DIGNĀGA

An Indian proponent of the YOGĀCĀRA SCHOOL about whose life little is known, Dignāga (ca. 480–540 C.E.) is renowned as the initial formulator of Buddhist LOGIC. In his most important work, *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (*Compendium on Reliable Knowledge*), Dignāga examines perception, language, and inferential reasoning. Dignāga maintains that perception is a preconceptual bare apprehension of real things, and that perception is therefore devoid of all conceptual activity. Language, in contrast, involves concepts, but concepts are actually fictions created through a process of "exclusion" or *apoha*. In other words, the concept *blue* appears to correspond to some real sameness that all blue things share (their *blueness*), but in fact, that sameness is a fiction constructed through excluding everything that is irrelevant. This position allows Dignāga to deny that concepts (such as *self*) correspond directly to real things in the world.

Dignāga's views on perception and language were highly influential for subsequent Buddhists, but his greatest influence lay in his analysis of inferential reasoning. Unlike previous Indian thinkers, Dignāga keenly distinguished between the reasoning used in debate and the underlying rational structure of all inferences. Focusing on the relation between inferential evidence (such as smoke) and that which it is meant to prove (such as fire), he presented a systematic taxonomy of the cases where that relation holds or fails. This analysis supports his famed formulation of the three aspects of all valid evidence.

Although an important innovator in the history of Buddhist philosophy, Dignāga was soon superseded by DHARMAKĪRTI (ca. 600–670 C.E.), whose presentation of Buddhist logic was adopted by subsequent Buddhist thinkers in India and Tibet.

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DĪPAṂKARA

The earliest lists of past buddhas consist only of six previous buddhas plus Śākyamuni, but in subsequent centuries the list was expanded to twenty-five, beginning with a buddha known as Dīpaṃkara (Lightmaker). According to relatively late Pāli works, such as the *Buddhavaṃsa* and the *Nidānakathā,* it was in the presence of Dīpaṃkara that the future Śākyamuni first made his vow to become a buddha.

Dīpaṃkara's complete absence from the Pāli sutta literature makes it virtually certain that traditions concerning this buddha did not gain general currency until several centuries after Śākyamuni Buddha's death. The distribution of artistic images of Dīpaṃkara—which abound in Gandhāra, but are virtually absent from other sites—points to the likelihood that the story of Dīpaṃkara was first formulated on the far fringes of northwest India. It may also be significant that the story of Dīpaṃkara related in the MAHĀVASTU (i.193ff)—a work ascribed to the Lokottaravāda branch of the MAHĀSĀṂGHIKA SCHOOL, known to have flourished in what is today Afghanistan—is rich in narrative detail, while the account found in such THERAVĀDA sources as the *Buddhavaṃsa* (and based on it, the *Nidānakathā*) is more formulaic. Dīpaṃkara himself eventually became the subject of JĀTAKA tales relating his previous lives, preserved in medieval Theravāda texts (Derris) and in early Chinese translations (Chavannes, story no. 73).

The story of Dīpaṃkara's prediction of the future Śākyamuni's eventual attainment of buddhahood came to play an especially important role in MAHĀYĀNA circles, where aspiring BODHISATTVAS interpreted the story as an indication that they too must be reborn during the time of a living buddha and receive a prediction (*vyākaraṇa*) in his presence.

See also: **Buddha(s); Buddha Images; India, Northwest**

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DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA

The disciples of the Buddha form a diverse category of human, nonhuman, and divine figures. This entry will

dha. The fourfold *dharmadhātu* outlined in the Huayan school consists of (1) the world of phenomena, (2) the world of principle, (3) the world of principle and phenomena united in harmony, and (4) the world of all phenomena interwoven or identified in perfect harmony.

See also: **Huayan Jing**

CHI-CHIANG HUANG

DHARMAGUPTAKA

The term *Dharmaguptaka* means "those affiliated with the teacher Dharmagupta." The Dharmaguptaka mainstream Indian Buddhist school, a subschool of the Sthavira branch, is attested by inscriptions in the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent. The Dharmaguptakas possessed their own monastic disciplinary code (VINAYA) and shared many doctrinal views attributed to the Vibhajyavādins.

