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Abstract:

This article puts to the test the ascription of the authorship of the brT sod pa’i de nyid – a short versified  
Tibetan treatise on debate – to gTsang nag pa brTson ’grus seng ge (?–after 1195). It addresses the issue  
of its dating and authorship by comparing the central section with the excursus on debate in gTsang nag  
pa’s commentary on Dharmakīrti’s Pramāṇaviniścaya and by exploring specific nicknames mentioned  
in the brT sod pa’i de nyid for arguments by consequence (thal ’gyur).

Project:

TibSchol – The Dawn of Tibetan Buddhist Scholasticism (11th-13th c.)

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“Thunderbolt Blaze” or “Armless Hero”? On the Authorship of the Essence of Debate
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Introduction
Like a magician, Leonard van der Kuijp always surprised me by pulling out of his hat the rarest Tibetan works. Recently he entrusted me with an early work on debate of an unusual style. In anticipation of my forthcoming critical edition and translation of this text, the present essay is a small token of gratitude to Leonard’s immense kindness and generosity in sharing both fascinating texts and his expertise and enthusiasm.

Leonard van der Kuijp located a copy of The Essence of Debate (Brtsod pa’i de nyid, hereafter Rtsod) at the China Nationalities Library of the Cultural Palace of Nationalities in Beijing in 1993. Based on the colophon of Rtsod that names “the monk-logician Tsöndrü Senggé (Brtson ’grus seng ge)” as the author,1 he ascribed the work to Tsangnagpa Tsöndrü Senggé (Gtsang nag pa Brtson ’grus seng ge, ?–after 1195), the foremost of the Eight Great Lions—the group of Chapa Chökyi Senggé’s (Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge, 1109–69) leading students in epistemology (tshad ma).2 This paper puts the proposed authorship of Rtsod to the test through a

1 Rtsod 3a8: rigs par smra ba’i dge slong brtson ’grus seng ges sbyar ba’o. The colophon is followed by a topical outline of Rtsod (fols. 3a7–3b1) ascribed to “the monk Tsöndrü Senggé.” The cover page reports the latter ascription.

comparison with the excursus on debate in Tsangnagpa’s extensive commentary on
Dharmakīrti’s *Ascertainment of Valid Cognition (Pramāṇaviniścaya)* (*Bsdus*).\(^3\) The issue of its
dating and authorship is further addressed by exploring specific nicknames for arguments by
consequence (*thal ’gyur*) mentioned in *Rtsod*.

**Rtsod and Bsdus on Debate**

*Rtsod* is a short treatise in verses available in a unique three-folio manuscript (nine lines per
folio) in cursive ‘*bru tsha*’ script bearing a few interlinear glosses. This work on debate stands
apart from discussions on the topic typical of early epistemological summaries and
commentaries. Indeed, the greatest part of *Rtsod* is devoted to exposing the cause and result of
vulgar and superior debate, providing compelling motives for rejecting bad debate (such as to
avoid being reborn in hell) and giving a general exposition of the path to enlightenment. The
central portion of the work (fols. 1b7–2b5) more specifically addresses topics constituting the
“essence of debate” (*brtsod pa’i de nyid*), an expression that gives the work its name.\(^4\) The
programmatic verse of this section announces nineteen topics but actually lists twenty-seven
notions, which are subsequently explained in thirty verses (notions 15, 16, and 17 being divided

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\(^3\) See van der Kuijp 1989 for an introduction to the publication of the facsimile of *Bsdus*
preserved at the Tōyō Bunko. Ten other works have appeared so far. Nine were published in
2006 in vol. 13 of the *Bka’ gdamgs gsung ’bum* collection (hereafter KDSB), in which the *Bsdus*
facsimile was also reprinted. One more appeared in 2010 in the collection *Bod kyi lo rgyus nam
thar phyogs bsgrigs* (BDRC: W1KG10687) (van der Kuijp 2016, 251). Nine of these ten works
name Tsöndrü Senggé as author in their colophons, with the addition of various specifications—
e.g., *shag kya’i dge slong, dbu ma smra ba’i dge slong, mang du thos pa’i dge slong*. The
commentary on the difficult points of the *Bodhisattva’s Way of Life (Bodhicaryāvatāra)* in
KDSB, vol. 13, 647–742, names instead “the learned Tsangnagpa” (*mKhas pa rtsang [=gtsang]
nag pa*). The colophon of *Bsdus* (fol. 201a4), like that of *Rtsod*, ascribes the work to “the monk-
logician Tsöndrü Senggé.” The authorship of *Bsdus* is confirmed by external evidence.

