

Kamalaśīla and Śāntarakṣita on scripture and reason

The limits and extent of “practical rationality” in
the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and *Pañjikā*

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If there is a real distinction between theoretical and practical reason, it does not appear to have been particularly troubling to classical Indian philosophers. The concept of pure reason, devoid of practical concerns or implications, was never explicitly entertained in ancient India – just as it was never explicitly entertained in ancient Greece. Indeed, rationality in all its forms is connected in India with a number of fundamental human goals (*puruṣārtha*), and one might thus be tempted to say that Indian rationality *just is* practical rationality. Saying this does not preclude our recognition that Indian systematic texts contain within them a great deal of highly theoretical reflection – termed *ānvīkṣikī* in many Indian contexts – on ontological, epistemological, logical, and other such philosophical themes.¹ Rather, it is just to emphasize that all theoretical reflection in India is connected with practical aims, a fact that should in no way diminish its worth in our eyes. Instead, we should seek to attune ourselves, in my view, to the ways in which *all* rational reflection is connected in some way to practical concerns, as well as to the particular ways in which various forms of Indian rational reflection are connected to particular practical concerns. It is only by paying close attention to the connections between practical aims and theoretical reflection,

¹ On *ānvīkṣikī*, see Chakrabarti 1997 and Halbfass 1981.

as well as to indigenous theoretical thinking concerning those same connections, that we can come to appreciate the contributions of Indian, or indeed any, philosophical thought.

One excellent resource for considering the contours of practical rationality in the post-Dharmakīrtian Indian Buddhist epistemological tradition is the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā*, Kamalaśīla's commentary on Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha*. In particular, the opening section of this massive work of Buddhist polemics contains sustained theoretical reflection on the relationship between rationality and action, a point that Vincent Eltschinger has also noted.² This extended passage, which is styled as commentary on the *Tattvasaṃgraha*'s six opening verses, offers a developed account of the rationality of both ordinary and religious action. The ingenuity of the passage is striking, integrating as it does a more general theory of rational action with Kamalaśīla's more specific concerns as a Buddhist apologist seeking to offer a rational foundation for the practice of Buddhism.³ In my book on the arguments for omniscience in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā*, I draw on this and other passages to argue that for Kamalaśīla, the ultimate goal of all rational inquiry is the religious goal of supreme liberation, defined in these works as perfect buddhahood or omniscience (*sarvajñatā*). Not surprisingly then, one of the most important tasks of rational discourse is, for Kamalaśīla and others like him, to provide rational persons with rational justification for seeking this soteriological goal.

Critical to this project is the demonstration that omniscience, as understood by these thinkers, is in the first place *possible*, since the rationality of pursuing an impossible goal is clearly questionable. As Eltschinger observes, Kamalaśīla's approach to demonstrating the possibility of attaining this religious aim depends heavily on

² Eltschinger 2007. See also McClintock 2010 and Eltschinger's essay in the present volume.

³ Eltschinger (2007: 137) remarks on the basis mainly of this passage that Kamalaśīla is "likely to be the one Buddhist philosopher who laid theoretical foundations in order to argue for the rationality of embarking on the Bodhisattva path."

Dharmakīrti's reworking of the so-called *kāryānumāna*, or "inference of an effect from a cause,"⁴ accepted by certain other Indian philosophical schools. According to Dharmakīrti, the *kāryānumāna* cannot be accepted as a true means of trustworthy awareness (*pramāṇa*), since an intervening obstacle could always prevent the arising of the effect from the cause (or, more precisely, causal complex). Nevertheless, Dharmakīrti holds that one *can* infer the suitability (*yogyatā*) of a particular causal complex to give rise to a particular effect, thus allowing for a more limited use of the *kāryānumāna* structure. The upshot is that although one cannot infer the *inevitability* of particular Buddhist practices to give rise to the perfect wisdom of a buddha (since an intervening obstacle can always arise), one can infer the *suitability* of such practices to do so.⁵ A rational person may therefore be justified in setting out on the Buddhist path, knowing that her goal is indeed attainable.

Now the rational person that we have been discussing thus far is the *prekṣāvanta* or "person who possesses investigation," known also as the *prekṣāpūrvakārī* or "person who undertakes an investigation prior to acting." The qualities of this person – to whom I will refer from this point forward as the judicious person to reflect the practical aspects of their rational nature – are not laid out in any one place but can be gleaned from comments made throughout the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā*.⁶ For our present purposes, the following qualities are most important. First, the

⁴ Eltschinger 2007: 142–150. Eltschinger notes also the contribution of Ernst Steinkellner, who earlier had already understood the *kāryānumāna* theory as a key to Dharmakīrti's religious philosophy. See Steinkellner 1999.

⁵ Eltschinger (2007: 153–57) treats Kamalaśīla's long excursus at TSP ad TS 3337 which attempts to demonstrate the possibility of the perfection of wisdom. See also my discussion at McClintock 2010: 192–219.

⁶ See McClintock 2010: 58–62 for a longer list of many of the qualities associated with this figure, whom I consider to be the "embodiment of rationality" for these thinkers and others of their era. A comparative study of this figure across traditions is a clear desideratum in the field of classical Indian rationality.

judicious person is one whose actions are always directed toward some goal, and that goal (*upeya*) must be one the means (*upāya*) for attaining which the judicious person has completed a suitable investigation.⁷ A suitable investigation is one that relies entirely upon perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*) – the only means of trustworthy awareness these authors accept – and this means also that the judicious person does not resort to mere proclamations to clear up doubt about the goal or the means to attain it.⁸ Finally, and perhaps most important, the judicious person is antidogmatic, in that he will necessarily accept *any* position that is established through reasoning (*nyāya*), even if that position does not accord the dogmas of the community in which he stands.⁹

The combined effect of these requirements is to reinforce the idea that the ideal audience for the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* is comprised of judicious persons who proceed on the basis of rational inquiry and not on the basis of the authority of a teacher or scriptures. Although this sentiment is expressed throughout the work, it is epitomized in a famous verse preserved in both the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā*:

Just as wise persons accept gold, having first tested it through heating it, cutting it, and rubbing it on a touchstone, so too, O monks, you

⁷ See, e.g., TSP ad TS 155 (Ś 97,16–17): *prekṣāpūrvakāripravṛtteḥ prayojanavattayā vyāptatvāt* /. “[Śāntarakṣita has asked for what reason the supreme person (*puruṣa*) created the world] because the actions of judicious persons necessarily have a purpose.” See also TS 169 (*puruṣa-parīkṣā*): *yathākathamcid vṛttiś ced buddhimattāsyā kīdṛśī / nāsamikṣya yataḥ kāryaṃ śanako’pi pravartate* //. “If the action of [the supreme person (*puruṣa*)] were to be haphazard (*yathākathamcit*), then what kind of intelligence would he have? For even a fisherman does not act without considering the effect [of his action].” Kamalaśīla glosses *yathākathamcit* by *abuddhipūrvakam*, “without prior intention.”

