

The Realities and Verbal Behaviors in the *Quyín jiashe lun*

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1. Introduction

The *Quyín jiashe lun* (取因假設論) is a short philosophical treatise written by Dignāga which is available only in the Chinese translation by Yijing. It discusses designation by provisional naming (*prajñāpti*). As Funayama pointed out, however, this treatise exceeds the scope of epistemology, and shows its relationship with Buddha's *upāya*.¹⁾ Indeed, Dignāga used the word '*upāya*' in its opening and ending portions (Q: 885a25–28 and Q: 887c9–10. Moreover, the final stanza (k.13) and its commentary seem to imply that religious practices take precedence over theoretical issues (887c13–20). It might be natural to Buddhists but is rarely observed in succeeding philosophical works. With this religious belief in mind, he was trying to give an epistemological foundation to Buddha's preaching by using skillful means (*upāya*). The theory for it is that Buddha's preaching depends on the conceptually constructed things, which are classified into aggregates (總聚: *saṃūha*), continua (相續: *saṃtāna*) and specific states (分位差別: *avasthāviśeṣa*). Can the conceptually constructed things be a basis for Buddha's verbal behaviors including skillful means? In this essay, I will examine the relation between the verbal behaviors and the conceptually constructed things in the *Quyín jiashe lun*.

2. The Concept of *Pudgala* as a Conceptually Constructed Thing

First of all, let us examine the concept of *pudgala* as an example of a conceptually constructed thing. The concept of *pudgala* is not accepted in the majority of Buddhist schools. In some cases, however, this concept seems to be useful such as for the explanation of transmigration. Dignāga, who did not originally accept the reality of *pudgala*, seems to have noticed the utility of this concept and paid much attention to it in this treatise. After having enumerated the three kinds of conceptually constructed things and given some ex-

planations of them, Dignāga said:

由此三義，密意說「有補嚩揭羅」，及「證圓寂」。然此三義但是假設。(Q: 885b6–7) Owing to these three things [i.e. aggregate, continuum and specific state], with hidden intention (*saṃdhāya*) [Buddha] says, “There is a person (*pudgala*),” or “He dies (*parinirvāṭi*).”²⁾ These three objects, however, are only conceptual constructions.

The above description means that the concept of *pudgala* consists of three kinds of conceptually constructed things. Notably this description seems to imply that *pudgala* is regarded as one of the most typical cases of conceptual constructions.

Moreover, another reference to *pudgala* with hidden intention is made in the following context: After having denied the last wrong conclusion that conceptually constructed things are absent, Dignāga discussed the reality of them and insisted that they are not conditioned entities (*saṃskṛta*). (Q: 887b6f.) In this situation, a person, quoting Buddha’s words,³⁾ objects that some conceptually constructed also have character of birth and so on that every conditioned entity must have. (Q: 887b13–20) In the counter-objection against him, Dignāga said that Buddha’s words have hidden intention and that the characters of birth and so on are mentioned conceptually. (Q: 887b20–22) The reason why Buddha’s words have hidden intention and are not ultimate truth is that there is said to be birth and so on in reference to *pudgala*. (於補嚩揭羅，說有生等故。 : Q: 887b26) In this case, *pudgala* is used as a mark of conceptual or metaphorical construction (*prajñāpti/upacāra*). That is to say, every *pudgala* must be a conceptually constructed thing, and is frequently used in Buddha’s preaching.