\(^4\) According to the topical outline, this is the third subsection of the section on the
determination of the nature of debate (*brtsod pa’i rang bzhin nges par bya ba*). The preceding
two subsections deal respectively with the cause and effect of vulgar and superior debate. The
title of the third subsection, *spyi’i de nyid*, can be understood to mean “the essence of [debate] in
general” (i.e., without the specification “vulgar” or “superior”).
into two verses each). It is not obvious how these notions should be grouped to arrive at the number nineteen.\(^5\)

1. participants in the debate
2. occasions that are improper for debating
3. occasions in which one engages in debate
4. points of defeat when questioning
5. points of defeat when pointing out faults
6. points of defeat when setting forth a state of affairs
7. points of defeat when presenting a proof
8. points of defeat of the referee
9. status of the object [about which one debates]
10. way to argue
11. questions
12. answers
13. causes [of expertise in disputation]
14. the ornaments [embellishing the disputation]
15. the motivations (inferior and superior)
16. the result (pure and impure)
17. similes [of good and bad debate]
18. philosophical positions
19. property possessors
20. characteristics of the logical reason
21. the divisions of logical reasons
22. fallacious reasons
23. modes of expression
24. autonomous arguments
25. arguments by consequence
26. fallacious consequences
27. elimination [of the conclusion]

In *Bsdus*, Tsangnagpa’s excursus on debate (fols. 155b8–164b8) prefaces the word explanation of the third chapter of the *Ascertainment of Valid Cognition* on “inference for others.” The author distinguishes three points: the determination of the participants in debate, the statements associated with each, and the division of these statements.\(^6\) The last division is done

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\(^5\) A reader—maybe the same person who wrote a few interlinear glosses on fol. 1—unsuccessfully attempted to make sense of this, writing numbers next to the verses in the explanatory section. The reader used “9” twice, regrouped several notions under “16,” and gave up after “17,” leaving the explanation of the last notions unnumbered.

\(^6\) These points are different from the three points the author identifies to be the main items in *Ascertainment of Valid Cognition*: the way of proving a thesis to an opponent, stating the faults in the proof, and points of defeat (*Bsdus* fol. 156a4).
according to the speaker (this includes a discussion of points of defeat), to what the statements achieve (proof or refutation), and to the mode of presentation (autonomous argument or consequence).

Many of the twenty-seven points presented in Rtsod simply do not appear in Bsdus—for instance the ornaments, the causes for being an expert, or the similes for good and bad debate. These points are not discussed in Dharmakīrti’s treatment of debate in the context of inference for others in the Ascertainment of Valid Cognition and the Commentary on Valid Cognition (Pramāṇavārttika), nor in the Science of Debate (Vādanyāya). Their nature recalls, rather, the kind of topics addressed in the sections on debate in Asaṅga’s Stages of Spiritual Practice (Yogācārabhūmi) and Compendium of Abhidharma (Abhidharmasamuccaya). However, the terminology in the Tibetan translation of the section of the Stages of Spiritual Practice devoted to the science of reasoning differs, and there is no specific match regarding the contents details that would suggest a direct source of influence. Mention of such “non-technical” elements of debate are not commonly found in early Tibetan epistemological works. Parallels may be located in Sakya Pandita’s (Sa skya Paṇḍita, 1182–1251) Entrance Gate for the Wise (Mkhas pa’jug pa’i sgo), where the author highlights the features of “debate in accordance with the Dharma” and of a “noble debater” (building on Dharmakīrti’s remark to this effect in the Science of Debate) and also points out that improper debating practices cause rebirth in evil realms.