⁸ See, e.g., TSP ad TS 3009–16 (Ś 957,11–12): *na hy ākrośamātreṇaiva vinā pramāṇaṃ prekṣāvatām āśaṅkānivṛttir yuktā* /. “In the absence of a means of trustworthy awareness (*pramāṇa*), a mere proclamation alone is incapable of eliminating doubt for judicious persons.”

⁹ See below n. 30.

should accept my words only after testing them, and not out of respect [for me].¹⁰

This maxim emphasizes the need for judicious persons to test the Buddha's doctrines, and it is further confirmation of the practical rationality at the heart of these texts. But, later in the commentary, Kamalaśīla explains that the metaphors of "heating it, rubbing it on a touchstone, and cutting it" stand for testing the Buddha's words through perception; through inference that functions through the force of real entities (*vastubalapravṛttānumāna*); and through scripturally based inference (*āgamāpekṣānumāna*; *āgamāśrītānumāna*).¹¹ Here the expected tests of perception and inference are augmented by the category of scripturally based inference, an apparent subset of inference more generally, but one that, like the *kāryānumāna* discussed above, does not rise to the level of an actual means of trustworthy awareness.¹² But if scripturally based inference is not a true *pramāṇa*, and thus is incapable of eliminating doubt, then what role does it play for rational persons? Is it in fact necessary? And if so, in what capacity and to what end? In what follows, we will address these questions in an attempt to explore more precisely the role of scripture (*āgama*) for Kamalaśīla and Śāntarakṣita's practical rationality.

¹⁰ TS 3587 and TSP ad TS 1–6 (Ś 15,23–24): *tāpāc chedāc ca nikaṣāt suvarṇam iva paṇḍitaiḥ / parīkṣya bhikṣavo grāhyaṃ madvaco na tu gauravāt //*.

¹¹ TSP ad TS 3343: *yathā kaladhautam suvarṇam amalam sarvadoṣarahitam parīkṣyamānam tāpādibhir na vikriyām pratipadyate tathā bhagavadvacoratnam pratyakṣeṇa tāpasadṛṣeṇa vastubalapravṛttānumānena nikaṣaprakhyeṇāgamāpekṣānumānenāpi chedadṛṣṭāntasūcitenā na vikriyate /*. Cf. also Kamalaśīla's comments on the verse in the *Nyāya-bindupūrvapakṣa-saṅkṣipti/saṅkṣepa* (D no. 4232, *tshad ma* vol. 16, ve 93a4ff.).

¹² That scripturally based inference is not an actual inference is well-attested in Dharmakīrti's thought. See, e.g., Tillemans 1999 and Krasser 2011.

Faith and judicious persons

Unlike ordinary inference, which these thinkers insist functions through the force of real entities (*vastubalapravṛtta*), Kamalaśīla and Śāntarakṣita are not so clear concerning the precise rules of operation for scripturally based inferences. That is, in the case of ordinary inferences, the authors follow Dharmakīrti in presenting clear rules for determining the existence of the natural relation (*svabhāvapratibandha*) that pertains between the evidence (*hetu*; *liṅga*) and that thing which is sought to be established (*sādhya*) by means of the evidence. In the case of scripturally based inference, however, while we do have some guidelines for *when* such an inference may be used, we find no special rules for determining the relationship between the evidence and that which is sought to be established. If we understand that scripturally based inference is not a true inference, this situation is perhaps not very surprising. But this still leaves vague the question of how such a scriptural inference is supposed to *function*. The most that we seem to be able to assert is that, on the analogy with ordinary inference, in a scripturally based inference, one takes the words of a particular scripture as evidence for the truth of the state of affairs to which those words refer, even if that truth cannot be established with the certainty associated with the true means of trustworthy awareness, perception and ordinary inference.

Now, the usual thinking has it that when a person accepts some state of affairs on the basis solely of the words of a scripture, that person may be said to have faith in the authority of that scripture. So one initial way to get at the role of scripturally based inference for Kamalaśīla and Śāntarakṣita's practical rationality is to investigate the place of faith in the theory of rational action espoused in these texts. Once again, the opening pages of the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* provide important clues, with the very first sentence extolling the importance of faith for judicious persons. Kamalaśīla is commenting on Śāntarakṣita's opening verses, which contain both an enumeration of the content of the work and an homage to the Buddha. Kamalaśīla indicates that the presentation of the content is to allow

judicious persons engage with the text, and the homage is for the purpose of generating faith in the Buddha or Blessed One. He says:

Having perceived that judicious people act toward a text having first determined its subject matter (*abhidheya*) and aim (*prayojana*) and that the primary cause of obtaining the highest good is faith in great beings, [Śāntarakṣita] states the subject matter and the aim of the treatise, preceded by the act of honoring his own teacher, by means of the first six verses [literally: “the verses that begin with *prakṛti* and end with the word *Tattvasaṃgraha*”] in order to generate faith in the Blessed One and to cause the listener to respectfully engage with this text.¹³

How are we to understand this passage? Clearly, we are being told that judicious persons engage with a text only after determining that it concerns a worthy subject and aim. Yet we also see faith extolled as the primary cause for obtaining the highest good, or liberation. Does this mean that judicious or rational persons should cultivate faith? And if so, in what fashion should they do so? Ordinary faith clearly does not play a role for such persons, as we see from statements made throughout the work. For example, as we have already seen, Kamalaśīla asserts that judicious persons rely on the *pramāṇas* of perception and inference to clear up doubt; they do not resort to mere proclamations.¹⁴ The rationalist bent is very clear.

It turns out that while judicious persons do need faith, that faith must be understood to be of a very particular kind. We glean this from another passage early in the *Pañjikā*. Here, Kamalaśīla divides the audience for the text into two categories: those who are inclined toward faith (*śraddhānusārin*) and those who are inclined toward wisdom (*prajñānusārin*). He explains that for those with a nature that is inclined toward faith, a mere statement proclaiming the greatness

¹³ TSP ad TS 1–6 (Ś 2,5–8): *iha hi śāstre prekṣāvatām abhidheyaprayojanāvasāyapūrvikā pravṛttir mahatsu ca prasādaḥ sarvaśreyo'dhigateḥ kāraṇaṃ prathamam ity ālocya bhagavati prasādotpādanārthaṃ śāstre cāsmīn ādareṇa śrotuḥ pravṛttiyartham svaśāstrpūjāvidhipūrvakam aśya śāstrasya prakṛtīyādibhiḥ ślokaḥ tattvasaṃgraha ityetaṭparyantair abhidheyaprayojane prāha /*.