See also: **Mainstream Buddhist Schools**

COLLETT COX

DHARMAKĪRTI

The Indian thinker Dharmakīrti (ca. 600–670 C.E.), whose biographical details remain obscure, responded to the works of his predecessor DIGNĀGA (ca. 480–540 C.E.) to establish the basic theories of Buddhist LOGIC. In doing so, Dharmakīrti sought to explain how we can obtain completely certain, indubitable knowledge.

The *Pramāṇavārttika* (*Commentary on Reliable Knowledge*), Dharmakīrti's best-known work, ostensibly comments on Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (*Compendium on Reliable Knowledge*), but Dharmakīrti actually revises Dignāga's theories in order to close gaps that prevent certainty. Concerning perception, Dignāga appeared to allow that a raw sense-datum—the uninterpreted phenomenal content of a perception—could never be erroneous, even in the case of perceptual illusion. Seeing that this renders all perception fallible, Dharmakīrti maintains that a reliable perception must involve a strict and regular causal relation between the perception and its object. This emphasis on causality reflects Dharmakīrti's innovative application of *telic efficacy* (*arthakriyā*) as the criterion for reality and, by extension, for all reliable knowledge. In brief, only causally efficient entities are real, and if knowledge is reliable, it must direct one to an object that has the causal capacity to accomplish one's goal. An important corollary is the claim that, to be causally efficient, a real thing can exist for only an instant.

Another crucial innovation comes in response to Dignāga's theory of inference, according to which the inductive process of determining the relation between evidence (such as smoke) and what it indicates (such as fire) is apparently fallible. Seeking certainty, Dharmakīrti argues for a "relation in essence" between evidence and what it proves. Inference thereby becomes immune to doubt, but at the cost of an inflexible appeal to definitions (smoke, for example, is by definition that which comes from fire).

Dharmakīrti's epistemic and logical theories were eventually adopted by most Indian Buddhist thinkers, and among Tibetan Buddhists, the *Pramāṇavārttika* is still the subject of extensive study and debate. In particular, the monastic curriculum of the DGE LUGS (GELUK) school places considerable emphasis on Dharmakīrti's Buddhist logic.

See also: **Yogācāra School**

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DHARMARAKṢA

Dharmarakṣa (Chinese, Zhu Fahu; ca. 233–310 C.E.) was one of the most prolific translators of Indian Buddhist texts into Chinese. According to traditional biographies, Dharmarakṣa was a descendant of the Yuezhi, a Central Asian people whose precise ethnicity and native language are still debated. He was born at DUNHUANG, a military colony and mercantile hub in the westernmost reach of the Chinese empire. Although his family is said to have lived at Dunhuang for generations, Dharmarakṣa is the first mention of

tions. The essential problem is that religious and cultural interactions in general are not mere juxtapositions of distinct and independent elements. The case of the Buddhist impact on local divinities is particularly revealing. Certainly, some deities were abandoned and forgotten, and new ones were added. But what matters more is the systematic and pervasive restructuring of the cultural field of the sacred that the interaction with Buddhism generated. Local deities were given features of Indian gods and vice versa, thus generating new entities; but new deities were also created to deal with the new conceptual and ritual situation that had developed. Interestingly, some Buddhist deities (or some of their features) were rendered native by the phenomena of *relocalization,* a process that at times even obliterated their Buddhist origin. This is the case with *kami* such as Hachiman and Inari in contemporary Japan, of deities incorporated into the folk religions of China and Korea, and of the Bon tradition in Tibet (an independent establishment still clearly indebted to Buddhism). All these cases cannot simply be reduced to modes of juxtaposition, combination, or even connection. Various conceptual categories should be mobilized instead to describe the multifarious forms of Buddhist interaction with local divinities in shifting historical, cultural, social, and ideological contexts. In other words, rather than taking as a starting point an abstract and reified idea of Buddhism and analyzing how it deals with local deities, it appears to be more appropriate and fruitful to investigate the various roles that certain DIVINITIES play within specific Buddhist contexts. As examples, we can think of processes of state formation (with divinities protecting newly formed states and their regional divisions), social control (the symbolic order of families, clans, and local communities as represented by specific divinities and ritual interactions with them), labor and economic concerns, and semiotic practices guiding the combination of various deities (as based on formal, functional, structural, and semantic features).

