamaka works. I will then turn to his epistemological works to attempt to identify elements grounding his treatment of the “neither one nor many” argument, and in particular the question of the probandum. Reciprocally, I will examine whether specific issues linked with this proof in the context of Madhyamaka interpretation may have influenced his discussion regarding the probandum of inference in his epistemological works.

2. The “neither one nor many” argument

Śāntarakṣita’s *Madhyamakālaṅkāra* contains a classic presentation of the “neither one nor many” argument,¹³ as stated in k.1.¹⁴

“Entities as asserted by ourselves and others, in reality have neither the nature of oneness nor manyness. Thus, they are without own-being, like a reflection.”

Śāntarakṣita’s discussion of the proof in the *Madhyamakālaṅkāra* maps the underlying Dharmakīrtian model of inference, according to which a correct logical reason must satisfy three characteristics, that amount to the following two criteria: (1) being a property of the subject (*phyogs chos, pakṣadharmatā*) and (2) pervasion by the property to be proven (*khyab pa, vyāpti*). Śāntarakṣita shows that the logical

¹² Tsong kha pa, *dBu ma rgyan gyi zin bris* 11b4–6, cited in Keira (2004: 217 n. 399): ‘*di la sngar gyi bod kyi mkhas pa kha cig gcig dang du bral gyi snang bas bden med kyi snang ba dang | gcig du bral gyis bden med kyi tha snyad bsgrub na | ma yin dgag sgrub yin la gcig dang du bral gyi* [read: *gyis*] *don dam gyi dngos po’i tha snyad du byas rung bas stong pa sgrub pa na med dgag sgrub pa yin zhes zer te...* Keira notes that this view is also described in the lCang *skya grub mtha’*. The two terms *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* are the Tibetan equivalents for the Sanskrit terms *prasajyapratishedha* and *paryudāsa*, sometimes translated “non-implicative negation” (or “mere negation”) and “implicative negation.” I refrain for now from using an English translation for reasons that will become clear in Section 3.2.1.

¹³ For an analysis of Śāntarakṣita’s version of the argument and its difference from other varieties of *ekānekaviyogahetu*, see Tillemans 1983.

¹⁴ As translated in Tillemans 1983: 306. The Tibetan reads: *bdag dang gzhan smra’i dngos ’di dag || yang dag tu na gcig pa dang || du ma’i rang bzhin bral ba’i phyir || rang bzhin med de gzugs brnyan bzhin ||*

reason “having neither a singular nor a manifold nature” (1) qualifies the subject “entities as asserted by Buddhist and non-Buddhist schools” — kk. 2 to 60 establish that these entities are “not one,” k. 61 that they are “not many” — and (2) is pervaded by the property to be proven, the “absence of inherent nature” (this is done in k. 62 by negating the presence of the reason in dissimilar instances, namely by establishing that what has an inherent nature must be either one or many, the two possibilities being exhaustive). This presentation mostly leaves aside “technical” questions linked with this proof.¹⁵ Those are not raised either by Kamalaśīla in his *Madhyamakālaṅkārapañjikā*. In his *Madhyamakāloka*, however, Kamalaśīla takes up a number of issues that have to do with the elements involved in this inference. In particular, the question arises as to the nature of the probans and probandum (the *sādhana* and the *sādhya*), namely: do they have the form of a *prasajyapratishedha*, a mere negation, or the form of a *paryudāsa*, a negation involving some affirmation?¹⁶ Kamalaśīla holds that when both *sādhya* and *sādhana* consist of *prasajyapratishedha* (mere negations) one is able to avoid the fault of “unestablished basis” (*āśrayāsiddha*).¹⁷ When discussing objections regarding the *sādhya*,¹⁸ however, Kamalaśīla refutes his opponent’s objections both to the *sādhya* being a *prasajyapratishedha* and to the *sādhya* being a *paryudāsa*, which suggests that it could be either.¹⁹

3. Phya pa’s discussion of the “neither one nor many” argument in rGyan bshad and sNying po

Phya pa’s explanation of the passage of the *Madhyamakāloka* concerned with this question in his commentary on this text (*sNang bshad*) turns out to be uninformative: Phya pa merely offers a brief linear gloss on Kamalaśīla’s arguments and does not hint at his own views on the subject.²⁰ He is more prolix in his commentary on the *Madhyamakālaṅkāra* (*rGyan bshad*). As mentioned, this text does not touch on technical issues, but Phya pa’s commentary includes an extensive excursus following the

¹⁵ Tillemans 1982: 104–105 identifies the “technical problems” related to this proof in Tsong kha pa’s *dBu ma rgyan gyi zin bris* as being: (1) the fallacy of *āśrayāsiddha* (unestablished basis) when the subject is non-existent; (2) the opponent’s acceptance that the logical reason qualifies the subject; (3) the nature of the reason and property to be proved (i.e., *prasajyapratishedha* or *paryudāsa*); and (4) the classification of the argument according to the three types of reasons (*kārya*, *svabhāva*, *anupalabdhi*).

¹⁶ See Keira 2004: 206ff., §4.2.2.4.

¹⁷ See Keira 2004: 127–129, §2.2.1.4.1 and Keira’s explanation on pp. 33–34. The fault of “unestablished basis” typically occurs when the subject of an inference is non-existent. In the case of the “neither one nor many” argument, the problem is due to the subject being devoid of an intrinsic nature.

¹⁸ See Keira 2004: 174ff., §4.1.2.1. Arguing against the conclusiveness of “neither one nor many,” the opponent claims that if *sādhya* and *sādhana* are *paryudāsa*, this would imply real entities that are neither one nor many (i.e., the *sādhana* would amount to ascribing a nature to the subject), and that if they are *prasajyapratishedha*, there can be no epistemic relation between them. The opponent does not consider the possibility that *sādhya* and *sādhana* would each represent a different type of negation.

¹⁹ See respectively Keira 2004: 211–216 (§4.2.2.3.1.2) and 216–218 (§4.2.2.3.2). Kamalaśīla argues on the one hand that the *sādhana* “neither one nor many” qua *paryudāsa* cannot imply a real entity (because not even the opponent can conceive of a real entity that is neither one nor many) and on the other hand that the verbal attribution of a property (or a pseudo-property) to something does not amount to the ascription of a real nature to the property-possessor.

²⁰ On the refutation of the arguments against probans and probandum being *ma yin dgag*, see *sNang bshad* 71b6–7.

explanation of k.1.²¹ This excursus addresses questions and objections concerning the subject (*chos can*, *dharmin*), the probandum (*bsgrub bya*, *sādhya*) and the logical reason or probans (*sgrub byed*, *sādhana*), and the establishment of the logical reason’s characteristics (*phyogs chos*, *pakṣadharmatā* and *khyab pa*, *vyāpti*). *rGyan bshad* is not the only place where Phya pa deals with this proof; at the end of the excursus he mentions two other (so far unidentified) compositions where he has presented the matter extensively.²² *sNying po* — whether or not it is to be equated with one of these compositions²³ — also includes a discussion that is in most part parallel to the excursus in *rGyan bshad* but in a somewhat longer version.²⁴

In *rGyan bshad*, Phya pa introduces the “neither one nor many” argument as the proof of the absence of intrinsic nature (*rang bzhin myed par gtan la dbab pa*) and more precisely, of the absence of an intrinsic nature on the ultimate level (*don dam par*). An intrinsic nature is indeed accepted on the conventional level, as developed in *Madhyamakālaṅkāra* k. 63ff., commented upon in *rGyan bshad* 29a5ff. In *sNying po*, the argument is presented as the proof of pervasive emptiness (*khyab pa’i stong pa nyid sgrub pa*), whose function is the elimination of proliferations (*spros pa ’gog pa*).²⁵

3.1 The identification of the negandum (*dgag bya*)

In both *rGyan bshad* and *sNying po*, the understanding of the probandum amounts to the negation of an object of negation, or negandum, and the discussion pertaining to the probandum (*bsgrub bya*, *sādhya*) accordingly starts with the identification of the negandum (*dgag bya*). The identification of the negandum is notably a crucial point in Tibetan Madhyamaka.²⁶ According to Phya pa, the negandum is “ultimate entity” (*don dam pa’i dngos po*).²⁷ As we will see below, in one of the formal applications, the probandum is given in terms of the “negation of the convention of ultimate entity”

²¹ See *rGyan bshad* 4b5–9a7, in the section “presentation of the logical reason” (11.121 *rtags dgod pa*, 4b1ff.). A table of the *sa bcad* for this section is given in appendix 1, with reference to the parallel passages in *sNying po*.

²² *rGyan bshad* 9a7: *tshul lugs ’di dag rgya cher kho bos shes rab gsungs la ’jug pa dang ’jug ngogs bsdu bar bstan la phab pa der blta bar bya ste | ’dir rkang pa rkyang ste gnas pa’i yi ge cha tsam mthong pas ngo bo nyid myed par khas che ba rnams kyi spyir cha tsam brjod pa yin no ||*. I am unable to identify what works the expressions “*shes rab gsungs la ’jug pa*” (“Introduction to the wisdom-sayings”?) and “*’jug ngogs bsdu ba*” (“Summarized introduction”?) might refer to.

²³ If this is the case, it would indicate that *rGyan bshad*, like *sNang bshad*, postdates *sNying po*.

²⁴ *sNying po* 80–124. See appendix 1.

²⁵ As explained in detail in Tauscher 2003: 218–220, in *sNying po* the proof is specifically presented as an autonomous reasoning (*rang rgyud*, *svatantra*), as opposed to the *prasaṅga* reasoning (*thal ’gyur*) advocated by Candrakīrti’s followers.

²⁶ See on this subject Jongbok Yi’s contribution to this volume.

²⁷ Phya pa refutes the option that the negandum would be “entity simpliciter” (*dngos po tsam*), arguing that negating such is refuted by experience — which implies that “entity simpliciter” is established by experience. The option that the negandum would be “conventional entity” (*kun rdzob pa’i dngos po*) is then refuted correlatively, for since entity simpliciter is established, negating conventional entity would imply that ultimate entity is established (ultimate entity and conventional entity being the only two possibilities for an entity). This negandum should not be qualified as either “real” (*dngos po*) or as “imagined” (*brtags/kun brtags*), or by a third possibility, since it has no nature whatsoever. See *rGyan bshad* 5a3–8 and *sNying po* 82–85.