¹⁴ See note 7 above.

of the Buddha is sufficient to give rise to unshakable faith.¹⁵ But for those with a nature that is inclined toward wisdom, producing faith requires that one first ascertain through rational means that the qualities attributed to the Buddha are actually possible. He says:

But those who are inclined toward wisdom, not seeing any refutation (*bādhā*) of these kinds of [qualities], and understanding that good qualities such as wisdom and so on [can reach] perfection (*prakarṣa*) through habituation (*abhyāsa*), [will determine] – through the means of trustworthy awareness that will be stated [and] which establishes the seer of supersensible objects – that “certainly these kinds of sages are possible in the world.” [And] having determined this, they indeed produce faith in the Blessed One.¹⁶

The means of trustworthy awareness or *pramāṇa* which establishes the seer of supersensible objects refers to the work’s final chapter, the “Investigation of One Who Sees Supersensible Objects” (*atīndriyārthadarśiparīkṣā*). The idea is that the final chapter of the work was written so that judicious persons might ascertain the possibility of supersensible seeing, which in this text is a gloss for a Buddha’s complete knowledge of Dharma and Adharma, or everything that is necessary to the soteriological aim of liberation. For Kamalaśīla, then, it is this certainty concerning the real possibility of their spiritual goal, and not blind adherence to scriptures, that is termed “faith” for those judicious persons who are inclined toward wisdom. This is clearly related to the *kāryānumāna* discourse of Dharmakīr-

¹⁵ TSP ad TS 1–6 (Ś 9,1–3): *śāstrpūjāvidhānaṃ tu bhagavati sarvaśreyo’dhigatihetoḥ prasādasyotpādanārtham / tathā hi guṇagaṇākhyānavidhināmunā bhagavato’tiśayo*⁽¹⁾ *māhātmyam udbhāvyate / tad upaśrūtya ca śraddhānusārīmanasāṃ tāvad asaṃśayaṃ bhagavati jhagiti cittaprasādaḥ samudeti /*

⁽¹⁾ *atiśayaḥ* TSP ms. Patan (no. 6680) fol. 69a below line 17, ms. Jaisalmer (no. 378) fol. 5b1 : no equivalent in TSP_{KS}

¹⁶ TSP ad TS 1–6 (Ś 9,4–6): *ye’pi prajñānusāriṇas te’pi tathāvidheṣu bādham apaśyantaḥ prajñādīnāṃ ca guṇānām abhyāsāt prakarṣam avagacchanto vakṣyamāṇād apy atīndriyārthadṛkśādhakāt pramāṇān nūnaṃ jagati sambhāvyanta eva tathāvidhāḥ sūraya ity avadhārya bhagavati prasādam upajanayanty eva /*

ti and his followers, and does not explain the need for scripturally based inference.

Judicious action on the basis of mere statements

Again we are left wondering about the role of scripturally based inference for judicious persons. Kamalaśīla first explores this question in another passage from the early pages of the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā*, ostensibly in the context of a debate concerning the necessity for stating the aim of the treatise at the outset of the composition.¹⁷ The larger argument, attributed to Arcaṭa, is that it is pointless to state the aim of a treatise because mere statements, not being suitable for engendering certainty in judicious persons, cannot motivate such persons to engage with the text. Kamalaśīla disagrees, holding that while judicious persons know they cannot attain certainty on the basis of mere statements, they also understand that to categorically refuse to act on the basis of all statements is not rational either. Echoing Dharmakīrti, and invoking the theme of scripturally based inference, Kamalaśīla says:

However, if it were established that no judicious person whatsoever acted on account of a statement, only then would it be true [that judicious persons only act out of certainty] for all [cases]. For some people, having heard about the great blessings and dangers of acting or not acting in relation to some results that are not directly perceptible, being unable to abide without relying on the authority of a scripture, are observed to act on account of a statement. And to that degree there is not any loss of their judiciousness, because their action is just as an expedient means (*abhyupāyena*). For apart from scripture there is no other expedient means for action with regard to an object that is a radically inaccessible entity (*atyantaparokṣārtha*). And one must necessarily act according to scripture (*āgama*) [when it comes to such extremely inaccessible entities]. That is, those who accept a contradictory scripture

¹⁷ In his article on practical rationality, Eltschinger traces a line of development from Dharmakīrti through his earliest commentators Devendrabuddhi and Śākyabuddhi, on to Arcaṭa to show that Kamalaśīla relies on the logic of the *kāryānumāna* when he rejects Arcaṭa's idea that judicious persons act out of certainty alone.

would be injudicious; but when there is action through reliance on a noncontradictory scripture, how could the [persons] not be judicious, since that [kind of scripture] is a proper means (*samyagupāya*)?¹⁸

The implication is clear: acting on the basis of a mere statement is not necessarily irrational when there is no other way. Action induced by a scripturally based inference is one example of rational action that arises not from the certainty produced by a true means of trustworthy awareness but rather just through a statement. Another example is engaging with a text that claims to be about a topic that is germane to one's goals – a fact about which one cannot be fully certain until one has actually read the text! But proceeding to read a text on the basis of, say, its title and table of contents, cannot be considered a breach of judiciousness. To deny this would result in paralysis.

It seems then that Kamalaśīla accepts the validity of scripturally based inference as a justification for action in relation to radically inaccessible entities, at least under circumstances which involve “the great blessings and dangers of acting or not acting in relation to some results that are not directly perceptible.” But what exactly does this imply? The notion that judicious persons, having heard of such matters, are “unable to abide without relying on the authority of a scripture” lends an air of urgency to the matter, such that we get the impression that a judicious person's spiritual progress will be

¹⁸ TSP ad TS 1–6 (Ś 4,21–5,4): *kiṃ tu yadi vākyān na kasyacit prekṣā-vataḥ pravṛttir astīty etat siddhaṃ bhavet tadā sarvaṃ evaitat syāt / yāvatā drśyante hi kecid apratyakṣaphalānāṃ keśāṃcit pravṛttinivṛttyor mahānuśaṃsāpāyaśravaṇād^a anāśrityāgamaprāmāṇyam āsitum āśak-
nuvanto vacanāt pravartamānāḥ / na caitāvatā teṣāṃ prekṣāvat-
tāhānir abhyupāyenaiva pravṛtter na hy āgamād rte'tyantaparokṣār-
thaviṣaye pravṛttāv anyo'bhyupāyo'sti / avaśyaṃ ca pravartitavyaṃ tv
āgamāt / vyāhatāgamaparigrahaṃ hi kurvāṇā apreṣāpūrvakāriṇaḥ
syuḥ / avyāhatāgamasamāśrayeṇa tu pravṛttau kathaṃ na prekṣāvanto
bhavyeṣu tasyaiva samyagupāyatvāt /. Cf. PVSṢV ad PV 1.214: *nāyaṃ pu-
ruṣo'nāśrityāgamam āsitum samarthaḥ / atyakṣaphalānāṃ keśāṃcit
pravṛttinivṛttyor mahānuśaṃsāpāpaśravaṇāt tadbhāve virodhādarśanāc
ca / tat sati pravartitavye varam evaṃ pravṛtta iti /**

^a °āpāya° PVSṢV_{ms} 25a2 (TSP 4,22–23; PVSṢV_T_{ms} 140b6; *ñan soṇ* PVSṢV, D322a4/
P478b3; see Yaita 2005: 443 n. 159) : °āpāya° PVSṢV, PVSṢV_T 390,25..

severely hampered if scripturally based inference is disallowed in this case. But while a number of radically inaccessible matters are discussed in these texts, it is really only in relation to one of them that we find any hint that one might need to rely on a scripture in order to make spiritual progress. I speak of the connection between karmic causes and their effects (*karmaphalasambandha*).

