Jakub Zamorski

The Problem of Self-Refuting Statements in Chinese Buddhist Logic

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Contents

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Introductory remarks

The famous pilgrim and translator Xuanzang's (玄奘, 602-664) translation of Śaṅkarasvāmin's *Introduction to Logic* (*Nyāyapraveśa, Yinming ru zhengli lun* 因明入正理論) around 647 marks the beginning of the systematic study of Indian Buddhist logic or the "science of reasons" (*hetuvidyā, yinming* 因明) by Buddhist monks in China. This terse treatise deals with methods of defending and refuting disputed theses by adducing sound arguments. Although it addresses examples of correct and fallacious inferences, its subject matter would be better described as rules of rational debate between representatives of competing philosophical schools, rather than formal logic.[1] This pragmatic concern is readily apparent in the section of the treatise that lists nine examples of "pseudo-theses" (*pakṣa-ābhāsa, sizong* 似宗), i.e. theses which are unacceptable as topics of debate. Śaṅkarasvāmin labels as "pseudo-theses" various kinds of statement which the opponent might refuse to discuss, e.g. theses incompatible with experience or common sense, or those that contain concepts and terms whose meanings cannot be agreed upon by both sides. A thesis inconsistent with the philosophical views of the school to which the disputant belongs is also dismissed as invalid. It is

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[1] According to I. M. Bocheński, Dignāga's system of the "science of reasons", presented in the *Nyāyapraveśa*, was one of the final stages in the transition from the "methodology of discussion" to formal logic in India (Bocheński, 1970: 431).

within such a context that the following sentence appears, without any further explanation:

Sentence [1]

自語相違者，如言：「我母是其石女」 (T32:1630.11c2-3).

svavacana-viruddho yathā: mātā me vandhyā iti (Guo, 1999: 43).

[The fallacy of] "inconsistency with one's own words" occurs in statements such as this: "My mother is that barren woman."[2]

Around 655, Xuanzang decided to translate a more substantial Indian logical work by Dignāga, called *The Gate of Logic* (*Nyāyamukha, Yinming zhengli men lun* 因明正理門論). This treatise provides a different, shorter list of "pseudo-theses", consisting of only five categories. Although the sentence above is not among them, Dignāga quotes another example of a thesis that is internally inconsistent:

Sentence [2]

若相[?][3]違義言聲所遣，如立:「一切言皆是妄」(T32:1628.1a19-20).

*yadi viruddhārthavācinā svavacanena bādhyate yathā: sarvam uktaṃ mṛ-ṣêti.[4]

(A thesis is invalid) if one's own words and meaning exclude each other, for example, when someone claims: "All statements are false."[5]

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[2] It is clear from the context that the term "barren woman" ("stone woman" in Chinese) denotes a woman that has never been capable of giving birth.

[3] This reading follows the amendment proposed by Katsura Shōryū (桂紹隆) on the basis of the corresponding Skt. fragments. Traditional Chinese editions of the text have the character (*fei* 非). A third variant reading (*ti* 體) was proposed by the Japanese commentator Usui Hōun (烏水宝雲, 1791-1847) (Katsura, 1977: 113).

[4] The Skt. manuscript of the *Nyāyamukha* preserved in Tibet (Luo, 1985: 69-70) had not been published at the time of writing of this paper. The corresponding Skt. fragment is reconstructed by Katsura Shōryū from the quotation in Prajñākaragupta's *Prāmaṇavārttika-bhāṣya* (Katsura, 1977: 113).

[5] The translation of the Chinese sentence is simplified due to textual problems. Classical Chinese vocabulary has no clear distinction between "sentence" and "statement". However, at least some Chinese commentators on this passage clearly understand the word

It seems that all Chinese (and in fact all East Asian) commentators of Indian treatises on Buddhist logic regarded Sentences [1] and [2] as two samples of one and the same fallacy, labeled according to the text of the *Introduction to Logic* as "inconsistency with one's own words" (*zi yu xiang-wei* 自語相違, after Sanskrit *svavacanaviruddha*).[6] Even though it is not entirely clear to what extent this classification reflected the previous views of Indian Buddhist logicians,[7] it is fairly understandable in the

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yan (言) as referring to *yanlun* (言論) "discourses", i.e. sentences that express some claims.

[6] It is difficult if not impossible to find a term from contemporary logic that could be applied to both examples. The term "self-refutation" is probably the most appropriate choice, partly due to the fact that it has no universally accepted definition. The broadest definitions of this term largely match the meaning intended by the Buddhist authors discussed in this article. For example, Simon Blackburn defines the term as follows: "A self-refuting utterance is one which is shown to be false in the very fact of its being made" (Blackburn, 1996: 345). In modern Western philosophical literature, self-refuting statements have been defined by some authors (Passmore, 1970: 59, 80; Perrett, 1984: 237, 239) as statements which are self-contradictory in themselves, rather than inconsistent with some remote implications or other statements uttered by the same person. This is analogous to the rationale behind distinguishing the fallacy of "inconsistency with one's own words" from "inconsistency with one's own teachings" (*āgama-viruddha, zijiao xiangwei* 自教相違) in Buddhist logic. Contemporary discussions of self-refutation also include so-called "pragmatic self-refutation", exemplified by such statements as "I cannot speak" (Mackie, 1964; Passmore, 1970: 62). As is shown below, precisely this kind of statement was counted by East Asian commentators as one of the subtypes of the fallacy in question. However, it should be noted that on some definitions, statements such as Sentence [1] are classified as self-contradictory but not self-refuting (Castagnoli, 2010: 5-6; Chmielewski, 1981: 67, 70). Even though self-refutation is sometimes considered to be a sub-category of self-contradiction, as a translation of technical expression used in Chinese Buddhist logic, the term "self-contradiction" could be misleading. It might be argued that the system of Buddhist logic does not seem to have a clear counterpart of the Western notion of contradiction, understood as a relation between two statements (Chmielewski, 1981: 71). The term *viruddha*, translated by Xuanzang as *xiangwei*, has broader application, as it refers to a relation between the thesis and any kind of counter-evidence that renders it problematic, including the testimony of perception. Moreover, neither sentence *directly* exhibits "contradiction" in the most common current meaning of this term, i.e. a conjunction of two opposing statements (*p* and not-*p*), and Buddhist logicians generally did not try to resolve both of them into this self-contradictory form.

[7] An anonymous Indian treatise translated into Chinese around 550 as *The Treatise on Accordance with Truth* (*Rushi lun* 如實論 **Tarka-śāstra*), in a passage that appears to be an

context of the principles of the "science of reasons". Both Sentences [1]
and [2], unlike other types of "pseudo-theses", exemplify statements
which are *internally* flawed, i.e. untenable on logical grounds alone. Any-
one who proposes a thesis of either kind at the same time inadvertently
proposes its refutation. For this reason such theses are unacceptable
regardless of the philosophical affiliation of the disputant and opponent.