(*don dam pa'i dngos po'i tha snyad du byar rung pas stong*),²⁸ suggesting that the negandum is to be understood more precisely as the convention, “ultimate entity,” and not as the state of affairs, ultimate entity.²⁹

3.2 The nature of the probandum (*bsgrub bya*)

Once the negandum (*dgag bya*) has been identified, one can identify its negation (*bkag pa*), which is the probandum. Two possibilities are examined and accepted by Phya pa as probandum: *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag*.

3.2.1 *Med dgag* and *ma yin dgag*

It is necessary here to consider Phya pa's understanding of these two notions, which differs from what is typically found in later dGe lugs pa literature³⁰ and in Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Rigs gter*,³¹ as well as in Tibetan works that predate Phya pa. Phya pa indeed does not associate these two notions with the non-entailment or entailment of another property (*chos gzhan mi 'phen/'phen*). He even explicitly refutes such a definition, attributed in *sNying po* to “some wise individuals” (*mkhas pa'i skye bo 'ga' zhig*).³² Such a definition involving the criterion of entailment/non-entailment (of another, i.e., positive, property) was held by Phya pa's predecessor Gro lung pa,³³ and maybe also by the latter's student Gangs pa She'u.³⁴ It was also adopted by rGya dmar pa, who appears to have relied on rNgog Blo ldan

²⁸ But when discussing the probandum in the section entitled “*rjes su dpag pa'i gzhal bya'i cha dpyad pa*,” Phya pa just speaks of “voidness” (*stong nyid*).

²⁹ This specification is confirmed by a subsequent discussion in *rGyan bshad* 8a4 (*don dgag bya ma yin la tha snyad dgag bya yin yang...*) and *sNying po* 107–108 (*yang dag pa'i dngos po'i tha snyad dgag bya yin yang...*). Note, however, that the notion of “the state of affairs, ultimate entity” is not completely discarded (even though there is indeed no such thing as an ultimate entity). Phya pa indeed uses this notion in a passage where he opposes “the void of the state of affairs of correct [i.e., ultimate] entity” (*yang dag pa'i dngos po'i don gyis dben pa*) and “the void of the convention of correct entity” (*yang dag pa'i dngos po'i tha snyad kyi dben pa*) as being, respectively, the definiendum of “void of causal efficiency resisting analysis” (*dpyod bzod pa'i don byed pas stong pa*) and that of “absence of oneness and manyness” (*gcig dang du mas bral*). See *rGyan bshad* 6a1–2 and *sNying po* 88–89.

³⁰ See for example the *Don gnyer mun sel* attributed to Tsong kha pa: *dgag pa la dbye na | med dgag dang ma yin dgag gnyis | med dgag gi mtshan nyid | dgag pa gang zhig rang brjod pa'i sgras rang gi dgag bya bkag shul du chos gzhan mi 'phen pa | dper na bum med lta bu'o || ma yin dgag gi mtshan nyid | dgag pa gang zhig rang brjod pa'i sgras rang gi dgag bya bkag shul du chos gzhan 'phen pa | (Don gnyer mun sel 10b5–11a1).*

³¹ *Rigs gter* VIII 221,19–21: *med dgag dang ma yin dgag gi mtshan nyid rim pa bzhin dgag bya bcad nas chos gzhan mi 'phen pa dang 'phen pa yin te | dper na bum pa med pa dang | bum pa med pa'i sa phyogs lta bu dgag pa rkyang pa dang* dgag sgrub tshogs pa'o ||. (* dang om. in text, but present in the sDe dge edition on which it is based.)*

³² See *sNying po* 85,14.

³³ See *bsTan rim chen mo* 390b7–391a1: *med dgag dang ma yin dgag gi khyad par ci yin zhe na | med dgag gis ni mi 'dod pa'i don rnam par bcad pa tsam byed kyi ldog pa'i mtshan nyid 'phen pa ma yin no || ma yin dgag ni mi 'dod pa'i don gcig bkag nas de las gzhan 'phen pa'o ||*

³⁴ An interlinear note in *Mun sel* 62a3 attributes the definition refuted by Phya pa to “gang she,” which presumably refers to Gangs pa She'u.

shes rab.³⁵ It is unclear on which Indian source these authors might have relied. Chu mig pa Seng ge dpal (13th c.), who also adopts such a definition, hints in this regard to the *Tarkajvālā*.³⁶

In Phya pa's works, “*med dgag*” and “*ma yin dgag*” have the status of definienda (*mtshon bya*). That is, they are conventions that are applicable to some definitional bases (*mtshan gzhi*) on account of specific definienda (*mtshan nyid*). Phya pa identifies the definiens of *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* by first identifying their respective definitional bases. To do so, he introduces the notion of “positive property/phenomenon” (*bsgrub pa'i chos*) and “negative property/phenomenon” (*dgag pa'i chos*). The difference between them is a matter of whether the relevant intentional determination (*zhen pa*) following the emergence of a concept (*don spyi*) relies on this concept itself, independently of its opposite — as for instance the determination “causally efficient” (*don byed pa*) — or relies on the opposite — as for instance the determination “void of causal efficiency” (*don byed pas stong pa*), which relies on the opposite concept, the negandum or *eliminandum* “causally efficient.” While negative phenomena, such as “void of causal efficiency,” are considered by Phya pa to be *med dgag*, positive phenomena, such as “causally efficient,” as well as combinations of positive and negative, such as “appearance devoid of intrinsic nature” (*snang la rang bzhin med pa*), are taken to be *ma yin dgag*.

The definiens of *med dgag* is thus identified as follows: what is to be determined as a mere negation when determining this individual concept (*ldog pa*). That of *ma yin dgag*: what is to be determined without discarding the positive phenomenon when determining this individual concept.³⁷

³⁵ In his *dBu ma de kho na nyid*, rGya dmar pa mentions this definition in a passage that is introduced at 17b6 by the interlinear note “*lo tsa'i lugs bden 2 tig chung du bshad pa*” and concludes at 18a2 with another mention of “*lo tsa*” (... *'dod pa bzhin no zhes <lo tsa> 'dod pa ni...*). (In this footnote and the following ones, interlinear notes are noted in the transcription within pointed brackets). “*Lo tsa*” probably stands for “*lo tsā ba*,” an abbreviation that commonly refers to rNgog Blo ldan shes rab. The “*bden 2 tig chung*” might be one of the two commentarial works composed by rNgog Blo ldan shes rab on the *Satyadvayavibhāṅga* (see Kramer 2007: 111 and 126–127). The definition introduced in this passage (*dBu ma de kho na nyid* 17b6–7: *de gnyis kyang mi 'dod pa rnam par bcad nas don gzhan 'phen pa dang mi 'phen pa'o*) is endorsed by rGya dmar pa in the section that follows (*dBu ma de kho na nyid* 18a2: *med dgag dang ma yin dgag gi khyad par <lo tsas bshad pa> ni legs mod kyi...*). rGya dmar pa repeats this definition in relation to the division between *sgrub pa* and *dgag pa* in *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 18b1–2 (cited in n. 40).

³⁶ See *rNam rgyal* 29b2–3. The passage referred to by Chu mig pa is found in *Tarkajvālā* 3 D59b4–6: *med par dgag pa dang ma yin par dgag pa zhes bya ba de gnyis kyi bye brag ji lta bu zhe na | ma yin par dgag pa ni dngos po'i ngo bo nyid dgag pas de dang 'dra ba de las gzhan pa'i dngos po'i ngo bo nyid sgrub par byed pa ste | dper na 'di bram ze ma yin no zhes dgag pas bram ze de 'dra ba de las gzhan pa bram ze ma yin pa dka' thub dang thos pa la sogs pas dman pa'i dmangs rigs yin par bsgrubs pa lta bu'o || med par dgag pa ni dngos po'i ngo bo nyid tsam zhig 'gog par zad kyi de dang 'dra ba de ma yin pa gzhan gyi dngos po sgrub par mi byed pa ste | dper na bram zes chang btung bar mi bya'o zhes bya ba de tsam zhig 'gog par zad kyi de las gzhan pa'i btung ba btung ngo zhe 'am mi btung ngo zhes mi brjod pa lta bu'o ||*. Translated by Atiśa and Tshul khriims rgyal ba, the *Tarkajvālā* was potentially available in the time of rNgog Blo ldan shes rab.

In the *Prajñāpradīpa* (D63b5ff.), commenting on a verse of unidentified origin cited to give the definitions of *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* (D65b6–7: *dgag pa don gyis bstan pa dang || tshig gcig sgrub par byed pa dang || de ldan rang tshig mi ston pa || ma yin gzhan pa gzhan yin no ||*), Bhāviveka uses “*bram ze ma yin*” as an example of *ma yin dgag*, which he explains in terms of indirect comprehension (*don gyis go ba*) and establishment of an entity (*dngos po sgrub pa*), namely, one understands “*ksatriya*” by saying “not a brahmin.” Since a concise commentary on the *Prajñāpradīpa* is attributed to rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (see Kramer 2007: 111), it would make it a likely source of influence for gSang phu scholars. Note, however, that the phrasing used in the *Prajñāpradīpa* is not as close to the Tibetan formulation “*chos gzhan 'phen*” as what is found in the *Tarkajvālā*.

In brief, for Phya pa, being *ma yin dgag* is not about *entailing* another (positive) property, but about *retaining* (literally, “not discarding” [*ma dor*]) something positive. Any determination (*zhen pa*) relies on the initial appearance of a concept, for instance, causal efficiency. In the case of the negative phenomenon, void of causal efficiency, the determination “void of causal efficiency” relies on an appearing concept that is a negandum, and this initially appearing concept is negated, leaving nothing positive. In the case of the positive phenomenon, causal efficiency, not only is there no reliance on the appearance of the opposite concept (absence of causal efficiency), the determination “causally efficient” also does not discard the initially appearing concept. When a combination of positive and negative phenomena occurs, the result always qualifies as *ma yin dgag* because the positive part linked with the positive phenomenon is not discarded.³⁸ To take a famous example, ‘the fat Devadatta who does not eat during the day’ would, in Phya pa’s system, qualify as *ma yin dgag* not because it entails the property of eating during the night, but because the determination that pertains to it does not discard the positive, i.e., the fat Devadatta.³⁹

Another particularity of Phya pa’s views on *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* concerns the model of affirmation/negation that is presupposed. Indeed, for Phya pa, as for his teacher rGya dmar pa, *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* are not two subdivisions of negation (*dgag*), distinct from affirmation (*sgrub*).