We find evidence of this again in the opening pages of the *Tattva-saṃgrahapañjikā*. The context remains the problem of judicious persons acting on the basis of a mere statement, in this case the statement of the aim of the treatise. Kamalaśīla is arguing that under certain circumstances it is entirely appropriate for judicious persons to act out of uncertainty or doubt (*saṃśaya*). He says:

And it should definitely be understood in this manner. Otherwise, the promulgation of a scripture whose object is a radically inaccessible entity would be pointless, because even before the promulgation of the scripture there exists doubt concerning that [radically inaccessible] entity on the part of a person who desires a particular result, due to the lack of any probative or contravening trustworthy awareness in relation to [the ascertainment of] giving and so on [as a means for accomplishing the goal]. But this doubt does not even arise for those who have not learned about results such as heaven and so on, because the desire for the particular result that is the cause of that [doubt] is not apparent [to them]. But even for those in whom [the doubt] does arise, because it would be a cause for action with regard to all things, including even eating rocks and so on, it is a [cause for action] in general; therefore, [it] is not a cause for taking up specific [means] such as giving, while avoiding the eating of rocks and so forth. Thinking this, the scripture is quoted by the one quoting it for the sake of those [persons]. Likewise, the author of the treatise makes the statement of the aim. This is undeniable.¹⁹

¹⁹ TSP ad TS 1–6 (Ś 7,1–7): *avaśyaṃ caitad evaṃ vijñeyam / anyathāty-antaparokṣārthaviśayāgamapraṇayanam api vyartham syāt / prāg apy āgamapraṇayanād dānādiṣu phalaviśeṣārthināṃ sādhakābādhakapramāṇābhāvena tatsaṃśayasya vidyamānatvāt / kiṃ tv asāv avyutpannasvargādiphalānāṃ naivotpadyate / tatkāraṇabhūtāyāḥ phalaviśeṣārthitāyā asaṃmukhībhāvāt / yeṣāṃ copajāyate teṣāṃ api sarvatropalādibhakṣaṇe'pi pravṛttihetutayā sādharmaṇatvād upalādibhakṣaṇaparihāreṇa na pratiniyatadānādiparigrahaḥetur bhavatīti matvā tadartham āgamapraṇetṛbhīr āgamaḥ praṇīyate tadvat prayo-*

The point here seems to be that when judicious persons are wondering about which actions to take in order to attain certain karmic goals, the existence of which remains a radically inaccessible entity, the only choice is to resort to scriptures. The example here is that of the practice of giving (*dāna*), one of the chief practices of the Buddhist laity and a virtue extolled on the bodhisattva path, the results of which are consistently stated to be rebirth in one of the higher destinies (i.e., as a god or human). The point is that before one has heard about the fact that certain actions will lead to a higher rebirth, one will not even wonder about it. But even once one has determined that a higher rebirth is a worthy goal, there is still the question of which particular actions will bring it about. Without the guidance of scripture, one has no way to decide between undertaking acts of giving and simply eating rocks.

Further evidence that the connection between certain actions and certain destinies is the primary object of scripturally based inference may be found in the “Investigation of Scripture” chapter (*śrutiparīkṣā*). The context here is a discussion of a Mīmāṃsaka claim that the words of the Veda are true because they give rise to an awareness that is free from doubt, just as a direct perception of a real entity, such as a fire, gives rise to the certain conviction that one is, in fact, experiencing fire.²⁰ Śāntarakṣita’s initial response is

janavākyam api śāstrakārair ity acodyam etat /.

²⁰ The argument here is related to another Mīmāṃsaka claim, namely that of the “intrinsic trustworthiness” (*svataḥprāmāṇya*) of all means of trustworthy awareness. The Mīmāṃsaka’s point is that in order for an awareness to be false, there must arise a second, sublating awareness in relation to the first awareness that conclusively shows that awareness to be wrong (as, for example, when after seeing a mirage one arrives at the place and discovers that there is no water there). When no such sublating awareness arises, the original awareness may be accepted as true. Regarding the Vedic sentences, as for example, “one who desires heaven should perform a sacrifice” (*svargakāmo yajeta*), no contravening awareness ever arises in any place, with regard to any person, in any situation, or at any time. Thus, the awareness that arises upon hearing the statement must be true. See, e.g., *Śābarabhāṣya* 1.1.2 (quoted in TSP ad TS 2386–2387, Ś 795): *na ca svargakāmo yajetety ato*

to deny that certainty arises from such Vedic statements as concern supersensible entities.²¹ He then seems to soften somewhat and to grant the possibility that a kind of psychological certainty, or “unshakability” (*niṣkampya*), may arise in the minds of Vedic scholars. But he states that this unshakability is the result of faith (*śraddhā*) and that it does not differ from the unshakable convictions of Buddhists concerning the misfortune that will arise in future lives due to the sacrifice of animals. He says:

But that unshakable opinion that arises for the Vedic scholars (*śrotriya*) whose minds are under the control of faith is the same [as that which arises] for others due to other [statements]. That is, for Buddhists and so on, there arises the unshakable conviction that there is the production of misfortune and suffering [in a future life] due to sacrifices that involve the slaughter of animals.²²

This passage can probably be considered a clincher for the hypothesis that Śāntarakṣita accepts that the details of karmic causality cannot be proven by belief-neutral reasoning, but are a matter of faith. If this is correct, then we have at least one radically inaccessible

vacanāt saṃdigdham avagamyante bhavati vā svargo na vā bhavatīti / na ca viniścitam avagamyamānam idaṃ mithyā syāt / yo hi janitvā pradhvaṃsate naitad evaṃ sa mithyāpratyaḥ / na caiṣa deśāntare puruṣāntare'vasthāntare kālāntare viparyeti / tasmād avitathaḥ //. See also D'Sa 1980.

²¹ See TS 2388–2389: *naivaṃ saṃśayasamjāter viparītānyavākyaavat / prekṣāvanto hi naiteṣāṃ bhedaṃ paśyanti kaṃcana // nātīndriye hi yujyete sadasattāvinīścayau / niścayo vedavākyaḥ ced anyādrī na kim anyataḥ //*. “It is not the case [that certainty ensues from Vedic sentences] since there is the arising of doubt, just as in the case of another sentence that asserts the opposite [i.e., that heaven is not the result of sacrifice]. Indeed, judicious persons do not perceive even the slightest difference between these two [cases]. For the definitive determinations of existence and nonexistence do not apply to supersensible [entities]. If there were certainty from a Vedic sentence, then why would there not be [certainty] from another [sentence] that was otherwise [i.e., that stated things to be otherwise]?”