That being said, the issues represented by Sentences [1] and [2] have
generally been distinguished in the history of logic in the West. "My
mother is a barren woman" – hereafter referred to simply as Sentence [1]
– is a case of what in traditional Western logic would be classified as *con-
tradictio in terminis* or *contradictio in adiecto*, a statement whose predicate
is in conflict with its subject. This kind of fallacy was discussed in detail
by medieval scholastics (Rieger, 2005: 74-76). "All statements are false" –
hereafter referred to as Sentence [2] – is a canonical example of a state-
ment that is both self-referential and self-refuting. Although it never
gained the notoriety of the much knottier "Liar's Paradox" ("This state-
ment is false"), its variants have often appeared in Western logical litera-
ture of the ancient, medieval and modern periods (Chmielewski, 1981;
Castagnoli, 2007).[8]

Both of the aforementioned Indian treatises were studied by the
disciples of Xuanzang, who attempted to write their own commentaries

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early version of the list of "pseudo-theses", mentions the sentence "A virgin has a child"
(童女有兒 *kumārī putravatī*) as an example of a thesis that is fallacious due to internal
inconsistency. In a different passage, it demonstrates how to refute someone who
claims, "I reject all that is said" (一切所說我皆不許 *sarvam uktaṃ na anujñāye*??).
Zheng Weihong (2007: 79) follows the Chinese tradition in identifying the second state-
ment as another example of the previously mentioned fallacy, but the text does not
seem to state that explicitly (cf. T32:1633.29a18-21, 30b17-23; and Tucci, 1981: 4, 11 [Skt.
pagination], 2, 3 [Arabic pagination]).

[8] According to Chmielewski, at least from the time of Aristotle, the customary approach
of Western logicians was to regard such statements as implying their own falsehood,
and ergo false. In the early twentieth century, Bertrand Russell (Russell, 1963: 40-42)
challenged this view by arguing that [2], being a proposition about all propositions, is a
meaningless statement, and as such cannot be legitimately asserted to be either true or
false. Castagnoli argues that ancient self-refutation arguments generally did not aim at
establishing the necessary falsehood of such statements as [2], but rather, at "criticizing
such theses as dialectical losers" (Castagnoli, 2007: 68).

in order to clarify the meaning of these notoriously difficult texts. Needless to say, Chinese monks had no training in formal logic whatsoever. Their most reliable clues as to the interpretation of Sentences [1] and [2] was a rather random selection of Chinese translations of Indian works dealing with the art of argumentation, and possibly some pieces of oral commentary transmitted by their master Xuanzang, who had reportedly studied the "science of reasons" in India. Although ancient Chinese thinkers occasionally took issue with self-contradictory and self-refuting statements (Chmielewski, 2009: 269-296; Graham, 1978: 445, 453; Harbsmeier, 1998: 212-218; Sun, 1999: 51-53, 258-259), there is no trace of this indigenous legacy in the writings of Xuanzang's disciples.

The aim of the present paper is to analyze the interpretations of Sentences [1] and [2] provided by the Chinese commentators to see how they approached the logical problems involved in these sentences. The focus will be placed on commentaries from the early Tang period, written by three direct disciples of Xuanzang: Wengui (文軌, d.u.), Shentai (神泰, d.u.) and Kuiji (窺基, 632-682), since their works contain the most original and insightful treatment of this problem in the whole history of Buddhist logic in East Asia. Even though the fragments discussed below certainly belong to the history of logic as such, it is to be remembered that their authors did not conceive of themselves as "logicians" in the contemporary sense of the word. They perceived the fallacy of "inconsistency with one's own words" primarily as a rhetorical tool that could be used to denounce heterodox views. Therefore, the final section of this paper will examine cases of the practical application of this notion in the context of doctrinal polemics typical of seventh-century East Asia.

Secondary scholarship on this subject is scarce. Sueki Takehiro (末木 剛博, 2001: 71-73) briefly mentioned Sentence [2] in his book devoted to the history of rationalism in Asia, and offered an interpretation of it in modern symbolic notation. Janusz Chmielewski (Chmielewski, 1981: 60-72) scrutinized relevant passage from Kuiji's commentary in a voluminous article about historical approaches to Russell's "principle of *reductio ad absurdum*", thus placing Kuiji's work in a very broad comparative perspective. Unfortunately, Chmielewski's paper, which was published only in Polish, is virtually unknown to specialists in related fields. The same passage was discussed by several contemporary Chinese scholars of

Buddhist logic, most notably Chen Daqi (陳大齊, 1974: 118-122) and Shen Jianying (沈劍英, 1985: 180-182), and more recently by Zheng Weihong (鄭偉宏, 1997: 368-371; 1999: 9-12; 2010: 353-356), who aligned it with the corresponding fragment of Shentai's work.[9] Generally speaking, the remarks of Chinese authors are not as extensive as Chmielewski's, and less informative in terms of the comparative history of logic.

The interpretation of Wengui

One of the earliest extant Chinese commentaries on Śaṅkarasvāmin's *Introduction to Logic* is the *Yinming ru zhengli lun shu* (因明入正理論疏) by Wengui, a disciple of Xuanzang. Wengui's grasp of the Indian "science of reasons" is known to be remarkable (Shen, 2007; Takemura, 1968; 1986: 32-34, 217-246). Even though his treatment of these problematic statements appears to be significant in historical and comparative terms, it is relatively little known among contemporary scholars. For this reason it will be discussed first and in the most detail.

[3a] 「自語相違」者，如言：「我母是其石女」。述曰：「我母」是有法，「石女」是法。法及有法和合為宗。然，有法之言即違其法。法言復反有法。若言：「我母」，即知非虛。既言：「石女」，明非我母。更相反故。故名「相違」。

[The error of] "inconsistency with one's own words" – as in *My mother is that barren woman.*

Says the commentary: [In the sentence above] "my mother" is the *dharmin* (*youfa* 有法) and "barren woman" is the *dharma* (*fa* 法). When *dharmin* and *dharma* are in agreement with each other, there is [a valid] thesis. [Here,] however, what is said to be the *dharmin* opposes its *dharma* and what is said to be the *dharma* counters its *dharmin*. If one says: "my mother", it is understood that she is not an infertile woman; by saying: "barren woman", it is made clear that [the woman in question] is not my mother. In such a case, there is a mutu-

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[9] The last work also contains a very brief mention of the passage from Zhizhou's commentary, which is discussed in the last section of this article.

al conflict [between *dharmin* and *dharma*]. This is what is meant by "inconsistency with one's own words".

[3b] 如外道立言: 「一切言論」是有法,「皆是妄語」是法。此立宗之言意許非妄有法中攝。 若言: 「一切言論」,即意許一分非妄,何得云: 「皆是妄語」? 若云: 「皆是妄語」,何得言「一切言論」? 以「一切」之言攝此宗意許非妄故。

[Furthermore, some] non-Buddhists make a claim [in which] "all statements" is the *dharmin,* and "are all false talk" is the *dharma.* [But] if someone sets forth such a thesis, [then] what is intended by his words, [i.e.] the non-falsity [of his own thesis], is [also] included in the *dharmin.* If someone says [something about] "all statements", then that person [already] implicitly acknowledges [that] some [statements] (i.e. at least his own statement) are not false; how can he [further] maintain that they "are all false talk"? If someone says "are all false talk", how can he make [this] statement about "all claims"? [This is inadmissible,] because the word "all" (in "all claims") includes the intended non-falsity of his own thesis.

[3c] 若救言: 「除我言外,餘一切言皆悉是妄者」,更有一人聞汝所說,便言: 「汝語非妄,諦實」。彼所發言,為妄為實? 若言: 「是妄語」,則汝語虛。若言: 「是實」,即違自語。

Suppose you try to defend [the above claim] by stating [it thus]: "Apart from my own statement, all other statements are false." Then another man, after hearing your words, states that it is indeed as you say. Is *his* utterance false or true? If you reply that it is false, then it follows that your own words are false [lit. in vain]. If you reply that it is true, then you oppose your own words [that all statements are false].