³⁷ See appendix 2 for the alternative formulations of these definitions found in Phya pa’s texts. gTsang nag pa (*bsDus pa* 18a7ff.) and mTshur ston (*sGron ma* 17a9ff.), two students of Phya pa, also refute the definition in terms of “entailment/non-entailment of another property” and adopt that proposed by Phya pa. Chu mig pa, on the other hand, adopts the definition in terms of “entailment/non-entailment” for *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* (*rNam rgyal* 29b2 and 29b4–5).

³⁸ When criticising the definition in terms of “discarding or not discarding a positive property” (*bsgrub chos dor ma dor*) in *Rigs gter* VIII 221,25ff., Sa skya Paṇḍita points out that the definiens of *ma yin dgag* in terms of *bsgrub chos ma dor ba* would equally apply to perception. He also accuses the adherents of this view with confusing what is “positive” or “affirmative” in the context of appearance and in the context of exclusion, the two modes of operation that, according to him, correspond to non-conceptual and conceptual cognition. In other words, he claims that his opponents mix up the distinction between appearance and exclusion on the one hand and the distinction between affirmation and negation, that both rely on exclusion, on the other.

The short version of the definiens indeed would apply to perception. However, Phya pa’s definitions taken in their complete formulations are explicit, by the use of the term “to be intentionally determined” (*zhen par bya ba*), about the fact that the conventions of *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* are relevant only in the realm of conceptual cognition, for non-conceptual cognition does not, according to Phya pa, have this function. One can note also that “positive phenomenon” and “negative phenomenon” are described in terms of the “emergence of a concept” (*don spyi shar*); in Phya pa’s system, concepts (*don spyi*) are the phenomenal object (*gzung yul*) of conceptual cognition (*rtog pa*).

³⁹ Note that Phya pa himself does not introduce such an example. In the *Don gnyer mun sel* this example admits of two variants: “the fat Devadatta who does not eat during the day” (*lhas byin tshon po nyin par zan mi za ba*) is a *ma yin dgag* that entails another property indirectly (*chos gzhan shugs la ’phen pa’i ma yin dgag*), and “the existence of a non-emaciated fat Devadatta who does not eat during the day” (*lhas byin tshon po nyin par zan mi za ba rid pa ma yin pa yod pa*) is a *ma yin dgag* that entails another property both directly and indirectly (*dngos shugs gnyis ka la ’phen pa’i ma yin dgag*). Two additional categories of *ma yin dgag* are accounted for: entailing another property directly (*chos gzhan dngos su ’phen pa’i ma yin dgag*) for instance “the existence of [something] pot-less” (*bum med yod pa*), and entailing another property thanks to the context (*chos gzhan skabs stobs kyis ’phen pa’i ma yin dgag*), such as “this one who is not a brahmin” when, upon asking whether someone is a brahmin or a low cast person, one is told that he is not a brahmin (*’di bram gdol gang yin dris pa na bram ze ma yin zhes brjod pa’i tshe ’di bram ze ma yin pa*). Cf. *Don gnyer mun sel* 11a1–3.

Rather, they exhaust the possibilities for both positive and negative phenomena, for affirmation, negation, and the combination of both.⁴⁰

One can wonder, at this point, how the term “*ma yin dgag*” is then to be translated to conform to Phya pa’s understanding. It is definitely not an “implicative negation” if “implicative” means “entailing a positive property” since such an understanding is refuted by Phya pa. But is it even a “negation” at all, as the Tibetan term makes explicit?⁴¹ In the case of the combination of positive and negative phenomena, one can indeed discern a negation that would, in propositional terms, be described as “internal negation,” as one determines “a X that is not Y.” But where is the negation in the case of a positive phenomenon such as “causally efficient”? It is not itself a negative phenomenon and its determination does not appear to involve any negation.⁴² It is a *ma yin dgag* by definition, but this definition does not include the idea of “negating a negandum.” If one wants to find a negation, one

⁴⁰ In dGe lugs pa works, one typically finds *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* as two subdivisions of negation (*dgag pa*); the notion of “negating a negandum” (*rang gi dgag bya bkag*) is explicit in their definitions and some negation is usually explicit as well in the formulation of the examples. For instance in the *Don gnyer mun sel*, an initial distinction is made between *dgag pa* and *sgrub pa*, whose definitions roughly match Phya pa’s definition of *dgag pa’i chos* and *sgrub pa’i chos*; *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* are introduced as subdivisions of *dgag pa*. *Don gnyer mun sel* 10b4–5: *dgag pa’i mtshan nyid | chos gang zhig khyod kyi don spyi ’char ba khyod kyi dgag bya’i don spyi ’char ba la bltos pa | sgrub pa’i mtshan nyid | chos gang zhig khyod kyi don spyi ’char ba khyod kyi dgag bya’i don spyi ’char ba la mi bltos pa | dper na bum pa lta bu | dgag pa dgag pa la dbye na | med dgag dang ma yin dgag gnyis |*. The discussion on *dgag pa* and *sgrub pa* in the *Grub mtha’ rin chen phreng ba* of dKon mchog ’jigs med dbang po (1728–1781), which is found in the section on Sautrāntika, also has *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* as subspecies of negation (*Grub mtha’ phreng ba* 22,19–23,7). The first is defined in terms of simply negating the negandum, the second is defined in terms of entailing another property via the negation of the negandum.

rGya dmar pa, although he adopts the definition in terms of “entailment/non-entailment” and includes the explicit mention of “negation of the opposite” for both *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag*, considered these notions to correspond to a distinction between negation and affirmation, and not to a distinction between subtypes of negation. Cf. *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 18b1–2: *de’i phyir chos can gang la rang gi dgag bya rnam par bcad pa tsam las don gzhan ’phen pa dang mi ’phen pa dang mi ’phen pa [ditto] ni dgag pa dang sgrub pa nyid kyi bye brag yin gyi | dgag pa’i bye brag gi khyad par ni ma yin no ||*. rGya dmar pa relies on *Pramāṇavārttika* IV.262 to argue that *ma yin dgag* is linked with affirmation — it is the object of inferences that establish positively (*sgrub pa’i rtags*), namely those relying on logical reasons qua effect or essential property — while *med dgag* is linked with negation, as it is the object of inference based on non-apprehension (i.e., a negating inference). Since Dharmakīrti associates only *med dgag* with the latter, and not *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag*, there is, rGya dmar pa argues, no ground to conceive of them as two types of negation.

According to the interlinear notes found in the manuscript of the *dBu ma de kho na nyid*, the adoption of *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* as subtypes of negation that rGya dmar pa criticizes was the view held by rNgog Blo ldan shes rab. See for instance the note ad 18b2: *dgag pa la 2 su phye nas med dgag ma yin dgag yin zhes lo tsa ’dod kyang*. Such a model is adopted again by later gSang phu authors such as Chu mig pa (see *rNam rgyal* 28a1 ff. on affirmation and negation [*dgag/bsgrub*]).

⁴¹ Although *prasajya* and *paryudāsa* are commonly referred to as two kinds of negation, and the *Mahāvvyutpatti* gives the Sanskrit *paryudāsapratīṣedha* for *ma yin par dgag pa* (No. 4510), Sanskrit texts oppose, to my knowledge, the term *prasajyapratīṣedha* to *paryudāsa* rather than to *paryudāsapratīṣedha*.

⁴² I do not think that the phrase *ldog pa de kha yar ba* appearing in Phya pa’s definition of *ma yin dgag* (and *med dgag*), which I translated earlier as “the individual concept,” is meant to express a negation in the sense of the exclusion from non-x, or non-non-x, as was suggested by Chizuko Yoshimizu in her communication at the XVIth IABS conference. Although this is a standard Dharmakīrtian understanding of the term, I could find only one place in Phya pa’s works that would support this hypothesis, namely the phrase “*shing ni shing ma yin pa las log pa’i ldog pa chig rkyang yin*” used when opposing generic and particular concepts (*spyi/bye brag*) in *Mun sel* 38b4 based on *Pramāṇaviniścaya* II.29 “*svabhāvaaparabhāvābhyāṃ yasmād vyāvṛttibhāginah*.” Phya pa otherwise does not associate the notion of exclusion (resp. exclusion from non-x) with the emergence of concepts (*don spyi*), as found in later *bsdus grwa* texts that define the *don spyi* of x as “x ’dzin rtog pa la x ma yin pa las log par snang ba” (see Tillemans 1999:144 n. 41).

would have to look to the process of “determination” (*zhen pa*) bearing on the concept, a determination that, according to Phya pa’s theory (which reflects here one aspect of Dharmakīrti’s *apoha* theory) entails the elimination of the opposite.⁴³ One could say that the positive “X” that is determined is, a posteriori, “a X that is not non-X.” In this sense, the determination of “causally efficient” involves a negation insofar as it does eliminate “non causally efficient.” But it does not rely on the conceptual appearance of “non causally efficient,” nor does it depend on the elimination of it.