²² TS 2390–2391: *śrotriyaṇāṃ tu niṣkampyā buddhir eṣopajāyate / śraddhāvivaśābuddhīnāṃ sānyeṣāṃ anyataḥ samā // tathā hi saugatādīnāṃ dhīr akampyopajāyate / apāyaduḥkhasambhūtir yāgāt prāṇivadhānvitāt //*.

matter that could be a candidate for something in need of grounding through scripturally based inference.

But does the judicious person really *need* to determine the details of karma in order to engage in the Buddhist path? We know from the “Investigation of the Connection between Actions and Effects” (*kar-maphalasambandhaparīkṣā*) that Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla hold that the *basic principle* of the connection between karmic causes and their results is *not* a radically inaccessible matter for ordinary persons. Here, the authors respond to the argument that, on the Buddhist view of selflessness, there would be no incentive for people to undertake ethically positive actions, since there is no person who endures over time to enjoy the fruits of those actions. The answer is that even ordinary persons, if they are sufficiently skillful, can determine the restrictions (*niyama*) that pertain between karmic actions and their effects, such that they will understand that ethically positive actions will bring about positive mental states, while ethically negative actions will not. Kamalaśīla says:

But skillful ordinary persons, due to correctly understanding momentariness and selflessness through reasoning and scripture in this manner realize reality (*tattva*); they establish that [things have] the nature of dependent arising. Having determined the restrictions that pertain between causes and their effects, [such persons recognize that] “momentary mental formations (*saṃskāra*) capable of giving rise to benefit for oneself and others arise, one after the other in succession from giving and so forth when these are preceded by compassion and so on, but [such mental formations] do not arise from harm and so on.” Therefore, they engage in actions that are good and so on.²³

²³ See TSP ad TS 540–541 (Ś 228,12–16): *ye’pi prthagjanakalyāṇā evaṃ yuktyāgamābhyāṃ yathāvat kṣaṇikānātmataḥ avabodhād abhi^asambuddhatattvās te’py evaṃ pratītyasamutpādadharmatām pratipadyante / karuṇādīpūrvakebhyo dānādibhyaḥ svaparahitodayaśālināḥ saṃskārāḥ kṣaṇikā evāparāpare paramparayā samutpadyante / na tu hiṃsādibhya ity atas te hetuphalapratiniyamam avadhārya śubhādīkriyāsu pravartante /*

^a The reading *kṣaṇikānātmataḥ avabodhād abhi* instead of *kṣaṇikātmataḥ avabodhābhi* in K and Ś is based on TSP, ze 256a2: *skad cig ma dang bdag med pa dag rtogs pa’i phyir*

This passage makes reference to the doctrine of dependent arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*), according to which each moment of the mind is conditioned by and conditions the next moment. The idea here is that through introspection, an ordinary person *can* determine that certain actions, when they are preceded by certain mental states like compassion, give rise to certain other mental states which bring about the benefit of both self and others. And, conversely, though introspection the ordinary person can also determine that certain other actions, such as harm and so on, which are not accompanied by mental states like compassion, do not bring about benefit for oneself or others. Knowing the radically inaccessible details of the karmic results in the next life is not necessary to convince the skillful person to take up giving and renounce harm; it is enough to recognize within one's own mind stream that these actions bring about benefit for both self and others.²⁴

At the same time, Kamalaśīla's use of the phrase "through reasoning and scripture" (*yuktyāgamābhyām*) in this passage is conspicuous as it is, I believe, the only place in the *Pañjikā* where it is found, despite being a standard Buddhist trope.²⁵ We know that Kamalaśīla generally does not put much stock in scripture. As he states in the *Madhyamakālamkārapañjikā*, scripture is a mere "ornament" (*alamkāra*; Tibetan: *rgyan*) for reasoning that a philosopher must employ so that uneducated people will not think the reasoning to be the concoction of a subtle or sophistic logician and thus come to despise his work.²⁶ The reference to scripture in this context, then, is proba-

²⁴ The demonstration of past and future lives occurs in the "Investigation of the Lokāyatas" (*lokāyataparīkṣā*), but it is too complex for us to enter into here.

²⁵ At least, I have not so far been able to locate this phrase in any other section of the TSP. It is interesting as well that this phrase also occurs at PV 2.133 and appears to refer to the methods that a person must use to attain liberation. But see, however, the comments of Devendrabuddhi (PVP 55a) and Śākyabuddhi (PVT *ñe* 117a), who seem to interpret the meaning to be that one might use scriptures to prompt one's initial investigation but that the final justification for one's actions must be reasoning alone. See also Franco 1997: 33 n. 43.

²⁶ See MA 21,12–21: *dad pas rjes su 'brang ba rnams kyang nges pa mi skye*

bly a way of confirming what we have already seen: that the details of the connection between karmic actions and their effects are radically inaccessible and may only be affirmed through scripture. Nevertheless, it does not appear necessary for judicious persons to gain knowledge of these radically inaccessible details in order to set out on the spiritual path, and to be rationally justified in doing so. The “faith” that is required is not faith in radically inaccessible entities but rather a kind of certainty concerning the benefit that will come through the practice of actions like giving accompanied by the cultivation of mental states such as compassion. We still have not found any truly critical way, then, in which judicious persons need to rely on scripture in order to engage with the Buddhist path. Knowing the details of karma is irrelevant so long as one can confirm the basic principles of karma and the real possibility of buddhahood.

Scripturally based inference as rhetorical tool

Well, then, does Kamalaśīla advocate any *other* use for scripturally based inference? I think the answer is yes. That is, we find a kind of rhetorical use of scripturally based inference, or something like it, that can be used in the context of an argument in which the opponent has himself offered what amounts to nothing more than a scriptural proclamation to defend a point. The logic here is the logic of debate: if the opponent strays from the realm of belief-neutral reasoning, offering nothing more than a scriptural passage as evidence for some supersensible matter, then the proponent, too, shall have the right to rely upon a scriptural statement of his choosing, without being required to offer belief-neutral evidence.

*bas yongs su tshim par mi 'gyur ro // kyang zhes bya ba'i sgras ni sems log
pa rnams lta smos kyang ci dgos zhes ston par byed do // dngos po'i stobs
kyis zhugs pa smos pa ni lung las grags pa'i rjes su dpag pa bsal ba'i phyir
te / de yang lung dang 'dra bas de dang bcas te de yang nges par mi byed
pa'i phyir tshim par mi 'gyur ro // rigs pa ni nges pa skyed par byed pas
yongs su tshim par byed pa yin no // ji ste gal te de lta na go ba rigs pa kho
nas chog mod / lung gis ci zhig bya zhe na / ma yin te / lung ni rigs pa'i
rgyan yin pa'i phyir ro // de lta ma yin na 'di ni rtog ge pa sgam pos brtags
pa yin no zhes mi mkhas pa kha cig gis brnyas par yang 'gyur ro //.*