Regarding the more “technical” elements of disputation, the comparison between Rtsod and Bsdus is challenged by the format and style of Rtsod. Not only is Rtsod composed in verses, but it explains each notion (or subdivision in the case of nos. 15–17) in the form of a triad. A triad is actually expected in several cases, such as the three kinds of logical reasons (no. 21) or the three characteristics of the logical reason (no. 20). In other cases, the triad is artificial. For instance, for

7 See Wayman 1958 and the more recent study in Todeschini 2011.

8 See Stages of Spiritual Practice, Dergé Tengyur 187a7–199b2. Compare notably: Rtsod no. 13 brtsod pa mkhas pa’i rgyu ≈ smra ba la gces spras byed pa’i chos rnams (Skt. vāde bahukarā dharmāḥ); no. 14 brtsod pa mdzes pa’i rgyan ≈ smra ba’i rgyan (Skt. vādālāṃkāra); no. 15 brtsod pa’i bsam pa ≈ smra ba las nges par ‘byung ba (Skt. vādaniḥsaraṇa).

9 See Mkhas’jug 3.12–13 and 3.69, translated in Jackson 1987, 329, 364. One may also note that Mkhas’jug 3.72 uses the same image as Rtsod in its introductory verse of homage—namely, the Buddha’s speech defeating bad views is compared to the lion’s roar scaring wild beasts.
number 23, the modes of expression of arguments, the author adds to the standard pair (homogeneous and heterogeneous) the “fallacious statements with a residue” to arrive at three.

While the two texts agree on standard issues of Dharmakīrtian logic, there are notable differences regarding some notions, in particular Rtsod’s nos. 1, 4–8, and 25–27.

The Debate Participants (No. 1)
Both texts posit three participants—proponent (rgol ba), respondent (phyir rgol), and referee (dpang po)—but define the first two differently. The proponent is “he who takes up the defense of a thesis” in Rtsod, but “he who takes up10 the proof of his own position” in Bsdus. The respondent is “he who takes up the refutation of the thesis” in Rtsod, but “he who takes up pointing out the faults of the proponent” in Bsdus.11

The Points of Defeat (Nos. 4–8)
Tibetan scholars differ in their count of the points of defeat, as well as on the number of contexts associated with each participant.12 Rtsod and Bsdus uphold two different models:

- Rtsod counts fifteen points of defeat, organized into five triads (nos. 4–8) that correspond to five contexts in which the participants are individually involved. The first two triads are associated with two contexts of the debate in which the respondent is involved (asking questions and stating faults), the next two with contexts in which the proponent is involved (setting forth a state of affairs and presenting a proof). The last triad concerns the referee.

10 Bsdus (fol. 156b1) makes clear that the mention of “accepting” or “taking up” (khas len) is part of each definition. It guarantees that the persons agree on the role they are to fulfill and are therefore liable to incur defeat if they do not fulfill it.

11 Rtsod (fol. 1b8): brtsod pa ’i skabs kyi gang zag gsum yin te / dam bca’ skyong par khas len rgol ba dang // dam bca’ sun ‘byin khas len phyir rgol dang // brtsod pa ’i shags ‘byed khas len dpang po’o // Bsdus (fol. 156a7–8): gang zag gsum gyi mtshan nyid ni rang gi ’dod pa bsgrub pa dang rgol ba’i skyon brjod pa dang de dag gi gshag ’byed [156a8] par khas blangs pa nyid yin te khas ma blangs kyang de dag du ’gyur na ha cang thal ba ’i phyir ro //

12 See Hugon 2011, 125.
• _Bsdus_ counts instead _nine_ points of defeat distributed over three contexts: two contexts involving the respondent (asking question and refuting), but only one involving the proponent (setting forth a state of affairs); it does not include points of defeat pertaining to the referee. One point of defeat linked with both the proponent and respondent is mentioned but not counted when the total number of points of defeat is stated.

Important differences of phrasing are found for the points of defeat common to the two works. For instance, regarding the faults for the proponent stating the object of debate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Rtsod</em> no. 6</th>
<th><em>Bsdus</em> fol. 156b3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- <em>gzhan gyis dris dang lan la mi ‘bad</em></td>
<td>- <em>pha rol gyis dris pa’i don mi brjod pa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>dam bcar mi ‘os chos rnams sgrub pa</em></td>
<td>- <em>skyon can brjod pa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>skabs las ‘das pa sgrub byar byed pa</em></td>
<td>- <em>ma dris pa’i don brjod pa</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Arguments by Consequence (Nos. 25–26)_

_Rtsod_’s discussion of consequences (thal ‘gyur) is limited to the distinction between correct and fallacious consequences, while _Bsdus_ (fols. 158b6–159a4) further distinguishes between correct consequences that prove a thesis and correct consequences that only refute the opponent.