3.2.2 Four alternative formal applications

According to Phya pa, in the “neither one nor many argument,” the probandum can have either the form of a *med dgag* or that of a *ma yin dgag*. The logical reason “neither one nor many” itself comes in two versions: the mere negation of one or many (*gcig dang du bral*, or *yang dag pa’i gcig dang du mas stong ba*) that is a *med dgag*, or the appearance void of oneness or manyness (*gcig dang du mas stong ba’i snang ba*) that is a *ma yin dgag*. This gives the possibility of four different formal applications, whose components are listed in the following table:

logical reason	probandum = property to be proven	type of logical reason
1a ■ med dgag void of genuine oneness and manyness (<i>yang dag pa’i gcig dang du mas stong</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • med dgag - void of the fitness for the convention of ultimate entity (<i>don dam pa’i dngos po’i tha snyad du byar rung pas stong</i>) - negation of the convention of the existence as genuine entity (<i>yang dag pa’i dngos por yod pa’i tha snyad bkag pa</i>) 	non-apprehension of the pervader (<i>khyab byed mi dmigs pa</i>)
1b (idem)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ma yin dgag - convention of void of ultimate nature (<i>don dam pa’i rang bzhin gyis stong pa’i tha snyad</i>) - convention of absence of intrinsic nature (<i>rang bzhin med pa’i tha snyad</i>) 	essential property (<i>rang bzhin</i>)
2a ■ ma yin dgag appearance void of genuine oneness and manyness (<i>yang dag pa’i gcig dang du mas stong ba’i snang ba</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • med dgag - emptiness (<i>stong ba nyid</i>) 	apprehension of what is pervaded by the contrary (<i>gal bas khyab pa dmigs pa</i>)
2b (idem)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ma yin dgag - like a mirage (<i>sgyu ma lta bu</i>) 	essential property (<i>rang bzhin</i>)

These four proofs differ, first in view of the categorization of the logical reason involved. In 1a the logical reason amounts to the non-apprehension of the pervader [of what is to be negated] (*khyab byed mi dmigs pa*, *vyāpakānupalabdhi*);⁴⁴ in 1b it consists in an essential property (*rang bzhin gi rtags*, *svabhāvahetu*). Similarly, the logical reason in 2a consists in the apprehension of what is pervaded by

⁴³ One example that Phya pa gives when discussing the three “functions” (*byed pa*) of conceptual thought in *Mun sel* (for instance *Mun sel* 4a3–5; see Hugon 2008: 171–172) is the conceptual appearance (*snang ba*) of the concept (*don spyi*) of fire. Its intentional determination (*zhen pa*) as “fire” induces the elimination (*sel pa*) of “non-fire.” In the same way, when inferring sound’s impermanence, the conceptual appearance of the concept of impermanence is followed by a determination that eliminates permanence.

⁴⁴ “Neither one nor many” is equated with the non-apprehension of “oneness or manyness,” which is the pervader of the “fitness for the convention of ultimate entity.”

the contrary [of what is to be negated] (*'gal bas khyab pa dmigs pa, viruddhavyāptopalabdhi*), while in 2b it is an essential property.

They differ, further, with regard to what type of proof they constitute — proof of a state of affairs (*don sgrub*) or proof of a convention (*tha snyad sgrub*). Thus, 1b does not prove “emptiness” itself, but “the fitness for the convention of emptiness.” It is important to distinguish the two: indeed, emptiness itself is a *med dgag*, but the convention of emptiness (in other words, the definiendum “emptiness”) is a *ma yin dgag*, as all conventions (*tha snyad*) are according to Phya pa. On the other hand, 1a does not prove a convention, but the negation of a convention, which is a state of affairs and a *med dgag*.⁴⁵

Phya pa adds a notable specification in *sNyīng po*, as he states that 1a qualifies as a “reasoning consciousness” (*rigs pa'i shes pa*) from the point of view of its direct probandum, while 1b qualifies as a “conventional consciousness” (*tha snyad pa'i shes pa*). This difference is crucial in that only a reasoning consciousness is apt to cognize ultimate truth.

There is thus an implicit hierarchy between these formal applications, and, more explicitly in *sNyīng po*, when identifying “the logical reason that proves pervading emptiness,” Phya pa names the logical reason qua non-apprehension of the pervader (*khyab byed mi dmigs pa*) alone.⁴⁶

3.3 Distinguishing *bsgrub bya* (*sādhya*) and *bsgrub bya'i chos* (*sādhyadharmā*)

When discussing how either *ma yin dgag* or *med dgag* can be the probandum in the “neither one nor many” argument, Phya pa consistently uses the term “*bsgrub bya*” (*sādhya*). But what he is actually speaking about is the *bsgrub bya'i chos* (*sādhyadharmā*), the property to be proven. In the third portion of the excursus, when identifying the epistemic object (*gzhal bya, prameya*) of inference, another use of the term *bsgrub bya* comes to the fore. In this section, Phya pa makes two points: (1) the epistemic object of inference (*rjes dpag gi gzhal bya*) must be identical with the probandum of the given logical reason (*rtags kyi bsgrub bya*),⁴⁷ and (2) the probandum in this sense consists in the combination (*tshogs pa, samudaya*) of the subject and the property⁴⁸ and hence must be differentiated from the property alone.

According to Phya pa, this applies to all three kinds of inferences: those based on logical reasons qua effect (*'bras bu, kārya*), essential property (*rang bzhin, svabhāva*) and non-apprehension (*mi dmigs pa, anupalabdhi*). Phya pa opposes on this point the view of an unidentified author who claims that, if “proving inferences” based on effect and essential property take as epistemic object (*'jal*) the combination of the subject and the property to be proved (S+P), that is, a *ma yin dgag*, “negating inferences” (namely those relying on non-apprehension), on the other hand, take as object a *med dgag*,

⁴⁵ See the discussion in *rGyan bshad* 6a1 ff. and *sNyīng po* 88ff.

⁴⁶ See *sNyīng po* 80,9, §125.122: *khyab pa'i stong pa nyid sgrub pa'i rtags bye brag tu gtan la dbab pa*.

⁴⁷ The argument for the first point is that if the epistemic object (*gzhal bya*) of inference were different from the probandum of the given logical reason, inferential understanding would not be relying on a (triply characterized) logical reason. Inference would thereby lose the specificity that warrants its validity.

⁴⁸ This is, according to *Pramāṇasamuccaya* III.10, the literal meaning of the term.

the negation of the combination of the subject and the negandum, non(S+N), but does not take as object the combination of subject and probandum (S+P), or (S+nonN).⁴⁹

The distinction between proving and negating inferences can be traced back to Dharmakīrti, a key-issue being the interpretation of Dharmakīrti's statement in *Pramāṇavārttika* IV.262 that inferences based on non-apprehension establish a negation which amounts to a *prasajyapratishedha* whereas those based on an effect or essential property establish *paryudāsa*.⁵⁰

According to Phya pa, in the case of non-apprehension, it is the *bsgrub bya'i chos* that is a *med dgag* — and it is in this sense that Dharmakīrti's abovementioned statement must be understood — but the *bsgrub bya* qua epistemic object (*gzhal bya*) is, as for the other types of reasons, the combination of subject and property. His argument against the opposing view that non-apprehension does not take as object the combination of subject and probandum relies on a parallel with the case of the reasoning that negates the presence of a logical reason in dissimilar instances (*gnod pa can gyi rjes dpag, [sādhyaviparyaye] bādhakapramāṇa*). Such a reasoning, although it is a “negating inference,” not only negates the combination of logical reason and dissimilar instances, but also establishes the logical reason's inclusion in similar instances. Using this case as an example, Phya pa establishes, via parallel argumentation, that if the negation of the combination of subject and negandum is established, and the subject is also established as something knowable, then the combination of subject and property to be proven also is established, because property to be proven and negandum are mutually exclusive and exhaustive of all possibilities.⁵¹

As a consequence, in the “neither one nor many” argument, the *bsgrub bya'i chos* can be either a *med dgag* or a *ma yin dgag*, but the *bsgrub bya* qua combination is always a *ma yin dgag*. This is because in this proof the subject is always a *ma yin dgag* and the combination of *ma yin dgag* with either *ma yin dgag* or *med dgag* results in a *ma yin dgag*.⁵² In particular, in the formal application 1a, the *bsgrub bya'i chos* is a *med dgag* but the *bsgrub bya* qua combination is a *ma yin dgag*.

⁴⁹ *rGyan bshad* 6a5ff.: *kha cig skad cig ma dang mye dpog pa lasogs pa'i rjes dpag sgrub pa'i rjes dpag yin pas la dang mye tshogs pa dang sgra dang skad cig ma tshogs pa la sogs pa ma yin dgag 'jal yang 'di dgag pa'i rjes dpag yin pas chos can dang don dam pa'i dngos po tshogs pa bkag pa 'jal gyi chos can dang [del.: ma min] stong pa nyid tshogs pa myi 'jal lo zhes zer ba...* Parallel in *sNyīng po* 92,1–5.

⁵⁰ *Pramāṇavārttika* IV.262: *anaṅgīkṛtavastvaṃśo niṣedhaḥ sādhyate 'nayā** | *vastuny api tu pūrvābhyāṃ paryudāso vidhānataḥ* ||; Tib: *'dis ni dngos la'ang dngos po'i cha || khas blangs med par dgag pa nyid || sgrub byed snga ma dag gis ni || ma yin sgrub par byed phyir ro ||*. (*Against Miyasaka: *nayā*.)

⁵¹ In short, if S and non(S+N) are established, provided that P=nonN and that everything is either P or N, then (S+P) is also established. Therefore, the opponent is mistaken in saying that inference relying on non-apprehension does not establish the combination of subject and property to be proven.

⁵² As pointed out above (section 3.2.1), this is a consequence of the definition of *ma yin dgag*: provided there is a *ma yin dgag* in the combination, some positive property will not be discarded, so that the combination also will satisfy the definition of *ma yin dgag*.

Inference (rjes dpag) and reasoning consciousness (rigs pa'i shes pa)

This last point is of importance in consideration of the qualification of 1a as a “reasoning consciousness” (*rigs shes*).⁵³ According to Phya pa, this reasoning consciousness is not a mental state different from inference, or brought about by the latter. Inference and reasoning consciousness are the same mental state, but considered in view of different criteria (according to the famous formula “*rdzas gcig la ldog pa tha dad*”): as an “understanding coming from a triply characterized reason,” this mental state is an “inference,” and as an “examination resisting analysis,” it is a “reasoning consciousness.” However, the respective objects of inference and reasoning consciousness are different. Indeed, the probandum qua combination of subject and property, being a *ma yin dgag*, cannot be the object of a reasoning consciousness although it qualifies as the epistemic object of inference. The object, from the point of view of the reasoning consciousness, can only be a *med dgag*.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, these two objects, the object of inference — the *ma yin dgag*, the combination of entity and void of true entity — and the object of reasoning consciousness — the *med dgag*, the property alone — are determined simultaneously.⁵⁵ In other words, the inference 1a, insofar as it is also a reasoning consciousness, actually establishes ultimate truth.