[3d] 若復救云: 「除我言及說我言實者,餘言妄者」。若爾,此即與比量相違。謂:
　　[宗]: 餘一切言不必是妄
　　[因]: 是語性故
　　[喻]: 如汝所言。

> Suppose you still try to defend [the above claim] by stating [it thus]: "Apart from my own statement, and the statements of those who say that what I say is true, all other statements are false." Such a thesis would [be unacceptable because it is] opposed by inference, namely:
>
> > Thesis [*zong* 宗]: All other statements are not necessarily false.
> > Reason [*yin* 因]: Because of their having the nature of speech.
> > Example [*yu* 喻]: Like what you yourself say (X53:848.690b7-19).

In the first paragraph, Wengui introduces a pair of key concepts in the Indian "science of reasons" – *dharma* and *dharmin* (literally "that which has the *dharma*" or "*dharma*-possessor"). There is no consensus among contemporary scholars as to exactly how Indian authors understood this opposition. English translations from Sanskrit include: "subject" and "predicate" (Tucci, 1930), "property-bearer" and "property" (Tachikawa, 1971), "substrate" and "superstrate" (Gillon & Love, 1980), "locus" and "locatee" (Matilal, 1998) etc. How Chinese commentators on Indian treatises understood these terms is of course yet another issue.

Wengui himself in his commentary discusses three possible interpretations of *dharma* and *dharmin*, but seems most committed to the one that defines *dharma* as "that which specifies" (*nengbie* 能別), and *dharmin* as "that which is specified" (*suobie* 所別) (X53:848.682a4 ff.).[10] He explains their mutual relation by the analogy of wax and seal.[11] When we attribute a certain *dharma* to a certain *dharmin,* the latter becomes "specified" or "differentiated" (*chabie* 差別), i.e. characterized by a particular quality that distinguishes it from other *dharmins*, just as a round seal distinguishes a piece of wax to which it was applied from a piece of wax in which a square seal was stamped. According to the principles of Buddhist logic, it is the presence of this distinguishing quality (*dharma*) in a given locus (*dharmin*) that is to be proved by disputants engaged in a debate. For example, an argument for the case that "sound is impermanent" has to convince one's opponent that the *dharma* of "impermanence" inheres in the *dharmin* identified as "sound".

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[10] Other interpretations mentioned by Wengui are "difference" (*chabie* 差別) vs. "essence" (*zixing* 自性) and "comment" (*houshu* 後述) vs. "topic" (*xianchen* 先陳).

[11] It appears that the character 臘 in the text of the Xuzangjing should be emended to 蠟.

What Wengui seems to understand by "inconsistency with one's own words", in the case of Sentence [1], is that a statement which attributes the *dharma* of "being infertile" to the *dharmin* described as "my mother" cannot become the subject of any meaningful debate, since it is known *a priori* that no "mother" can be a possible locus for such a quality. This is because the very term "mother" denotes someone who is not a barren woman, and the very term "barren woman" denotes someone who is not a mother. Whereas the disputant's objective is to prove the connection between *dharmin* and *dharma*, in the case of Sentence [1], the possibility of such a connection is implicitly refuted. It can be inferred that such a fallacy occurs whenever the subject and predicate of a thesis are mutually contrary or contradictory terms.[12]

Wengui's explanation of the fallacy inherent in Sentence [1] resembles the refutation of a similar statement, "A virgin has a child," in the Chinese translation of an early Indian work on Buddhist logic known as *The Treatise on Accordance with Truth* (*Rushi lun* 如實論, **Tarka-śāstra*), traditionally ascribed to the half-legendary sage Vasubandhu:

> [4] 若是童女，不得有兒。若有兒，則非童女。「童女」、「有兒」， 此二相違。 是故，稱有言說無道理。

> If she is a virgin, she cannot have a child. If she has a child then she is not a virgin. "Being a virgin" and "having a child" are two mutually opposed [qualities]. Thus it is said that this kind of discourse is illogical (T32:1633.29a18-21).[13]

From the comparative point of view, it should be noted that unlike the Indian author, Wengui clearly emphasizes the mutual semantic incongruence between the words or terms (*yan* 言) that constitute the two parts of the thesis. He does not elaborate any ontological reasons for which the quality of being a "barren woman" cannot be predicated of

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[12] It can be argued that Wengui was (at least vaguely) aware of the difference between contrary and contradictory terms, as he wrote: "'Permanence' and 'impermanence' are *directly* (truly) opposed" (「常」與「無常」正相違) (X53:848.685b1).

[13] T32:1633.29a18-20. Skt. retranslation by Tucci is as follows: (...) *yato yadi kumārī putra-vatīti na sampadyate. yadi putravatī tarhi naiva kumārī. kumārīti putravatīti cobhayaṃ virud-dham. tasmān mama vacanam anyāyyam iti* (Tucci, 1981: 4 [Skt. pagination]).

anyone's mother. Moreover, from the structure of his argument in Passage [3a], it is clear that he focuses on the symmetrical relation between the two terms, rather than on the relation between subject and predicate.[14]

Wengui's analysis of Sentence [2] in Passage [3b] is clearly meant to follow the same scheme of explanation as his interpretation of Sentence [1] in Passage [3a]. Namely, he suggests that the *dharmin* "all statements" is incompatible with the *dharma* "are [all] false" and *vice versa*. In spite of this misguided premise, Wengui manages to pinpoint some essential differences between the two statements. He seems to be aware that the problem with Sentence [2] lies not in the mutually exclusive semantic fields of the terms in question (there is nothing outright contradictory in predicating falsehood of a statement), but in the use of the universal quantifier "all", which renders the whole statement self-referential and eventually self-refuting. Moreover, Wengui seems to believe that someone who states that "all statements are false" at the same time makes the tacit assumption that his own statement is true. It is the opposition between this assumption (the "intended meaning" *yixu* 意許) and the statement itself ("what is said" *yan* 言), rather than the opposition between the subject and predicate of the statement, that Wengui turns to in his analysis.[15]

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[14] The extent of difference between Wengui's understanding of *contradictio in terminis* and that of Western traditional logic merits further investigation. According to the thirteenth-century classification proposed by Peter of Spain (Petrus Hispanus), statements such as Sentence [1] are considered as propositions *in materia remota*, i.e. propositions whose predicates and subjects can never agree with each other. His contemporary, Lambert of Auxerre, argued that in propositions of this kind, the predicate "naturally disagrees" with its subject (*predicatum naturaliter disconvenit subiecto*) (Alessio, 1971: 19; Rieger, 2005: 74-75). An early twentieth-century German philosophical dictionary (Eisler, 1927) defines *contradictio in adiecto* as a "proposition in which the predicate term cancels the subject term" (*Urteil, in welchem der Prädikatsbegriff den Subjektsbegriff aufhebt*). Interestingly, in another fragment of his commentary, Wengui goes against Indian sources (and the Aristotelian approach) by saying that in some sense, the *dharmin* also "specifies" its *dharma* (X53:848.683a1-3; Harbsmeier, 1998: 369 n. 1).