_Rtsod_ and _Bsdus_ agree on a threefold division of fallacious arguments by consequence that corresponds to three possible retorts by the respondent—namely, “logical reason not established,” “entailment not established,” and “I accept (what follows from the premises)!” Their phrasing of the first two cases differs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>Rtsod</em> no. 26</th>
<th><em>Bsdus</em> fol. 158b1 and 158b5–6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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13 A second context involving the proponent, “rejecting faults,” is mentioned in _Bsdus_ fol. 156b2 but no point of defeat is associated with it.

14 This model, shared by a number of early epistemological works and which found its way in Gelukpa textbooks, was criticized by Sakya Pandita, who argued in favor of four possible answers. See Jackson 1987, 457n216 and 459n220.
A difference in genre (one work being an independent composition, the other a commentary) cannot be invoked to explain the above discrepancies, since the passage considered in *Bsdus* is an excursus in which Tsangnagpa presents his own model. One could invoke instead a difference of scope: *Rtsod’s* emphasis being on “moral” criteria for distinguishing proper and improper debate, *Bsdus*’s focus being on logical criteria. But this distinction does not warrant discrepancies pertaining to technical notions explained in both works.15

### Nicknames for Consequences

A feature of *Rtsod’s* verses on arguments by consequence (that does not find an equivalent in *Bsdus*) deserving additional attention are nicknames given to correct consequences and to the three types of fallacious consequences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a</th>
<th>Correct consequence</th>
<th>Thunderbolt blaze</th>
<th><em>rnam</em> (=gnam) lcags ’bar ba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| b | Fallacious consequence
lacking qualification of the subject | *Catapult weapon*16 | *mtshon cha khri sgyogs* |
| c | Fallacious consequence
lacking pervasion | *Armless hero* | *dpa’o lag rdum* |
| d | Fallacious consequence
lacking elimination | *Poison-destroying peacock* | *rma bya dug ’joms* |

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15 Sakya Paṇḍita’s discussions of debate in the third chapter of the *Entrance Gate for the Wise* and in the eleventh chapter of the *Treasure of Reasoning* (*Tshad ma riggs pa’i gter*) illustrate a distinction of scope in this sense, but no divergence on technical points can be observed.

16 The term is also used for cannon, but it may refer here to a type of stone-slinger rather than a firearm.
“Poison-destroying peacock” and “catapult weapon” are reminding of the titles of two works on mind training (blo sbyong) attributed to Dharmarakṣita, the teacher of Atiśa who translated the works into Tibetan with Dromtön (’Brom ston, 1008–64). The first work has this very title, *Poison-Destroying Peacock*, the second is entitled the *Wheel Weapon* (mtshon cha ’khor lo, an expression not so different from Rtsod’s mtshon cha khri sgyogs). It is likely that the inventor of these nicknames was acquainted with these works.

Searching Tibetan epistemological works for other occurrences of these terms, I discovered several concurring models. The three main ones are represented in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B/C</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rtsod</td>
<td>Rnam rgyal</td>
<td>Me tog</td>
<td>Mtshon cha</td>
<td>Tshad don bs dus</td>
<td>Rigs rgyan</td>
<td>Rol mtsho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chu mig pa</td>
<td>Ral gri</td>
<td>Ral gri “kha cig”</td>
<td>Tshad don bs dus</td>
<td>Blo gros mtshungs med “bod rnams”</td>
<td>Dge ’dun grub</td>
<td>Śākya mchog ldan “Rtsang nag pa”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>rnam lcags ’bar ba</td>
<td>gnam/rnam lcags ’bar ba</td>
<td>gnam lcags ’bar ba</td>
<td>gnam lcags ’bar ba</td>
<td>gnam lcags ’bar ba</td>
<td>gnam lcags thog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>mtshon cha khri sgyogs</td>
<td>dpa’ bo lag rdum</td>
<td>dpa’ bo lag rdum</td>
<td>mtshon cha khri sgyogs</td>
<td>dpa’ bo lag rdum</td>
<td>mtshon cha khri sgyogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>dpa’ o lag rdum</td>
<td>mtshon cha khri sgyogs</td>
<td>gzhu mo rgyud chad</td>
<td>mtshon cha khri sgyogs</td>
<td>dpa’ bo lag rdum</td>
<td>mtshon cha khri sgyogs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 These two works are translated in Geshe Lhundub Sopa 2001. The first verse of the *Wheel Weapon* and the *Poison-Destroying Peacock* refer to the peacocks that prefer the jungles’ poisonous plants to the medicine gardens (bodhisattvas are later compared to them). See Geshe Lhundub Sopa 2001, 59: “When the peacocks roam the jungle of virulent poison, the flocks take no delight in gardens of medicinal plants, no matter how beautiful they may be, for peacocks thrive on the essence of virulent poison.” Peacocks supposedly are able to kill poisonous snakes and to eat poisonous plants without being affected by their toxins.
Model A, the version found in *Rtsod*, is identical with the one reported by Chomden Reldri (Bcom ldan ral gri, 1227–1305) in *Mtshon cha* (fol. 152a3–4), where it is ascribed to “some people” (*kha cig*). It is found as well in *Rigs rgyan* of Gendün Drup (Dge 'dun grub, 1391–1475) (pp. 327 and 333), on which more will be said in the section “Gendün Drup’s *Rigs rgyan*” below.