A specific concern in the section dealing with the *gzhal bya* of the “neither one nor many” inference is to include the subject within the scope of inference – hence the importance that the probandum is a combination, not the property alone. Phya pa also attempts to reconcile the inclusion of the subject within the scope of inference with the latter’s status as reasoning consciousness. Indeed, reasoning consciousness only takes as object a *med dgag*, while the subject is a *ma yin dgag*. Phya pa manages to bring the subject within the scope of reasoning consciousness by invoking a distinction between the subject qua *rdzas* and qua *ldog pa*, two terms that I will for the time being translate as “substance” and “exclusion.”⁵⁶ The subject is indeed only a *ma yin dgag* in view of its exclusion, but in view of its substance, it is emptiness, and hence a suitable object of reasoning consciousness.⁵⁷ Still, since

⁵³ For more details on this point, see Kevin Vose’s contribution in this volume.

⁵⁴ There are two candidates that have the status of *med dgag* in 1a: (1) the *bsgrub bya'i chos* and (2) the negation of the combination of subject and negandum (as in the anonymous opponent’s typology of the *gzhal bya* of inference). That Phya pa means that the first, and not the second, is the object of a reasoning consciousness is explicit in the passage of *sNying po* cited in the next footnote. Thus when Phya pa specifies that 1a is a reasoning consciousness “in view of its direct probandum,” one should understand “in view of the property to be proven.”

⁵⁵ *sNying po* 94: *gcig dang du bral gyi rtags la rten pa'i blo'i gsal ba la'ang tshul gsum la brten te dpog pa'i cha nas rjes dpag yin pas de'i yul dngos po dang bden pa'i dngos pos stong ba'i tshogs pa ma yin dgag yin la | don dam pa'i bden pa 'jal ba'i cha nas rigs pa yin pas de'i yul bden pa'i rang bzhin gyis stong ba'i myed dgag yin te tshogs pa ma yin dgag dang chos myed dgag gnyi' ga blo'i rdzas gcig gis dus gcig du nges pa yin no ||*

⁵⁶ The exact implications of the *rdzas/ldog pa* dichotomy in Phya pa’s system remain to be investigated. A first approximation is that *rdzas* represents the intrinsic identity of an object, *ldog pa* the way it is apprehended as excluded from various opposites. On gTsang nag pa’s views of *rdzas* and *ldog pa*, see Hugon 2008: Chapter D. As gTsang nag pa claims to hold an idiosyncratic position on this topic, any reverse-attribution to Phya pa should be considered carefully.

⁵⁷ In *sNying po*, this discussion is divided into seven parts: Phya pa (i) refutes that the subject is the negandum of the inference; (ii) refutes that it is not the object (/scope) of inference; (iii) refutes the view that reasoning does not take as object the subject qua substance (*rdzas*); (iv) refutes the view that reasoning takes as object the subject qua exclusion (*ldog pa*) — the latter being *ma yin dgag*; (v) rejects objections regarding the view that

reasoning consciousness cannot take as its object a *ma yin dgag*, it cannot examine the subject in the form of its “exclusion” and therefore cannot eliminate superimpositions with regard to this aspect of the subject. Phya pa’s answer to this problem is that reasoning consciousness cannot, *alone*, perform this function (which is required for it to qualify as valid with regard to the subject), but that it “works in team” with the inference it is substantially identical with in order to eliminate superimpositions with regard to the combination of subject and property, even when the subject is taken as a *ma yin dgag*.

4. The nature of the probandum from the point of view of tshad ma

After having examined Phya pa’s position on the probandum of the “neither one nor many” argument in his Madhyamaka works, I now turn to the epistemological background provided in *Mun sel* and *’Od zer*. There, we find two sets of discussions that address precisely the two issues that are characteristic of Phya pa’s position regarding the “neither one nor many” argument:

- (1) The nature of the probandum qua property to be proven of inference
- (2) The nature of the probandum qua epistemic object of inference.⁵⁸

4.1 The probandum qua property to be proven

The first topic is linked with the question of what inference proves. It is correlated with the distinction between three types of inference and is thus discussed in the chapter on inference when addressing the specific definiens of each of the three kinds of inference.⁵⁹ Inferences are indeed classified on the basis (i) of what they prove, i.e., of their property to be proven, which can be a *ma yin dgag* or a *med dgag*, and, for those that prove a *ma yin dgag*, (ii) on what type of relation they are grounded in (essential or causal). This provides the rationale for there being only three kinds of reasons: first, *ma yin dgag* and *med dgag* exhaust the possibilities for what is proven; then, identity and causality exhaust the possibilities of relation.⁶⁰ The definitions of *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* are introduced in this context.

inference examines (*’jal*) a combination; (vi) rejects objections regarding the claim that reasoning examines the [subject qua] substance; (vii) rejects objections regarding the claim that it does not examine [the subject qua] exclusion (*ldog pa*).

⁵⁸ Both questions are equally treated, in parallel contexts and in a way mostly corresponding to Phya pa’s, in the epistemological works of gTsang nag pa, mTshur ston, and the *Tshad ma’i de kho na nyid bsdu pa*. Chu mig pa, for his part, provides in *rNam rgyal* a detailed explanation of the “neither one nor many” argument in the context of refuting the Vaibhāṣika.

⁵⁹ See in *Mun sel* under “*rtags kyi bye brag gi mtshan nyid*” (60b8ff.) the rubric “their respective definitions” (*so so’i mtshan nyid*; 61a6ff.): *bsgrub bya’i chos med dgag bsgrub pa la phyogs chos dang ldog pa tshang pa mi dmigs pa’i mtshan nyid do || sgrub bya’i chos ma yin dgag bsgrub pa la bdag cig pa’i rtsa ba la rten pa’i ldog pa dang phyogs chos tshang pa rang bzhin bsgrub bya’i chos ma yin dgag bsgrub pa la de las byung pa’i ’brel pa’i rtsa ba la rten pa’i ldog pa dang phyogs chos tshang pa ’bras bu’i rtags kyi mtshan nyid*. (Parallel in *’Od zer* 104b3ff. in the section “*grangs dang ngo bo nges pa’i rgyu mtshan*.” The three reasons are enumerated at 105a9.)

⁶⁰ *Mun sel* 61b4–5: *bsgrub bya’i chos la med dgag dang ma yin dgag las mi ’da la | ma yin dgag sgrub na’ang ma ’brel pas ma ’brel pa rtogs par mi ’thad pas ’brel pa la ltos la | de ’ang bdag cig pa la rten nas rtogs pa rang bzhin dang de las byung pa la brten nas rtogs pa ’bras bu yin zhing ’brel pa gsum pa med pas rtags gsum kho na’o |*

Their presentation is almost identical with that in *sNying po* 87,1ff.,⁶¹ and also involves the refutation of the alternative definition involving entailment of another property, which is attributed to “gang she” in an interlinear note in *Mun sel*.⁶² The pairing of the three kinds of reasons with their respective property to be proven, and in particular that of non-apprehension with *med dgag*, raises no discussion. The distinction between proofs of a state of affairs (*don sgrub*) and proofs of a convention (*tha snyad sgrub*) takes place in a subsequent section of the chapter on inference.⁶³ The notions of “*don sgrub*” and “*tha snyad sgrub*” themselves are not defined, but Phya pa classifies all 24 subtypes of logical reasons according to whether they prove exclusively a state of affairs, exclusively a convention, or either. The logical reason “neither one nor many” does not appear in the examples given in this classification. Phya pa does not, so far as I know, state as a theoretical point that in proofs of conventions the property to be proven is a *ma yin dgag*, or that conventions are always *ma yin dgag*, but this feature of his system stands out clearly, in particular in the section on definition, where it is the starting point of a number of debates.⁶⁴

4.2 The probandum qua epistemic object

The second topic, the question of the probandum qua epistemic object, is linked with the scope of validity of inference. It is taken up at the beginning of *Mun sel* in a section one could describe as the “*blo rigs*-section,” where Phya pa distinguishes categories of mental states in relation to their objects. There, he deals with what inference examines (*’jal*), i.e., takes as epistemic object (*gzhal bya, prameya*).⁶⁵ This discussion thematically corresponds to the last part of the *bsgrub bya*-section in *sNying po* and *rGyan bshad*, but is more extensive. In particular, Phya pa introduces additional opposing views.⁶⁶

⁶¹ See section 3.2.1 and appendix 2. In *’Od zer*, the definition of *med dgag* and *ma yin dgag* precedes the division of logical reasons.

⁶² See n. 34.

⁶³ *Mun sel* 72a5ff. “*rtags de dag la don sgrub dang tha snyad bsgrub du dbye ba.*” Parallel in *’Od zer* 116b6ff., where the classification is limited to inferences based on non-apprehension.

⁶⁴ For instance, Phya pa holds that when defining emptiness as “ultimate truth” on account of the definiens “true as the object of reasoning [consciousness],” even though emptiness is a *med dgag*, the convention “ultimate truth” (*don dam pa’i bden pa’i tha snyad*) that applies to it is a *ma yin dgag*. Debates related to such definitions mostly rely on the confusion between attributing qualifications (such as *ma yin dgag* and *med dgag*) to things and attributing these qualifications to properties of these things or to *definienda* applying to them.

⁶⁵ In this context, Phya pa associates the validity of inference with the function of “elimination” (*sel ba*) that it performs. *Mun sel* 4a5: *sel pa ni mi rtag par nges pas rtag pa’i log shes de la ’jug pa bsal ba dang mer zhen pas me med du zhen pa bsal ba dang kun rdzob du zhen pas don dam du zhen pa dang dngos kyi brjod byar zhen pas dngos kyi brjod bya ma yin par zhen pa bsal bas de tshad ma yin no ||* and 4a8: *tshad mar ’gyur ba’i tshul ni thams cad kyang bzlog pa’i zhen pa bkag ste gzhan sel pas ’jug go ||*. This function of elimination must be distinguished from the criterion of “elimination of opposite superimpositions” present in the definition of valid cognition, insofar as the former is present only for conceptual cognitions. While both apply in the case of inference, valid perception only has the function of appearance, but is devoid of the function of determination (*zhen pa*) and elimination (*sel pa*). In spite of this, it eliminates opposite superimpositions and therefore qualifies as valid. See Hugon 2011.

