

Archaeologies of the Written: Indian, Tibetan, and
Buddhist Studies in Honour of Cristina Scherrer-Schaub

Series Minor

LXXXIX

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Archaeologies of the Written: Indian,
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Cristina Scherrer-Schaub

Edited by
Vincent Tournier, Vincent Eltschinger,
and Marta Sernesi



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Cristina Scherrer-Schaub at the XIIIth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, December 2002.

*Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka: A Fleeting Episode in
the History of Tibetan Madhyamaka**

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Outline

This paper investigates the category “Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka,” a division of Madhyamaka characterized by adopting, at the level of conventional reality, a perspective akin to the Vaibhāṣika philosophical system. While “Yogācāra-Madhyamaka” and “Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka” are well-known doxographical categories, the mention of “Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka” is not as frequent in doxographies. This perspective does not seem to have attracted very many supporters. It was, however, adopted by several Tibetan scholars

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around the twelfth century. In an earlier paper I discussed the adoption of this perspective by the famous Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109–1169) and some of his followers, and their refutation of other options.¹ The present paper inquires into a likely source of influence for Phya pa's position in the newly recovered works of rGya dmar ba Byang chub grags (12th c.), one of Phya pa's teachers. I examine in particular a section of rGya dmar ba's *dBu ma'i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa* in which the author discusses the perspective to be adopted by Mādhyamikas at the level of conventional reality and declares himself a partisan of Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka. This section, supplemented by numerous notes written on the manuscript, introduces us to a fascinating intra-Tibetan debate that involved a number of eleventh- and twelfth-century scholars whose works are no longer extant. To conclude, I address the question of the origin and support for the Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka perspective in Indian literature and reflect on the probable causes for its lack of popularity and its disappearance from the Tibetan Madhyamaka landscape.

1. Doxographical Divisions of Madhyamaka

The pioneering studies on the Tibetan divisions of Madhyamaka by Mimaki and Seyfort Ruegg² reveal the effort of Tibetan scholars to categorize the various trends they recognized in the Indian corpus. Tibetan scholars further used these divisions to characterize their own position. Three distinctions stand out in these classifications, distinctions which are frequently combined or blended:

- I Between *rang rgyud pa* (*svātantrika) and *thal 'gyur ba* (*prāsaṅgika).
- II Between *sgyu ma lta bur gnyis su med par smra ba* (māyopamādvayavādin) and *rab tu mi gnas par smra ba* (sarvadharmāpratīṣṭhānavādin).
- III Between *mdo sde spyod pa'i dbu ma* (*sautrāntika-madhyamaka) and *rnal 'byor pa'i dbu ma* (*yogācāra-madhyamaka), sometimes with the addition of other options (see below §1.1 for the details).

¹ See Hugon 2016.

² Mimaki 1982: 27–54, Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 55–58. See also Werner 2014: 7–17 for a survey of Tibetan doxographical literature, including new findings published in the *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum*.

The divisions and their associated terminology can for a large part be traced to late Indian Buddhism. Distinction (I) may have already been in use among the late Indian scholars with whom Pa tshab Nyi ma grags (11–12th c.) had studied.³ Distinction (II) is attested in several Indian eleventh-century works, such as the *Tattvaratnāvalī* of Advayavajra.⁴ The basic pair in distinction (III) is attested in an eleventh-century Indian text, the *Pañcakramaṭikā* of the Kāśmīrī nun Lakṣmī.⁵ But this third distinction is already found in one of the earliest Tibetan doxographies, one that predates the Indian text by two centuries, the *lTa ba'i khyad par* of Ye shes sde (9th c.).⁶ This work is a likely source for subsequent Tibetan authors mentioning this distinction.⁷ Ye shes sde links the two orientations with Bhāviveka (6th c.) and Śāntarakṣita (c. 725–788), respectively, but other thinkers are sometimes named by later scholars.⁸

³ See Dreyfus and Tsering 2009.

⁴ Mimaki 1982: 33. Seyfort Ruegg (2000: 34, n. 60) additionally mentions the **Paramārthabodhicittabhāvanākrama* of Śūra(/Aśvaghōṣa) and the **Ratnamālā* of the Kāśmīrī master Candahari (11th c.). Almogi (2010: 139–163) discusses the relevant passages of these three works and other Indian sources.

⁵ Mimaki 1982: 43.

⁶ See Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 217 and Mimaki 1982: 31 and 40–41. This distinction also figures in the *lTa ba'i rim pa* of Nyi ma 'od, which may predate Ye shes sde's work, and in several Dunhuang manuscripts (Mimaki 1982: 42–43). The passages of the *lTa ba'i khyad par* cited below are based on the sDe dge edition. As noted by Seyfort Ruegg (1981: 213), some portions of the text are not in the right order. But this does not concern the passages cited here.

⁷ See for instance dBus pa blo gsal's reference to Ye shes sde's division (Mimaki 1982: 173). See also Śākya mchog ldan's reference (but giving "*lTa ba'i brjed byang*" as the title of Ye shes sde's work) with regard to these two options in his *dBu ma'i byung tshul* (7b4–6): *slob dpon 'di* (i.e., Bhāviveka) *'i bshad rgyun de ltar 'dzin pa mtha' dag la dbu ma rang rgyud pa zhes grags te | de la yang dpal sbas dang | ye shes snying po sogs nas rim par brgyud pa dang | byang chub sems dpa' zhi ba 'tsho yab [7b5] sras las rim par brgyud pa dag ste | srol gnyis po 'di la go rim bzhin du | lo tstsha ba chen po ye shes sdes mdzad pa'i lta ba'i brjed byang las | mdo sde spyod pa'i dbu ma pa dang | rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma pa zhes bshad [7b6] do ||*. See also Go rams pa's *Nges don rab gsal* 28a2–4: *lnga pa ni (=rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma) ye shes snying po dang | zhi ba 'tsho la sogs pa ste | klu sgrub kyi rjes su ye shes [28a3] sdes phyis don khas len mi len gyi gsal kham byung pa la | legs ldan byed kyis phyi don khas blangs pas mdo sde spyod pa dang | ye shes snying pos snang ba sems su bshad pas rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma byung || zhes snga rabs pa rnams la [28a4] grags te | de ltar na 'di gnyis ka rang rgyud pa'i dbye ba'o ||*.

⁸ For instance, the *bDen gnyis spyi bshad*, an early bKa' gdams pa work on the Two Truths attributed to Atiśa (982–1054) (although not written by Atiśa him-

1.1 Divisions of Madhyamaka Pertaining to the Conventional Level

Distinction (III) is to be understood as a division that pertains to the position adopted by Mādhyamika thinkers with respect to the conventional level in the Two-Truth framework. This is clear in Ye shes sde's doxography: the author explains that Śāntarakṣita—who is characterized as a Yogācāra-Mādhyamika—establishes at the conventional level (*kun rdzob tu*) mere consciousness in agreement with the Yogācāra tradition of Asaṅga, and explains that ultimately (*don dam par*) even consciousness is devoid of an own nature.⁹ Ye shes sde also ascribes to Kamalaśīla (c. 740–795) the claim that Yogācāra-Madhyamaka and Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka differ only slightly with regard to the conventional level, but agree with regard to the ultimate level.¹⁰ That the criterion for distinction (III) pertains to the perspective adopted at the conventional level is also stated, for instance, in the *lJon shing* of Grag pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216), in the 16th-century (?) *gZhung lugs legs par bshad pa*,¹¹ and by Śākya mchog ldan (1428–1507) in his account of the classification of ancient teachers.¹² Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge's discussions on this topic in his Madhyamaka summary (*sNying po*)

self, it reports Atiśa's oral teaching), mentions that Atiśa gave a teaching in Tibet on the Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka system of Bhāviveka and on the Yogācāra-Madhyamaka system of Buddhajñāna. Nāgārjuna's position, which was the subject of a third teaching of Atiśa, is referred to in this text as Madhyamaka or Great Madhyamaka. See Apple 2016: 630.

⁹ *lTa ba'i khyad par* 213b2–4: *bar* (em. : *par*) *gyi* [213b3] *mkhan po shānta rakṣi ta zhes bya bas ātsārya a sang* (em. : *sa*) *gas rnam par shes pa tsam du bshad pa'i bstan bcos rnal 'byor spyod pa mdzad pa la brten te | kun rdzob tu de'i lugs dang mthun par rnam par shes pa tsam du bsggrubs la | don dam par rnam par shes pa yang rang bzhin med par bshad pa'i dbu* [213b4] *ma'i bstan bcos dbu ma'i rgyan zhes bya ba zhig mdzad de | [...]* and *lTa ba'i khyad par* 214a1: *de la rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma'i lugs ni kun rdzob tu ni rnam par shes pa tsam du smra ba dang mthun te |*. See Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 217–218.

¹⁰ *lTa ba'i khyad par* 215a1–2: *ātsārya* (em. : *ārya tsārya*) *kamala shīlas dbu ma'i bstan bcos dbu ma snang ba zhes bya ba mdzad pa las ni dbu ma 'di gnyis kun rdzob tu cung zad mi mthun yang |* [215a2] *don dam par pnyi nang gi dngos po thams cad rang bzhin med par 'dod du 'dra bas na 'gal ba med do zhes 'byung ngo |*. See Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 219.

¹¹ The *gZhung lugs legs par bshad pa*, which is wrongly attributed to Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182–1251), was more likely composed in the 16th century (van der Kuijp 1985: 84).

¹² Mimaki 1982: 31–32 and 36.

and his doxography also make this point explicit.¹³ Tsong kha pa (1357–1419) also notes that the Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka/Yogācāra-Madhyamaka division “made by earlier *kalyāṇamitras*” relates to their view regarding conventional truth.¹⁴

The items listed in distinction (III) are often associated with the notion of “adopting a position” (*phyogs ’dzin pa*), sometimes with “adopting the position of a philosophical system” (*grub mtha’ phyogs ’dzin pa*). This notion is often contrasted with the “Madhyamaka of the original texts” (*gzhung phyi mo’i dbu ma pa*). It thus refers to perspectives introduced by exegetes of the foundational Madhyamaka treatises of Nāgārjuna.¹⁵

The “philosophical systems” being discussed are the ones in the well-established fourfold division of Indian Buddhist philosophical systems, which distinguishes, on one hand, external realist positions from idealist ones, and on the other, representationalist positions from non-representationalist ones.

	Non-representationalist	Representationalist
Idealist	Non-representational (<i>nirākāravāda</i>) Mind-only (<i>yogācāra</i> , <i>vijñaptimātra</i>)	Representational (<i>sākāravāda</i>) Mind-only (<i>yogācāra</i> , <i>vijñaptimātra</i>)
External realist	Vaibhāṣika	Sautrāntika

Tibetan authors agree that none of these systems is ultimately acceptable. They commonly apply a refutation along a “gradual scale of analysis,” in which lower systems are successively refuted, leading to the establishment of Madhyamaka. The issue here is the application of these systems at the conventional level.

a. Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka

Ye shes sde limits the division of Madhyamaka to two, Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka.¹⁶ A restricted twofold

¹³ See Hugon 2016: 57.

¹⁴ See Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 96.

¹⁵ See for instance the typology of ’Jad pa gZhon nu byang chub (§1.2.ii) or that attributed to ancient scholars by rGya dmar ba and Go rams pa (§2.3.1.a). See Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 96 regarding Tsong kha pa’s remark on this point.

¹⁶ See *lTa ba’i khyad par* 216a5: *dbu ma rnam gnyis kyi tshul* and *lTa ba’i khyad par* 213b4: *dbu ma’i bstan bcos lugs cung zad mi mthun pa gnyis byung bas*. Ye shes sde sub-

division is also found, among other places, in the commentary on the *Man ngag lta phreng* of Padmasambhava (8th) by the rNying ma pa Rong zom Chos kyi bzang po (11th c.),¹⁷ and in the doxography of sTag tshang Lo tsā ba Shes rab rin chen (b. 1405).¹⁸ A number of later doxographies of the dGe lugs pa school, and Tsong kha pa himself in his *Lam rim chen mo*, also limit distinction (III) to a two-fold division, but many introduce further subdivisions within Yogācāra-Madhyamaka.¹⁹

b. “Unspecific” Madhyamaka

In a classification that rGya dmar ba ascribes to “ancient scholars,” which is also mentioned by Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489) (see below §2.3.1.a), the pair Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka/Yogācāra-Madhyamaka is supplemented by a third category, the “*spyi bzung zhal che ba*” (or “*spyi phung zhal che ba*” in Go rams pa’s text) or the “*gnyi ga’i lugs dang mi ’gal ba*.” These appear to be two alternative names for the same perspective, rather than two options for this third category. While the first is difficult to translate (maybe “those who judge in general”?), the second term obviously refers to a position that is “not incompatible with the two traditions [of Yogācāra and Sautrāntika].”

I suspect that this category is identical with the “*dbu ma spyi gzhung gi zhal mchu ba*” listed by the rNying ma scholar Rog bande Shes rab ’od (1166–1244).²⁰ Rog bande associates this category

sumes these two under the perspective of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, based notably on the Prajñāpāramitā, which advocates essencelessness and complete absence of production at the ultimate level and illusory production at the conventional level. See *lTa ba’i khyad par* 213b4–214a1. See Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 217.