[15] The distinction between the explicit content of what is said in a thesis ("that which is expressed by words" *yanchen* 言陳 or *yanxian* 言顯) and its intended meaning ("that which is implicitly accepted" *yixu* 意許) is an important one in the system of the "science of reasons". How Chinese authors understood this distinction, and the extent to

Wengui's main argument - that someone who denies the truth of all statements at the same time asserts the truth of his own statement and thus contradicts himself - has respectable parallels in the history of Western logic.[16] Interestingly, it appears that Indian Buddhist debaters started to apply the germinal form of this argument very early. Wengui might have taken this idea either directly from Dignāga's description of the fallacy represented by Sentence [2] in the *Gate of Logic,* or from his master Xuanzang's Chinese translation of *The Gem in the Palm of the Hand* (*Zhang zhen lun* 掌珍論, **Karatalaratna-śāstra*) by the sixth-century philosopher Bhāviveka:

[5] 如梵志言：「世尊，一切我皆不忍」。佛言：「梵志忍此事不」？此中，梵志固忍此事而言：「一切我皆不忍」。彼言違自所許事故，可有違害自所言過。

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which they followed Indian discussions on this subject, is a topic that requires a separate study. Wengui comes closest to defining this pair of concepts in a fragment of his commentary which is preserved as a quote in the Japanese monk Zōshun's (藏俊, 1104-1180) *Inmyō daisho shō* (因明大疏抄). His explanation suggests that the main purpose of this distinction is to separate the literal or general meanings of terms that constitute a thesis (their "substance" *zixiang* 自相) from the specific meanings of those terms, which reflect the debater's hidden philosophical assumptions (their "specificities" *chabie* 差別). For example, when a Mahāyāna Buddhist utters the word "impermanence", his intended meaning may be "impermanence [of something] which is only a manifestation of Consciousness" (T68:2271.713b23-c5). However, Wengui's use of these concepts appears to be somewhat broader than his definition would suggest. In the surviving portion of his commentary he invokes the notion of "intended meaning" to explain how a Buddhist who argues that "sound is impermanent" at the same time establishes that sound is devoid of permanent self (*wuwo* 無我): since everything that is impermanent is also devoid of permanent self, the latter quality "follows" (*shun* 順) from the former without being explicitly mentioned (X53:848.686a16-21). Seen in this light, [2] represents a case in which a speaker's intended meaning – the non-falsity of his own statement – cannot be consistently attributed to either part of the explicitly stated thesis.

[16] Somewhat similar (although more theoretically sophisticated) refutations of sentences equivalent to Sentence [2] were discussed by Sextus Empiricus (ca. 160-210) and Bonaventure (1221-1274) (Castagnoli, 2010: 132-135). This type of argument was further refined by Thomas Bradwardine (ca. 1290-1349) and, more famously, John Buridan (ca. 1300-1362) (Hughes, 1982: 45-51, 100-112; Prior, 1976; Read, 2002; Spade, 1982: 249).

A [non-Buddhist] *brahmacārin* said [to the Buddha]: "World-Honored One, I do not assert anything." The Buddha replied: "*Brahmacārin*, do you assert this thing [you said] or not?" The *brahmacārin* firmly asserted the thing [he said], but [still] maintained that he did not assert anything. <u>His words were in opposition with a thing he assumed</u> [彼言違自所許事]. This is what is called the fallacy of violating one's own statement (T30:1578.27b10-12).[17]

In Passage [3c], Wengui discusses the possibility of defending the "non-Buddhist's" claim by explicitly excluding the statement "All statements are false" from the set of "all statements", in order to avoid self-reference and the self-refutation it entails. This idea might also have been inspired by an Indian antecedent, contained in *The Treatise on Accordance with Truth*:

[6] 若汝言:「一切所說我皆不許」，我今共汝辯決是處。 汝說:「不許一切」，此說為入一切數? 為不入一切數? 若入一切數，汝則自不許汝所說。 若自不許者，我義則是汝所許。我義自成，汝言便壞。若不入一切數者，則無一切。若無一切，汝不許一切。若不許一切，我義便非汝不許。我義亦成，汝言終壞。

If you say that you reject all that is said, I will now settle this issue with you. You say that you reject "all"; is what you say counted among "all" or is it not? If it is counted among "all", you yourself reject what you say. If you yourself reject it, then what I propose is what you do not reject. What I propose is established by itself, and your words are thus refuted. If it is not counted among "all", then there is no "all" [i.e. it is not "all" that you are making a statement about]. In such a case, you reject the "all" [in your own statement], and what I

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17 In the Buddhist literature the *brahmacārin*'s skeptical claim is usually ascribed to a recluse called Dīrghanakha (Pali: Dīghanakha, Ch. Zhangzhao 長爪), the Buddha's interlocutor in the Pāli *Dīghanakha-sutta* (Jayatilleke, 1963: 213-216), who is quite frequently mentioned in the Chinese Tripiṭaka (e.g. T2:99.249b1 ff.). A more verbose refutation of Dīrghanakha's stance can be found in the preface to Jizang's (吉藏, 549-623) commentary on Āryadeva's *Śata-śāstra* (*Bai lun* 百論) (T42:1827.235b6-15).

propose is not what you reject. What I propose is again established, and your words are finally refuted (T32:1633.30b17-23).[18]

According to Janusz Chmielewski, this short fragment has ground-breaking significance in the history of logic. It suggests a way of avoiding self-reference which was not endorsed by ancient Greek or Chinese authors, and in fact, may be regarded as the earliest known anticipation of Russell's revolutionary approach (Chmielewski, 1981: 47-49, 86). The possibility of construing potentially self-referential statements as self-excepting, rather than literally universal, was discussed in the Western logical literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Ashworth, 1974: 104-106; Spade, 1982: 248) and has been suggested by a contemporary author as one of the most viable approaches to the elimination of the paradoxes occasioned by self-reference (Rescher, 1968: 16). In this context, it is certainly worth noticing that Wengui not only appears familiar with this possibility, but also discusses it at considerable length within the conceptual framework of the Buddhist "science of reasons".

In Passage [3c], the Chinese commentator argues that an improved version of Sentence [2]: "All statements are false, apart from this very statement," is untenable, since every other statement that affirms the truth of the speaker's sentence also cannot be false. For this reason, in Passage [3d], Wengui's imaginary non-Buddhist opponent once more rephrases his claim. The proposition he is now trying to defend is: "All statements are false, apart from this very statement and those statements that affirm the truth of this very statement." Wengui argues that such a thesis is still unacceptable, even though it belongs to a different category of "pseudo-thesis", namely "a thesis opposed by inference" (*anumānaviruddha, biliang xiangwei* 比量相違).

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[18] The Skt. retranslation by Tucci: *yac ca* (*bhavato*)*ktaṃ mayā sarvam uktaṃ nānujñāyata iti tad idānīṃ* (*bhavatā sārdhaṃ*) *vicārya nirdhāryate. sarvaṃ nānujñāyata iti yad uktam bhavatā, etad vacanaṃ sarvasminn antarbhavati na vā? yadi tāvat sarvasminn antarbhavati, tadā bhavān svayaṃ svoktaṃ nānujānāti. yadi svayaṃ nānujānāti, asmadarthaḥ svata eva siddho bhaved bhavavacanasya tu hāniḥ syāt. atha sarvasmin nāntarbhavati, tadā tasya sarvatvam eva na syāt. yadi sarvatvam eva na bhavet, tadā bhavatā yad ananujñātaṃ tat sarvam. yadi sarvam ananujñātaṃ, tadāsmadartho bhavatā naivānanujñātaḥ. asmadarthaḥ siddho, bhavatas tu sarvasya pratiṣedhaḥ* (Tucci, 1981: 11 [Skt. pagination]).

The "inference" presented by Wengui follows the three-membered scheme expounded by Dignāga.[19] The crux of this reasoning is that statements arbitrarily excluded from the set of "all statements" by the opponent share with the remaining elements of this set a property described as "the nature of speech" (*yuxing* 語性). In the technical vocabulary of Xuanzang's disciples, this term apparently denotes the meaningful use of language.[20] By uttering his statement, the opponent demonstrates that meaningful sentences spoken by humans are not necessarily false. It is therefore illogical for him to maintain that all other statements, which are also meaningful sentences, are necessarily false.

