

(Means of) Valid Cognition (pramāṇa: tshad ma) in Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Sources

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Abstract:

This paper is in essence a report of a part of my ongoing attempt to explore a multilayered Buddhist apology by the eleventh-century Tibetan Buddhist scholar and translator Rong-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po. I have been trying to examine four sets of triadic concepts underlying his apologetical strategies: his ideas of (a) three kinds of witness (*dpang po gsum*), (b) three kinds of (means of) valid cognition (*tshad ma gsum*), (c) three hermeneutical tools of *āgama*, *yukti/vidyā*, and *upadeśa* (*lung rig/s man ngag gsum*), and (d) the analogy of the three-fold, *tāpātchedāt-nikaṣāt*, analysis of gold. When I began my research on this topic, I had no intention to consider other schemes of *pramāṇa* found elsewhere in Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions. But a discussion of Rong-zom-pa's three-*pramāṇa* concepts without putting it into proper and broader context turned out to be unsatisfactory. In my talk, I wish to discuss the following four main topics: (a) Rong-zom-pa's use of the term *pramāṇa*, (b) non-Buddhist positions on the number of *pramāṇas*, (c) Buddhist positions on the number of *pramāṇas*, and (d) Rong-zom-pa's own position on the three *pramāṇas*. In doing so, I hope to give a comprehensive overview of the number of *pramāṇas* in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist sources.



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1:15 pm-2:30 pm EST

Thomas Chan-Soo Kang Room, S050 CGIS-South

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