¹⁷ But this distinction is not mentioned in the source text. See Mimaki 1982: 44.

¹⁸ See *Grub mtha’kun shes* 87b6–88a5.

¹⁹ See the classifications by Se ra rJe btsun pa Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1469–1546), dGe ’dun rgya mtsho (1475–1542), ’Jam dbyangs bzhad pa (1648–1722), lCang skya Rol pa’i rdo rje (1717–1786), dKon mchog ’jigs med dbang po (1728–1791) and Thu’u bkwan Blo bzang Chos kyi nyi ma (1737–1802) in Mimaki 1982: 29–31. For Tsong kha pa’s discussion, see Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 96.

²⁰ *Chos ’byung grub mtha’ chen po* §167–168, pp. 45–46: *phyogs ’dzin pa’i dbu ma la gsum ste | mdo sde spyod pa’i dbu ma dang | rnal ’byor spyod pa’i dbu ma dang | dbu ma spyi gzhung gi zhal mchu pa’o | [...] dbu ma spyi gzhung gi zhal mchu ba ni | snang ba mkhan po ka ma la shi’i la’i zhal nas | don dam mthar thug pa la yul kyang med la | sems kyang med | spros pa thams cad bral bas chog la | kun rdzob tu phyi rol gyi don yod*

with Kamalaśīla. He describes it as a perspective that leaves undecided the option of external realism or idealism at the conventional level—which corresponds to the idea of a perspective that is “not incompatible with Sautrāntika and Yogācāra.”

As such, this perspective would correspond to the position ascribed to Gangs pa she’u in the Madhyamaka work of rGya dmar ba that I will consider in Section 2 (see below, §2.3.2).

Possibly also conveying the same idea, the *gZhung lugs legs par bshad pa* lists as a third category the “*gang dang yang mi ’gal bar smra ba’i dbu ma pa*.”²¹

c. Madhyamaka “Upholding Illusion”

Gags pa rgyal mtshan is, as far as I know, the only scholar who lists the category “*sgyu ma lta bu dbu ma*” in distinction (III). Go rams pa, in his commentary on this passage of Gags pa rgyal mtshan’s work, associates this category with Śūra/Aśvaghōṣa (Tib. *slob dpon dpa’bo*), providing a long quote from the latter’s **Paramārthabodhicittabhāvanākrama*.²²

d. Madhyamaka “Following Worldly Agreement”

A category more frequently mentioned in the context of distinction (III) is that of Madhyamaka following “worldly agreement” (*’jig rten grags*, suggesting the Skt. *lokaḥprasiddha/lokaśiddha*).²³ Although it does not amount to “adopting a philosophical system,” it is nonetheless classified among the options for “adopting a position.” Notably, it is included in the classifications by:

- (i) Gags pa rgyal mtshan (*’jig rten grags sde pa*),²⁴
- (ii) his nephew Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan (1182–1251) (*’jig*

par ’dod pa dang | sems su ’dod pa gnyis gang ltar byas kyang chog phyi rol gyi don yod na yang yod | med na yang med zer ro | Cabezón (2013: 200) translates this category as “the upholders of the general textual tradition.” Rog bande’s three-fold division is mentioned in Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 56.

²¹ Mimaki 1982: 32–33, van der Kuijp 1985: 84, n. 22.

²² *Nges don rab gsal* 27a4–28a2. Mimaki 1982: 31–32. See also below §1.2.vii.b. For an edition and a translation of the passage of Śūra’s text cited here by Go rams pa, see Almogi 2010: 140–143 and 184–196.

²³ On the term referring to this category, see also Mimaki 1982: 38–39 and Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 58, n. 124.

²⁴ Mimaki 1982: 31–32. See also below, §1.2.iii.

- rtēn grags sde dang bstun*),²⁵
- (iii) bCom ldan ral gri (1227–1305) (*'jig rten grags sde spyod pa'i dbu ma pa*),²⁶
 - (iv) Ral gri's pupil dBus pa blo gsal (c. 1300) (idem),²⁷
 - (v) Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364) (idem),²⁸
 - (vi) the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud scholar 'Ba' ra ba rGyal mtshan dpal bzang (1310–1391) (idem),²⁹
 - (vii) Bo dong Paṅ chen Phyogs las mam rgyal (1376–1451) (*'jig rten grags sde dang mthun par spyod pa ≠ 'jig rten grags sde spyod pa*),³⁰
 - (viii) Go rams pa bSod nams seng ge (1429–1489), commenting on (i),³¹
 - (ix) and Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507–1554) (*'jig rten grags sde spyod pa'i dbu ma*).³²

gSer mdog paṅ chen Śākya mchog ldan ascribes the trio Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka, Yogācāra-Madhyamaka and *'jig rten grags sde spyod pa'i dbu ma pa* to “ancient teachers.”³³ Paṅ chen bSod nams grags pa (1478–1554) ascribes the same trio—using the term *'jig rten grags pa ltar spyod pa'i dbu ma pa* for the third category—to an unidentified earlier scholar.³⁴

Go rams pa also reports that some of his predecessors include the “*'jig rten grags sde spyod pa*” as a subcategory of those who adopt an external realist position at the conventional level (see §1.2.vii.a).

Yet earlier than the occurrence of this category in the 12th-century doxographical discussion of Grags pa rgyal mtshan (i), I will

²⁵ Sa skya Paṅḍita distinguishes this category from the category of the “Mādhyamikas who follow a substantialist system at the conventional level.” *Rigs gter* I 48,5–7: *dbu ma pa'ang don dam par spros pa dang bral zhing kun rdzob tu dngos por smra ba de dag gi rjes su 'jug kyang rung | 'jig rten grags sde dang bstun yang rung ste.*

²⁶ *Grub mtha' rgyan gyi me tog* 62a6–7: *'di ni kun rdzob 'jig rten pa dang 'thun par smra bas 'jig rten grags sde spyod pa'i dbu ma pa ces kyang zer la snang ba la mi dpyod pa'i dbu ma pa ces kyang zer ro ||.* See *Grub mtha' rgyan gyi me tog* 61b1–62b1 for the threefold division in the section discussing the Madhyamaka views on the “material basis” (*gzugs kyi gzhi*), and in particular 62a4–b1 for the category of Madhyamaka “in agreement with worldly conventions.”

²⁷ Mimaki 1982: 27.

²⁸ Bu ston identifies this category with the *dBu ma thal 'gyur ba* (**prāsaṅgika-mādhyamika*). See Mimaki 1982: 33–34.

²⁹ Mimaki 1982: 34.

³⁰ Mimaki 1982: 35. See also below, §1.2.v.

³¹ See Mimaki 1982: 31–32 and Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 56, and below, §1.2.vii.b.

³² Mi bskyod rdo rje's threefold classification is mentioned in *dGongs gcig 'grel* 14b7–15a1, translated in Higgins and Draszczyk 2016: 38.

³³ Mimaki 1982: 36.

³⁴ Mimaki 1982: 37.

discuss in §2.3 evidence for such a position having been adopted by an 11th–early 12th c. Tibetan scholar referred to as “Jo btsun,” whose perspective is known to and criticized by Gangs pa she’u and rGya dmar ba.

Still earlier than this, the *bDen gnyis spyi bshad*, reporting Atiśa’s teaching, mentions a method of dividing correct and incorrect conventionalities “in dependence upon the worldly” (*lo ka la ltos pa*), which is associated with Candrakīrti via a citation of *Madhyamakāvatāra* 6:25.³⁵

The name Candrakīrti is always mentioned when this position is associated with an Indian thinker (e.g., ii, iii, iv, v, viii). Go rams pa (viii) argues that Candrakīrti is a representationalist and an external realist who does however not accept a remote object projecting its aspect in the way the Sautrāntikas propose. Candrakīrti’s adoption of a position “in agreement with the world” is supported by passages common to the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* and the *Prasannapadā*, in which Candrakīrti quotes from Nāgārjuna (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 24:10) and Āryadeva (*Catuhśataka* 8:19), and from a *sūtra*.³⁶

Additionally associating this category with Buddhapālita is only done by bCom ldan ral gri (iii) and Bu ston (v). bCom ldan ral gri (iii) and his pupil dBus pa blo gsal (iv) name Jñānagarbha. sTag tshang Lo tsā ba (b. 1405) was aware of some of his predecessors’ association of this category with Jñānagarbha, which he criticizes.³⁷ Bo dong Paṅ chen (vii) adopts an idiosyncratic distinction between the *’jig rten grags sde dang mthun par spyod pa* and the *’jig rten grags sde spyod pa*, associating the first with Jñānagarbha, the second with Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Candrakīrti and Śāntideva.

bCom ldan ral gri (iii) and ’Ba’ ra ba (vi) link “following worldly agreement” with the idea of an “absence of analysis” (*snang ba*

³⁵ This method of division is opposed to the division relying on philosophical tenets (*grub pa’i mtha’ la ltos pa*) and the one depending on yogic awareness (*mal ’byor pa’i blo la ltos pa*). See Apple 2016: 641. See p. 661 for the question whether Atiśa himself was a Mādhyamika who adopted philosophical tenets.

³⁶ *Nges don rab gsal* 26b2–27a1. The passages cited correspond to MABh 276a2–3, 258b7, 258b6 ≅ PP 118b4–5, 164a3–4, 118b4. On the source of the *sūtra* quotation see Tillemans 2018.

³⁷ *Grub mtha’ kun shes* 88a2–5 (see below n. 53). See Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 58, n. 124.

mi dpyod pa). bCom ldan ral gri (iii) explains these two notions and associated terms by citing *Madhyamakāvatāra* 6:35,³⁸ 6:159d³⁹ and SDV 5:21.⁴⁰ His pupil dBus pa blo gsal (iv) repeats the first and the third citations.⁴¹

e. Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka

When mentioned, the category “Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka” or “Madhyamaka in agreement with Vaibhāṣika” is listed in the context of the distinction (III) always together with the basic pair Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka/Yogācāra-Madhyamaka, sometimes with additional categories. I list below in § 1.2 the occurrences I have as yet located, which will be augmented by the material that will be examined in § 2.

1.2 Mentions of the Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka Category in Doxographical Discussions

The following scholars mention the category of Madhyamaka in agreement with Vaibhāṣika in their own typology, or when reporting the typology of earlier thinkers:⁴²

³⁸ Tib. *’jig rten gyi tha snyad bden la rnam par dpyad mi bya*; Skt.: *na tato vicārah kāryo hi lokavyavahārasatyē* |.

³⁹ Tib. *’jig rten grags pa’i kun rdzob ma brlag cig*; Skt.: *mā samvṛtiṃ nāśaya lokasi-ddhām* ||.

⁴⁰ Tib. *ji ltar snang bzhin ngo bo’i phyir* || *’di la dpyad pa mi ’jug go*.

⁴¹ Mimaki 1982: 171–173.

⁴² The Vaibhāṣika-Mādhyamikas could theoretically be included in Sa skya Paṇḍita’s category termed “Mādhyamikas who follow the substantialists at the conventional level” (*kun rdzob tu dngos por smra ba de dag gi rjes su ’jug*) (see the passage cited in n. 25). The substantialist positions mentioned in the preceding part of the sentence include the non-Buddhist Tīrthikas, theists, Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika, and the Buddhist Śrāvaka and Mind-only. But Sa skya Paṇḍita’s category most likely intends to include exclusively the Buddhist substantialist systems. In commenting on this passage, Śākya mchog ldan (maybe because he himself does not recognize Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka as a category) only distinguishes two items in this category: Mādhyamikas who follow Sautrāntika at the conventional level and Mādhyamikas who follow Yogācāra. See *Rigs gter rol mtsho* 11a7–b1: *dbu ma don dam par spros pa dang bral zhing* | *kun rdob tu rten ’brel sna tshogs su snang ba ’di* | *gnas skabs su mdo sde pa dang* | *mal ’byor spyod pa dang* | *’jig rten grags sde dang mthun par ’jog pa gsum yod do* ||. Similarly, the 16th-c. (?) *gZhung lugs legs par bshad pa* does not name this category explicitly, but potentially includes it within the “External realist Mādhyamikas whose account of the conventional is in agreement with a Śrāvaka system” (*tha snyad kyi nam gzhas nyan thos dang mthun pa’i phyi rol don yod par smra ba’i dbu ma pa*) (see van der Kuip 1985: 84, n. 22).

i. 'Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas (1004/1005–1064)

According to a remark by Mi bskyod rdo rje (1507–1554) in his *dGongs gcig 'grel*, 'Brom ston rGyal ba'i 'byung gnas mentions in his *gSung rgyun zin bris* the existence, in India, of “*bye brag tu smra ba spyod pa'i dbu ma pa*.”⁴³ The Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka category is explained as being made up of followers of the Vaibhāṣika system who, when they became Mādhyamikas, maintained the tenets of their earlier affiliation at the conventional level.⁴⁴

ii. 'Jad pa gZhon nu byang chub (11/12th c.)⁴⁵

Eric Werner located an early mention of “Vaibhāṣika-Mādhyamikas” in a commentary on the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* by 'Jad pa gZhon nu byang chub. The author proposes the following classification of “Mādhyamikas who adopt a philosophical position regarding the level of conventional truth” (*kun rdzob gyi bden pa la phyogs 'dzin pa'i dbu' ma pa*):⁴⁶

⁴³ *dGongs gcig 'grel* 15a1–2: 'brom ston gyi gsung rgyun zin bris su | bye brag tu smra ba spyod pa'i dbu ma pa zhig kyang rgya gar du yod de | rgya gar na rang sde gnyis dang sems tsam pa'i grub mtha' gang la gnas pa gsum ste dbu ma pa la zhugs pa'i tshe | tha snyad kun rdzob kyi bden pa ni | sngar rang gi grub mtha' tha snyad ji ltar 'jog dang po de nyid phyis kyang 'dzin pa yin zhes gsung la |. Translated in Higgins and Draszczuk 2016: 38: “According to the *Notes on the Oral Tradition (Gsung rgyun zin bris)* by 'Brom ston, “there also existed in India one [called] Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka. When those in India who had abided by the two [early] Buddhist schools (*rang sde*) and the third, Cittamātra, joined the Mādhyamikas, then whatever conventions they previously posited regarding conventional truth in their respective philosophies, they also maintained later on [when they became Mādhyamikas].” I am grateful to David Higgins for pointing out this reference.