Model B is found in *Rnam rgyal* (A 67b8–68a2; B 77a1–2), an epistemological summary by Chumikpa Senggé Pel (Chu mig pa Seng ge dpal, ca. 1200–1270), which is also the earliest datable evidence for these nicknames. In *Rnam rgyal*, the focus is on the expression “thunderbold blaze” that illustrates the function of “defeating others” (*gzhan tshar gcod pa*) common to both consequences that induce a proof and those that do not. The four nicknames and corresponding specification appear after the statement on proof-inducing consequences; it may originally have been an insert. Model B is also found, for instance, in Séra Jetsün Chokey Gyeltse’s (Se ra rje btsun Chos kyi rgyal mshan, 1469–1544/46) commentary on the difficult points of the *Commentary on Valid Cognition*. Model B’: Model B, with a slightly different phrasing for *a* (*gnam lcags thog* instead of *gnam lcags ’bar*) and a phonetic variant for *c* (*mtshon bya* for *mtshon cha*) is reported in *Rol mtsho* (fol. 127a7) by Serdok Panchen Shakya Chokden (Gser mdog Pan chen Śākya mchog Idan, 1428–1507), who names “the Learned Tsangnagpa” (*mkhas pa rtsang [=gtsang] nag pa*) as the inventor of the four nicknames. This passage (with the reference to Tsangnagpa) is repeated by Namgyel Drakpa (Rnam rgyal grags pa, b. sixteenth century), a student of the ninth Karmapa.

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18 The two manuscripts of *Rnam rgyal* have different spelling. For *a*: A 67b8 *gnas lcags [sic]*, 67b9, and 68a1 *gnam lcags*; B 77a1 and 77a2 *rnam lcags*. For *c*: A 67b8 *khri sgvyogs*; B 77a2 *khri rgyogs*.

19 *Gsung ’bum* (BDRC: W1AC364), vol. 2, 337.

20 This was noted in Jackson 1987, 456n216.

21 *Rtags rig rigs lam gsal byed* (BDRC: W22314).
Model C is attested in Chomden Reldri’s *Me tog* (126). It gives to *c* the name “cut-off bow” (*gzhu mo rgyud chad*) instead of, as in B, “catapult weapon.”

The other occurrences of this terminology I could trace are repetitions of, or variations on, one of these models. For instance, Lodrö Tsungmé (Blo gros mtshungs med, active between 1330 and 1371)\(^{22}\) was aware of both models B and C, which he ascribes to unidentified “Tibetans” in *Tshad don bsdus* (fol. 58a4–5, *bod rnams*). As he frequently mentions the views of Chumikpa and Chomden Reldri in this epistemological summary, one can suppose that he learned these models from their works. Identifications of the source of this terminology in later works do not go beyond the vague mention of “previous scholars” (*mkhas pa snga ma rnams*).