⁶⁶ See the table in appendix 3.

4.2.1 Opponents' views

1) The first view, which Phya attributes to Dharmottara, is that all inferences examine *med dgag*. For instance, the object of the inference proving fire based on the effect “smoke” is the negation of non-fiery entity; in the case of the essential property “produced” proving impermanence, it is the negation of permanent entity; and in the case of the reason “neither one nor many” proving emptiness, the object of inference is the negation of ultimate entity.⁶⁷

2) The second opposing view is attributed to Śāṅkaranandana (an attribution that, like the preceding one, remains to be confirmed).⁶⁸ Contrary to Dharmottara, its author argues that all types of inference examine exclusively *ma yin dgag* insofar as their object consists in the combination of the subject and the property, that is to say, for the examples cited before: the combination of mountain and fire, the combination of sound and impermanence, and the combination of entity and void of true (/ultimate) entity. Śāṅkaranandana is said to hold that this combination is always a *ma yin dgag*. The rationale attributed to him is first that “non-entities cannot be an epistemic object (*gzhal bya*), hence an epistemic object is necessarily an entity.”⁶⁹ In other words, no *med dgag* can be examined by an inference, because it does not exist as an entity. Moreover, Śāṅkaranandana is said not to admit the possibility that the subject of inference is not an entity, because in order to be examined by inference, this subject must be an appearance (*snang ba*); and all appearances, being of the nature of consciousness, are, like consciousness, entities.⁷⁰

Two of Phya pa's arguments against this position deserve to be mentioned. One of them addresses the question of the subject. Phya pa points out that some inferences require a subject that is not an entity, typically, inferences negating the presence of the logical reason in dissimilar instances, for instance, in the proof of impermanence based on the logical reason “existence,” the inference proving that what is permanent is void of existence. Following Śāṅkaranandana's position, such an inference would be devoid of an epistemic object, and thus tantamount to an erroneous cognition. Another set of arguments concerns the nature of the epistemic object. Phya pa rejects the notion that non-entities (*dnegos med*) do not qualify as epistemic objects, for this would prevent incorrect relative [reality] (*log pa'i kun rdzob*) from being examined by valid cognition. Further, if only entities qualify as epistemic objects, and entities exclusively belong to relative reality (otherwise there would be ultimate entities),

⁶⁷ Phya pa's criticism centers on the case of the logical reason qua essential property. He argues in particular that such reason would end up fulfilling the definiens of non-apprehension.

⁶⁸ Chu mig pa (*rNam rgyal* 25a5) instead associates this position with “rgyan mkhan po,” i.e., Prajñākaragupta.

⁶⁹ *Mun sel* 4b8: *dnegos med gzhal byar mi rung pas gzhal bya la dnegos pos khyab pa yin no* |

⁷⁰ 'Od zer 27b5–6: *bram ze chen po... gzhi' myi snang pa tshad ma'i gzhal bya ma yin pas snang pa kho na tshad ma'i gzhal bya yin la | snang pa thams cad shes pa dang bdag gcig pas dnegos po yin pa'i phyir gzhal bya la dnegos pos khyab po* |. Parallel in *Mun sel* 5a7. This rationale extends to the case of non-apprehension: in a discussion occurring in 'Od zer about the epistemic object of inferences based on non-apprehension ('Od zer 108b7 “*myi dmyigs pa'i rjes dpag gi gzhal bya bsam pa*”) the position attributed to Śāṅkaranandana is that its epistemic object consists in “the entity that is the basis of negation empty of the negandum” (*dgag byas dben pa'i dgag gzhi'i dnegos po*), in other words, the subject qualified by, or combined with, the negation of a property. 'Od zer 109a8–9: *yang bram ze chen po na re myi dmigs pa'i rjes dpag gi gzhal bya thams cad ni dgag byas dben pa'i dgag gzhi'i dnegos po yin no des na gzhal bya la ma yin dgag gis khyab pa yin no* ||

this would prevent ultimate reality from being an epistemic object. As a consequence, there could be no reasoning consciousness (*rigs shes*), for there would be no cognition taking ultimate reality as epistemic object.

3) After dealing with these two views, Phya pa discusses a third, anonymous position that corresponds to the one discussed in the two Madhyamaka works we considered above, namely, that inferences based on effect and essential property examine a *ma yin dgag*, while non-apprehension inferences examine a *med dgag* consisting in the negation of the combination of subject and negandum. He criticizes it with the same arguments. One can note that an analogous position is already mentioned by rNgog Lo tsā ba, who does not specify whether the *med dgag* examined in the case of non-apprehension is the negation of a combination or the negation of the negandum.⁷¹ In the *Tshad ma'i de kho na nyid bsod pa* (36ff.), a more specific model, analogous to the third position discussed by Phya pa, is attributed to “rgya.”⁷² This abbreviation, according to Leonard van der Kuijp (2003: 417), refers in this manuscript to rGya Grags pa bsod nams, a senior contemporary of Phya pa, rather than to rGya dmar pa, Phya pa’s teacher. It seems, nevertheless, that the latter can be credited with this view. rGya dmar pa’s works on epistemology unfortunately have not been recovered, but in the *dBu ma de kho na nyid*, he appears to be defending the view that the epistemic object of the inference proving the lack of essential nature is the negation of the combination of subject and negandum, and opposes this case to “proving valid cognitions” (*sgrub pa'i tshad ma*) that take as their object a combination.⁷³

4.2.2 Phya pa’s view

The presentation of Phya pa’s own position is more systematized in *Mun sel* and *'Od zer* than what is found in *sNying po* and *rGyan bshad*. Phya pa’s own model appears to be close to the one attributed to Śāṅkaranandana insofar as Phya pa considers that all three kinds of inferences, including inference based on non-apprehension, take as epistemic object the combination (*tshogs pa*) of subject and property to be proven. But contra Śāṅkaranandana, Phya pa claims that the subject is not necessarily an entity,⁷⁴ and that this combination can be a *med dgag* if both elements are themselves *med dgag*.⁷⁵

⁷¹ *dKa' gnas* 261: *myi dmigs pa'i gtan tshigs med pa'i don sgrub pas na med par dgag pa tsam sgrub la | rang bzhin dang 'bras bu gnyis ni rnam par bcad pa'i don gzhan sgrub pas ma yin par dgag pa bsgrub par bshad pa yang...* Proponents of this view invoke *Pramāṇavārttika* IV.262 (see n. 50). This verse is also cited in *Mun sel* 6a2, where it is wrongly identified as a verse of the *Hetubindu* by Phya pa, a mistake repeated by gTsang nag pa.

⁷² According to the model attributed to “rgya,” the *med dgag* consists in the simple negation of an entity devoid of the property to be proven. If this “entity” is the subject, then this *med dgag* can also be conceived as the negation of the combination of subject and negandum. One can note also that according to the *Tshad ma'i de kho na nyid bsod pa*, the author of this model distinguishes between what is directly understood and what is indirectly understood for logical reasons qua effect and essential property (see below under 4.2.2 “Direct/indirect examination”).

⁷³ See in particular *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 18b3: *des na des na snang <rten 'brel> ba la <rang bzhin du> bden pa'i chos bdag nyid du ldan pa'i tshogs pa bkag pa nyid <rjes dpag gi> gzhal bya gzhal bya <yang de nyid> yin gyi || tshogs pa'i yul can ni sgrub pa'i tshad ma nyid <yin pas na de> la gzhag go ||*

⁷⁴ In *'Od zer* (109b4ff.), when discussing the epistemic object of non-apprehension, Phya pa specifies that this combination amounts to “the basis of negation void of the negandum” when the subject is a *ma yin dgag* and the property a *med dgag*, but, contra a position attributed to Śāṅkaranandana (see n. 70), deems that the subject does not need to be an entity. In this context, he also discusses the difference between such inferences that establish a

Direct/indirect examination

There is one additional element in the presentation of Phya pa's views that is not found in his Madhyamaka works: Phya pa distinguishes in *Mun sel*, for each type of inference, a "direct examination" (*dnegos su 'jal ba*) and an "indirect examination" (*shugs la 'jal ba*) or, in the terminology of the parallel passage in *'Od zer*, a "direct understanding" (*dnegos su rtogs pa*) and an "indirect understanding" (*shugs la rtogs pa*). The distinction between direct and indirect understanding (*dnegos su rtogs pa/shugs la rtogs pa*) is well established in Phya pa's epistemological system, and applies to perception as well as to inference.⁷⁶ The principle is that indirect understanding ("understanding" meaning here valid cognition) eliminates opposite superimpositions without relying on the appearance of the very object that is understood or of its concept (*don spyi*).⁷⁷ In the case under consideration, what is directly examined is the combination of subject and property, (S+P), while what is indirectly examined is identified as the negation of the combination of the subject and the negandum, non(S+N). Since the property to be proven is the negation of the negandum, if one considers the probandum in propositional terms, one can see clearly the opposition between, in the first case, an internal negation — "S is not N" — and, in the second, an external negation — "it is not the case that S is N." If one wants to see this distinction in light of Phya pa's definiens of direct/indirect cognition, this would mean that as the outcome of inference, it is the combination of subject and property to be proven alone that appears, not the negation of the combination of subject and negandum. Applied to the case of the "neither one nor many" inference 1a, which is precisely the example used by Phya pa here, what is directly examined is the *ma yin dgag* consisting in the combination of "entity" and "emptiness," and what is indirectly examined is the *med dgag* consisting in the void of the combination of entity and ultimate entity.⁷⁸

One can wonder at this point why Phya pa introduces this distinction between direct and indirect understanding, and why he introduces it in his epistemological works but not when dealing with the same issue in his Madhyamaka works. By using the notion of "indirect understanding," Phya pa can

state of affairs that is a negation, and inferences that establish a convention, where both subject and property are *ma yin dgag*. This distinction matches the specification made in *sNying po* and *rGyan bshad* regarding the formulations 1a and 1b of the "neither one nor many" argument.