⁴⁴ A similar idea is expressed with regard to adepts of Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika turning to the Mahāyāna in an early Tibetan commentary on the *Satyadvayāvatāra*, whose author was active around 1100 and a disciple of scholars of the second generation in the teaching lineage coming from 'Brom ston. See the translation of the relevant passage in Apple 2013: 288: “Mahāyānists, when initially [3b] a monk or novice from the Sautrāntika, posit all conventional things like the Sautrāntika, and, if among the Vaibhāṣika, posit conventional things like the Vaibhāṣika.”

⁴⁵ Van der Kuijp proposes the approximate dates 1150–1210 for 'Jad pa gZhon nu byang chub (van der Kuijp 2013: 1389), who was the teacher of Khro phu lo tsā ba (1173–1236) (van der Kuijp 2013: 1396–1397).

⁴⁶ *Kun btus sgron me* 6b2–7. See Werner 2014: 34–35 and n. 114 for a citation of the whole passage and details about the other categories.

- a. External realists (*phyi rol gyi don yod par smra ba*)
 - a1. **Vaibhāṣikas** (*bye brag smra ba*)
 - a2. Sautrāntikas (*mdo sde ba*)
- b. Anti-realists (*[phyi rol gyi don] med par smra ba*)
 - b1. True representationalists (*rnam bden*)
 - b2. False representationalists (*rnam brdzun*)

iii. Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147–1216)

Grags pa rgyal mtshan includes “Madhyamaka similar to Vaibhāṣika” (*bye brag smra ba dang tshul mtshungs pa*) in his fivefold classification of Madhyamaka with respect to the conventional level.⁴⁷ This category is consequently also mentioned by Go rams pa in his commentary on this passage (see vii.b below).

iv. Klong chen rab ’byams pa (1308–1364)

The rNying ma thinker Klong chen rab ’byams pa does not discuss the subdivisions of Madhyamaka and their tenets in detail, but his doxography does mention several of them. Among the ones he mentions one finds, in addition to the Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka and the twofold Yogācāra-Madhyamaka category (representationalists and non-representationalists), “some Mādhyamikas who adopt a philosophical position with regard to conventional reality, who are in agreement with Vaibhāṣika” (*kun rdzob kyi bden pa’i phyogs ’dzin pa’i dbu ma pa kha cig bye brag tu smra ba dang mthun par smra [ba]*).⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *Ujon shing* 30a1–2 (=p.59): *rang gi ’dod pa brjod na | kun rdzob kyi bden pa dang | don dam pa’i bden pa’o || dang po la lnga | jig rten grags sde ba dang | bye brag smra ba dang | tshul mtshungs pa dang | sgyu ma pa dang | mdo sde spyod pa dang | mal ’byor spyod pa’i dbu ma’o ||*.

⁴⁸ *Grub mtha’ mdzod* 42a4–7: *kun rdzob kyi bden pa’i phyogs ’dzin pa’i dbu ma pa kha cig bye brag tu smra ba dang mthun par smra ste | dus mnyam par gzung ba dang ’dzin pa’i dngos por nye bar ’du ba’i rgyu tshogs pa snga ma las skyes pa ste | de yang tha na rtogs pa med pa’i shes pa la gzung char gsal ba thams cad phyi rol gyi don du sgyu ma tsam du bden no zhes smra ba dang |*. I am extremely grateful to Eric Werner for pointing out this passage to me. Comparing Klong chen pa’s doxography with that of Phya pa, Werner has highlighted the fact that Klong chen pa not only adopted the structure of Phya pa’s doxography, but also imported, with some adaptations, whole sections from the latter, especially regarding the discussion of Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika and Yogācāra positions (Werner 2014: 37–40). Further study will be needed to ascertain whether Klong chen pa’s depiction of Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka and other Madhyamaka orientations is based on Phya pa’s presentation or other sources.

v. Bo dong Paṅ chen Phyogs las nram rgyal (1376–1451)

The Vaibhāṣika-orientation (*bye brag tu smra ba spyod pa*) of Madhyamaka is also mentioned in the classification of Bo dong Paṅ chen:⁴⁹

•rtog ge spyod pa		
▪bye brag tu smra ba spyod pa	—————>	Āryavimuktisena, etc.
▪mdo sde spyod pa	—————>	Bhāviveka, etc.
▪rnal 'byor spyod pa		
- nram bden spyod pa	—————>	Śāntarakṣita, Haribhadra, etc.
- nram rdzun spyod	—————>	Asaṅga, etc.
▪'jig rten grags sde dang mthun par spyod pa	→	Jñānagarbha, etc.
•'jig rten grags sde spyod pa	—————>	Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Candrakīrti, etc. + Śāntideva

The author provides some details regarding the views involved in the adoption of this orientation. In particular, he notes with regard to “the basis” (*gzhi*) that the upholders of this position adopt as “correct conventionalities” what the Vaibhāṣikas hold to be “ultimately real,” and as “incorrect conventionalities” what the Vaibhāṣikas hold to be “conventionally real.”⁵⁰

Bo dong associates this category of Madhyamaka with the name of Āryavimuktisena (Tib. *grol sde*), the 6th-century author of a commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, and gives as the textual source the “*gsum gyi snang ba la sogs pa*.”⁵¹ This could refer to commentaries on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* having the word “*snang*” in their

⁴⁹ Mimaki 1982: 35. The relevant passage is found in *Bo dong gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, 322a2–328b5 (p. 641–654). See in particular 322a2–324a6 (pp. 641–645).

⁵⁰ *Bo dong gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, 322a6–b2 (pp. 641–642): *gzhi ji ltar bkral ba la yang | kun rdzob kyi gzhi dang | don dam pa'i gzhi'o || de la dang po ni bye brag du smra ba mams kyi don dam pa'i bden pa* [p. 642] *gang yin pa de nyid 'dir yang dag pa'i kun rdzob dang | de'i kun rdzob gang yin pa de nyid 'dir log pa'i kun rdzob yin no || don dam la yang gnyis las | skye med dang stong nyid lasogs pa ni nram grangs pa'i don dam yin la | gang du 'ang rjod par mi nus pa ni nram grangs pa ma yin pa'i don dam yin no ||*.

⁵¹ *Bo dong gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, 322a4–5 (p. 641): *bshad bya'i bka' ni snga ma bzhin no || bstan bcos ni gsum gi snang ba lasogs pa'o || slob dpon ni 'phags pa grol sde la sogs pa'o ||*. Note his final comment on this category; *Bo dong gsung 'bum*, vol. 11, 324a6 (p. 645): *phyogs 'di ni grol sde'i rjes su 'brangs pa ste | bye brag tu smra ba spyod pa gzhan yang yod srid pas | lugs 'di kho na bzhin du bsam par mi bya'o ||*. See Seyfort Ruegg 1981: 101 on Āryavimuktisena and the Madhyamaka-Prajñāpāramitā synthesis.

- Idealists (*snang ba sems su khas len pa*)
- External realists (*snang ba phyi don du khas len pa*)
 - Following worldly agreement (*'jig rten grags sde spyod pa*)
 - **Similar to Vaibhāṣika** (*bye brag tu smra ba dang tshul mtshungs pa*)
 - Sautrāntika (*mdo sde spyod pa*)

b) Commentary on Grags pa rgyal mtshan's typology
 Commenting on Grags pa rgyal mtshan's typology (see iii. above), Go rams pa associates four of Grags pa rgyal mtshan's five categories with Indian scholars. But he states that the exegetical source for the category of Madhyamaka "similar to Vaibhāṣika" is unclear.⁵⁵

GRAGS PA RGYAL MTSHAN	GO RAMS PA
• kun rdzob bden pa	
▪ 'jig rten grags sde pa	→ Candrakīrti (26b2)
▪ bye brag smra ba dang tshul mtshungs pa	→ <i>'grel byed 'di yin ces pa gsal bar mi snang</i> (27a1)
▪ sgyu ma pa	→ Śūra (27a3)
▪ mdo sde spyod pa	→ Bhāviveka (27a2)
▪ rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma pa	→ Jñānagarbha, Śāntarakṣita (28a2)

Go rams pa (like 'Brom ston, see i.) explains that upholders of this category are Vaibhāṣikas who embraced Madhyamaka. He gives as an example Bla ma Byams pa'i rnal 'byor pa.⁵⁶ This could refer to *Maitrīyogin, who was an Indian teacher of Atiśa.

After Go rams pa, the latest mention of this category I am aware of is the indirect reference to the category "Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka" in the 16th century by Mi bskyod rdo rje via his citation of 'Brom ston (see i. above).

1.3 Adoption of the Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka Perspective by Tibetan Scholars

While a number of scholars include the Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka category in their typology, or are aware of some of their predeces-

⁵⁵ *Nges don rab gsal* 26a6–28a4. See Mimaki 1982: 31–32 and Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 56.

⁵⁶ *Nges don rab gsal* 27a1–2: *'grel byed 'di yin ces pa gsal bar mi snang yang* | [27a2] *thog mar bye brag tu smra ba'i grub mtha' la gnas pa phyis dbu ma la zhugs pa'i tshe | de dang tshul mtshungs par 'dod pa nges par dgos te | bla ma byams pa'i rnal 'byor pa bzhin no* |.

sors having done so, actual partisans of this view among Tibetan scholars are rare.

In a previous paper I have shown that the famous Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge (1109–1169) upheld such a perspective, although he did not himself adopt the label “Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka,” but described himself simply as a “proponent of the awareness of an extra-mental object without representation” (*Mun sel* 8a8: *kho bo cag nam pa med par phyi rol gyi don rig par smra ba*).⁵⁷ The only significant point of agreement between Phya pa’s perspective at the conventional level and the Vaibhāṣika system is the claim that object and cognition are distinct but simultaneous. Phya pa does not mention any sources for the perspective that he adopts. Its adoption is grounded in the refutation of all the other alternatives being considered, namely, Sautrāntika representational external realism and the two types of idealism corresponding to representational and non-representational Yogācāra.

Few of Phya pa’s successors followed his lead on this issue. The only instances I am aware of are mTshur ston gZhon nu seng ge (c. 1150–1210) (who had been a pupil of Phya pa’s student gTsang nag pa [?–after 1195]) and the anonymous author of the *Tshad bsdus*, an epistemological summary wrongly attributed to Klong chen rab ’byams pa (1308–1363), which most likely post-dates Phya pa by one or two generations.⁵⁸ mTshur ston does not adopt the label “Vaibhāṣika-Mādhyamika” and resorts to the same characterization as Phya pa.⁵⁹ But the author of the *Tshad bsdus* describes his own position as being “in agreement with the Śrāvaka Vaibhāṣikas” (*nyan thos bye brag tu smra ba dang mthun pa*).⁶⁰

In the next part of this paper I will deal with a work by the 12th-century scholar rGya dmar ba Byang chub grags. This author is a likely source of influence for Phya pa’s adoption of a Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka perspective. His discussion broadens our under-

⁵⁷ See Hugon 2016.

⁵⁸ On this work, see van der Kuijp 2003.

⁵⁹ *sGron ma* 30b1: *’dir dngos po sems pa’i blos dpyad na tha snyad du don rig nam med kyi phyogs nyid rigs pas de’i lugs tar khas blang par bya’o* ||. “In this regard, when analyzing with a mind that considers what is real, conventionally, the position that there is cognition of an object without representation is the one that is correct.”

⁶⁰ *Tshad bsdus* 5,6 and 173,13.

standing on this topic, whereby we are introduced to an intensive, early intra-Tibetan debate around the issue of subdivisions of Madhyamaka.