Considering these facts, I think it is useful to compare the concept of *pudgala* with that of conceptual construction proposed by Dignaga. In considering the concept of *pudgala*, the Vātsīputrīya theory of *pudgala*, which is recorded in the 9th chapter of AKBh, offers a model. The Vātsīputrīya theory of *pudgala* tries to clarify the relation between *pañca-skandha* and *pudgala*, and can be summarized in the following two points:

- (1) *ādhyātmikān upātān vartamānān skandhān upādāya pudgalaḥ prajñāpyate . . . yathendham upādāyāgñih.* (AKBh, p.461,20–21, 25) Being conditioned by (or having taken) the perceived and present *skandhas* (aggregate of elements) in a personal life, *pudgala* is conceptually constructed . . . Just as, being conditioned by kindling, fire is [constructed].
- (2) *evaṃ na ca vinā skandhaiḥ pudgalaḥ prajñāpyate. na cānyaḥ skandhebhyaḥ śakyate pratijñātuṃ*

śāsvataprasaṅgāt. nāpy anyā uccedaprasaṅgād iti. (AKBh, p.462,3–4) In this way, *pudgala* is not constructed without *skandhas*. Furthermore it cannot be insisted that [*pudgala*] is something different from *skandhas*, because the consequence would be eternal. And it [i.e. *pudgala*] is not identical with [*skandhas*], because it would conclude that it is totally absent.

In the case of the Vātsīputrīya theory of *pudgala*, the relation between *pudgala* and *skandha* (aggregate) can be expressed by the following two schemata.

- (1) *skandhān upādāya pudgalaḥ prajñapyate.* (Having taken A, B is constructed)
- (2) *nānyaḥ skandhebhyaḥ pudgalaḥ, nāpy anyāḥ.* (D is neither different from nor identical with C: In this case, A=C is *skandha*, and B=D is *pudgala*)

The above schemata seem to be applicable to every conceptual construction.

3. A Framework of Conceptual Construction (*prajñapati*)

Three kinds of conceptual constructions are described as follows:

(總聚: *samūha/samudāya*) 言總聚者, 謂於一時有多法聚, 隨順世間以一性說。如身林等。 (Q:885a29–b2) What is designated as “aggregate” is as follows: Many *dharma*s (elements) collectively [occurring] at one time is designated as one thing in accordance with the worldly people. It is exemplified by body, forest and so on....無異性言事唯二種。爲當許有此二自性, 遮其性別, 謂於有聚總聚不別, 名無異耶? 爲但無餘, 說名無異? (Q:885b9–11) The word, “non-difference (*ananyā*)” is [interpreted] in only two ways. Suppose there exist their [viz. of an aggregate and its components] two properties, making the exclusion (*pariyudāsa*?) of difference between their properties, we say, “The aggregate is not different from its components” Is it called “non-difference? Or is non-existence (*prasajyapratishedha*?) of [the aggregate] other than [its components] called “non-difference”?⁴⁾

(相續: *saṃtāna*) 言相續者, 謂於異時因果不絕以一性說。如羯羅羅等位, 名之爲人, 芽等轉異, 名之爲穀。 (Q:885b2–4) What is designated as “continuum” is as follows: When [a series of] causes and effects is not disrupted at different periods of time, then it is said to be one thing, as e.g. the states of *kalala* (a stage of embryo development) and so on are called “a person” and the transformed states of a sprout and so on are called “a grain”.....若許相續於有續 (K reads. T.讀) 事無異性者, 應許自性有其二種。 (Q:886b6–7) If you admit the non-difference of continuum from a continuous thing, you should admit that the nature [of non-difference] has the two sorts [as mentioned in the case of aggregates].

(分位差別: *avasthāviśeṣa*) 於果性等分位之處, 取彼事已, 而興言說。異彼無體。 (Q:886c8–9) In regard to the specific states such as the property of being an effect and so on, having taken that entity (彼事=*vastu/dravya*), a person states [metaphorical expression such as “It is an effect” and so

on] and there is nothing different from that [entity].

The above descriptions are found in the introduction (Q: 885a25–b8) and in the denial of identity and difference of conceptually constructed things (Q:885b8–886c17). Therefore, those descriptions are fragmentary and not sufficient for our comparison with the Vātsīputrīya theory of *pudgala*. Although our sources are limited and insufficient, my observations and considerations can be summarized in the table below.