⁷⁵ An example would be when proving that what is void of impermanence is void of existence by way of the logical reason "void of simultaneous or successive causal efficacy." *Mun sel* 5b9: *mi rtag pas stong pa la rim dang cig car gyis don byed pas stong pas yod pas stong pa bsgrub pa lasogs pa gzhi' dang chos gnyi' ga med dgag yin na dnegos dang shugs gnyi gas med dgag kho na 'jal ba yin no ||*

⁷⁶ On the topic of direct/indirect cognition, see Schwabland 1995 and Hugon 2011.

⁷⁷ In the case of inference, indirect understanding is often called for in order to account for the intrinsic ascertainment of a number of features relevant to its validity. For instance, when an inference establishes directly a true object (such as fire), one can establish indirectly that this inference is the cognition of a true object (unlike the concept of fire, the concept of cognition does not appear). See *Mun sel* 36b4–5: *don de'i don spyi snang nas sgro 'dogs gcod pa dnegos su rtogs pa ste rjes dpag gis me bden pa'i don spyi shar nas nges pa lta bu'o || gzhal bya de'i don spyi ma shar bar sgro 'dogs gcod pa shugs la rtogs te | de'i tshe shes pa'i don spyi ma shar yang de la bden pa 'jal byed ma yin pa'i sgro 'dogs gcod pa lta bu'o |*

⁷⁸ In the case of inference based on non-apprehension where both subject and property are *med dgag* (see note 75), inference examines a *med dgag* both directly (the combination of two *med dgag*) and indirectly (the negation of a combination).

manage to provide every inference with a *med dgag* as its epistemic object. However, this *med dgag*, the negation of the combination of subject and negandum, non(S+N), differs from the *med dgag* identified by Phya pa as the object of reasoning consciousness, the property alone (i.e., the negation of the negandum alone), nonN. It is, furthermore, only an indirect probandum and not the “direct probandum” required for reasoning consciousness. The direct/indirect distinction thus would be of no use for securing the status of reasoning consciousness for the “neither one nor many” inference of the type 1a.

The question thus remains why Phya pa deems it necessary to introduce this distinction in his epistemological works, where there appears to be no need for this indirectly understood *med dgag*. Why not just stick to the rule that for each kind of inference, the object is the combination of subject and property, which is either a *ma yin dgag* or a *med dgag*, depending on its constitutive elements? As one can notice, in the case of inference based on non-apprehension, what is indirectly examined, non(S+N), turns out to be no other than what was propounded by the author of the third model that Phya pa criticized. Phya pa’s arguments against this view, let us remember, targeted the claim that inference based on non-apprehension would examine only the *med dgag*, non(S+N) and not the *ma yin dgag* (S+nonN). The direct/indirect distinction allows Phya pa to retain this *med dgag* as an object of inference, but conjointly with the *ma yin dgag*, and to propose a unified model for all three types of inference. The account of the *Tshad ma’i de kho na nyid bsdu pa* informs us that a senior contemporary of Phya pa who also held that inferences based on non-apprehension examine the negation of a combination had already introduced the distinction between direct and indirect object with regard to inferences based on effect and essential property, not, however with regard to non-apprehension.⁷⁹ It is thus plausible that Phya pa introduced — or retained — the direct/indirect distinction under the influence of the historical context rather than of the philosophical one.

5. Conclusion

When one says that Phya pa admits a *ma yin dgag* as the probandum of the neither one nor many argument, one should distinguish two points:

(1) Phya pa holds that the property to be proven may be a *ma yin dgag* when the logical reason “neither one nor many” or the logical reason “appearance as void of oneness and manyness” is an essential property (*rang bzhin gyi rtags*) (1b and 2b). Such a logical reason proves a convention (the convention of emptiness) and not a state of affairs. Insofar as the property is a *ma yin dgag*, it cannot be the object of a reasoning consciousness. Such an inference is merely a conventional cognition (*tha snyad pa’i shes pa*). This is the view Tsong kha pa refers to, as he mentions some authors who admit

⁷⁹ See n. 72.

ma yin dgag and *med dgag* as two possibilities for the probandum of the “neither one nor many” argument.⁸⁰

(2) The probandum qua combination of subject and property to be proven is identical with the epistemic object (*gzhal bya*). In the “neither one nor many” argument, it is a *ma yin dgag* in all four formal applications, because the subject is a *ma yin dgag*.

Both positions are disputed points and appear not to have been shared by several of Phya pa’s predecessors as well as followers. For instance, Gro lung pa argues, contra (1), that the property to be proven in the “neither one nor many” argument is exclusively a *med dgag*.⁸¹ rGya dmar pa also held that the probandum is a *med dgag*, not a *ma yin dgag*.⁸² This will also be Tsong kha pa’s standpoint.⁸³ As for (2), we have seen that Phya pa established his position against the view of his senior contemporaries that inferences based on non-apprehension have a different probandum than other inferences and, in particular, only examine a *med dgag*. One can note that Chu mig pa, a later author in the gSang phu lineage, follows Phya pa by accepting a combination as probandum qua epistemic object, but refuses that this combination could be a *med dgag*, and hence that inference could realize a negation (*dgag pa*).⁸⁴

As for Phya pa’s position that inference 1a is also a reasoning consciousness that simultaneously understands the *bsgrub bya* (the *ma yin dgag*) and the *bsgrub bya’i chos* (the *med dgag*), one can expect that it was not shared by those authors who held that ultimate truth was outside the range of conceptual reasoning. For instance Phya pa’s contemporary Byang [chub] skyabs, whose views often come up in the *Tshad ma’i de kho na nyid bsdu pa*, held that the ultimate does not qualify as an epistemic object (*gzhal bya*),⁸⁵ a position that seems to have been shared by supporters of Candrakīrti’s Madhyamaka interpretation.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ See n. 12. Tsong kha pa mentions in this quote formal applications that correspond respectively to 2b, 1b, and 1a.

⁸¹ *bsTan rim chen mo* 390b7: *’dir bsgrub bya’i chos ni bden pa’i rang bzhin med par dgag pa tsam yin gyi | ma yin par dgag pa ni ma yin no ||* and 391a5: *des na yang dag par rang bzhin med par bkag pa tsam zhig bsgrub byar byed kyi...*

⁸² *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 17b2–3: *bsgrub bya ni med pa<r> dgag pa ste | bden pa’i dngos po rnam par bcad pa tsam ste | sgyu ma dang ’gal ’dus lta du ma yin par dgag pa ni sgrub byar ’dod pa bkag zin to ||* and 17b6: *’dir bsgrub bya ni med dgag yin gyi ma yin dgag ni ma yin no.*

⁸³ Tsong kha pa considers both the *sādhya* and the *sādhana* in the “neither one nor many” argument to be *med dgag*. *dBu ma rgyan gyi zin bris* 11b4: *rtags chos gnyis ka rnam bcad tsam yin par gsal bar gsungs ba’i phyir na med dgag kho na’o ||*

⁸⁴ *rNam rgyal* 26a2: *des na dgag pa rtogs pa’i rjes dpag mi srid do zhes bya ba ni bdag gi dam bca’ chen po yin no ||*

⁸⁵ See notably *Tshad ma’i de kho na nyid bsdu pa* 34,17–19: *don dam gzhal byar mi ’dod pa kho bo cag rnam ni ’dod tog gis lan ’debs so zhes byang skyabs gsung ngo.* Phya pa mentions in *’Od zer* 108b7ff. the view of an author who considers that the *gzhal bya* of reasoning consciousness is not emptiness, but the negandum, ultimate entity (*don dam dngos*).

⁸⁶ See Vose 2009:92ff. on Phya pa’s portrayal of Candrakīrtian views as rejecting that ultimate truth qualifies as an object of knowledge.

One question I posed at the beginning of my enquiry was that of the support provided for Phya pa's position in his epistemological texts, and of the possible interaction between the two contexts, epistemology and Madhyamaka, on this theme. As is obvious, the introduction of the "neither one nor many" argument presupposes reliance on the general rules of inference, but one sees that more specific features of Phya pa's epistemological system also apply in this case, such as the classification of types of inferences in view of their property to be proven (a *ma yin dgag* or a *med dgag*), or the distinction between proofs of a state of affairs or of a convention. Some discussions are shared in both contexts, such as the definition of *ma yin dgag* and *med dgag* and the question of the identification of the epistemic object of inference, and in particular, of inference based on non-apprehension. Even though in *Mun sel* and *'Od zer*, Phya pa's concern is a general theory of inference, and not specifically the fundamental inference eliminating proliferations, it is the "neither one nor many" logical reason that most often exemplifies a reason qua non-apprehension. Nevertheless, one has observed that certain features of Phya pa's model as presented in his epistemological works, such as the distinction between direct and indirect comprehension, plays no role in his Madhyamaka works. Conversely, one can note that the discussion relative to the epistemic object (*gzhal bya*) of this inference in the two Madhyamaka works (*rjes su dpag pa'i gzhal bya'i cha dpyad pa*) is concerned with an issue that does not receive the same kind of attention in the parallel passages of the epistemological works, namely, the question of the subject, which is linked with that of the reasoning consciousness. We have seen that in *rGyan bshad* and *sNying po*, Phya pa manages to reconcile the necessity of including the subject in the scope of inference with the requirement that reasoning consciousness only bears on a *med dgag* by (1) distinguishing the object of reasoning consciousness, the property alone, that is a *med dgag* from the object of inference, the combination, that is a *ma yin dgag*, and (2) by pointing out that the subject qua substance (*rdzas*) is actually a *med dgag* as well. In Phya pa's epistemological works, the question of the subject is taken up from a different angle, and mostly subsumed into that of the scope of validity of valid cognition, in other words, the identification of the epistemic object (*gzhal bya*). Phya pa's arguments for his claim that the epistemic object should not be restricted either to entities or to *ma yin dgag*, as we have seen in the criticism against the view attributed to Śāṅkaranandana, often invoke the need to preserve access to ultimate reality and to account for reasoning consciousness. This aspect thus comes as an important point in Phya pa's epistemological system, whose scope is not limited to relative truth. The question of the epistemic object appears to be a crucial point where Phya pa's Madhyamaka and epistemological projects meet.