2. *rGya dmar ba on Madhyamaka Divisions and His Adoption of Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka in the dBu ma de kho na nyid*

2.1 *rGya dmar ba Byang chub grags*

rGya dmar ba Byang chub grags lived between the end of the 11th and the 12th century (his floruit can be situated around 1095–1135) and was active in sTod lung.⁶¹ He is known as a student of Khyung Rin chen grags and Gangs pa She'u Blo gros byang chub, who were both students of rNgog Blo ldan shes rab (1059–1109), and as the principal teacher in Madhyamaka and epistemology of Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge.⁶²

In terms of intellectual lineage, rGya dmar ba is clearly situated within the rNgog-tradition associated with the monastery of gSang phu. It is not known, however, whether rGya dmar ba actually studied there or was trained elsewhere by representatives of this monastery.

rGya dmar ba constitutes an important link for our understanding of the early developments of Madhyamaka and epistemology up to Phya pa's time. Only a little is known about rGya dmar ba's views from mentions in later works. His Madhyamaka theories are referred to explicitly by Śākya mchog ldan (on his definition of ultimate and conventional truth) and by rGyal tshab rje (1364–1432).⁶³ A number of views in later epistemological works

⁶¹ See van der Kuijp 1983: 60, Akahane 2010: 78 and Sørensen and Hazod 2007: 420, n. 25. The third also list the relevant sources and enumerate the available information about rGya dmar ba's life and works.

⁶² See Śākya mchog ldan's *rNgog lo rol mo* 4b5: 'dis dang po khyung gi slob ma | rgya dmar ba byang chub grags la dbu tshad gsan and dBu ma'i byung tshul 12b4–5: de'i bshad srol 'dzin pa mang po dag las gtso bo ni khyung rin chen grags | de'i slob ma rgya dmar byang [12b5] chub grags pa dang |. In Śākya mchog ldan's *rNgog lo rol mo* (4b3) Khyung rin chen grags is likewise singled out as rNgog Lo's major disciple in the fields of Madhyamaka and epistemology. His relation with both Gangs pa she'u and Khyung is mentioned by Padma dkar po (b. 1527) in his *Chos 'byung*, cited in van der Kuijp 1978: 355. See also Seyfort Ruegg 2000: 36 and n. 63.

⁶³ See van der Kuijp 1983: 293, n. 212. The reference by Śākya mchog ldan (*Theg chen dbu ma rnam nges*, chap. 4, vol. 15, 36b6–7 (p. 72): *rgya dmar ba byang chub grags ni | gnas tshul la sems pa'i rigs pas brtag bzod pa ma yin pa dang | des bzod*

are identified as those of “rGya.” There are notably 66 mentions of “rGya” in the *Tshad bsdus*.⁶⁴ While van der Kuijp is of the opinion that these should be ascribed to rGya Grags pa bsod nams, a senior contemporary of Phya pa,⁶⁵ there is clear evidence in several cases that the views being mentioned can be associated with rGya dmar ba Byang chub grags.⁶⁶

While rGya dmar ba’s contributions to the domain of epistemology have yet to surface,⁶⁷ three of his Madhyamaka works have now appeared in the *bKa’ gdams gsung ’bum* collection:⁶⁸

- A commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* of Śāntideva (c. 7th–8th c.).⁶⁹
- A commentary on the *Satyadvayavibhāṅga* of Jñānagarbha (8th c.).⁷⁰
- A treatise on Madhyamaka.⁷¹

pa’o zhes ’chad |) appears to be a paraphrase. The source of the former definition can be traced to *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 8a6: *brtag bzod ma yin ba’i shes bya ni kun rdzob ste*. The two references in rGyal tshab rje’s work have yet to be examined.

⁶⁴ Listed in van der Kuijp 2003: 416.

⁶⁵ Van der Kuijp 2003: 417.

⁶⁶ For instance in the case of the first attribution of a view to “rGya” (*Tshad bsdus* 11,2), a parallel can be found in rGya dmar ba’s *dBu ma de kho na nyid* (13a8–b2) and the verse cited in this connection in an interlinear note on the manuscript of the *Tshad bsdus* (which appears in smaller script in the edition) turns out to be an almost literal citation of *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 11a5. I argue in Hugon 2015: 71 that the view attributed to “rGya” in *Tshad bsdus* 36,1 also finds support in rGya dmar ba’s *dBu ma de kho na nyid*.

⁶⁷ A khu chin Shes rab rgya mtsho reports in his *Tho yig* that rGya dmar ba authored two epistemological works: a commentary on the *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (No. 11809) and a “Summary” (*Tshad ma bsdus pa*, No. 11810). Cf. van der Kuijp 1983: 60–61. Van der Kuijp (1983: 293, n. 212) notes that according to a gloss reading “*kha shas*” the latter might have been fragmentary.

⁶⁸ For the first two, the author is identified as “Byang chub grags” in the colophon. The author of the third is identified as “rGya dmar pa” in the colophon. The name “Byang chub grags” also appears in an earlier verse (accompanied by an interlinear note reading “*rgya dmar ba*”).

⁶⁹ *bKa’ gdams gsung ’bum*, vol. 6, 11–174. The title on the first folio reads *Byang chub sems dpa’i spyod pa la ’jug pa’i ti ka*. In the colophon the text is referred to as *Byang chub sems pa’i* [sic] *spyod pa la ’jug pa’i tshig dang don gsal bar bshad pa*.

⁷⁰ Incomplete manuscript published in the *bKa’ gdams gsung ’bum*, vol. 19, 247–316. As discussed in Akahane 2010, the *dBu ma bden gnyis kyi ti kā* is a commentary on Jñānagarbha’s *Satyadvayavibhāṅga*, including many references to Śāntarākṣita’s *Satyadvayavibhāṅgapañjikā*. In the closing verse the text is referred to as “*bDen gnyis mam bshad ti ka dag dang bcas*.” This text would thus correspond to the work of rGya dmar ba referred to by A khu chin under the title *dBu ma bden gnyis kyi tikka* (*Tho yig*, No. 11347).

⁷¹ *dBu ma de kho na nyid*, 31-folio manuscript published in *bKa’ gdams gsung ’bum*, vol. 31, 7–67.

2.2 The *dBu ma de kho na nyid*

The third text, on which the present paper focuses, is referred to in its colophon as the “*dbu ma de kho na nyid rnam par spyod*⁷² *pa*,” that is “Madhyamaka—a thorough investigation of the real nature,” or “A thorough investigation of the essentials of the Madhyamaka.” The first folio bears the title “The establishment of the essentials of the Madhyamaka composed by rGya dmar ba” (*rGya dmar bas mdzad pa’i dbu ma’i de kho na nyid gtan la dbab pa*).⁷³

The core of the treatise focuses on the Two Truths.⁷⁴ rGya dmar ba’s work might be characterized as a “Summary of Madhyamaka.” It qualifies not only as a precursor of Phya pa’s “Summaries” but as a recognizable source of influence on them. One can at the outset note that the structure of Phya pa’s Madhyamaka summary (*sNying po*) mostly follows that of the *dBu ma de kho na nyid*.

Table 1
General Outline of the *dBu ma de kho na nyid* and
Corresponding Sections in Phya pa’s *sNying po*⁷⁵

<i>dBu ma de kho na nyid</i>		<i>sNying po</i>
Verses of invocation	1b1	
Introductory discussion recalling the three Turnings of the Wheel	1b1–2a4	
Presentation of Madhyamaka (<i>gzhung dbu ma’i bka’i rtogs par bya ba’i don gtan la ’bebs pa</i>)	2a4–2a5	11 <i>bden pa gnyis kyi dbye ba</i>
I Basis of the division of the Two Truths (<i>dbye ba’i gzhi</i>)	2a8	111 <i>dbye ba’i gzhi</i>
II Object of the division of the Two Truths (<i>dbye ba’i don</i>)	2b1–5a8	112 <i>dbye ba’i don</i>
III Meaning of the terms (<i>ming gi don</i>)	5a8–7a6	114 <i>ming gi don</i>
IV Determination of the number (<i>grangs nges pa</i>)	7a6–8a6	113 <i>grangs nges pa</i>

⁷² *sPyod pa* is to be read as *dpyod pa*.

⁷³ The translation “essentials” for *de kho na nyid* (< Skt. *tattva*) was suggested by van der Kuijp (2003: 381) in relation to an epistemological work bearing a title with a similar expression, the *Tshad ma’i de kho na nyid bsdus pa* (= *Tshad bdsus*).

⁷⁴ rGya dmar ba’s discussion of the Two Truths in his commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, chap. 8, begins in a similar way.

⁷⁵ The numbering of the *sa bcad* of the *sNying po* is that of Tauscher’s edition.

V	Definiens of the Two Truths (<i>mtshan nyid</i>)	8a6–15a7	12 <i>mtshan nyid</i>
1	Explicit definiens of the Two Truths (<i>bden gnyis mtshan nyid dngos</i>)	8a6–9b3	121 <i>bden pa gnyis kyi so so'i mtshan nyid</i> 121.1 <i>rang gi lugs</i> 121.11 <i>kun rdzob kyi bden pa'i mtshan nyid</i> 121.12 <i>don dam pa'i bden pa'i mtshan nyid</i>
2	Respective divisions (<i>so so'i dbye ba</i>)	9b3–9b5	
3	Definiens of the sorts of conventionalities (<i>kun rdzob kyi rnam par dbye ba'i mtshan nyid</i>)	9b5–10a6	121.13 <i>kun rdzob kyi bden pa'i bye brag gi mtshan nyid</i> ... 122 <i>mtshan nyid gnas pa'i rten mtshan gzhi bsam pa</i> 122.1 <i>don dam dang kun rdzob kyi bden par mtshon pa'i mtshan gzhi</i> 122.2 <i>yang dag pa dang log pa'i kun rdzob du mtshon pa'i mtshan gzhi</i> 123 <i>mtshan gzhi la brisad pa spang pa</i>
4	What has the definiens (<i>mtshan nyid dang ldan pa</i>)	10a6–15a7	122.2 <i>yang dag pa dang log pa'i kun rdzob du mtshon pa'i mtshan gzhi</i> 123 <i>mtshan gzhi la brisad pa spang pa</i>
VI	Valid cognition determining that the definiens applies (<i>tshad ma</i>)	15a7–29a5	124 <i>mtshan gzhi nges byed kyi tshad ma</i>
	Concluding discussion recalling the refutation of all other systems and the establishment of the Madhyamaka system	29a5–39b1	...
	Versified summary	30b1–30b8	
	Closing verses and statement of authorship	31a1–31a3	

In addition to giving us firsthand access to rGya dmar ba's position, the *dBu ma de kho na nyid* also offers a fascinating glimpse into the active intellectual environment of 11th/12th-century Tibet, as rGya dmar ba discusses the views of a number of scholars whose works are otherwise not extant. This aspect of the text would have remained quite obscure were it not for the numerous interlinear notes on the manuscript, which in all evidence were written by a well-informed reader or a diligent student. These notes provide the kind of information that would be expected in an oral teaching. They shed light on the structure of rGya dmar ba's exposition (rGya dmar ba's use of explicit *sa bcad* divisions is limited), provide glosses, examples and additional explanations. Moreover, they

identify by name the various (inter)locutors in the discussions featured in rGya dmar ba's work.

In the discussion under consideration in this article, the notes reveal that rGya dmar ba is discussing the position of various other scholars, who themselves discuss the position of still other scholars. The protagonists involved are identified as "Jo btsun," "Me tig," "Lo tsa" and "Gangs pa." Other names that appear in other sections in the interlinear notes of the text are "dGe bshes" and "Khyung." All these names are also found linked to a number of views in the *Tshad bsdus*.⁷⁶ The scholars thus referred to were not only active in the field of Madhyamaka, but also in the field of epistemology.

"Lo tsa" (one also finds elsewhere in the text "*lo tsa ba*") in all probability stands for rNgog Lo tsā ba, i.e., rNgog Blo ldan shes rab.⁷⁷ "Gangs pa" evidently stands for Gangs pa She'u Blo gros byang chub, and "Khyung" for Khyung Rin chen grags. As mentioned in § 2.1, the latter two figure among the main disciples of rNgog Blo ldan shes rab and were teachers of rGya dmar ba. According to the interlinear notes, the addressee of the second verse of dedication of the *dBu ma de kho na nyid* is Gangs pa she'u.⁷⁸ "Me tig" is probably the same person referred to as "Me dig pa" in the *Tshad bsdus*. He appears to have been the assistant teacher of Khyung Rin chen grags.⁷⁹ The identity of "Jo btsun" and "dGe bshes" remains to be ascertained.⁸⁰ Van der Kuijp has noted that

⁷⁶ See van der Kuijp 2003: 415–417 for a list and an attempt to identify the scholars referred to in this way.

⁷⁷ The interlinear note *khyung lo tsa* ("Khyung and rNgog blo ldan shes rab") glosses rGya dmar ba's mention of *slob dpon dge bshes dag* ("the spiritual friends and teachers") in *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 8b7. And the note *lo tsa la sogs pa* ("rNgog Blo ldan shes rab, etc.") glosses *rje btsun dam pa mkhas rnams* ("the learned excellent reverend ones") in *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 15a6.