In the table above, the items with superscript “*” are not supported by Dignāga’s descriptions. Considering the uniformity of Dignāga’s theory of conceptual construction and the given concrete examples, however, I think that the interpretations represented in the table are not strained. Needless to say, my interpretation of Dignāga’s theory of conceptual construction is modelled on the Vātsīputrīya theory of *pudgala*. If my interpretation is adequate, we could say that Dignāga dramatically extended the usage of conceptual constructions and that he provided a versatile foundation of understanding for Buddha’s preaching. There remains a question whether Dignāga’s theory of conceptual construction covers every verbal behavior. Let us examine this point.

4. Conceptual Construction as a Basis for Verbal Behavior

Before our examination, let us follow Dignāga’s discussion. While Dignāga devoted more than half of the *Quyín jiashe lun* to the denial of identity and difference of conceptually constructed things (Q:885b8–886c17), he also denied that conceptually constructed things are absolutely absent (Q:886c17–887a12). Dignāga seems to have noticed the utility of

	A_acc. upādāya B prajñāpyate		nānyaḥ C_inst./abl. D, nāpy ananyaḥ	
	A	B	C	D
<i>pudgala</i>	<i>skandha</i>	<i>pudgala</i>	<i>skandha</i>	<i>pudgala</i>
總聚 (<i>saṃūha</i>)	ex. 多法 (<i>dharma_pl.</i>) <i>saṃudāyin</i> *	ex. 身, 森 (<i>śarīra, vana</i>) <i>saṃudāya</i> *	有聚 (<i>saṃudāyin</i>)	總聚 (<i>saṃudāya</i>)
相續 (<i>saṃtāna</i>)	e.x. 羯羅羅, 芽 (<i>kalala, aṅkura</i>) <i>saṃtānavat</i> ?	e.x. 人, 穀 (<i>puruṣa?, yava</i>) <i>saṃtāna</i> *	有續事 (<i>saṃtānavat/</i> <i>saṃtānin</i> ?)	相續 (<i>saṃtāna</i>)
分位差別 (<i>avasthāviśeṣa</i>)	彼事 (<i>tadvastu/-dravya</i>)	分位 (<i>avasthā</i>)	彼(事) (<i>tadvastu/-dravya</i>)	<i>avasthā</i> *

The sign “?” indicates dubious Sanskrit reconstruction.

such things in both religious and daily activities. He especially seems to have thought that Buddha's teachings of truth are meaningless without acceptance of conceptually constructed things. He said in stanza 9 as follows:

若不許身是實有 無倒說法應無益 又復應無邪見人 亦無差別作用事。(Q:886c19–20) If it is not accepted that a body is really existent, any faultless teaching would be meaningless, there would be no people who hold to wrong views, and also there would not be various functions.

Although Dignāga's discussion is not limited to verbal issues, the issues mentioned in his discussion seem to concern verbal behavior beginning with Buddha's preaching, because every religious injunction, prohibition and so on are made in terms of verbal expression.

In this situation, let us turn back to the previous question about whether Dignāga's theory of conceptual construction can entirely explain verbal behavior. If we wish to answer this question, we must examine the relation with the things designated as “實物有 (*dravya-sat*).” Indeed, after Dignāga's denial of the absence of conceptually constructed things, an opponent questioned why conceptually constructed things are not accepted to be substantially existent (*dravya-sat*) when their absence causes many inconveniences (Q:887a13–14). Dignāga answered this question as follows:

由遮一性異性故。(Q:887a16. k. 10a) = 由於色等是實有故, 更互相望一異之性是可說故, 其總聚等是不可說。(Q:887a18–19) It is because the identities and differences [of conceptual constructed things] are denied. In regard to *rūpa* and so on, since they are substantial entities, their mutual identities or differences can be described. On the contrary, their aggregate and so on cannot be mentioned [as being different or identical].