It is not entirely clear, however, if Wengui's conclusion, "All other statements are not necessarily false" (餘一切言不必是妄) should be interpreted as a simple particular negative ("Some other statements are not false") or a modal statement ("All other statements are possibly not false"). Dignāga's "science of reasons", the only system of rules of inference known to Wengui, has little to say regarding quantification of theses, and has nothing commensurable with the modal syllogistic of traditional Western logic.

The intepretation of Shentai

Shentai's (神泰) commentary to the *Gate of Logic*, *Li men lun shuji* (理門論述記), contains an interesting explanation of Sentence [2] that does not make explicit reference to Sentence [1]:

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[19] This sort of inference presupposes a relation of "invariable concomitance" between the two *dharmas* (qualities) possessed by the *dharmin* (locus of quality) in question. Just as the presence of fire on a mountain is inferred from the presence of smoke, since there cannot be smoke without fire, the presence of the quality described as "the nature of speech" serves an as infallible mark of the presence of the quality of "not necessarily [being] false" in every possible locus.

[20] Cf. Kuiji's explanation in T43:1830.504a20: "Verbal discourse is 'the nature of speech'. In general terms, the essential characteristic of 'the nature of speech' is verbal activity, which can be of three natures (i.e., good, bad and neutral)" (言說是語性。語性總言，即通三性語業為體).

[7a] 謂有外道立: 「一切語皆悉不實」。此所發語便自[語]相[違]。何故? 說:「一切語是妄者」, 汝口中語為實為妄? 若言是實, 何因言「一切皆是妄語」? 若自言是妄, 即應一切語皆實。

[The fallacy of "inconsistency with one's own words"] refers to the claims of non-Buddhists that all statements are not true. Whoever utters such a statement opposes his own words. Why is that? [If] you say that all statements are false, then are the words you speak true or false? If they are true, what are your grounds for maintaining that all statements are false? If your own words are false, then all statements turn out to be true.

[7b] 若復救云: 「解我口中所語, 餘一切語皆妄者」, 更有第二人聞汝所說「一切語皆是妄」即復發言:「汝此言諦實」。彼人發語為妄為實? 若言是妄, 汝語即虛。若言是實, 何故便言「除我所說」?

Suppose you try to defend your claim by stating [it thus]: "Apart from what I am saying now, all other statements are false". If there is another man who, having heard you saying that all statements are false, replies: "It is indeed as you say," is his utterance true or false? If it is false, then your own words are false (lit. in vain). If it is true, how can you maintain that "Apart from what I am saying now [all other statements are false]"?

[7c] 若復救言: 「除道我語此一人是實, 除一切悟皆悉是妄」, 若爾受有第三人復云: 「此第二人語亦是實」, 此第三人語為虛為實? 若言是虛, 此第二人並初人語是實應妄。若第三人語是實, 何故言「除我及此人餘虛妄」耶?

Suppose you still try to defend your claim and state [it thus]: "What that man says about my words is true; apart from this, all other statements are false." [Now,] suppose you are confronted by a third man, who says that the second man's statement [about your words] is true. Is the statement of the third man false or true? If you reply that it is false, then it must be false that the words of the two previous speakers are true. If the statement of the third man is true, then why do you say that apart from your statement and the statement of the second man, all [other statements] are false? (T44:1839.78c28-79a12).

What Shentai says in Passage [7a] can be paraphrased as follows: if Sentence [2] is assumed to be true, it is untenable; if it is assumed to be false, it implies that all other propositions are true. The latter statement contains a rather blatant logical error, since the negation of a universal affirmative (all S are P) results in a particular negative (some S are not P) and not a universal negative (all S are not P). However, it should be noted that Shentai does not content himself with rejecting Sentence [2] as a statement that implies its own falsehood, and therefore is false. It looks as if he is trying to present this sentence as a sort of paradox that yields unacceptable conclusions, on the assumption that it is true *and* on the assumption that it is false. As stated earlier, this approach is rather unique in the history of logic.

Zheng Weihong (Zheng, 2007: 79) rightly points out that Shentai's refutation of Sentence [2] appears to be indebted to the passage from the *Treatise on Accordance With Truth* quoted above as Passage [6]. Granted, the arguments employed in Passages [6] and [7a] are formally very similar: the skeptical opponent is confronted with two horns of a dilemma implied by his statement and forced to admit self-refutation.[21] Nevertheless, the two authors use this form of argument in slightly different way. Whereas the reasoning presented in the Indian treatise is meant primarily to force the opponent to admit defeat,[22] the explanations of Shentai, although not correct in terms of formal logic, are more focused on demonstrating the inherent fallacy of the proposition in question.

In Passage [7b], Shentai tackles the issue raised by Wengui in Passage [3c]. He differs from his co-disciple in that he does not resort to inference as the ultimate refutation of "non-Buddhist" theses. Instead, he seems to suggest that exclusion of the problematic statement from the scope of "all" sentences eventually leads to infinite regress. Unlike Wengui, Shentai does not consider the refutation of the claim, "All statements are false, apart from this very statement and all those statements that assert this very statement." It is not clear whether he is not aware of

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[21] This form of argumentation was well known to Indian debaters, who called it the "double noose" (Skt. *ubhayataḥpāśā*) (Perrett, 1984: 251).

[22] According to Tucci (Tucci, 1981: 3) Passage [6] is an example of *chala*, i.e. openly sophistic refutation.

this possibility, or if he assumes that it would also be susceptible to infinite regress.

Shentai's discussion of Sentence [2] demonstrates even more clearly than parallel passages in Wengui's commentary that the opponent's theses are problematic not only because they involve self-reference but also due to the fact that they predicate truth (*shi* 實) and falsity (*wang* 妄) of other statements. While it is unlikely that the modern idea of relegating this category of statements to a higher level in a hierarchy of meta-languages could have emerged among Chinese monks studying the "science of reasons", it is certainly regrettable that later East Asian commentators on the *Introduction to Logic* were not interested in investigating this aspect of Shentai's argument any further.

The interpretation of Kuiji

Kuiji (窺基), the most renowned of Xuanzang's disciples, was credited with compiling the standard early Tang commentary on Śaṅkarasvāmin's *Introduction to Logic,* which became known in East Asia as the "Great Commentary" or *Da shu* (大疏). The following fragment was therefore regarded by the majority of subsequent commentators as the most authoritative explanation of the fallacy of "inconsistency with one's own words":

[8a] 述曰: 宗之所依謂法、有法。有法是體，法是其義。義依彼體。不相乖角，可相順立。今言: 「我母」，明知有子。復言: 「石女」，明委無兒。我母之體與石女義，有法及法，不相依順。自言既已乖反，對敵何所申立? 故為過也。

The commentary says: "A thesis depends on a *dharmin* and a *dharma.* A *dharmin* is its subject (lit. substance [*ti* 體]). A *dharma* is its predicate (lit. meaning [*yi* 義]). A predicate depends on a subject. They cannot be at variance with each other and they have to be mutually reconcileable. Now, when someone says "my mother", it is clearly understood that she has a child. When someone says "a barren woman", it is clearly implied that she has no child. The subject "my mother" and the predicate "a barren woman", the *dharmin* and the *dharma*, do not support each other in mutual accord. If one already contradicts him-

self in his own words, what [thesis] could he establish for the opponent [to respond to]?[23] It is for this reason that such a sentence is fallacious (...).