A variant (maybe involving some confusion of terms from different models) is found in an early Kadampa work ascribed to “Nyak” (Gnyag), as yet undated.\(^{23}\) The author reports two terms for *a*, *rma bya khri sgyogs* (“peacock catapult”) and *spyi bor thog bcas* (“lightning on the head”), follows model C for *b* and *c*, and terms *d’khar che grog skyel* (“big castle with an escort of ants”\(^{2}\)). Another alternative version is found in the work of a fourteenth-century Bön scholar, Nyammé Shérap Gyeltsen (Mnyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan, 1356–1415), who uses the terms “cut-off bow” for *b*, and *mtshon cha ’phrul ’khor*—a terminological variant of “catapult weapon”—for *c*.\(^{24}\)

**Gendün Drup’s *Rigs rgyan***

The plot thickens when taking a closer look at Gendün Drup’s *Rigs rgyan*. First, the passage mentioning the “thunderbolt blaze” (327) is a quasi-literal repeat of Chumikpa’s *Rnam rgyal*, but without the sentence mentioning the four nicknames together. As for the passage in which the nicknames of the three fallacious consequences occur, it is part of a section entitled “Presentation of the Three, Proponent, Respondent, and Referee” (329–35), which includes a short section

\(^{22}\) Hugon 2018, 867n36.

\(^{23}\) *Tshad ma’i spyi skad cung zad bsdus pa*, in KDSB, vol. 44, fols. 7b6–8a8.

\(^{24}\) See *Tshad ma’i rnam ’byed ’phrul gyi sgron me’i rang ’grel*, in Bon po’i yig cha las tshad ma’i skor (BDRC: W23427), 220–21 and 374–75. This passage is cited in *Mu stegs kyi grub mtha’ tshar gcod gan tshigs thigs pa’i rigs pa smra ba’i mdo’ ‘grel*, in *Gsung ’bum* of Shérapgyeltsen (BDRC: W8LS16918), vol. 1, 273.
providing definitions and divisions and a longer discussion of their respective role in debate.\textsuperscript{25} This second subsection (\textit{rtsod pa byed pa’i rnam gzhag}, 330–35) amounts to a prose version of the discussion of the twenty-seven notions addressed in \textit{Rtsod}. The items appear in a different order and are arranged in a nested hierarchical structure. The only notable differences in contents between the two texts is that \textit{Rtsod}’s nos. 3 and 24 are omitted in \textit{Rigs rgyan} and that \textit{Rigs rgyan} counts an additional point of defeat for the proponent in the first context (no. 6 in \textit{Rtsod}), bringing the total number of points of defeat to sixteen. The following examples will suffice to demonstrate the extent of the terminological match (differences are marked in bold):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rtsod no. 1</th>
<th>Rigs rgyan, 330–31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>\textit{brtsod pa’i skabs kyi gang zag gsum yin te} / \textit{dam bca’ skyong par khas len rgol ba dang} // \textit{dam bca’ sun ’byin khas len phyir rgol dang} // \textit{brtsod pa’i shags ’byed khas len dpang po’o} //</td>
<td>\textit{rtsod pa’i dus kyi gang zag la gsum yod de} / \textit{dam bca’ skyong bar khas len pa’i snga rgol dang} / \textit{dam bca’ sun ’byin par khas len pa’i phyi rgol dang} / \textit{rtsod pa’i shan ’byed par khas len pa’i dpang po gsum yod pa’i phyir} //</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rtsod no. 15a</td>
<td>Rigs rgyan, 334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>\textit{brtsod pa’i bsam pa tha shal gsum yin te} // \textit{pha rol smad par ’dod pa’i zhe sdang dang} // \textit{bdag nyid che bar ’dod pa’i chags pa dang} // \textit{rigs lam ’dor bar ’dod pa’i g.yo sgyu’o} //</td>
<td>\textit{pha rol po dma’ bar ’dod pa’i zhe sdang dang} / \textit{rang nyid mtho bar ’dod pa’i ’dod chags dang} / \textit{rigs lam ’dor bar ’dod pa’i g.yo sgyu rnams ni rtsod pa’i bsam pa tha shal yin la} /</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A prose presentation similar to that of Gendün Drup—and likely borrowed from him—is found in a number of monastic manuals, including the well-known \textit{Magic Key of the Path of Reasoning} (\textit{Rigs lam ’phrul gyi lde mig}) of Purbuchok Lozang Jampa Gyatso (Phur bu lcog Blo