若如是者, 身望餘身云何名異? (Q: 887a19–20) In spite of such a situation, why can we call one body different with reference to another one? 非是展轉藉因成 (Q:887a16. k. 10b) = 此由非是更互相因。(Q: 887a20) [Bodies] do not come to exist in mutual causal dependence. It is because [each body] does not take another one as its cause (*anyonyahetuka?*).⁵⁾

For Dignāga, the conceptually constructed things differ from substantial ones because of the indescribability of identities or differences. Even though bodies are conceptually constructed things, they are described as being different from each other in daily life. In such cases, bodies are not due to causal relation. Judging from the context of the above discussion, this seems to be Dignāga's answer, and he seems to have thought this situation is contradicted with the substantiality of a body.

On the other hand, Dignāga also has to explain the following expression, “This body is different from that one”, because such an expression is found in daily verbal behavior, even in Buddha’s preaching. At first, Dignāga gave the definition of the conceptualization based on cause (取因假設: *upādāyaprajñapti*).

凡諸事物, 若捨於彼而心取此者, 斯則不名取因假設。由不取彼以爲因故... 若捨彼時意不取此, 此乃方名取因假設。 (Q: 887a21–24) Generally speaking, with reference to entities, if the mind, having abandoned that one, takes this one, it is not designated as conceptualization based on cause. It is because we regard it as a cause without having taken that one... If the consciousness [i.e. “mind” in this case], having abandoned that one, does not take this one, it is to be designated as conceptualization based on cause.

This definition is easily applicable to the case of aggregate.

若捨色等, 無其總聚。是故應知但於自事一異之性是不可說, 非於一切。 (Q: 887a24–25) If [the mind] abandons *rūpa* (visible element) and so on, there will be no [concept] of their aggregate. Therefore, one should know that it is impossible to mention its identity and difference with reference to its own [composing] entities, but not with reference to every entity.

Let us summarize the distinction between a substantial entity and a conceptually constructed thing. In the case of a substantial entity, the difference and identity between a cause and its effect can be described. On the other hand, in the case of a conceptual construction, the difference and identity between some constructed thing and its cause, which might be substantial, cannot be described. When the cause of a constructed thing is replaced with its own object in the above description, we can find a possibility to describe some conceptually constructed things as being different. That is, the indescribability of difference is limited to the relation between a constructed thing and its cause. However, we have not observed the basis for expressions referring to difference and identity. The basis for such expressions is specific state (*avasthāviśeṣa*). Dignāga said:

然分位差別於異性等更互名異。說之爲假。 (Q: 887a25–26) On the other hand, the specific states are called “mutual difference” with reference to the difference and so on and they are called “provisional”.

In this kind of specific state, there seems to be no distinction between the case of substantial thing and that of the conceptual one. Dignāga discussed:

若如是者，於色等處，亦不取故說爲異性，應非實有。(Q: 887a26–28) [Objection:] If that is the case, with reference to *rūpa* and so on, since [the mind] does not take [them i.e. *rūpa* and so on], they cannot be substantially real, though they are called “different”.

理不應爾，由彼自體是可說故。亦是可得，體相別故，非於餘事不棄捨故。然此似境亦從識起。於彼所有一切境相，若離識者，即不能知。所有自性亦是假設。(Q: 887a28–b2) [Answer:] It is not reasonable, because their [i.e. of *rūpa* and so on] own properties can be described [as “it is different”= 自體亦是可說故: k.10c]. Furthermore, they are perceptible, because their characteristics are different, and because it is not the case that they are abandoned with reference to other things. In this way, they appear as [perceptible] objects and arise from [our] consciousness. [=似境唯從於識起: k.10d] In such a situation, apart from [our] consciousness, any characteristic of objects cannot be known. All the properties are also conceptually constructed.