See also: **Folk Religion: An Overview; Ghosts and Spirits; Kūkai; Merit and Merit-Making; Shintō (Honji Suijaku) and Buddhism; Syncretic Sects: Three Teachings**

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LOGIC

Indian thinkers of many traditions, including Buddhism, often maintain that reliable knowledge is the key to spiritual liberation. By the fourth century C.E.,

many such thinkers were engrossed in an ongoing conversation focused on two interrelated questions: What constitutes reliable knowledge? And what types of reliable knowledge are there? The answers to these questions led to intricate debates on the nature of perception, reason, and language. Buddhists participated prominently in this conversation, but their contribution does not constitute a separate "school" of thought. It is, instead, a style of Buddhist philosophy that eventually gained much sway among Buddhist thinkers in India; Tibetan traditions continue to employ it vigorously to this day. Since Buddhists have no indigenous term for this philosophical style, Western scholars invented the term *Buddhist logic* to describe especially the formulations initially presented by DIGNĀGA (ca. 480–540 C.E.) and refined by DHARMAKĪRTI (ca. 600–670 C.E.).

Dignāga gave the first systematic presentation of Buddhist logic, but Dharmakīrti and his followers provided the form that became widespread in India and Tibet. Concerning the types of reliable knowledge, Buddhist logic holds that there are just two kinds, each with a corresponding type of object: (1) perception, which cognizes particulars, and (2) inference, which cognizes universals. A particular is a completely unique, causally efficacious entity that exists for only a moment. We know that particulars are real because they are causally linked, directly or indirectly, to our cognitions of them. Universals, the objects of inference, are concepts that are meant to apply to many particulars. They are causally inert; hence, although we imagine them to be real, they cannot in fact be the causes of any cognition. For this reason, Buddhist logicians maintain that only particulars are truly real; universals may seem real, but they are actually mental fictions that we create through a process of excluding everything that is irrelevant to the context at hand.

To understand the difference between particulars and universals, suppose that this dot ● is a unique particular. It may seem to be the same as this other dot ●, but that sameness is created by associating two unique sensory experiences with a single universal, the concept *dot.* Each specific instance may also seem to last over time, but the apparent stability of particulars over time is also an illusion created by associating them with a single universal. Moreover, only the actual dot on the page can cause a cognition; the universal *dot* cannot do so (we can see ●; we cannot see our concept of it).

Buddhist logicians further argue that an instance of reliable knowledge must be an efficacious cognition—efficacious because it enables one to achieve one's goal. Strictly speaking, then, reliable knowledge can be partially defective. For example, a cognition might falsely attribute qualities to a thing but still remain effective: While correctly identifying something as fire, one might incorrectly believe that the observed fire is exactly identical to all other fires. Nevertheless, that cognition is still efficacious because those false attributions do not obstruct one from attaining one's goal: If you seek to warm your hands, then it does not matter whether you falsely believe that the fire in front of you is identical to all others.

Buddhist logicians must allow that reliable knowledge may be partially defective because they must make use of language without accepting some characteristics implied by universals. The concept *dot,* for example, makes us falsely believe that all dots are one; nevertheless, we can successfully use this concept to speak of the (actually unique) dots on this page. Likewise, the concept *person* falsely makes me believe that I am identical to the infant that I was; nevertheless, we can use *person* to speak of one who suffers and seeks liberation.

