

1 Course description

Indian Buddhism developed a rich scholastic tradition, the purpose of which was to provide a sound foundation for the doctrines and practices of Buddhism. Within the scholastic tradition, two broad approaches evolved. One of the approaches was that followed by those scholastics who favored logic or systematic reasoning. This approach was contrasted with that followed by those who adhered to scriptural tradition. Both of these approaches cut across sectarian boundaries, so one finds representatives of both approaches in most of the major schools of Indian Buddhism. Those who favored reasoning over scriptural exegesis were indebted primarily to the thought of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti. The principal topic of this course will be these two thinkers, whose works will be read in translation, along with reflections on their work by several modern scholars.

The epistemological tradition of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti received its impetus from Nāgārjuna's radical questioning of the possibility of justifying one's beliefs. This questioning was taken up in a text called *Averting the dispute* (*Vigraha-vyāvartanī*). Studying this text and its background will be our focus for two weeks. The next three weeks will be devoted to a study of key chapters in Dignāga's *Pramāṇa-samuccaya*. The main work that will be discussed in the second half of the course will be a chapter in Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇa-vārttika*, in which he attempts a rational defense of the principal teachings of Buddhism.

2 Readings

All required readings for this course can be found on reserve. The readings can be checked out of the reserves section of the Zimmerman library or downloaded through the electronic reserve facility at ereserves.unm.edu. If you use the electronic facility, the readings are found under PHIL 438. The password is `10b0438`. The full bibliographical information for the readings can be found in the References section at the end of this syllabus. The references section also contains other works that you might find useful as background reading.

3 Schedule of lectures and discussions

Date	Topic
Aug	24 The place of the epistemological school within Buddhism.
	26 Differences between Buddhists and other Indian schools on issues concerning epistemology
Sep	31 Skeptical trends in canonical Buddhism Reading: Hayes (1988a, pp. 41–52)
	2 Nāgārjuna’s assault on views in his <i>Mūla-madhyamaka-kārikā</i>
	7 Nāgārjuna’s <i>Vigraha-vyāvartanī</i> : The opponent’s challenge
	9 Nāgārjuna’s response
	14 Dignāga’s principal works and contributions Reading: Potter (2003, pp. 34–52)
	16 Dignāga’s <i>Pramāṇa-samuccaya</i> : First chapter: Sensation (<i>pratyakṣa</i>)
	21 No class
	23 Dignāga’s <i>Hetucakra</i> and his theory of inference and linguistic signs Reading: Hayes (1988a, pp. 111–131)
	First assignment due
	28 Dignāga’s <i>Pramāṇa-samuccaya</i> : Second chapter: Inference (<i>svārthānumāna</i>)
	30 Dignāga’s theory of language Reading: Potter (2003, pp. 349–360)
Oct	5 Dharmakīrti’s principal works and contributions Reading: Jackson (1993, pp. 109–116)
	7 An overview of issues in Dharmakīrti’s <i>Pramāṇa-vārttika</i> , <i>Pramāṇasiddhi</i> chapter: Proving that the Buddha is a source of truth.
	12 Issues in <i>Pramāṇasiddhi</i> verses 1–7.
	14 No classes (midterm break)

- 19 Indian views on the nature and authority of God
 21 Dharmakīrti’s critique of arguments for the existence of God
 Reading: *Pramāṇasiddhi* vv. 10–22
- 26 Dharmakīrti’s critique of arguments against the existence of God
 Reading: *Pramāṇasiddhi* vv. 23–30
- 28 Discussion of Hayes (1988b)
- Nov 2 The Buddha’s possession of knowledge
 Reading: *Pramāṇasiddhi* vv. 31–35
Take-home test due
- 4 Dismissal of materialist view of mind
 Reading: *Pramāṇasiddhi* vv. 36–44
- 9 Dharmakīrti on the nature of awareness (vv. 45–72)
 11 Discussion of Franco (1997, pp. 67–93)
- 16 Dharmakīrti’s discussion of the four noble truths
 18
- 23 Discussion of Jackson (1993, pp. 27–63)
 25 No classes (Thanksgiving vacation)
- 30 Discussion of Jackson (1993, pp. 117–135)
- Dec 2 Evaluating Dharmakīrti’s arguments
 Reading: Jackson (1993, pp. 137–145)
- 7 “Philosophy as an education of the mind”
 Reading: Dreyfus (1997, pp. 443–462)
- 9 Review and open discussion
- 16 **Take-home final exam due**

4 Assignments and evaluation

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage
3-page analysis of <i>Vigrahavyāvartanī</i>	September 23	30%
Take-home test	November 2	35%
Take-home final exam	December 16	35%

References

- Dreyfus, Georges B. J. 1997. *Recognizing Reality: Dharmakīrti’s Philosophy and Its Tibetan Interpreters*. State University of New York Press.
- Franco, Eli. 1997. *Dharmakīrti On Compassion and Rebirth*. Wiener Studien zur

- Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, vol. 38. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien Universität Wien.
- Hayes, Richard P. 1988a. *Dignāga on the Interpretation of Signs*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Hayes, Richard P. 1988b. Principled Atheism in the Buddhist Scholastic Tradition. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, **16**, 5–28.
- Jackson, Roger R. 1993. *Is Enlightenment Possible? Dharmakīrti and rGyal tshab rje on Knowledge, Rebirth, No-Self and Liberation*. Textual Studies and Translations in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications.
- Potter, Karl H. 1963. *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
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- Stcherbatsky, Th. 1930. *Buddhist Logic*. Vol. 2. New York: Dover Publications. 1962 [reprint]. Originally published in Leningrad: Izdatel'stov Akademii Nauk S.S.S.R., 1930–32. Bibliotheca Buddhica, 26.
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- Williams, Paul. 1989. *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*. The Library of Religious Beliefs and Practices. London and New York: Routledge.
- Wood, Thomas E. 1994. *Nāgārjunian Disputations : A Philosophical Journey Through an Indian Looking-glass*. Society for Asian and Comparative philosophy, vol. 11. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.