In the above description, the words, “自體” and “自性”, are synonymous and seem to be translations of *svabhāva*. In this text, these terms cover every item that we call property whose substratum is either a substantial entity or a conceptually constructed thing. Since such properties can belong to both substantial and conceptual thing, Dignāga can refute the above objection that *rūpa* and so on would not be substantially existent. Moreover, he insisted that such properties are conceptual. However there remains an ambiguity in the meaning of “體相”. I assume that it is a translation of *lakṣaṇa* or *svabhāvalakṣaṇa* and means an apparent or phenomenal characteristic that is produced from its own properties.⁶⁾

Considering the context of his discussion, we can say that every property (*svabhāva*) whose substratum is substantial or conceptual is based on a specific state or states (*avasthāviśeṣa*) which arise from our consciousness and conceptually constructed. This function of the specific state seems to make our various verbal behaviors possible.

5. Conclusion—a working hypothesis and some remaining problems—

In this essay, I build the working hypothesis that Dignāga’s theory of conceptual construction is modelled on the Vātsīputrīya theory of *pudgala* which explains the relation between five *skandhas* and *pudgala*. Considering Dignāga’s interest and historical background,⁷⁾ I would like to claim that this hypothesis has a certain degree of probability. However, there remains an ambiguity in its historical background. Additionally, the specific states play an important role in verbal expression. They function as the properties in general whose substratum is either substantial or conceptual. It makes our various verbal behaviors possible. Further investigation into its semantical structures is needed.

(My special thanks are due to Prof. Syoru Katsura for his detailed comments and advice, to Prof. Akira Saito for his kind advices and to Ms. Lauren Alexander for English correction.)

Notes

1) See Funayama (1990, 616). 2) See Ui (1958, 205). 3) Quotations concerning this discussion. 積聚皆消散 崇高必墮落 合會終別離 有命皆歸死. (Q: 887b17–18)=*sarve kṣayāntā nicayāḥ patanāntāḥ samucchrayāḥ/ saṃyogā viprayogāntā maraṇāntaḥ hi jīvitam* (Udānavarga 1.22); 若見女人, 與母狀同者, 應爲母想. (Q: 887b24)=? 若見宿人, 而作母想. 見中年者, 作姊妹想. 見幼稚者, 而作女想. (Saṃyuktāgama: T0099, 331a15–16, a21–22); 若見極妙女色, 便起如母想. (Tridharmakaśāstra: T1506,18b6); 如有一人出現世間能多利益等. (Q: 887b26–27)<是名四人出現於世能多利益憐愍世間爲世間依安樂人天. (Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra: T0374,397a26–27; T0375,637c1–2); 一切有情, 皆依食住 (Q: 887b27–28)=*sarvasattvā āhārasthītikā* (AKBh on AK3.38, p.152,9–10; cf. Honjo (2014, 417)). Some other quotations from *Āgama* or *Vinaya* remain unidentified. 4) The phrase “爲…爲…” is alternative question (*kim…āhosvid*). See IAKB vol.1 p.131. 5) See IAKB, vol.1 p.34. 6) cf. Kitagawa (1957, 489). I follow his translation of this word. It also concerns Dignāga's citation (Q:887b4–5) from Yogācāra works. 7) See Frauwallner (1959, 122–127).

Abbreviations

AKBh *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya of Vasubandhu*. Ed. P. Pradhan. Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, vol. 8. Patna: Jayaswal Research Institute, 1975.
IAKB *Index to the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. Ed. Akira Hirakawa, Shunei Hirai, So Takahashi, Noriaki Hakamaya and Giei Yoshizu. Tokyo: Daizo Shuppan, 1973.
K *Tripitaka Koreana*: <http://kb.sutra.re.kr/ritk/index.do>.
Q *Quyīn Jiashe lun* (取因假設論) in T vol. 31, Taisho Catalogue No.1622.
T *Taisho Tripitaka*: <http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/>.

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Key words 取因假設論, Dignāga, prajñapti, Vātsīputrīya, svabhāva

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