\textsuperscript{25} One can note that the shorter and the longer account offer different definitions of proponent and respondent, and that three types of referee are distinguished in the shorter section (as in \textit{Rnam rgyal}) but not in the longer section. Note, in the first section, the division between correct and incorrect proponent and respondent (330), for which no details are provided. This part is reused by Purbuchok (see Nemoto 2013, 159n14).
bzang byams pa rgya mtsho, 1825–1901). Yet complicating the matter, some of them additionally cite verses for the notions corresponding to Rtsod’s nos. 13 to 17 (without mentioning a source), verses that, however, differ from the versified version of Rtsod, as illustrated here in the third column:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rtsod no. 17b</th>
<th>Rigs rgyan</th>
<th>ji skad du/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>rnam dag brtsod pa’i dpe ni gsum yin te</em>  //</td>
<td><em>rang dang gzhan gyis gti mug gcod pa ‘khor lo lta bu dang</em>  //</td>
<td><em>rang gzhan gti mug gcod pa ‘khor lo bzhin</em>  //</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>gti mug gcod pas ‘khor lo ‘dra ba dang</em>  //</td>
<td><em>sun ‘byin pa’i rlung gis mi g.yo lhun po ‘dra</em>  //</td>
<td><em>sun ‘byin rlung gis mi g.yo lhun po bzhin</em>  //</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>sun ‘byin rlung gis mi g.yo lhun po ‘dra</em>  //</td>
<td><em>tshig dang don la ma rmongs pa thub pa’i dbang po’i sras lta bu ni rnam par dag pa’i rtsod pa’i dpe yin no</em>  //</td>
<td><em>tshig dang don la ma rmongs thub pa’i sras</em>  //</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>don la ma rmongs thub dbang ‘dra ba’o</em>  //</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>’di rnams rnam dag rtsod pa’i dpe ru bshad</em>  //</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>ces pa’o</em>  //</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These five verses corresponding to Rtsod’s nos. 13–17 all appear together, in an order reflecting Gendündrup’s presentation, in a text by Kirti Lozang Tendzin (Kirti blo bzang bstan ’dzin, b. 1942) entitled Precepts on Debate (Rtsod pa byed tshul gyi bslab bya). This is, however, not an original composition, as some of the verses are quoted by earlier scholars (the earliest I could find being a work by Yongdzin Paṇḍita Lozang Penden [Yongs ‘dzin Paṇḍita Blo bzang dpal)

26 BDRC: WA1KG22610. Other instances include: Gangs ljonggs dgon sde’i slob dep dpe tshogs (BDRC: W1KG16581) and Dga’ ldan shar rtse’i chos spyod mdzad rim ngo mtshar bstan pa’i mdzes rgyan nyin byed snang ba’i yang gsal (BDRC: WA1KG24220).

27 These verses are found, for instance, in Dga’ ldan shar rtse’i chos spyod mdzad rim ngo mtshar bstan pa’i mdzes rgyan nyin byed snang ba’i yang gsal (BDRC: WA1KG24220), Bsdus grwar thog mar ’jug byed skyabs khrid dang ‘brel ba’i man ngag gser gyi lde mig of Dzötsang Lozang Tsöndrü (Mdzod tshang Blo bzang brtson ’grus, twentieth century) (BDRC: WA20471), and in a text reproduced in several volumes of the compilation Gangs ljonggs rig bcu’i snying bcud chen mo (BDRC: WA1PD95727).

28 It is published as part of Legs bshad dpe tshogs nor bu’i phreng ba (BDRC: WA1GS54156).
ldan, 1880–1944]). These verses are likely to be based on Gendün Drup’s prose presentation or a later reuse and are as such not directly related to Rtsod.

The direction of the relationship between the versified version attested in Rtsod and the prose version attested in Rigs rgyan—assuming they would be directly related—is difficult to ascertain. It seems slightly more likely that the verses would be based on the prose, but it is also possible that the prose represents the unfolding of a versified text. Given Gendün Drup’s reuse of previous material in other parts of Rigs rgyan (see above on the passage common to Chumikpa’s Rnam rgyal), one can suspect that his presentation of debate is also not original. As no precedent could be traced so far, the dating of the prose version itself can at best be established with the first half of the fifteenth century as terminus ante quem.

**Conclusion**

The above considerations left unresolved the questions of the origin of the nicknames used for consequences. The main clues are the earliest datable occurrence in Chumikpa’s Rnam rgyal (model B), followed by Chomden Reldri’s secondary reference to model A and mention of model C, and the ascription by Serdok Panchen (and scholars reusing his presentation) of model B’ to Tsangnagpa.