⁷⁸ *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 1b1: *yon tan dpag myed rin cen dang lhan 'gro na nyi bzhin gsal byed rab grags pa || nam 'byed blo gros dri myed byang chub sems^a dpa' rje btsun dag la rab tu 'dud ||*.

Interlinear note ^a *gangs pa blo gros byang chub*.

⁷⁹ This information is provided in the *Zhib mo rdo rje* of dMar ston Chos kyi rgyal po (c. 1197–1258), see Stearns 2001: 134 and 137.

⁸⁰ Van der Kuijp notes (2003: 417): "The expression *jo btsun* is a title rather than a name in religion. This Jo btsun must therefore be distinguished from Jo btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan, of whom Glo bo Mkhan chen writes that this no doubt fourteenth century scholar was the author of a PV study." See van der Kuijp 2003: 416 for some hypotheses about the appellation "*dge bshes*" in the *Tshad bsdus*.

“Me dig pa, Gangs pa and Jo btsun seem to be anterior to rGya, and Jo btsun flourished before, or more likely, was a senior contemporary of Gangs pa. This means that he was fully contemporaneous with rNgog Lo tsā ba.”⁸¹ This relative chronology is confirmed in the interlinear notes of the *dBu ma de kho na nyid*, which indicate that Jo btsun refuted certain positions of Lo tsa, and that Jo btsun’s positions were in turn refuted by Gangs pa.

2.3 rGya dmar ba on the Divisions of Madhyamaka

2.3.1 Divisions of Madhyamaka

a) Typology of ancient scholars

A first discussion of the division of Madhyamaka takes place at the very beginning of the core part of the text (*dBu ma de kho na nyid* 2a4–7), before rGya dmar ba starts to discuss the Two Truths. rGya dmar ba first reports and criticizes the following division of ancient scholars (*snga rabs pa dag*):⁸²

- a) Madhyamaka of the original texts (*gzhung phyi mo'i dbu ma*)
- b) Madhyamaka adopting a philosophical position (*phyogs 'dzin pa'i dbu ma*)
 - I - Regarding the ultimate level (*don dam la*)
 - 1) Those who claim [that phenomena are] like illusions (*sgyu ma ltar smra ba*)
 - 2) Those who hold [that phenomena] do not abide whatsoever (*rab du mi gnas par 'dod pa*)
 - 3) Those who hold what is paradoxical to be ultimate (*'gal 'dus don dam par 'dod pa*)
 - II - Regarding the conventional level (*kun rdzob la*)
 - 1) Yogācāra (*mal 'byor spyod pa*)
 - 2) Sautrāntika (*mdo sde spyod pa*)
 - 3) (3i) “Not incompatible with both traditions” (*gnyi ga'i lugs dang mi 'gal ba*) or (3ii) “Those who judge by apprehending in general (?)” (*spyi bzung zhal che ba*) (see §1.1.b)

⁸¹ Van der Kuijp 2003: 417.

⁸² *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 2a5: *phyogs 'dzin pa yang don dam pa la sgyu ma ltar smra ba dang | rab du mi gnas par 'dod pa dang | 'gal 'dus don dam par 'dod pa'o || kun rdzob la mal 'byor spyod pa dang | mdo sde spyod pa dang | gnyi ga'i lugs dang mi 'gal ba zhes sam | spyi bzung zhal che ba zhes* ^α *'chad pa ni* ^β *mi bzang ste |*.

Interlinear notes: ^α *snga rabs pa dag*; ^β *de dgag pa*.

Compare with the almost identical typology ascribed to “ancient scholars” by Go rams pa (*Nges don rab gsal* 24a5–25a4). The passage on their division pertaining to conventional reality is cited in n. 54.

rGya dmar ba does not accept (b.I.3) and (b.II.3) to be correct divisions. In particular, his arguments against (b.II.3i) point out that the Vaibhāṣika category has been left out, and that it is impossible to adopt a perspective that is not incompatible with two positions that are themselves incompatible (one being antirealist, the other one realist). Against (b.II.3ii), he argues that there is no textual source that takes the two traditions into consideration but does not adopt one in particular.⁸³

b) rGya dmar ba's own typology

rGya dmar ba's own typology of the "Mādhyamikas who adopt a philosophical position" (*phyogs 'dzin pa*) is the following:

I - Regarding the ultimate level (*don dam la*)

1) Those who claim [that phenomena are] like illusions
(*sgyu ma [ltar smra ba]*)

2) Those who hold [that phenomena] do not abide whatsoever
(*rab du mi gnas pa[r 'dod pa]*)

II - Regarding the conventional level (*kun rdzob la*)⁸⁴

1) Yogācāra (*rnal 'byor spyod pa*)

According to the interlinear notes:

⁸³ rGya dmar ba's refutation of the first option is given in *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 2a6: *mdo sde spyod pa dang rnal 'byor spyod pa bas ma bsdus pa'i bye brag du smra ba ltar 'dod pa^α yod pa'i phyir dang | gnyi ga'i lugs dang mi 'gal ba 'dod pa mi srid dang |^β gal ba gnyis dang mi 'gal ba'i grub mtha 'dzin na rtog ldan mkhas par mi rung ba'i phyir ro ||^γ.*

Interlinear notes: ^α *yees (=ye shes) snying po lasogs* (see §3.i); ^β *phyi rol don yod med phan tshun spangs 'gal yin la*; ^γ *cha shas dang bcas par dmigs pas cig ma yin la de ma yin pas du ma yang ma yin la | cha shas dang bcas pa de dmigs pa la cig gis khyab pas.*

The refutation of the second option is given in 2a6–7: *zhal che byas pa spang myed kyi | lugs gnyis rjes su brjod nas rang gis phyogs [2a7] gang yang ma bzung ba gzhung la mi snang ba'i phyir ro ||.*

Compare with Go rams pa's refutation of this part of the typology of "ancient scholars" in *Nges don rab gsal* 26a2–4: *kun rdzob 'dod [26a3] tshul kyi dbye ba de'ang mi 'thad de | rnal 'byor spyod pa dang | mdo sde spyod pa gnyis su ma 'dus pa'i bye brag tu smra ba dang tshul mthungs pa dang | 'jig rten grags sde spyod pa gnyis kyang yod pa'i phyir dang | snang ba sems su [26a4] khas len pa dang | snang ba phyi don du khas len pa gnyis 'gal bas | gnyis ka dang mi 'gal ba zhes pa'ang mi 'thad pa'i phyir ro ||.* Go rams pa significantly adds the *'jig rten grags sde spyod pa* (which rGya dmar ba does not recognize as distinct) to the categories not included among the Sautrāntika and Yogācāra.

⁸⁴ This part of the typology is identical with that proposed by 'Jad pa gZhon nu byang chub (see §1.2.ii).

- 1.i True representationalists (*rnam bden*)
- 1.ii False representationalists (*rnam rdzun*)
- 2) External realists (*phyi rol gyi don yod pa*)
 - 2.i Those who hold the view of the Sautrāntikas (*mdo sde spyod pa ltar 'dod*)
 - 2.ii Those who hold the view of the Vaibhāṣikas (*bye brag smra ba ltar 'dod pa*)

2.3.2 *The Perspective to be Adopted at the Level of Conventional Reality*

Subdivisions of Madhyamaka pertaining to the level of conventional reality are discussed in more detail in the *dBu ma de kho na nyid* in the section in which the respective instances of the two types of conventional reality—correct (*yang dag pa'i kun rdzob*) and incorrect (*log pa'i kun rdzob*)—are being examined (V.4 in Table 1). This is the same context in which the same is discussed in Phya pa's *sNying po* (122.2 in Table 1).⁸⁵ This discussion is not to be confused with the refutation of all non-Mādhyamika systems that rGya dmar ba presents at the end of the *dBu ma de kho na nyid*.

The discussion in Section V.4 unfolds in quite a complicated way; fortunately, the interlinear notes help clarify it. In these notes, the various orientations of Madhyamaka being discussed are not associated with the names of Indian scholars (as is usual in doxographical discussions), but with those of their Tibetan upholders.⁸⁶ Based on the information provided in the interlinear notes, the general structure of the section can be described as follows:

Table 2
General Outline of Section V.4 of the *dBu ma de kho na nyid*

1	rGya dmar ba's refutation of other scholars	10a6–13a7
1	<i>Presentation of Jo btsun's position</i>	<i>10a6–11a3</i>

⁸⁵ See *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 29a5–30a8. See also rGya dmar ba's commentary on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (*sPyod 'jug 'ti ka* 60a7f.), which presents the list *'jig rten phal pa, rnal 'byor pa, mu stegs kyi rnal 'byor, sangs rgyas pa'i rnal 'byor* among which *bye brag du smra ba, mdo sde ba, sems tsam pa* among which *sems tsam pa rnam bden pa, sems tsam pa rnam brdzun pa, dbu ma pa*, in which each system is refuted by the next. The arguments against specific systems might correspond to those adduced when discussing optional systems to be adopted at the conventional level, but in the discussion in Section V.4 the author's goal is not to establish a final position (it is agreed that it is Madhyamaka), but to determine which system (if any) best fits at the conventional level.

⁸⁶ See § 3.i below for an exception.

1	Jo btsun’s own position: adopting a philosophical system is impossible since they can all be refuted	10a6
2	Jo btsun’s refutation of philosophical systems	10a6–11a3
	a Presentation and refutation Lo tsa’s non-representationalist position	10a6–10b5
	b Refutation of Sautrāntika representationalism	10b5–6
	c Refutation of idealism	10b6–11a1
	Summary	11a1–11a2
2	<i>Refutation of Jo btsun by rGya dmar ba</i>	11a3–12a5
	1 Examining which of Jo btsun’s arguments against the philosophical systems are correct	11a3–11a5
	2 Refuting the position that rejects any philosophical system in favor of worldly conventions	11a5–12a1
3	<i>Presentation of Gangs pa she’u’s position</i>	12a5–12b7
	1 Gangs pa’s refutation of other scholars	12a5–12b5
	a Gangs pa’s refutation of the non-representationalist position akin to that of Lo tsa	12a5–12b2
	b Gangs pa’s refutation of Jo btsun’s adoption of worldly conventions and rejection of all philosophical systems	12b2–3
	c Gangs pa’s refutation of the (anonymous) view rejecting the division between correct and incorrect conventional	12b3–5
	2 Statement of Gangs pa she’u’s own position	12b5–7
4	<i>Refutation of Gangs pa’s own view by rGya dmar ba</i>	12b7–13a7
2	rGya dmar ba’s own position	13a7–15a7

This section opens with the general question of whether Mādhyamikas should or shouldn’t actually adopt a philosophical system when dealing with conventional reality. The latter position is ascribed to “Jo btsun,” who argues that none of the four philosophical systems previously distinguished is to be adopted because they are all faulty.⁸⁷ Even the Scriptures do not enable a choice to be made because some support idealism and others support external realism. Philosophical systems are thus to be rejected in favor of worldly conventions. Jo btsun thus qualifies as an early upholder of the doxographical category “Madhyamaka following worldly agreement” (see §1.1.d). It is not explicit in the text or the

⁸⁷ The four systems are introduced here using slightly different terminology than in the passage discussed in § 2.3.1.a, and the subdivision of Yogācāra is made explicit in the text. See *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 10a6: *slob dpon dag ’di skad gsung ste | yul sems gnyis ^αsam [ka] | [kha]rnal ’byor spyod pa ’am | [ka]bye brag du mdo sde spyod pa ’am | bye brag du smra ba dang mthun par spyod pa ’am | [kha]rnam pa bden rdzun zhes gzhas par ma nus te | jog na sun <byin> par byed do ||*.
Interlinear note: ^α ’dod pa *

notes whether Jo btsun’s position was influenced by Candrakīrti. Although this author probably lived before the spread of Candrakīrti’s works by Pa tshab Nyi ma grags, Jo btsun may have been exposed to the Candrakīrti teaching lineage that was brought to Tibet at the time of Atiśa’s visit.⁸⁸

Jo btsun criticizes in particular an (external realist) non-representationalist view ascribed to Lo tsa (1.1.2.a). This perspective—characterized in terms of “Madhyamaka in agreement with Vaibhāṣika”—deserves a separate detailed investigation that goes beyond the scope of the present paper.⁸⁹ It involves the controversial tenet that all non-conceptual cognitions are correct and have a true object, including the case of dreams and hallucinations. Establishing this point revolves about the interpretation of specific passages in Jñānagarbha’s work on the Two Truths.⁹⁰

rGya dmar ba rejects Jo btsun’s mere adoption of worldly agreement at the conventional level (1.2.2). He does however endorse most of Jo btsun’s arguments against the philosophical systems that Jo btsun has considered (1.2.1), with the exception of one argument that affects his own position (see below §1.4.b1).

The position of Jo btsun and a view similar to that of Lo tsa are also criticized by Gangs pa she’u (1.3). Gangs pa she’u was one of rGya dmar ba’s teachers and probably his main teacher on the topic of the Two Truths if one believes the identification of the addressee in the verse of dedication at the beginning of the text (see n. 78). Gangs pa’s own view (1.3.2) is a representationalist perspective that leaves the option between external realism and idealism undecided; the existence of external objects remains doubtful due to the lack of probans and the undefined scope of

⁸⁸ See Apple 2013: 265 and 268 for the evidence from an early commentary on Atiśa’s *Satyadvayāvātāra*.

