

THE SUCCESS OF VEN. XUANZANG IN HIS DEBATE RELATING TO THE PROOF OF IDEALISM THROUGH LOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Ven. Wang Lili*

PGIHS, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

*shi.anlong2018@gmail.com

This research study analyzes a syllogism by Master Xuanzang (玄奘) called Proof of Idealism (*pramāṇa* of *vijñapti-mātratā*; 真唯識量) or Inference of Idealism (*anumāna* of *vijñapti-mātratā*; 唯識比量) from the viewpoint of consciousness-only (*vijñapti-mātratā*) and Buddhist Logic (*Hetuvidyā*). *Pramāṇa*, literally meaning “proof of knowledge”, refers to the epistemology concerning the acquisition of true knowledge in Indian philosophies. According to Ācārya Diñnāga, only two *pramāṇa* can be considered valid means of knowledge: perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāṇa*). The Proof of Idealism of Master Xuanzang is an *anumāna* to acquire the true knowledge of consciousness-only. Master Xuanzang (602-664 CE), an eminent monk who lived during the Tang Dynasty of China, proposed the famous Proof of Idealism in the form of a syllogism during his study in Nālandā in India. During a service with a public debate open to all hosted by King Śīlāditta, Master Xuanzang proposed the proof in a rebuttal to Master Prajñāgupta of the Sammitīya Sect from South India, who presented an inference to refute the doctrine of consciousness-only. Master Xuanzang won the debate and was awarded the title of *Mahāyānadeva*. It attracted both worldwide attention and heated debate in the history of *Hetuvidyā*. The syllogism is considered to be an indisputable truth establishing the doctrine of consciousness-only by the *Vijñānavādins* while also being criticized by some scholars. Master Xuanzang inherited and developed the theory of Ācārya Diñnāga and Dhammapāla. Inspired by Dhammapāla’s use of a syllogism to prove the theory of consciousness-only, Master Xuanzang employed a similar syllogism in his Proof of Idealism and applied the three conditions of the reason (*trairūpya*). This research study has two objectives: (1) to introduce the Proof of Idealism of Master Xuanzang, analyze how he succeeds in the debate, examine the evaluation of the validity in the perspective of *Hetuvidyā* according to Ācārya Diñnāga and trace back to the syllogism by Ācārya Dhammapāla who attempted to prove the doctrine of consciousness-only; (2) to clarify certain misunderstandings regarding it and critically analyze the syllogism by Master Wōnhyo (618-686 CE) from Korea who proposed to challenge Xuanzang, thus making a comparison between Master Xuanzang and Master Wōnhyo.

Keywords: Xuanzang, Pramāṇa, AnumāNa