This critical approach to universals creates problems when Buddhist logicians present their theory of logic, which is in fact a detailed theory of inference. Here, the form of an inference is "S is P because E," where the terms are a subject (S), a predicate (P), and the evidence (E). An example would be, "Joe is mortal because of being human." An inference is well formed if three relations hold: the evidence entails the predicate (a human must be mortal); the negation of the predicate entails the negation of the evidence (a nonmortal must be nonhuman); and the evidence is a quality of the subject (Joe is indeed human). For Buddhists who employ this theory of inference, two notable problems persist. First, the inference's terms must be universals, and since universals are strictly speaking unreal, how does one account for relations among them? And second, if one uses an inference to prove that a purely imaginary entity does not exist, how can that purely imaginary entity be the subject of that inference? That is, if one wishes to prove that "an absolute Self is nonexistent," how can an imaginary entity (the absolute Self) bear any predicate? This latter question is particularly acute for Madhyamaka thinkers who employ the Buddhist logicians' theory of inference.

See also: Madhyamaka School; Yogācāra School

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LONGMEN

The Longmen cave complex is located twelve kilometers south of Luoyang, Henan province, in China. From the end of the fifth century through the middle of the eighth century, CAVE SANCTUARIES were excavated out of the limestone hills on two sides of the Yi River. They were sponsored by Buddhist devotees from all sectors of the society—aristocrats and commoners, ethnic nomads and Chinese alike, attesting to the widespread support of Buddhism. The late Northern Wei and High Tang periods represent two periods of great activity, during which imperial patronage also played an important role. The central Binyang cave, begun in 505 and sponsored by the Northern Wei emperor Xuanwudi (r. 449–515), ushered in a new phase of Chinese Buddhist art that synthesized foreign and native Chinese art styles, combining a three-dimensional approach to form with minute attention to surface details and patterns. Fengxian Monastery, completed in 675, epitomized the imperial patronage of Emperor Gaozong (r. 649–683) and Empress Wu (r. 684–705) of the Tang dynasty. The colossal statue of Vairocana Buddha, accompanied by disciples, bodhisattvas, and guardian deities, is a powerful statement of the omniscience of the Buddha as the lord of the universe and as a protector of the state.

See also: **China, Buddhist Art in; Monastic Architecture**

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LOTUS SŪTRA (SADDHARMAPUṆḌARĪKA-SŪTRA)

The *Lotus Sūtra* (Sanskrit, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*) numbers among the most popular of MAHĀYĀNA scriptures. It is celebrated for its reconciliation of diverse teachings in the "one Buddha vehicle" (*ekayāna*) and for its promise that buddhahood can be achieved by all. Although it has not figured prominently in the Mahāyāna traditions of India or Tibet, the *Lotus Sūtra* has for centuries profoundly influenced Buddhist thought, art, and literature throughout East Asia. Its ideas have served as the basis for philosophical systems and meditative and ritual practice, while its parables and mythic imagery have inspired paintings, drama, and poetry. Since the late nineteenth century, the *Lotus* has also been read as supporting various forms of Buddhist social engagement.

Texts and translations

As with most Mahāyāna sūtras, little is known of the circumstances surrounding the composition of the *Lotus Sūtra.* There is only one extant full-length commentary that appears likely to have been composed in India: the *Fahua lun* (*Treatise on the Lotus*), attributed to VASUBANDHU (ca. fourth century C.E.), which exists in Chinese translation. Scholars date the sūtra's compilation to roughly around the first two centuries of the common era. Six Chinese translations were made, of which three survive: *Zhengfa hua jing,* translated by DHARMARAKṢA in 286; *Miaofa lianhua jing,* translated by KUMĀRAJĪVA in 406; and *Tianben miaofa lianhua jing,* translated by Jñānagupta and Dharmagupta in 601 (this last is a revision of Kumārajīva's translation). Kumārajīva's translation has twenty-eight chapters; the material comprising its twelfth, "DEVADATTA," chapter is included at the end of chapter eleven in the other two translations, which have only twenty-seven chapters (subsequent chapter references in this entry are to Kumārajīva's twenty-eight chapter version). Whether Kumārajīva's translation originally contained the Devadatta chapter, or whether it was added later, has been a matter of some debate.

Of the three Chinese versions of the *Lotus Sūtra,* Kumārajīva's proved by far the most popular. A Tibetan