⁸⁹ The elucidation of rNgog Lo’s views will hopefully benefit from the discovery, in the Tangut collection in Khara-Khoto, of a work entitled *Exposition of the Two Truths According to rNgog lo tsā ba*. See Solonin 2015: 854.

⁹⁰ See in this connection, rGya dmar ba’s *dBu ma bden gnyis kyi ṭī kā* 38b6 (*ad* SDVV following SDV 24ab): *bye brag du smra ba dang mthun pa’i dbu ma’i gzhung btsugs pa yin no* |. rGya dmar ba mentions that he has already refuted the interpretation of the commentary on this point (idem: *’di la ti kas rmi lam gi yul lasogs pa kun tha dad du yod par bshad pa ni* | *rigs pa dang lung gis dgag par sngar rjod pas na* | *nor ba yin_no* ||). This might refer to the refutation found in the *dBu ma de kho na nyid*.

the refutations. Gangs pa would thus be a representative of the doxographical category of “unspecific Madhyamaka” (see §1.1.b).

By the time rGya dmar ba turns to presenting his own position (2) he has already achieved, by way of his own arguments and the arguments already put forward by his predecessors, the refutation of the following positions:

Position	Refutation (summary of the main arguments)
<p><i>[Jo btsun]</i> (i) Refusal of any philosophical system (ii) in favor of worldly agreement at the conventional level</p>	<p><i>[rGya dmar ba]</i> (i) Not all arguments against the various philosophical systems are sound. Acceptance of valid cognition is needed to refute other systems. The four options are exhaustive. (ii) Worldly agreement includes conventional means of valid cognition. Worldly agreement amounts to the acceptance of external objects known without aspects.</p> <p><i>[Gangs pa]</i> (ii) Personal reasoning is needed to discern who is competent in the world, reasoning which makes worldly expertise unnecessary.</p>
<p>Idealism</p>	<p><i>[Jo btsun]</i> The idealist’s neither-one-nor-many argument for refuting external objects also refutes the existence of the mind.</p>
<p>Representational idealism</p>	<p><i>[Lo tsa]</i> External reality is established by perception. The “certitude of co-apprehension”-inference for proving representationalism is not correct.</p>
<p>Sautrāntika representational external realism</p>	<p><i>[Jo btsun]</i> There is no probans for external reality being the cause of appearance. The argument against the idealist’s refutation of external objects (i.e., it only refutes their ultimate existence) applies mutatis mutandis to the refutation of God (no criterion to define the scope of the refutation).</p>
<p><i>[Gangs pa]</i> Unspecific representationalism</p>	<p><i>[rGya]</i> There is no doubt regarding external reality: there are probans (perception) and a</p>

criterion for defining the scope of potential refutations.
The awareness-inference for proving representationalism is incorrect.

[Lo tsa]
“Extreme” non-representationalist involving (i) acceptance of dreams & hallucinations as veridical objects and (ii) the argument that refutations against the former only refute ultimately

[Jo btsun]
(i) This would destroy the accepted account of causality and karmic retribution.
(ii) This would be liable to a parallel argument (also adduced against Sautrāntika) implying the conventional acceptance of God.

[Lo tsa dang mthun pa]
(i') all non-conceptual cognitions have a true object,
(iii) grounded in the SDV

[Gangs pa]
(i') This has overreaching absurd consequences.
(iii) This is contradicted by other passages of the SDV.

Absence of distinction between correct and incorrect conventionalities from the point of view of error

[Gangs pa]
A distinction is required for transactional usage, as otherwise there would be absurd consequences.

2.4 rGya dmar ba's Position

2.4.1 Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka

rGya dmar ba introduces his own view in a straightforward way, saying:

We accept the duality of object and mind in agreement with Vaibhāṣika.⁹¹

What does it mean, for rGya dmar ba, to adopt “Madhyamaka in agreement with Vaibhāṣika” (*bye brag du smra ba dang mthun pa'i dbu ma*)? Earlier in this section, rGya dmar ba defined “Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka” with two minimal criteria:

⁹¹ *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 13a7: *bdag nyid kyi lugs ji ltar zhe na | yul sems gnyis bye brag du smra ba dang mthun par 'dod*. My translation “duality of object and mind” for “*yul sems gnyis*,” rather than “the object and the mind, the two,” is based on rGya dmar ba's recurrent use of this expression to refer to the acceptance of the distinction between the apprehending mind and an apprehended object.

- (i) Acceptance, at the conventional level, of extra-mental objects that are cognized via a non-representational cognition
- (ii) Acceptance of emptiness at the ultimate level.⁹²

The “agreement with Vaibhāṣika” is thus circumscribed by non-representational external realism being adopted at the conventional level.⁹³ Ultimately, of course, Vaibhāṣika is refuted, as all other substantialist systems are, in favour of the Madhyamaka view that everything lacks a nature.⁹⁴

Based on the two minimal criteria given for this position, rGya dmar ba argues that the “agreement with worldly conventions” advocated by Jo btsun actually amounts to adopting a philosophical system: one in agreement with the Vaibhāṣika system. Indeed, what ordinary people agree upon is precisely that external objects exist and are being apprehended without any aspects intervening.

⁹² These criteria are provided in the context of the refutation of Jo btsun’s position. *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 11b1: *tshad ’bras lasogs pa thams cad mam med kyis don ’dzin pa bye brag du smra ba dang mthun* ^α *pa’i dbu ma zhal gyis bzhes pa ste | tha snyad du mam med kyis don grub pa dang | don dam par stong pa nyid ces bya ba’i bden pa gnyis las bye brag du smra ba dang mthun pa’i dbu ma la* ^β *mtshan nyid gzhan med pa’i phyir ro ||*. “The result of valid cognition, etc., all of this being the apprehension of an object by a non-representational cognition, is called the Madhyamaka in agreement with Vaibhāṣika. There is no definiens of Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka other than [their distinction of] the Two Truths as follows: ‘Conventionally, an external object is established by a non-representational [cognition]; ultimately, [one holds] emptiness.’”

Interlinear notes:

^α A gloss in *dbu med* is provided on top of the folio: *pa ** gzhag ** cir ’gyur zhe na | tha snyad du yang tshad ma chad par mi gyur cig ces | tha snyad pa’i tshad mas de ltar rnam par gzhag pa la (tshad?) ma gzhan gyis gnod pa mi srid pa’i phyir tha snyad du mam med kyis phyi’i don grub pa dang | don dam par dpyad pa’i yul du bden pas stong ba ni bzhed pa’i phyir | bye brag tu smra ba dang ’thun*. The gloss is repeated almost literally, with additional interlinear notes, at the end of the last folio, in *dbu can* script: *pa ’di la gzhag par bya’o | <de ltar yin pa ci ste na> des cir ’gyur zhe na | tha snyad du yang tshad ma chad par ma gyur cig ces tha snyad pa’i tshad mas de ltar <phyi rol gyi don lasogs par> rnam par gzhag pa la tshad ma gzhan gyis gnod pa mi srid pa’i phyir | tha snyad du mam med kyis phyi’i don <’dzin par> grub pa dang | don dam par spyad <na thamd (=thams cad) stong bas> pa’i bden pa’i stong ba ni <jo btsun nyid> bzhed pa’i phyir bye brag du smra ba dang mthun pa’i*.

^β *grags pa dang mthun nas bzhag pa de las*

⁹³ See in this regard Mimaki’s remark as to what the label “Sautrāntika-Mādhyamika” entails, namely, external realism and representationalism (Mimaki 1982: 52).

⁹⁴ See *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 29a7. Vaibhāṣika is said to be refuted via the refutation of atoms; no other argument is necessary.

The tenet that the object and the subject (its cognition) are distinct and simultaneous (*tha dad dus mnyam*) was, in the case of Phya pa, a significant point of agreement with Vaibhāṣika. This point is not explicitly stated among the criteria for holding a Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka position, but comes up in rGya dmar ba's defense of non-representationalism. In this later discussion, a further point of agreement with the Vaibhāṣika model of cognition (which Phya pa will not subscribe to) is indicated by rGya dmar ba: the view that the agent of cognition is a sense faculty (see § 2.4.2.c).

2.4.2 Justification for External Realism and Non-representationalism

In the first part of Section V.4, in which he refutes other scholars (1), rGya dmar ba has already cleared the way for non-representational external realism via the refutation of idealism and representationalism. When presenting his own position (2), he provides arguments supporting non-representational external realism and answers objections against this position, some of which already came up in Jo btsun's criticism of philosophical systems (1.1.2).

a. External reality exists at the conventional level — distinguishing the scope of the arguments

One point that came up in several of Jo btsun's objections is that there is no criterion for discerning which arguments refute ultimate existence and which arguments refute existence also at the conventional level. This lack of "distinction of arguments" (*rigs pa'i mam dbye*) is a problem for the idealists. If they claim that the neither-one-nor-many argument refutes the conventional existence of external objects, they face the problem that this argument would similarly refute the conventional existence of the mind.⁹⁵ This is also a problem for external realists. In order to secure their position, external realists want to say that the neither-one-nor-many argument only refutes the ultimate existence of external objects. But they cannot explain why this would be the

⁹⁵ The argument is presented in the form of an "argument by parallel," a method of argumentation that will be profusely applied by Phya pa. See Hugon 2008.

case for the neither-one-nor-many argument but not for the inference refuting the existence of God. They would thus have to admit that God, just like external objects, exists at the conventional level.

rGya dmar ba mentions already in his examination of Jo btsun's arguments (1.2.1) that he does not consider the objections invoking the "lack of distinction of arguments" to be sound. The first point in the presentation of his own view thus consists in offering a criterion of distinction (*dBu ma de kho na nyid* 13a8–13b7). rGya dmar ba's idea is that these two can be distinguished based on their negandum (*dgag bya*): whether the negandum is not analysed (*ma dpyad pa*) or is subjected to an analysis (*dpyad pa*), such as distinguishing parts. Here what rGya dmar ba calls "negandum" is actually the phenomenon whose negation constitutes the logical reason. Thus the "existence as causally efficient" that is negated in the refutation of "God" via the logical reason "lacking causal efficacy" qualifies as a "conventional negandum." The inference that negates the existence of God thus refutes its conventional existence. But in the neither-one-nor-many argument, the "oneness" that is negated consists in atoms or moments of mind; this constitutes an "ultimate negandum." Thus, the neither-one-nor-many argument refutes the ultimate existence of external objects or the mind. The existence of external objects and the mind remains unrefuted when there is no analysis into parts. Hence the "external objects" that are accepted at the conventional level are not atoms, but things with a spatial extension such as pots.

Thanks to this criterion, rGya dmar ba can preserve the argument targeting the idealists, but avoid the objection targeting the external realists.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ This solution will be criticized by Phya pa, who proposes another explanation to account for the difference in scope between the neither-one-nor-many inference and the inference refuting God. See Hugon 2016: 115–118. Phya pa's argument is that the logical reason of the neither-one-nor-many inference qualifies everything that is knowable, whereas the logical reason adduced for refuting God does not. The pervasion of the latter by the property "void of being conventional entity" is unproblematic, hence this reason can be adduced to refute God's existence at the conventional level. But in the case of the neither-one-nor-many inference, the pervasion of the logical reason by the property "void of being conventional entity" would entail the problematic consequence that there could not be any conventional entities. Therefore, the logical reason "neither-one-nor-many" cannot be adduced to refute conventional existence.

b. Defense of Dualism in Contrast to Idealism

rGya dmar ba's "positive argument" in favour of dualism and non-representationalism, and against representationalism, can be summarized as follows: "External objects exist as causally efficient and distinct from the mind because they appear as such."⁹⁷ This argument is presented in the form of an argument "by parallel" involving a parallel case on which the external realists and the idealists agree: that of "pleasure."⁹⁸ The realist holds that (a) "external objects" are real because they are causally efficient and (b) are distinct from the mind because they appear as such. The idealist disagrees, but wants to support the claims (a') that "pleasure" is real because it is causally efficient and (b') that "pleasure" is distinct from "suffering" and appears as such. Based on the parallel between the two cases, any attempt by the idealist to counter the realists' claims would generate a similar objection regarding his own tenets.

c. Defense of Non-representationalism

Two issues that non-representationalism has to face were already pointed out in an earlier passage of Section V.4, identified in the interlinear notes as Jo btsun's presentation of Lo tsa's view, which, as I mentioned earlier (§ 2.3.2), was characterized in terms of "Madhyamaka in agreement with Vaibhāṣika:"

(i) Non-representationalists have to explain how the external object and cognition can stand in an "object"- "subject" or "apprehended"- "apprehender" rapport if they are held to be distinct and simultaneous, which would prevent that they stand in either a relation of identity or of causality.

(ii) Non-representationalists also have to account for the distinction between individual episodes of awareness (for instance, a cognition of sound and a cognition of form, or a cognition of white and a cognition of yellow) if this distinction is not to be explained, as in a causal model of cognition, by distinguishing between their respective causes.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ See *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 13b6–7.