[8b] 理門論云：『如立一切言皆是妄』，謂有外道立：「一切言皆是虛妄」。陳那難言：『若如汝說:「諸言皆妄」，則汝所言稱可實事。既非是妄，一分實故，便違有法「一切」之言。若汝所言自是虛妄，餘言不妄。汝今妄說。非妄作妄。汝語自妄，他語不妄。便違宗法言「皆是妄」。故名自語相違』。

It is said in *The Gate of Logic* (*Nyāyamukha*): *When someone states: All statements are false.* This refers to [those] non-Buddhists who claim that all statements are false. Dignāga refuted [such a view] in the following way:

> "If you say that every statement is false, then you utter [another] statement, [assuming] that it is in accord with the facts. [Your statement itself] not being false, [it turns out that] one part [of "all statements"] is true, [i.e. that some statements are after all not false]. That means that your statement is in opposition with the word "all" in the *dharmin* (subject) of your thesis [i.e. "all statements"]. If your own statement is itself false, [then] the other statements are not false, and by saying that they are false, you mistake what is not false for false; your own statement is itself false and the statements of others are not false. This [in turn] is in opposition with the *dharma* (predicate) of your thesis: "are all false". For this reason [such a fallacy] is called "inconsistency with one's own words" (T44:1840.116b21-c4).

Kuiji's initial comments resemble those of Wengui in Passage [3a]. However, his interpretation of the mutual incongruence between *dharmin* and *dharma* is somewhat different. Rather than the co-existence of two contrary terms within a statement, it is the co-existence of two mutually exclusive attributes ("having a child", *you zi* 有子, and "childlessness",

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[23] In his Polish translation of this fragment, Janusz Chmielewski renders *duidi* (對敵) as a noun referring to "opponent" (Skt. *prativādin*) (Chmielewski, 1981: 61). If his reading is correct, this fragment should be translated as "How can the opponent support his own thesis?"

wu er 無兒) in one subject (not mentioned explicitly) that renders such a thesis inadmissible. In this sense, Kuiji's understanding of the fallacy underlying Sentence [1] resembles the Aristotelian notion of contradiction (Höffe, 2005: 51) much more closely than Wengui's. The last sentence of the paragraph is also worthy of attention, since it very directly states that the Chinese author rejects Sentence [1] mainly because of its lack of pragmatic value. An opponent cannot really take issue with a statement that is self-contradictory. Perhaps he would not even understand what the controversy is about in the first place.

In the dense Passage [8b], Kuiji proceeds to analyze Sentence [2]. Just as in Wengui's commentary, this sentence is mentioned and analyzed after Sentence [1], even though it does not belong to the treatise which is the object of the commentary. Moreover, Kuiji takes the notion that both statements represent one and the same kind of fallacy even more seriously than his predecessor. He seems to believe that just as in the case of Sentence [1], the problem with Sentence [2] lies in the mutual disagreement between *dharmin* and *dharma*, corresponding to subject and predicate respectively. His argument can be paraphrased as follows: If Sentence [2] is true, then it contradicts the *dharmin* "all sentences", since it is no longer *all* sentences that are false. If Sentence [2] is false, then it contradicts the *dharma* "are [all] false", since it is not the case that *all* statements are *false*. In either case, the whole thesis is inconsistent because of the conflict between itself and one of its two constituent parts.

Curiously, Kuiji explicitly attributes this argument to the great Indian logician Dignāga. This attribution was challenged by Janusz Chmielewski, who pointed out that the piece of reasoning presented by Kuiji presupposes redundant quantification of the predicate in the Chinese sentence: "*All* statements are *all* false" (一切言皆是妄). According to Chmielewski, since this peculiar grammatical feature of literary Chinese is absent in Sanskrit, it is extremely unlikely that an argument of this form was really proposed by Dignāga, or for that matter, by any native user of an Indo-European language (Chmielewski, 1981: 63-66).

Even though Chmielewski's remarks cast serious doubt on the Indian origin of the ideas expressed in Passage [8b], it might be argued that they are not decisive, as the argument in question still makes sense under the assumption that the phrase "*dharma* of your thesis" originally referred

only to the predicate "false" (Skt. *mṛṣā*), to which the adverbial qua-
si-quantifier "all" (*jie* 皆) was added later in the Chinese text. Never-
theless, Chmielewski certainly does have a point that there is something
distinctively Chinese about the rhetoric of the whole passage, especially
about the parallel structure of its main argument. On the other hand, if
we delete problematic references to "oppositions" with *dharmin* and
dharma, what remains is essentially nothing other than a slightly extend-
ed and improved version of Shentai's Passage [7a], supplied with an idea
probably borrowed from Wengui's Passage [3b]. It might be conjectured
that this common pattern of refutation of Sentence [2] was transmitted
by Xuanzang to his disciples as a part of an oral commentary he had
learned in India, and as such, was associated with the name of Dignāga
himself.[24]

   In the concluding paragraph of his commentary (not translated here)
Kuiji remarks that the fallacy of "inconsistency with one's own words"
can also be attributed to a thesis that in any way contradicts the philo-
sophical stance of its proponent (*zijiao* 自教). This means that a materi-
alist who states to his Buddhist (i.e. idealist) opponent that "The four ele-
ments (earth, water, fire and wind) are unreal" and a non-Buddhist skep-
tic who claims that "All statements are false" can be regarded as guilty of
the same kind of fallacy. They both destroy their credibility as represent-
atives of one of the sides in the debate, by proposing a statement that
goes against the tenets of their side, the only difference being that the
skeptic simultaneously undermines the opponent's stance as well (即違
自語，又違他語) (cf. T44:1840.116c). Kuiji's opinion was already chal-
lenged in the eighth century by the monk Dingbin (定賓, d.u.), who

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[24] This hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that a similar pattern of refutation of a
statement representing the fallacy in question, translated by Th. Stcherbatsky as
"whatsoever I speak is wrong" (*sarvaṃ mithyā bravīmi*), appears in the *Nyāyabinduṭīkā*
by Dharmottara (seventh or eighth century), a post-Dignāgan Indian work on Buddhist
logic. Dharmottara begins his argument by pointing out that "the speaker pronounces
his proposition in order to convey that these words (at least) have a true meaning"
(*yo 'pi hi sarvaṃ mithyā bravīmīti vakti so 'py asya vākyasya satyārthatvam ādarśayann eva
vākyam uccārayati*) and then proceeds to spell out the consequences that follow on the
assumption that the speaker's words are either true or false (Stcherbatsky, 1918: 59-60;
2004: 166).

underlined the necessity of distinguishing between "inconsistency with the tenets of one's own school" (自教相違) and "inconsistency with one's own words" proper, which occurs regardless of the speaker's philosophical assumptions (T68:2270.325a20; Chen, 1974: 119).