The use of conceptual resources developed by Buddhist logicians, notably Dharmakīrti, in a Madhyamaka framework is not new in itself, as it is already at work in the treatises of the "Madhyamaka teachers from the East" whose interpretative line Phya pa follows. One can observe, in Phya pa's case, that his understanding of Madhyamaka has a direct influence on the way he explains and adapts Dharmakīrti's thought, for instance by revising the definition and scope of valid cognition in order, notably, to secure an inferential understanding of ultimate truth. Consideration of this

influence serves to explain a number of features of Phya pa's epistemological system that have often been derogatorily termed inventions and misunderstandings.

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Appendix 1: Sa bcad of Phya pa's excursus in rGyan bshad and parallel in sNying po

NB: The table below contains an exhaustive list of subdivisions for the sections on *chos can* and *sgrub bya*; for the other sections, only the main subdivisions are indicated. The *sa bcad* titles are those of *rGyan bshad*. *Sa bcad* titles in corresponding passages in *sNying po* may vary; for instance, §125.121.12 has the title “*khyab pa'i stong pa nyid mi 'grub pa spang ba*” whereas *rGyan bshad* has “*rdzas gzhan la myi khegs pa spang pa*.” The additional subdivisions indicated in marginal notes in the manuscript of *rGyan bshad* have not been included here. Paragraph (§) and page numbers (p.) of *sNying po* refer to the text edited by Tauscher. Folio numbers (f.) refer to the manuscript published in the *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum*.

	<i>rGyan bshad</i>	<i>sNying po</i>		
	f.	§	p.	f.
i. chos can	4b5	125.122.1	80	32a5
i.1 chos can gyi ngo bo	4b5	125.121.11	80	32a5
i.2 rdzas gzhan la myi khegs pa spang pa	4b6	125.121.12	81	32b2
i.3 ldog pa gzhan la dgag bya mi khegs pa spang pa	4b8	125.121.13	82	32b7
ii. bsgrub bya	5a2	125.122.2	82	33a2
ii.1 dgag bya'i khyad par	5a3	125.122.21	82	33a3
ii.2 bkag pa'i khyad par	5a8	125.122.22	85	34a5
ii.21 myed dgag dang ma yin dgag gi mtshan nyid	5b1	125.122.221	85	34a6
ii.22 de gnyis bsgrub bya'i chos su byed pa'i tshul	5b5	125.122.222	87	35a3
ii.23 myed dgag sgrub pa la rtsad pa spang pa	5b6	125.122.223	88	35a5
ii.24 ma yin dgag bsgrub pa la brtsad pa spang pa	6a2	125.122.224	90	36a1
ii.3 rjes su dpag pa'i gzhal bya'i cha dpyad pa	6a4	125.122.23	91	36a5
iii. gtan tshigs	7b5	125.122.3	103	41a3
iii.1 dgag bya'i khyad par	7b5	125.122.31	103	41a3
iii.2 bkag pa'i khyad par	7b7	125.122.32	107	42b3
iii.3 rtags tha snyad bsgrub du gzhas pa'i tshul	8a2	125.122.33	107	42b7
iv. phyogs chos nges byed	8a6	125.122.4	109	43b1
v. khyab pa nges par byed pa'i tshad ma	8b7	125.122.5	117	46b7

Appendix 2: Definitions of med dgag and ma yin dgag in Phya pa's works

NB: For the definitions of *sNying po*, the text is that of Tauscher's edition. Alternative readings found in the manuscript of the *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum* are given in parentheses; they are underlined when preferable.

sgrub pa'i chos

rGyan bshad

ldog pa de nyid kyi don spyi shar nas de gnas par zhen par bya ba ni **sgrub pa'i chos** yin

<i>sNying po</i>	don byed pa dang rgyus bskyed pa dang dus gzhan du(/na) 'gag pa dang blo'i yul lasogs pa bzlog(/ldog) pa 'ga' zhig gi don spyi 'char ba na bzlog(/ldog) pa'i don spyi 'char(/shar) ba la ma ltos par rang nyid kyi don spyi rang dbang du shar nas zhen du rung ba rnam ni sgrub pa'i chos zhes bya'o
<i>Mun sel</i>	'gal zla blos yul du byas pa la ma ltos par ldog pa de nyid kyi don spyi rang dbang du shar nas zhen par bya ba
<i>'Od zer</i>	don byed pa dang rgyus bskyed pa lasogs pa bzlog pa'i don spyi shar ba la ma ltos par rang ldog gi don spyi shar nas zhen du rung pa rnam

dgag pa'i chos

<i>rGyan bshad</i>	'gal zla'i don spyi shar nas de bsal bar zhen par bya ba ni [dgag pa'i chos] yin pa
<i>sNying po</i>	don byed pas stong ba dang rgyus bskyed pa myed pa dang 'gag pa myed pa lasogs pa dgag bya'i don spyi shar ba la ltos nas de las bzlog pa'i don spyi shar ste zhen du rung ba ni dgag pa'i chos zhes bya'o
<i>Mun sel</i>	dgag bya'i don spyi shar ba la ltos nas de las bzlog par zhen par bya ba
<i>'Od zer</i>	byas pas stong ba dang don byed pas stong pa lasogs pa dang por dgag bya'i don spyi shar ste des stong par phyis zhen par bya ba rnam ni dgag pa'i chos so

ma yin dgag (mtshan nyid)

<i>rGyan bshad</i>	sgrub pa'i cha ma dor bar zhen par bya ba ma yin dgag ste
<i>sNying po</i>	ldog pa de kha yar nges pa na sgrub(/bsgrub) pa'i cha ma dor bar zhen par bya ba yin
<i>Mun sel</i>	ldog pa de kha yar ba la zhen pa na bsgrub pa'i cha ma dor bar zhen par bya ba'o
<i>'Od zer</i>	bsgrub pa'i cha ma dor bar zhen par bya ba

ma yin dgag (mtshan gzhi)

<i>rGyan bshad</i>	sgrub pa 'ba' zhig pa dang dgag sgrub tshogs pa rnam yin
<i>sNying po</i>	sgrub pa 'ba' zhig pa dang dgag sgrub tshogs pa
<i>Mun sel</i>	bsgrub pa 'ba' zhig pa don byed pa lasogs pa dang dgag bsgrub tshogs pa snang la rang bzhin med pa lasogs pa
<i>'Od zer</i>	dgag bsgrub tshogs pa dang bsgrub pa 'ba' zhig pa

med dgag (mtshan nyid)

<i>rGyan bshad</i>	dgag pa'i chos 'ba' zhig par zhen par bya ba myed dgag yin
<i>sNying po</i>	ldog pa de kha yar nges pa na dgag pa 'ba' zhig par blos zhen(/nges) par bya ba yin
<i>Mun sel</i>	dgag pa 'ba' zhig par zhen par bya ba ste
<i>'Od zer</i>	dgag pa 'ba' zhig par zhen par bya ba

med dgag (mtshan gzhi)

<i>rGyan bshad</i>	-
<i>sNying po</i>	dgag pa 'ba' zhig pa
<i>Mun sel</i>	don byed pas stong pa dang yang dag pa'i rang bzhin gyis stong pa dang yang dag pa'i cig dang du ma<s stong pa> lasogs pa dgag pa 'ba' zhig pa rnam
<i>'Od zer</i>	-

Appendix 3: The identification of the probandum (bsgrub bya)

	essential property (<i>rang bzhin</i>)	effect (<i>'bras bu</i>)	non-apprehension (<i>mi dmigs pa</i>)
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Example	produced→impermanent	smoke→fire	neither one nor many→emptiness no fire→no smoke
Dharmottara	med dgag negation of permanent entity (<i>rtag pa'i dngos po bkag</i>) non(S+N)/nonN (?)	med dgag negation of non-fiery entity (<i>me med kyi dngos po bkag</i>) non(S+N)/nonN (?)	med dgag negation of genuine entity (<i>yang dag pa'i dngos po bkag</i>) non(S+N)/nonN (?)
Śāṅkaranandana	ma yin dgag combination of sound and impermanence (<i>sgra dang mi rtag pa tshogs pa</i>) (S+P)	ma yin dgag combination of mountain and fire (<i>la dang me tshogs pa</i>) (S+P)	ma yin dgag combination of entity and void of real entity (<i>dngos po dang bden pa'i dngos pos stong pa tshogs pa</i>) (S+nonN)=(S+P)
Anonymous	ma yin dgag combination of basis (i.e., subject) and property (<i>gzhi dang chos tshogs</i>) (S+P)	ma yin dgag combination of basis (i.e., subject) and property (<i>gzhi dang chos tshogs</i>) (S+P)	med dgag negation of the combination of basis and negandum (<i>gzhi dang dgag bya tshogs pa bkag pa</i>) non(S+N)
rGya (cited in <i>De kho na nyid bsdu pa</i>)	<u>dngos su</u> (ma yin dgag) combination of sound and impermanence (<i>sgra mi rtag pa'i tshogs don</i>) (S+P)	<u>(shugs la med dgag</u> [not explicit in the text])	<u>dngos su</u> (ma yin dgag) combination of [mountain] with fire (<i>me ldan gyi tshogs don</i>) (S+P)
			<u>shugs la med dgag</u> mere negation of a non-fiery entity (<i>me med kyi dngos po bkag tsam</i>) non(S+N)/nonN (?)
Phya pa	<u>dngos su</u> ma yin dgag combination of sound and impermanence (<i>sgra dang mi rtag pa tshogs pa</i>) (S+P)	<u>shugs la med dgag</u> negation of the combination of sound and permanence (<i>sgra dang rtag pa tshogs pa bkag pa</i>) non(S+N)	<u>dngos su</u> ma yin dgag combinantion of mountain and fire (<i>la dang me tshogs</i>) (S+P)
			<u>shugs la med dgag</u> negation of the combination of mountain and non-fiery entity (<i>la dang me med kyi dngos po tshogs pa bkag pa</i>) non(S+N)
			<i>if gzhi and chos are med dgag (e.g.: mi rtag pas stong pa and yod pas stong):</i>
			med dgag
			<i>In other cases:</i>
	<u>dngos su</u> ma yin dgag combination of entity and emptiness (<i>dngos po dang stong pa nyid tshogs pa</i>) (S+P)=(S+non N)	<u>shugs la med dgag</u> void of the combination of entity and genuine entity (<i>dngos po dang yang dag pa'i dngos po tshogs pas stong</i>) non(S+N)	