We find at least one such example in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and the *Pañjikā*. The context is a discussion of the *pralaya*, the universal destruction that many Indian traditions, including Buddhist traditions, accept as occurring on a cyclical basis. It is, by its nature, clearly a radically inaccessible entity. The background for the discussion is the Mīmāṃsaka claim that the meaning of words is eternally fixed, and does not depend upon the establishment of a convention (*vyavahāra*) by a creator god at the start of a new cycle. As part of upholding this view, the Mīmāṃsakas deny the existence of the *pralaya*, at least in the sense of a truly universal destruction, since a universal destruction would entail that the meaning of words also be destroyed.²⁷ In that case, they argue, the term *pralaya* can refer only to some limited form of destruction, as in the destruction of particular families or locales.²⁸

Śāntarakṣita counters that the Mīmāṃsaka cannot refute the possibility that the Veda or the meaning of its words could be destroyed, whether by a limited form of destruction or by the universal destruction as depicted in Buddhist scriptures. Kamalaśīla explains as follows:

But you describe destruction in the form of the destruction of a locale and so on; but that [destruction] Buddhists describe as having the nature of destruction in the form of fire, water, and wind reaching to the limits of the billionfold world system – downward to the limit of the elemental wind sphere [and] upward successively to the limits of the first, second, and third *dhyānas* – because it is not refuted by any means of trustworthy awareness, is therefore “unrefuted” (*avyāhata*); so that because it cannot be negated, it is doubtful [i.e., possible] even in relation to Brahmā and so on. Therefore, the destruction of the Veda is

²⁷ See ŚV, *sambandhākṣepaparihāra*, 42: *pratyuccāraṇanirvṛttir bhāṣya eva nirākṛtā / sargādaḥ ca kriyā nāsti tādṛk kālo hi neṣyate //*. Cited in a variant form at TS 2273: *pratyuccāraṇanirvṛttir na yuktā vyavahārataḥ / sargādaḥ ca kriyā nāsti tādṛk kālo hi neṣyate //*.

²⁸ TS 2274–2276: *iṣyate hi jagat sarvaṃ na kadācid anīdṛśam / na mahā-pralayo nāma jāyate pāramārthikaḥ //* *rātrir vā pralayo nāma līnatvāt sarvakarmaṇām / divasaḥ sṛṣṭisaṃjñāś ca sarvaceṣṭātisarjanāt //* *deśot-sādakulotsādarūpo vā pralayo bhavet / pralaye tu pramāṇaṃ naḥ sarvocchedātmake na hi //*.

possible in the case of both these two forms of *pralaya*, and there is the uncertainty (*kalpana*) of an erroneous meaning [in the sense that the original meaning of the Veda could have been lost].²⁹

In this passage, Kamalaśīla refers to the theory of universal destruction as found in Buddhist scriptures, calling it unrefuted (*avyāhata*). As a radically inaccessible matter, it cannot be negated (nor can it be affirmed) by belief-neutral reasoning. It thus remains a matter of doubt.

Nevertheless, Kamalaśīla appears to feel that raising the Buddhist theory of the *pralaya* is a legitimate move in this debate, since it highlights the radically inaccessible nature of the Mīmāṃsaka's claim that *no* universal destruction occurs. While it is not explicitly named as a scripturally based inference, I think we can see it as such, though it is perhaps more akin to a *prasaṅga* than to an ordinary *anumāna* in the way that it functions. What is interesting, though, is that this seems to be a case where a scripturally based inference is used even in the absence of any pressing soteriological need for the judicious person to rely upon scripture. Rather, there is instead a rhetorical need for this use of scripture. That is, this is an occasion where one's opponent in debate has resorted to an unverifiable claim (i.e., there is no universal destruction), which then opens the door for the Buddhist authors to draw equally on their own tradition's unverifiable claims in the course of the argument. Of course, one could argue that it is soteriologically necessary to the Mīmāṃsaka's spiritual progress to be refuted in this way.

²⁹ TSP ad TS 2670–2672: *kiṃ tu yo'yaṃ bhavatā deśotsādādirūpapralayo varṇito yaś ca baudhdhair agnyambuvāyusaṃvartanīyasvabhāvaḥ paryantatas trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātumaryādo'dhastād vāyumaṇḍalāvadhir upariṣṭād yathākramaṃ prathamadvitīyatṛtīyadyānaparyantaḥ so'yaṃ pramāṇenābādhitatvād avyāhato'sakyaṇiṣedhatvād brahmāder api śaṅkyate / ato'smin dvividhe'pi pralaye vedasya dhvaṃsaḥ sambhāvyate viparītārthakalpanaṃ ca /*

The extent and limits of practical rationality

How far, then, is Kamalaśīla willing to go in the defense of his practical rationality? Consider the section in which he responds to a position, articulated by Kumārila in the *Ślokavārttika*, as part of his defense of the authorlessness (*apauruṣeyatva*) of the Veda. According to Kumārila, passages in the Veda in which sages are identified as authors must be interpreted as a kind of eulogistic embellishment or “propaganda” (*arthavāda*). That is, such passages add prestige in the Veda, but are not to be taken literally. But Kamalaśīla (following Śāntarakṣita) counters that there is no reason then why the same could not be said of other scriptures, including those attributed to the Buddha. He says:

If it is correct that this thing is to be accepted, then why would the Buddhist not accept it? For it is not correct for a judicious person not to accept a thing that has been proved through reasoning. Even if judicious Buddhists do not accept [this interpretation], nevertheless we state that this [argument] falls to you on the basis of reason alone.³⁰

At first it seems that Kamalaśīla speaks purely tongue-in-cheek, because of course he does not really want to suggest that the Buddha is not the author of the Buddhist scriptures. Yet there may be something more to this rhetorical move. That is, while Kamalaśīla does claim that Buddhist scriptures – like all texts – have an author, his commitment to that view is not in service of any claims about the authority of those scriptures. For, it is not the personality or the trustworthiness of the Buddha that allows the judicious person to rely on the Buddhist scriptures. Rather judicious persons may rely upon the

³⁰ TSP ad TS 2790–2791 (Ś 897,21–23): *yady ayam artho yuktyupetaḥ syāt / tadā kim iti bauddho nābhyupagacchet / na hi nyāyopapanne'rthe prekṣāvato'nabhyupagamo yuktaḥ / mā bhūd bauddhasya prekṣāvato'bhyupagamaḥ / tathāpi nyāyād evaṁ āpadyate bhavata iti brūmahe //*. A similar principle can also be seen at work in Dharmakīrti's PV 4, the chapter on inference-for-another (*parārthānumānapariccheda*), where Dharmakīrti holds that proponents in a debate should not be considered responsible for every position accepted by the system or school to which they belong, but only for the thesis they advance in the current dispute. See PV 4.42 and PV 4.53ff.

Buddhist scriptures in the limited ways we have seen only because their statements on perceptible and inferable matters accord with the findings of ordinary perception and inference, and because their statements on radically inaccessible matters do not contradict these other findings. Scripturally based inference only may add some color and rhetorical flair to an otherwise rational assessment of the truth, but it is entirely unnecessary for the generation of faith.

Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla follow Dharmakīrti in their resistance to grounding the authority of the Buddhist scriptures in the authority of the Buddha. Considering the conditions under which a statement may serve as a scripturally based inference, Dharmakīrti offers a verse setting out an initial set of criteria that must be in place:

A statement (*vākya*) that is a worthy subject of examination is one that is coherent (*sambaddha*), offers a suitable method, and cites some human aim. Other statements are not worthy subjects of examination.³¹

By themselves, however, these criteria do not suffice to render a statement eligible to be relied upon as a scripturally based inference. Further restrictions are announced in *Pramāṇavārttika* 1.215, which is the locus of a method that comes to be called the *threefold analysis*³² for testing whether an author's statements may be considered reliable when it comes to radically inaccessible entities. The verse states:

Its [i.e., a scripture's] trustworthiness consists of not being contradicted by perceptual awareness and by the two kinds of inference with regard to both the observable (*dṛṣṭa*) and unobservable (*adṛṣṭa*) things (*artha*) that are the objects (*artha*) of those statements.³³

³¹ PV 1.214: *sambaddhānugūṇopāyaṃ puruṣārthābhīdhāyakam / parīkṣādhikṛtaṃ vākyaṃ ato'nadhikṛtaṃ param //*. Translation from Dunne 2004: 361–62. Also cited at TSP ad TS 1–6 (Ś 2,18–19).

³² The term *tshul gsum gyi brtag pa* comes from Kamalaśīla's *Madhyamakāloka*; see Keira 2006: 181–184. In the Tibetan commentarial tradition it is known as *dpyad pa gsum*.

³³ PV 1.215: *pratyakṣeṇānumānena dvividhenāpy abādhakam / dṛṣṭā-dṛṣṭārthayor asyāviśaṃvādas tadarthayoḥ //*. The two kinds of inference are the ordinary *vastubalapravṛttānumāna* form of inference and

According to this method, a scripturally based inference requires that one first determines whether the statements in question are reliable in matters that are independently verifiable through perception and inference. That is, using ordinary perception one first determines that everything the statements claim concerning perceptible (*pratyakṣa*) matters is true; and then, using ordinary inference, one further verifies that everything said about inferable (*parokṣa*) matters is also true. The third step is to verify that none of statements' claims concerning radically inaccessible (*atyantaparokṣa*) matters contradict either these other, independently verifiable propositions or each other. If the statements pass all three of these tests, then the statements are said to be "purified," and one is justified in relying on their claims concerning radically inaccessible matters. Notice that according to this method, the criterion for testing the reliability of the scripture is not the credibility of the author but rather the overall trustworthiness of the scripture itself.

Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla advocate this method as well. In the last chapter of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and the *Pañjikā* they apply this method to the speech of the Buddha. We can start by citing the relevant verse:

[The Sugata's speech] is coherent (*sambaddha*), with a suitable method [for achieving its aims]; it sets forth that which is useful for humans (*puruṣārtha*); it does not in the least contradict the two means of trustworthy awareness with regard to the object that is seen as well as [that which is unseen].³⁴

scripturally based inference. Regarding the terms observable (*dṛṣṭa*) and unobservable (*adṛṣṭa*), my understanding is that the observable refers to the objects of both perception and ordinary inference while the unobservable (or "nonempirical") refers to the supersensible objects of scripturally based inference.

³⁴ TS 3342: *sambaddhānuguṇopāyaṃ puruṣārthābhīdhāyakam / dṛṣṭe'py arthe pramāṇābhyām iṣad apy aprabādhitam //*. Cf. PV 1.214, cited just above. The term *dṛṣṭa* here refers to that which is empirically observable, either through perception or inference; its counterpart is *adṛṣṭa*, the nonempirical.

The first half of this verse is clearly modeled on *Pramāṇavārttika* 1.214, cited above. The second half of the verse represents a shorthand way of referring to the threefold analysis as presented in *Pramāṇavārttika* 1.215. This becomes clear in Kamalaśīla's commentary, which starts off with a question about whether the speech of non-Buddhist teachers such as Kapila might not be acceptable as scripturally based inference, since they are also coherent and are oriented toward a human aim. The question and the relatively lengthy response are as follows:

[Question:] Well, is not all this the case for the speech of Kapila and the others? [Answer:] Here he says, "It does not in the least contradict" and so on. In saying "with regard to the [object that is] seen" he intends that which is the object as well as that which is not the object of perception and inference. "The two means of trustworthy awareness" are perception and inference. "It does not contradict [them]" since things exist in the way that they are taught [by him]. That is, the [Buddha] maintained that the five aggregates, which are characterized as (1) blue and so on; (2) happiness, suffering, and so on; (3) the grasping of cognitive signs; (4) attachment and so on; and (5) awareness are perceptible. And it is not possible for it to be otherwise. And those things that are held to be not perceptible are indeed not perceptible – things that others maintain are perceptible, such as the happiness as the conjunction (*saṃniveśa*) with form, sound, and so on, and substance, activity, universals, conjunctions, and so on. Likewise, those things that he maintained to be the objects of inference that operates through the force of a real entity (*vastubalapravṛttānumāna*) are indeed like that (*tathābhāva eva*); for example, the nobles' four truths. And those things that he asserted are not the objects of that [kind of inference] indeed are not its objects – things such as the Self (*ātman*) and so on that others maintain are the objects of inference that operates through the force of real things. The words "as well as (*api*)" show that the [speech of the Sugata] is also not mistaken with regard to that which is not seen. That is, he first explained the nature of attachment and so on and the nonvirtue that arises from it. Then, in order to eliminate that [attachment and its effect] by means of what contradicts the vision of the self that is that cause of that [attachment], he taught the antidote, which is just the vision of selflessness. But such is not the case for scriptures like those of Kapila and

the others, which do not contradict the cause of that [attachment] and which advise such things as ritual bathing and fire sacrifice.³⁵

Here we see all three elements of the threefold analysis: there is the test by perception in which all that is claimed to be perceptible is shown to be perceptible and all that is claimed to be not perceptible is shown to be not perceptible. There is the test by inference in which all that is claimed to be inferable is shown to be inferable and all that is claimed to be not inferable is shown to be not inferable. And finally there is the test of the statements on radically inaccessible matters, in which such statements are shown to be not in contradiction with the findings of the two means of trustworthy awareness or among themselves.³⁶ As we can see, on the “purification” or threefold analy-

³⁵ TSP ad TS 3342 (Ś 1063,6–17): *nanu caitat sarvaṃ kapilādivākyeṣv apy astīty āha dṛṣṭe'pītyādi / dṛṣṭe pratyakṣānumānaviśayatvenābhiprete / pramāṇābhyāṃ pratyakṣānumānābhyāṃ / aprabādhitam yathānirdiṣṭa-syārthasya tathābhāvāt / tathā hi nilādisukhaduḥkhādīnimitto dgrahaṇarāgādibuddhilakṣaṇasya skandhapañcakasya pratyakṣatvenābhimatasya nānyathātvam sambhavati / apratyakṣatvena cābhimatānām apratyakṣataiva^a / yathā paraiḥ pratyakṣābhimatānām rūpaśabdādī-saṃniveśānām sukhādīnām dravyakarmasāmānyasaṃyogādīnām ca / tathā vastubalapravṛttānumānaviśayatvenābhipretānām tathābhāva eva / yathā caturṇām āryasatyānām atadviśayatveneṣṭānām cātadviśayatvam eva / yathā parair vastubalānumānaviśayatvenābhimatānām ātmādīnām / apīśabdād adṛṣṭe'pi na vikriyeti darśitam / tathā hy atra rāgādirūpaṃ tatprabhavaṃ cādharmaṃ^b uddiśya tatprahāṇāya tannidānātmadarśanavirodhena nairātmyadarśanam eva pratipakṣo deśito na tu kapilādiśāstravat tannidānāviruddhaḥ snānāgnihoṭrādir upadiṣṭaḥ //*. Cf. PVSV ad PV 1.215, on which this passage is clearly based.