Later Japanese and Chinese interpretations

By the beginning of the eighth century, Xuanzang's translations of the two Indian manuals, complete with a whole set of Chinese commentaries, were transmitted to Japan, which contributed to the development of an independent scholastic tradition. In the Japanese commentaries on logical works that were included in the modern edition of the Buddhist canon, the Taishō Tripiṭaka, the fallacy of "inconsistency with one's own words" is mentioned quite often. However, Japanese authors were definitely not interested in challenging existing interpretations. For the most part they merely repeated in their own words the arguments of their Chinese predecessors, especially Kuiji. Exceptions can be found in the *Inmyō ron sho myōtō shō* (因明論疏明燈抄) compiled by Zenju (善珠, 723-797), a monk of the Hossō (法相) school, the Japanese counterpart of the so-called "Faxiang" (法相) school founded by Xuanzang. Zenju offers an explanation of the distinction between "total inconsistency with one's own words" (全分自語相違 or 自語全相違) and "partial inconsistency with one's own words" (一分自語相違 or 自語分相違), which was only hinted at in Kuiji's commentary (T44:1840.116c17). The first type is represented by Sentence [1] and a new example, "I am currently dumb" (我今瘖瘂).[25] The second type is illustrated by Sentence [2] and the non-Buddhist claim "I do not affirm anything" quoted from Passage [4] (T68:2270.324c). Apparently, the terms "total" and "partial" refer – in

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[25] Interestingly, a very similar pair of sentences can be found in the tenth-century Indian logical treatise *Ātmatattvaviveka* by the Nyāya logician Udayana, where they are presented as illustrations of inconsistency with one's own words (*svavacanavyāghāta*) and inconsistency with one's own actions (*svakriyavyāghāta*), respectively (Perrett, 1984: 239). This might suggest that Zenju was inspired by some unknown Indian source, although pure coincidence cannot be ruled out as well.

the manner of Kuiji – to the extent of consensus between debaters.[26] In the first case, no agreement can be reached on the thesis, and thus the fallacy is "total". In the second case, it might still be admitted by the opponent that *some* statements are false, and this makes the fallacy "partial".

After flourishing briefly in the seventh century, the study of Buddhist logic in China lost most of its original impetus. The scarce and repetitive scholarship of later periods produced hardly any original approaches to the subject of fallacious theses. During the brief period of revival of the "science of reasons" in the late sixteenth century the issue of "inconsistency with one's own words" resurfaced once again, albeit treated in a very cursory way. Ming dynasty Chinese students of Buddhist logic had no access to early Tang commentaries, some of which were preserved only in Japan. Their writings, amounting to a handful of commentaries on the *Introduction to Logic*, are generally criticized by contemporary scholars as rife with simplifications and misunderstandings (Frankenhauser, 1996: 203-205; Zheng, 2007: 278-292). The following quote from the *Yinming ru zhengli lun jie* (因明入正理論解, written around 1590 by the monk Zhenjie 真界, d.u.) can be treated as representative of the approach of Ming authors:

> [9] 鞠我育我，方為我母。石女無能養育，實非我母。而言我母是其石女。豈不與自語相違哉。

> It is only she who "nourished me and supported me" that can be called my mother.[27] An infertile woman cannot bring up and rear children. It is [evidently] true that she is not my mother. Now, to say that my mother is that barren woman – is this not a case of "inconsistency with one's own words"? (X53:856.912a4-7).[28]

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[26] For different analyses of the usage of the terms "partial" (*yifen* 一分) and "total" (*quanfen* 全分) in Chinese Buddhist logic, see Chen, 1974: 110-113; Zheng, 1997: 40-45; 2007: 199-200; and Frankenhauser, 1996: 42, 61.

[27] A reference to *The Book of Odes* (*Shijing* 詩經), ode 202 (Legge, 1967: 352).

[28] Zhenjie was one of the pioneers of the short-lived "revival" of logical and epistemological studies in China during the Ming period. However, his interpretation was not substantially improved upon by later authors.

The sheer contrast between the informal language of this passage and the technical vocabulary employed in Passages [3a] and [8a], written a thousand years earlier by the disciples of Xuanzang, speaks volumes about the decline of post-Tang Chinese Buddhist logic. Needless to say, this fragment offers no new insights concerning the logical aspect of the fallacy it attempts to explain.

The fallacy of "inconsistency with one's own words" as a rhetorical tool

One of the first recorded cases of an East Asian author using the accusation of "inconsistency with one's own words" in the context of an actual debate appears in the *Critical Discussion on Inference* (*P'an piryang non* 判比量論) by the Korean monk Wŏnhyo (元曉, 617-686). Ironically, in this work Wŏnhyo employed Dignāga's "science of reasons" partly in order to challenge tenets specific to Xuanzang's school (Lusthaus, 2012: 284). The fallacy in question is ascribed to an unidentified opponent who holds that "words do not reveal the Pure Land". Wŏnhyo asks whether this statement was intended to deny the possibility of obtaining any sort of knowledge about the Pure Land by means of language, or rather, the possibility of conveying the "essence" (*ch'e* 體) of the Pure Land through words. On the first interpretation, the opponent cannot avoid the charge of "inconsistency with one's own words", as what he says is in fact yet another doctrinal statement about the Pure Land. On the second interpretation, his claim does not pose any challenge to the stance which, as may be surmised, Wŏnhyo regards as the orthodox Buddhist view (X53: 860.951a7-15; Lusthaus, 2012: 286).[29] The distinction made by Wŏnhyo implies that his approach to self-refuting statements was more nuanced than that proposed by Xuanzang's disciples in their discussions of Sentence [2]. This points to the specifically Buddhist context of this issue,

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[29] Since the surviving text is incomplete and not well preserved, it is difficult to determine the exact doctrinal affiliation and stance of Wŏnhyo's opponent. According to Dan Lusthaus, Wŏnhyo aimed to refute the view that "words" (Buddhist teachings?) are insufficient to prove that the Pure Land (presumably, the Western Pure Land of Buddha Amitābha) really exists.

which was not directly tackled by Wengui, Shentai and Kuiji, but which nevertheless was perceived by most Buddhist authors as much more significant than its purely logical dimension.

In all of the commentaries quoted above the self-refuting Sentence [2] is attributed to unspecified non-Buddhist "heretics" (*tīrthika, waidao* 外道). This rhetoric somewhat obscures the fact that Indian Buddhist debaters were skilled not only in refuting this kind of claim, but also in defending their own claims against similar refutations. This pertains especially to the so-called Mādhyamikas, followers of the legendary sage Nāgārjuna (ca. 150-250?), who propounded the teaching of universal "emptiness" (Skt. *śūnyavāda*). Whereas the point of this core Buddhist doctrine is that nothing exists of itself and independently of something else, non-Buddhist opponents often misunderstood Nāgārjuna's thesis as a nihilist denial of existence as such. In a polemical work called *The Refutation of Criticisms* (*Vigrahavyāvartanī, Hui zheng lun* 迴諍論) Nāgārjuna responds to the argument that by calling all phenomena "empty" he implies that no statement, including his own, can be true (T32:1561.15b; Perrett, 1984: 249-254). In Bhāviveka's *Light of Wisdom* (*Prajñāpradīpa, Banruo deng lun* 般若燈論), an anonymous opponent ridicules the Mādhyamikas, saying that their talk of all phenomena being empty of their own nature is as illogical as stating that someone is the child of a barren woman and a celibate monk (T30:1566.93b).

It appears that at least some Chinese commentators on logical treatises were aware that condemnation of Sentence [2] had some risky implications for the Buddhist standpoint. A response to this problem can be found in a commentary to the *Introduction to Logic* by Zhizhou (智周, 668-723), one of the last exponents of early Tang scholarship on the "science of reasons":

[10] 問：「准佛法中，所有言詮亦不得法體亦是虛妄，與外道計而何別耶」？答：「准外道計，即喚言語總是妄語，無詮表也。今佛法言即不同彼，雖不得實體，能詮召法，還有作用。」

Question: According to the Buddhist teachings, no verbal discourse can reach the essence of phenomena, and [as such] it is false. How is this any different from the schemes of the non-Buddhists [who say that all statements are false]?