⁹⁸ On "arguments by parallels" see the reference provided in n. 95.

⁹⁹ *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 10a8: ^α *phyogs 'di la tha dad dus mnyam pas* ^β *'brel pa mi*

Lo tsa's answer was to concede that he did not accept the *ultimate* status of “apprehender” and “apprehended” of a cognition and its object. But he held this status to be unrefuted at the conventional level, which is “like a mirage” (*sgyu ma lta bu*). Lo tsa's answer is evoked when rGya dmar ba takes up the issue in the context of presenting his own view,¹⁰⁰ but rGya dmar ba provides a more refined answer to these two objections. Leaving the details and identification of the potential textual background for rGya dmar ba's entangled discussion for another occasion, I will limit myself here to summarizing the main points.¹⁰¹

c.1 Explaining the status of object and subject without a relation between the two

To respond to the first of the above-mentioned issues (i), rGya dmar ba again proceeds by parallel argumentation.¹⁰² Mirroring the claims that cognition (a) knows its object without an aspect, (b) is simultaneous with that object, and (c) has no relation of identity or causality with the object, he introduces as a parallel a model of self-awareness that holds that (a') self-awareness, for instance self-awareness of “pleasure,” does not involve an aspect, (b') “pleasure” and the “experience of pleasure” are simulta-

srid pas gzung 'dzin mi rung ba dang | ' don so sor rig pa'i nye ba'i rgyu ^δ med pa lasogs pas kyang ^ε mi gnod de |.

Interlinear notes: ^α *bye brag du smra bar spyod pa'i*; ^β (long illegible note); ^γ *'brel ba med par **la*; ^δ *mig shes kyis gzugs rtogs la sgra mi rtogs pa'i*; ^ε *phyi rol don kun rdzob du khas blangs* *

“This position is not refuted by arguments such as (1) because [the object and the cognition] are distinct and simultaneous, there cannot be a relation [between them]. Therefore it is improper that they would be what is apprehended and what apprehends. Or (2) there would be no immediate cause for the distinct episodes of awareness of objects.”

¹⁰⁰ *dBu ma de kho na nyid 13b7*: ^α *nam <pa> med pa<r> don la 'dzin par mi rigs ^β so zhe na | don dam pa'i dpyad pas mi gnod pa'i ' dzin pa khas mi len no zhes slob dpon ^δ dag lan 'debs so | ^ε.*

Interlinear notes: ^α *shes pa la yul gyi*; ^β *te don 'dzin pa la shes pa la don ky'i nam pa 'char dgos pa la de med pas_so zhes rgol ba'o*; ^γ *phyi rol don*; ^δ *lo tsa*; ^ε *me tig pa gsung ngo*

¹⁰¹ *dBu ma de kho na nyid 13b7–14b4* (*'dod pa'i phyogs nyid gzung ba dang don dang 'dzin pa ma grub pa'i brtsad pa spang pa nyid dang bcas*).

¹⁰² *dBu ma de kho na nyid 14a7–b3*. In the text, this comes after the discussion of point (ii), on which see §2.4.2.c.2 below.

neous, and (c') there is self-awareness even though there is no agent/patient-relation between self-awareness and what it is aware of.¹⁰³ Objections against rGya dmar ba's non-representationalist model of cognition would thus entail corresponding objections to the accepted model of self-awareness.

c.2 Explaining the distinctiveness of apprehensions

To account for the distinctiveness of apprehensions (*'dzin pa tha dad*) (ii), rGya dmar ba first appeals to the distinction between the sense faculties (*dbang po*). Thus an "apprehension of form" (*gzugs 'dzin*) is distinct from an "apprehension of sound" (*sgra 'dzin*) because the first involves the faculty of seeing (referred to as "the eye"), the second involves the faculty of hearing ("the ear"). What rGya dmar ba seems eager to imply is that this explanation is also accepted by the representationalist Sautrāntika, and accounts for the distinctiveness of apprehension without appealing to aspects. In the context of this discussion, rGya dmar ba puts forward the Vaibhāṣika view that the agent of cognition is a sense faculty (Skt. *indriya*).¹⁰⁴ The relation between the notions of "apprehending" (*'dzin pa*) and "understanding" (*rtogs pa*) is also clarified as follows: distinct apprehensions are states of affairs (*don*) that are also defining characteristics (*mtshan nyid*) grounding the distinction between the respective conventions (*tha snyad*) or definienda (*mtshon bya*), e.g., the convention "understanding of form" (*gzugs rtogs*) for the first, the convention "understanding of sound" (*sgra rtogs*) for the second.

To account for the difference between the "apprehension of white" (*dkar 'dzin*) and the "apprehension of yellow (*ser 'dzin*)"—in which case the sense faculty is the same—rGya dmar ba invokes the "specificity of the apprehending element" (*'dzin cha'i khyad par*) resulting from the specificity of the sense faculty (*dbang po'i*

¹⁰³ Support for this model is drawn from the *Madhyamakālaṅkāra* (k. 18 and k. 17 are cited, and rGya dmar ba composes a parallel verse for the case of the cognition of external objects) and, according to an interlinear note, Jñānagarbha's work (probably SDVV at SDV 6d).

¹⁰⁴ *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 14a3–4: *des na bye brag du smra ba dbang po nyid lta bar 'dod pa de la bsams na | legs so ||*. "Thus, if one considers the Vaibhāṣika acceptance that the sense organ itself is what sees, this is correct." This view is attested, for instance, in AK 1:42 and AKBh 30.4–12.

khyad par). The latter is itself a matter of the specificity of the “conjunction” (*'tshogs pa'i khyad par*). This expression must probably be understood as a reference to the Vaibhāṣika model of cognition, in which a sense faculty, the object and consciousness “come together” (Skt. *sannipātaḥ*).¹⁰⁵ “Apprehension of white” and “apprehension of yellow” thus differ because the “conjunction” involves a white object in the first case, a yellow object in the second.

Experience of	sense (<i>dbang po</i>)	apprehension of (<i>'dzin pa</i>) – state of affairs/ definiens	“understanding of” (<i>rtogs pa</i>) – convention/ definiendum
sound	ear	apprehension of sound	“understanding of sound”
form	eye	apprehension of form/ color	“understanding of form”
white	eye	apprehension of white	“understanding of white”
yellow	eye	apprehension of yellow	“understanding of yellow”

At the end of the day, it is thus the object that is responsible for the specificity of the cognition, as in the Sautrāntika’s model. But rGya dmar ba’s point is that the object is simultaneous with cognition and merely characterizes cognition in the same way a stick held by a person characterizes the person as a “stick-holder”; the stick does not cause the stick-holder or modify it.¹⁰⁶

2.4.3 Correct and Incorrect Conventionalities

The last portion of rGya dmar ba’s presentation of his own position addresses the identification of correct and incorrect conventionalities, which was the object of Section V.4.¹⁰⁷

He distinguishes correct and incorrect conventionalities based on the criterion of “causal efficacy”—which corresponds to the

¹⁰⁵ See AKBh 143.2–3 ad AK 3:30b on the simultaneity and contact of a sense, an object and its cognition and AKBh 34.3–4 on the simultaneity of a sense and cognition. But note that rGya dmar ba refers in the present discussion to the distinctiveness of “apprehension” as “a phenomenon that is an effect of the sense faculty” (*dbang po'i 'bras bu'i chos*). This point remains to be clarified.

¹⁰⁶ See *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 14b3. The “stick” (*dbyug pa*) simile is said in the interlinear note to come from a work by Dharmottara. This could refer to the discussion on characteristic and characterized (*khyad par/khyad par can*) in PVinT I 53b–54a.

¹⁰⁷ *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 14b7–15a6.

one given by Jñānagarbha in SDV 12ab.¹⁰⁸ He combines it with the criterion of “absence of opposition by a valid cognition.” Thus, things such as pots are “correct conventionalities”; they are established as being causally efficient by experience, and this cognition is not opposed. In contrast, things such as double moons or objects in dreams are “incorrect conventionalities.”

rGya dmar ba thus rejects the controversial view that the objects of dreams and hallucinations are correct conventionalities, or, more generally, that all non-conceptual cognitions have veridical objects, which was associated with Lo tsa and his followers. Lo tsa’s position was labeled “in agreement with Vaibhāṣika.” But rGya dmar ba argues in the conclusion of this section that those who hold this view cannot claim to be in agreement with the Vaibhāṣikas, because their position does not match what is explained by Vasubandhu in the *Abhidharmakośa*.¹⁰⁹

3. Possible Source(s) of the Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka Orientation

rGya dmar ba’s perspective appears to constitute a modified (and less extreme) version of the position that was adopted by Lo tsa and some of his followers. But the question remains of which (if any) Indian textual sources did rGya dmar ba (and before him, Lo tsa) rely on to support this perspective. I list here the various hints that I could so far gather from the sources I have examined.

i. Jñānagarbha

In the *dBu ma de kho na nyid*, in the presentation of Lo tsa’s view by Jo btsun, Jñānagarbha’s SDV and a commentary are mentioned in connection to the controversial tenet that dreams (or all non-conceptual cognitions) have a veridical object. Commenting on this passage of the SDVV in his *dBu ma bden gnyis kyi tī kā*, rGya dmar

¹⁰⁸ According to the early bKa’ gdams pa work attributed to Atiśa, this criterion was adopted by most scholars who divided conventional reality in dependence upon philosophical tenets. See Apple 2016: 641.

¹⁰⁹ *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 15a5–6: ^α rnam med kyis don ’dzin pa la rtog med ’khrul pa mi ’dod pa rnams ni bye brag du smra ba’i ’dod pa ^β yang ma rig [15a6] pa ste | slob dpon dbyig gnyen gyis mdzod du bshad pa dang ma mthun pa’i phyir ro |.

Interlinear notes: ^α shes pa; ^β r byed pa yang bye brag pa’i ’dod pa.

ba identifies it as the passage “that founds the system (*gzhung btsugs pa*) of Madhyamaka in agreement with Vaibhāṣika.”¹¹⁰

In Gangs pa’s presentation of the view of those who follow Lo tsa, a commentary on SDVV *ad*SDV 3cd and *ad*SDV 4d is mentioned as the source (*khyung byed*) for their non-representationalist position.¹¹¹ This commentary (*ti ka*) is also mentioned in connection to the ascription of non-representational external realism to “this teacher” (here: Jñānagarbha) in rGya dmar ba’s *dBu ma bden gnyis kyi ṭi kā* on SDV 3cd cum *vytti*.¹¹²

This indicates that Lo tsa and those who adopted his perspective regarded non-representational external realism in general to be the position of Jñānagarbha. Did rGya dmar ba also think this? An interlinear note attached to rGya dmar ba’s initial discussion of the divisions of Madhyamaka in the *dBu ma de kho na nyid* seems to confirm this. In the passage in which rGya dmar ba criticizes his predecessors’ typology, noting that they left out the Vaibhāṣikas, an interlinear note below “Vaibhāṣika” reads: “Jñānagarbha, etc.” (see §2.3.1, n. 83).

While characterizing Jñānagarbha as a Vaibhāṣika might sound peculiar, if one thinks of the minimal criteria by which rGya dmar ba defines Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka, it does not differ so much from the later characterization of Jñānagarbha as a “Mādhyamika following worldly conventions” by bCom ldan ral gri and dBus pa blo gsal (see §1.1.d). Note, however, that none of the doxographies known to me that mention Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka associate it with Jñānagarbha.

ii. Śubhagupta (and Arcata)

I evoked in my study of Phya’s position the possible influence of Śubhagupta on the adoption of the view that object and cognition are simultaneous, a view that makes Phya pa’s perspective, to some extent at least, “in agreement with Vaibhāṣika.” The Tibetan trans-

¹¹⁰ See n. 90.

¹¹¹ *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 12a5.

¹¹² See *dBu ma bden gnyis kyi ṭi kā* 11a4–5: *’dir mthong pa ni mam pa gnyis te zhes pas yang dag pa dang log pa’i bye brag gis kun rdzob gnyis su ti kas bshad pa ltar | slob dpon [11a5] ’di’ kun rdzob du rnam med kyes don ’dzin par bzhed pa’i phyir rtog med la snang pa blo’i rnam par mi ’dod pas | zla ba gnyis lasogs pa’ang kun rdzob du phyi rol gi don du bzhed de |.*

lation of Śubhagupta’s **Bāhyārthasiddhikārikā* dates to the time of the Early Diffusion of Buddhism and was thus potentially available to Phya pa and earlier scholars.¹¹³ The many verses from this work cited in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and its *Pañjikā* were also available to them. I showed that verse 81 of the **Bāhyārthasiddhikārikā*, which is not cited by Phya pa but is cited in the epistemological work of Phya pa’s student gTsang nag pa, was a likely source for Phya pa’s account of the status of object and subject in the case the object and its cognition are distinct and simultaneous, since Phya pa mentions the notion of their “having the same causal complex,” which is found in this verse.