^a The reading *apratyakṣataiva* in place of K and Ś: *apratyakṣateva* is based on TSP₁ 'e 302a4: *mñon sum ma yin pa kho na yin*.

^b The reading *cādharmaṃ* in place of K and Ś: *vā dharmam* is based on TSP₁ 'e 302a6–7: *de ltar 'dod chags la sogs pa'i ngo bo dang chos ma yin pa de las byung bar bstan nas*

³⁶ As we see here, although the process has been characterized as a “threefold analysis,” it might be better thought of as an analysis consisting of five steps. That is, for both perception and inference, the scripture must in fact be “purified” in *two* ways, one positive and one negative. The final test is the test of noncontradiction between the statements made about radically inaccessible entities (i.e., the nonempirical) and entities

sis model, the credibility of the author does not play any overt role in determining whether a statement may be used as a scripturally based inference.

Speaking from walls

It thus would seem that for Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, there is an extremely limited use for scripturally based inference. But is this really so? For occasionally these authors seem to move away from this rationalist approach. Consider the way in which they respond to a criticism of a Buddhist position that we can describe as the “spontaneous Buddha model.” According to this model, the Buddha has neither desire to speak nor dualistic knowledge of any kind. His teachings are therefore explained through the mechanism of his regency (*ādhipatya*). They proceed spontaneously, as if from a wish-fulfilling gem, in accord with the needs of sentient beings and powered, as it were, by the Buddha’s previous vows (*pūrvapraṇidhāna*). This idea, common in Mahāyāna Buddhism, is raised in the final chapter, where it is attributed to the otherwise unknown Mīmāṃsakas, Sāmaṭa and Yajñaṭa. Kamalaśīla summarizes their supposed characterization of the Buddhist doctrine as follows:

Someone [i.e., some Buddhist] might think: He does not teach anything at all, because he remains always in a nonconceptual meditative concentration (*samādhi*). But, through his regency (*ādhipatya*), representations (*vijñapti*) of various teachings of the Dharma appear to the fortunate. As it is said, “On a certain night, the Tathāgata awakened, and on a certain night he attained *parinirvāṇa*. Between these [two nights] the Tathāgata did not utter or speak even a single syllable. Why is that? It is because the Tathāgata is always absorbed in meditative concentration. But those who are to be disciplined through teachings that are given voice through syllables hear words issuing from the mouth, the *uṣṇīṣa*, and the *ūrṇā* of the Tathāgata.”³⁷

that are amenable to perception and inference (the empirical).

³⁷ TSP ad TS 3240–3242: *syād etat / naivāsāv upadiśati kiñcit sarvadā nirvikalpasaṃādhisthitatvāt / kiṃ tu tadādhipatyena vicitradharmadeśanā pratibhāsā vijñaptayo bhavyānām bhavanti / yathoktam / yasyām rātrau*

In some verses attributed to Sāmaṭa and Yajñaṭa, reference is made as well to teachings that issue spontaneously through the Buddha's regency even from inanimate objects like walls and so on.³⁸ Sāmaṭa and Yajñaṭa are then made to say that such doctrines may be fine if one is already imbued with faith, but for those who lack such faith, some reasoning should be provided.³⁹

Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla's response to this challenge amounts to a rather cheap trick. Rather than answering the substance of the charge – namely, that the doctrine of the spontaneous Buddha sounds good to those who have faith, but lacks convincing evidence for rational persons – they instead complain that their opponents have incorrectly applied the rules of reasoning. The gist of the complaint is that the opponents have not followed through on the implication of their objection. As Śāntarakṣita states:

For here, the context is the statement, "And thus not possessing all objects [of knowledge], he is not able to teach." And in this regard, wise persons say, "If he were to have no capacity to teach, then what?" At this point, you should say "Then there would be no scripture." But [in fact,] you then say, "Let it be thus [that the Buddha has no capacity to speak]; but have you seen the speaker [of those scriptures]?" If you urge an objection through the means of a *prasaṅga*, then the undesired consequence is this: "If speakerhood is not accepted, then there would be no scripture. But if a scripture promulgated by that one [is accepted], then you must accept his speakerhood."⁴⁰

*tathāgato'bhisambuddho yasyāṃ ca parinirvṛtaḥ / atrāntare tathāgat-
enaikam apy akṣaram nodāhṛtaṃ na pravyāhṛtaṃ / tat kasya hetoḥ /
satatasamāhito hi tathāgataḥ / api tu ye'kṣararutadeśanā vaineyikās
te tathāgatasya mukhād uṣṇīṣād ūrṇāyāḥ śabdaṃ nihsarantaṃ śṛṇvan-
tītyādi /*

³⁸ TS 3240–3241: *tasmin dhyānasamāpanne cintāratnavad āsthite / nīś-
caranti yathākāmaṃ kuṭyādibhyo'pi deśanāḥ // tābhir jijñāsītānarthān
sarvān jānanti mānavāḥ / hitāni ca yathābhavyaṃ kṣipram āsādayanti
te //*. Reading *dhyānasamāpanne* with K in place of *jñānasamāpanne* as
found in Ś.

³⁹ TS 3242: *ityādi kīrtiyamānaṃ tu śraddadhāneṣu śobhate / vayam āśrad-
dadhānās tu ye yuktīḥ prārthayāmahe //*.

⁴⁰ TS 3601–3604: *tathāvyāptaś ca sarvārthaiḥ śakto naivopadeśane / ity*

etat prakṛtaṃ hy atra tatra cāhur mahādhiyaḥ // tasyopadeśane śaktir na syāc cet kiṃ tadā bhavet / tato bhavadbhir vaktavyam āgamo na bhaved iti // tatrāpy āhur bhavativ evaṃ kiṃ dṛṣṭo'sau tvayā vadan / prasaṅgasāadhanenedam aniṣṭaṃ codyate yadi // na ced vaktṛtvam iṣyeta nāgamopagamo bhavet / tatpraṇetāgameṣṭau tu tasya vaktṛtvam isyatām //

⁴² See TS 3605–3609 with TSP.

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