Answer: According to the schemes of the non-Buddhists, all the words and sentences that are uttered are [only] false talk. They do not convey [*quanbiao* 詮表] anything. Now, what Buddhism says is different: although we cannot reach the real essence [of phenomena by means of language], we can refer to phenomena [at the conventional level]. [Therefore, verbal discourse] still has [some] function [...] (X53:854. 858b23-c2).

Zhizhou concedes that the Buddhist view of language superficially resembles the self-refuting views of skeptical "heretics", as it stipulates that linguistic concepts cannot reflect reality as it really is. However, he stresses that unlike their opponents, Buddhists admit the possibility of meaningful communication by the means of words. This rather obscure fragment deals with crucial tenets of the Buddhist philosophy of language, and for this reason demands study in its own right. In the context of the present discussion, the most important observation regarding its content is that Zhizhou differentiates his stance from the self-refuting position exemplified by Sentence [2] by introducing a more nuanced understanding of the predicate "false". This approach is opposite to the one adopted by the fictional non-Buddhist opponent in Passages [3] and [7], where self-refutation is avoided by excluding the statement about all statements from the range of the universal quantifier "all".

Conclusions

One of the most interesting aspects of research into Chinese commentaries on the Indian treatises about the "science of reasons" is the issue of specifically Chinese developments within the system transmitted from India, that is, the "sinification" of Indian Buddhist logic. Unfortunately, as far as the topic of the present article is concerned, any conclusion regarding this point can only be tentative, due to the fact that we cannot be certain to what extent the ideas expressed by Chinese commentators in the Passages [3], [7] and [8] are really their own. As previously noted, it is not improbable that Xuanzang's disciples utilized some "unwritten" Indian sources, pieces of oral commentary which their master had learned in India. This hypothesis could be reliably tested only by pursu-

ing a much more in-depth survey of Indian logical literature than has been attempted in the present paper. The comparison between Chinese approaches to the fallacy of "inconsistency with one's own words" and their possible models extracted from Indian works extant in the Chinese Buddhist canon suggests that the interpretations of Chinese monks are not only original, but also in many ways superior to their antecedents in Indian literature.

The Indian source of inspiration that presents itself as the most conspicuous in most cases is *The Treatise on Accordance with Truth* attributed to Vasubandhu. This work presents refutations of the sentences "A virgin has a child" and "I reject all that is said" in a section devoted to "sophisms" (*dūṣaṇa, wudaoli nan* 無道理難). It is not concerned with the thorough analysis of those propositions, but merely suggests a way to address claims of this kind so as to make the opponent concede defeat in debate. On the other hand, in their comments on the sentences "My mother is that barren woman" and "All statements are false" Chinese monks try to elucidate the exact nature of the fallacies exemplified therein using the technical vocabulary of the fairly advanced theoretical system of Dignāga's science of reasons. In doing this, they achieved remarkable results.

Wengui's commentary offers a convincing explanation of the difference between the two exemplifications of "inconsistency with one's own words", which is apparently unparalleled in the history of East Asian Buddhist logic before the twentieth century. He explicates Sentence [1] as a thesis whose subject and predicate are contrary terms, and Sentence [2] as a thesis that entails contradiction between itself and its "intention", which amounts to the assertion that "All statements are false" is a true statement. While these may not be Wengui's original ideas, their precise formulation is probably his own achievement.

Wengui's co-disciple Shentai views Sentence [2] as a paradoxical statement that forces its proponent to admit a self-defeating or absurd conclusion regardless of whether it is true or false. The structure of his argument resembles a similar refutation in the text attributed to Vasubandhu. Nevertheless, his own comments (logically erroneous as they are) are more profound than those of the Indian author. For one thing, Shentai's commentary deals with the abstract and difficult problem of

predicating truth and falsity of statements about all (remaining) statements, and does it to a considerable level of sophistication.

The interpretation of Kuiji, historically the most influential, is noteworthy for the clear spelling out of the contradiction underlying Sentence [1]. Otherwise it does not add much to the opinions of the two aforementioned commentators, except for a rather convoluted fragment which attributes the self-refutation of Sentence [2] to incongruence between the thesis itself and its two constituent parts. The fact that this argument was attributed by Kuiji to the "*bodhisattva*" Dignāga, and further enshrined by his own authority for the centuries to come, appears very unfortunate for the development of the East Asian tradition of Buddhist logic, especially given that the theoretical grasp of its principles clearly deteriorated after the Tang period.

The findings of the present paper confirm the view that the development of Buddhist logic in East Asia was severely hindered by a lack of sustained interest in the theory of reasoning among the Chinese. Both secular Chinese culture and Chinese interpretations of Buddhist doctrine provided relatively few incentives and conceptual tools to identify and pursue the purely logical issues underlying the system of the "science of reasons". There is no way of knowing how Wengui's commentary would have looked if he had been acquainted with a living commentarial tradition on the ancient *Mohist Canons* (*Mo bian* 墨辯), where the self-refutation of Sentence [2] is noted and exposed. It is futile to speculate on the direction in which further commentaries on passages such as Shentai's Passage [7c] could have evolved if some more analytically-minded Chinese author had wanted to bother himself with carrying the fictional debate further. In fact, even accomplished scholar monks from the school of Xuanzang, often touted as the most "intellectual" and "philosophical" strand in the history of Chinese Buddhism, did not regard the logical aspect of the fallacy of "inconsistency with one's own words" as an issue of importance. As demonstrated by the case of Zhizhou, if the statement "All words are false" attracted any attention outside the context of word-by-word commentaries on Dignāga's treatise, it was not because of its self-refuting character, but rather because it could serve as an example of heterodox views concerning the relation between language and reality.

This being said, it should be noted that whenever the interpretations of Chinese commentators appear unsatisfactory or incorrect, they reveal the inherent limitations of the system they were working within, rather than their own misunderstandings of this system. Granted, if Chmielewski's criticism of Kuiji's pseudo-Dignāgan argument is accepted, Kuiji's argument could be regarded as a case of logical confusion due to the grammatical structure of the Chinese sentence (double quantification) and the typically Chinese tendency to structure arguments in parallel fashion (after all, Kuiji erroneously assumes that "inconsistency with one's own words" has to be explained as "inconsistency with the *dharmin*" *and* "inconsistency with the *dharma*").[30]

However, the commentary of Wengui discussed above provides some examples of formulations which are linguistically or conceptually more precise than the Indian text that might have inspired them. For example, whereas in Paramārtha's translation of *The Treatise on Accordance with Truth* a self-excepting statement is said to refer to "not all" statements, Wengui in a similar context uses the more explicit phrase "all other statements" (餘一切言). Although the Indian author mentions only an unspecified "mutual opposition" between the two parts of the thesis "A virgin has a child" (此二相違), Wengui explains this kind of fallacy in a more precise manner, as a semantic conflict between subject and predicate terms ([有]法之言).

These observations might be taken to suggest that, far from being constrained or limited by their language or "patterns of thought", the Chinese commentators were capable of clarifying some ambiguous theoretical aspects of the Indian "science of reasons" using their own words. However, a more definite statement regarding the independent contributions of Chinese monks would have to be corroborated by a thorough survey of passages from South Asian works that deal with similar subject matter. One of the purposes of the present article is to provide reference

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[30] Chmielewski himself, in his discussion of ancient Chinese logical thought, maintained that the rules of quantification in Classical Chinese and the frequent use of parallelism as a stylistic device have a potentially positive role in "spontaneous logical thinking" (Chmielewski, 2009: 244, 260-268).

points for those who are more competent to carry this discussion further.

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