Chumikpa and Reldri have in common that they both studied under Kyelnak Drakpa Senggé (Skyel nag Grags pa seng ge), a student of the Sangpu (Gsang phu) abbot Nyelzhik Jampé Dorjé (Gnyal zhig ’Jam pa’i rdo rje)29 and a disciple of Dānasīla, who had founded a seminary of philosophical study in Nartang (Snar thang). Nyelzhik himself was a student of Denbakpa Mawé Senggé (Dan bag pa Smra ba’i seng ge)—another of Chapa’s Eight Mighty Lions. Reldri studied with Chumikpa, but not in the field of epistemology. For this, his teachers were notably Kyelnak, Kyitön Drakbum (Kyi ston grags ’bum), Dānasīla, and Uyukpa (’U yug pa). Uyukpa (d. 1253) mentions the “thunderbolt blaze” as name for a, but not the other three terms, in his epistemological summary.30 No epistemological work by Nelzhik or Kyelnak is available. Extant epistemological summaries by two students of Nyelzhig—Tsangdruk Dorjé (Gtsang drug rdo rje), whose works bears many similarities with Rnam rgyal, and Dharmaratna—do not mention

29 See Sparham 1996.

30 See Rigs grub 352.
this terminology. The terms are also absent from the epistemological summary of Tsangnagpa’s student Tsurtön Zhönnu Senggé (Mtshur ston Gzhon nu seng ge) and do not appear in Chapa’s epistemological works or, earlier, in the extant ones by Ngok Loden Sherap (Rngog Blo Idan shes rab, 1059–1109).

The argument “from silence” would hint to the terminology emerging shortly before Chumikpa but not before nor with Nyelzhik. Such type of argument has some weight in a context of composition where extensive reuse of previous material is common practice. It cannot, however, be taken as conclusive: in addition to the limited range of extant sources, nothing speaks against the possibility that scholars knew this terminology but did not mention it at all in their own compositions or did not mention it in all of their compositions (indeed, for instance, Chumikpa mentions the four nicknames in Rnam rgyal but not in his commentary on the Ascertainment of Valid Cognition).31

What does this say about the authorship of Rtsod? If the colophon of Rtsod is genuine and “Tsöndrü Senggé” refers to Tsangnagpa Tsöndrü Senggé,32 there would be, against the argument “from silence,” an instance of the use of the four nicknames predating Chumikpa. We would, however, have to conclude that Serdok Panchen is mistaken with regard to the model he ascribes to Tsangnagpa (since Rtsod exemplifies model A, and not model B’), or is mistaken about the nominal reference to the inventor of model B’ (which would not be a unique case).33 Should Serdok Panchen’s claim be correct, it would be an argument against Tsangnagpa being the author of Rtsod, as it is unlikely that the same author would adopt different models in different works.34

31 The absence of these nicknames in Bsdus whereas they are present in Rtsod is thus not a strong argument against identical authorship of Bsdus and Rtsod.

32 Although there are several other scholars named Tsöndrü Senggé, I am not aware of another candidate as “the monk-logician Tsöndrü Senggé” besides Tsangnagpa.

33 See van der Kuijp 1989, 22, on Serdok Panchen’s misidentification of an opponent in the Treasure of Reasoning as Tsangnagpa, whereas it was actually Tsurtön (who held a different position than Tsangnagpa on this point).

34 The case of Chomden Reldri is unalike, as Me tog presents the model adopted by the author while Mtshon cha is reporting someone else’s model.
I could not find compelling arguments for dating Rtsod in relation to other works, in particular other works by Tsangnagpa, the future study of which might still reveal pertinent similarities of phrasing or stylistic features comparable to Rtsod.

The colophon is, at this point, the only argument in favor of Tsangnagpa’s authorship of Rtsod, whereas the divergences in Rtsod and Bsdus pointed out in section 1—although one may argue whether it constitutes a genuine “thunderbolt blaze”—point to the authors of the respective works being different.

References

*Tibetan Works*


Works in European Languages

BDRC, Buddhist Digital Resource Center (https://library.bdrc.io/). See this resource for full bibliographical references to the works mentioned only once, for which the BDRC work ID number is provided.