My hypothesis that Phya pa could base himself on Śubhagupta finds some external support in the fact that in the doxography of dBus pa blo gsal, verse 81 of the **Bāhyārthasiddhikārikā* is cited in the presentation of the Vaibhāṣika system precisely to answer the problem related to the lack of relation between subject and object if they are held to be distinct and simultaneous.¹¹⁴

dBus pa blo gsal’s involving Śubhagupta in the context of the presentation of the Vaibhāṣika system is in contrast to earlier discussions, such as Grags pa rgyal mtshan’s doxographical presentation, which relies mainly (if not exclusively) on Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośa*. It finds a precedent in the doxography of his teacher bCom ldan ral gri.¹¹⁵ Discussing the same issue,¹¹⁶ bCom ldan ral gri interestingly distinguishes the views of Śubhagupta and Arcaṭa (Tib. Chos ’byung byin = Skt. Dharmākara-datta)¹¹⁷ from those of the “Vaibhāṣikas who follow the *Abhidha-*

¹¹³ See Steinkellner and Much 1995: 52–54.

¹¹⁴ Text edited in Mimaki 1982: 67–68.

¹¹⁵ *Grub mtha’ rgyan gyi me tog* 36b3–44b3.

¹¹⁶ See *Grub mtha’ rgyan gyi me tog* 39b8–40a8 (*gal te rnam pa med kyang don rig na thams cad kyis thams cad rig par ’gyur la | tha dad dus mnyam la ’brel pa 2 ka med pas rig pa mi rung ngo zhe na* |).

¹¹⁷ In the section on Vaibhāṣika, Arcaṭa is mentioned a second time together with Śubhagupta on the issue of the existence of the three times (*Grub mtha’ rgyan gyi me tog* 42a5–6). Their view (which rejects the substantial existence of the three times) is contrasted to those of Dharmatrāta, Ghoṣaka, Vasumitra, and Buddhadeva. bCom ldan ral gri comments that Śubhagupta and Arcaṭa are Vaibhāṣikas and not, like these four, Sarvāstivādin. They are only “logicians [who hold a view] similar to those” (*Grub mtha’ rgyan gyi me tog* 42a6–7: *de la snga ma 4 ni* [42a7] *thams cad yod par smra ba yin la phyi ma dag ni bye brag tu smra ba yin kyang thams cad yod par smra ba ni ma yin gyi de dang ’thun pa’i rtog ge pa yin no* |). Śubha-

rma[kośa]” (*bye brag tu smra ba chos mngon pa ba rnams*). He supplies an additional explanation ascribed to “some non-representationalist Tibetan teacher” (*bod kyi slob dpon shes pa rnam med du smra ba kha cig na re*).¹¹⁸ Verse 81 of the **Bāhyārthasiddhikārikā* is cited by bCom ldan ral gri when presenting the answer of Śubhagupta and Arcaṭa.¹¹⁹

rGya dmar ba’s answer to this first issue does not appeal to the notion of “arising from the same causal complex.” It rests, as we have seen, on the parallel with self-awareness (see §2.4.2.c.1). But let us consider a second issue that comes up both in dBus pa blo gsal’s discussion of the Vaiḅhāṣika view and in rGya dmar ba’s text, namely, the question of explaining the specificity of various cognitions without appealing to an immediate cause (§2.4.2.c.2). dBus pa blo gsal cites verses 92 and 106–107a of the **Bāhyārthasiddhikārikā* as the Vaiḅhāṣika answer to this problem.¹²⁰ Verse 106 contains the idea that the specificity derives from the distinctiveness of the sense faculty, which corresponds precisely to rGya dmar ba’s initial answer.

Additional “hard” evidence would be desirable to exclude the possibility that the similarities of Phya pa’s position and rGya dmar ba’s position with Śubhagupta’s statements are merely incidental.

iii. *Maitrīyogin

Go rams pa, who noted that it is unclear which Madhyamaka interpreter should be associated with this category, explained that upholders of this category were Vaiḅhāṣikas who embraced Madhyamaka. He gave as an example Bla ma Byams pa’i rnal ’byor pa, which could refer to *Maitrīyogin, who was an Indian teacher

gupta is mentioned without Arcaṭa on the issue of atomism, in the context of which verses 45 and 46 of the **Bāhyārthasiddhikārikā* are cited (*Grub mtha’ rgyan gyi me tog 37a5–7*).

¹¹⁸ Compare this explanation with the passage that comes after the citation of v. 81 in dBus pa blo gsal’s doxography and with *dBu ma de kho na nyid 14a1*.

¹¹⁹ *Grub mtha’ rgyan gyi me tog 40a1–7*. Verse 81 is cited on 40a4–5. While the version of the verse cited by dBus pa blo gsal corresponds to the Tibetan translation of the **Bāhyārthasiddhikārikā* preserved in the canon, the version cited by bCom ldan Ral gri is identical with that cited by gTsang nag pa, which is a slightly modified version of the one found in the Tibetan translation of the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā*.

¹²⁰ Text edited in Mimaki 1982: 68.

of Atiśa (see §2.1.2.vii.b). A similar explanation was reportedly given by 'Brom ston (see §1.2.i) but no name was mentioned in this connection.

iv. Āryavimuktisena

Bo dong Paṅ chen associates Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka with Āryavimuktisena, the author of a commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* (§1.2.v). Further research in the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*-related corpus might allow additional light to be shed on the dawn of Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka as a category and its adoption in the rNgog-tradition, as well as on its link to the Madhyamaka-Prajñāpāramitā synthesis issuing from the works of Vimuktisena. One can note in this regard that Vimuktisena's work was translated by rNgog Blo ldan shes rab.¹²¹ However, one should keep in mind that, unlike Bo dong, other scholars, such as sTag tshang Lo tsā ba and Paṅ chen bSod nams grags pa (1478–1554), associate the name Āryavimuktisena with the category of Yogācāra-Madhyamaka.¹²²

v. Bhāviveka

sTag tshang Lo tsā mentions that some scholars associate Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka with Bhāviveka (§1.2.vi). The relevant source remains to be identified.

vi. Dharmottara

Kevin Vose recently pointed out to me a surprising passage from Pa tshab's recovered works, in which the view that "object and cognition are distinct and simultaneous" is ascribed to Dharmottara.¹²³ While this possibility cannot be excluded given that Dharmottara was a student of Śubhagupta and Dharmākara-datta/Arcaṭa (see above ii.), I was unable to find any potential sources for such an ascription in Dharmottara's epistemological works. It is however possible that Pa tshab was referring to

¹²¹ See Apple 2009 on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* literature in Tibet, and p. 18 on rNgog Blo ldan shes rab's contribution.

¹²² For sTag tshang's classification of Āryavimuktisena, see *Grub mtha' kun shes* 87b5–88a2. For bSod nams grags pa's association, see Mimaki 1982: 37.

¹²³ *Tshig gsal ba'i dka' ba bshad pa* (in *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum* vol. 11, 29–203), p. 160.ii.9–10: *slob dpon chos mchog yul dang shes pa dus mnyam du 'dod do* |.

Dharmottara, the author of the *Abhidharmahṛdaya*, and not Dharmottara the logician.

Conclusion

rGya dmar ba acknowledges in his conclusion to the discussion on division of Madhyamaka at the conventional level that his explanation differs in many ways from the ones of earlier Tibetan scholars, but claims that “it does not cause any displeasure to the learned ones.”¹²⁴ Nevertheless, it is obvious that his Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka perspective never became a popular option in the Tibetan tradition. Its adoption was limited to rGya dmar ba’s pupil Phya pa and a limited number of the latter’s successors. The lack of adepts certainly also played a role in the fact that this category fell for the most part into oblivion in Tibetan doxographies.

Among the probable causes for this lack of success might be the fact that Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka lacks a clear (or at least unambiguously accepted) basis in Indian sources, in contrast notably to Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka or Yogācāra-Madhyamaka.

For Tibetan scholars who were also active in the epistemological field, another problem may have been the incompatibility of this position with the Sautrāntika/Yogācāra perspectives advocated by Dharmakīrti. The *dBu ma de kho na nyid* mentions that some scholars (such as Jo btsun) adopted differing attitudes in the epistemological context and the Madhyamaka context: they followed Dharmakīrti in the former context but refused any philosophical system in the latter. But rGya dmar ba himself rejects this option. The issue of the compatibility of the Vaibhāṣika perspective with Dharmakīrti’s works is only raised indirectly in the *dBu ma de kho na nyid* in connection with rGya dmar ba’s refutation of Gangs pa’s representationalist position. rGya dmar ba’s refutation includes a critique of the proofs of representationalism based on the logical reasons “certitude of co-apprehension” and “awareness,”¹²⁵ which are logical reasons supported by Dharmakīrti. rGya dmar ba’s answer to the charge of “contradiction with the Scriptures” is that the relevant passages from Dharmakīrti’s works consist “merely in

¹²⁴ *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 15a6: *des na mkhas mams mi mnyes med ||*.

¹²⁵ *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 13a6–7 (*bkag pa la lung dang ’gal ba spang pa*).

the explanation of the doxographical positions.” An interlinear note completes the sentence: “but not Dharmakīrti’s statement of his own view.” In other words, rGya dmar ba’s refutation does not touch Dharmakīrti himself, but only the philosophical systems that Dharmakīrti discusses.¹²⁶ This would mean that rGya dmar ba did not consider Dharmakīrti’s final position to be either Sautrāntika or Yogācāra.

I have shown that both Phya pa and mTshur ston acknowledge that their own position diverges from Dharmakīrti on this point and that they do not seem to view this divergence as problematic. But Sa skya Paṇḍita strongly criticized his predecessors and contemporaries who claimed to interpret Dharmakīrti correctly while refuting the Sautrāntika and idealist perspectives advocated in his works. It may thus have become difficult, after the 13th century, for scholars to ignore the issue of “faithfulness to the founding fathers” when developing their own systems.

Even for those who were ready to downplay this aspect, or did not aim at merging epistemology and Madhyamaka, the Vaibhāṣika-option may not have been appealing for other reasons. In particular, Vaibhāṣika did not have a particularly good reputation among Buddhist systems. As a philosophical option, it is systematically placed at the lowest end of the scale of analysis. Some of the tenets it supports even place it at the brink of being categorized as “non-Buddhist.” For such reasons, scholars might have been reluctant to label themselves “Vaibhāṣika-Mādhyamikas.”

The (arguably) intuitive nature of the main “points of agreement” with the Vaibhāṣika was used by rGya dmar ba for arguing that “Madhyamaka following worldly conventions” was in fact “Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka.” The same point could have been a reason for scholars who supported an external realist non-representationalist perspective but did not want to be associated with the name “Vaibhāṣika” to label themselves “Mādhyamika following worldly agreement,” rather than “Vaibhāṣika-Mādhyamikas.” However, whether in the perspective of Jo btsun or that of later fol-

¹²⁶ *dBu ma de kho na nyid* 13a7: ^α *yang na grub mtha’ tshul lugs bshad du zad pas slob dpon gyis* ^β *rigs par bshad pas bdag la gnod pa ni ma yin no* |].

Interlinear notes:

^α *slob dpon chos kyi grags pa rang mi bzhed kyi*; ^β *rnam bcas skyong ngo she na*.

lowers of Candrakīrti, the category of “Madhyamaka following worldly agreement” involves the rejection of any philosophical system. This is not just because “substantialist” systems are refuted in final analysis, but because, even at the conventional level, they are not held to be sound.

In this regard, another probable cause for the limited success of the Vaibhāṣika-Madhyamaka perspective might just have been its weakness as a maintainable philosophical system. The arguments in defense of non-representational external realism put forward by rGya dmar ba were manifestly not considered convincing enough: the objections that rGya dmar ba intended to answer are indeed reiterated by later authors rejecting Vaibhāṣika non-representational external realism as a potential perspective to be adopted at the conventional level.¹²⁷

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Prasannapadā

PP Candrakīrti, *Prasannapadā*. Tibetan version. D 3860, 'A 1a–200a.

Pramāṇaviniścayaṭīkā

PVinṭ Dharmottara, *Pramāṇaviniścayaṭīkā*. Tibetan version. D 4227, Tshe 1a–178a3.

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¹²⁷ This is the case, for instance, in the works of successors of Phya pa such as Chu mig pa or gTsang drug rdo rje. See Chu mig pa's *rNam rgyal* A2a4–5a3; B2a8–6a4 (Chu mig pa himself subscribes to true-representational idealism at the conventional level) or gTsang drug rdo rje's *gSal byed sgron ma* 4a4–4b1 (gTsang drug rdo rje refutes all four philosophical systems). These authors notably invoke the problem ensuing from the lack of a relation between an object and its cognition if these are distinct and simultaneous.

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Candrakīrti, *Madhyamakāvatāra*. Tibetan version. D 3861, 'A 201a–219a. For the Sanskrit of the sixth chapter, see Li 2015.

Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya

MABh Candrakīrti, *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya*. Tibetan version. D 3862, 'A 220b–348a.

Satyadvayavibhaṅga-kārikā and *-vṛtti*

SDV/SDVV Jñānagarbha, *Satyadvayavibhaṅga-kārikā* and *-vṛtti*. Tibetan version. D 3881, Sa 1–3b3 and D 3882, Sa 3b3–15b1. See also Eckel 1987.

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