

Article

Refutation Without *Vitaṇḍā*: Dialectical Burdens in the *Fangbian Xin Lun* (**Upāyahṛdaya*)

Kaspars Eihmanis 

Independent Researcher, Kristapa iela 16C-13, LV-1083 Riga, Latvia; eihmanisk@gmail.com

Abstract

The *Fangbian Xin Lun* 方便心論 (**Upāyahṛdaya*, T 1632), rendered into Chinese in 472, is the earliest extant Buddhist manual of debate. Because it trains its reader chiefly to object, it is readily read as instruction in refutation alone. This paper argues that the treatise instead distributes distinct burdens and entitlements between proponent and objector. Four features show this. Its epistemology ranks perception above scripture. Its objector advances a positive thesis, though only after the opponent's alternative has failed. Its catalogue of defeat penalizes failures of understanding as well as failures of speaking. And its procedural rules bind both parties, denying a debater who has himself erred the standing to press his opponent's error. The argument-forms it licenses as proper responses (相應), the *Nyāyasūtra* classifies as erroneous objections (*jāti*). What separates the two texts is not a repertoire but an allocation of burdens.

Keywords: **Upāyahṛdaya*; *Fangbian Xin Lun*; Buddhist logic; Indian debate; *nigrahasthāna*; *vitaṇḍā*; *jāti*; burden of proof; *Nyāyasūtra*; *Carakasamhitā*

1. Introduction

Scholars of the history of Indian logic and argumentation treat the *Fangbian Xin Lun* (方便心論; abbreviated as FBXL) as a Buddhist manual of debate.¹ Although the Chinese text—translated by Jijiaye (吉迦夜) and Tanyao (曇曜) in 472 CE—is the only extant form of the work, and although scholars have put forward differing reconstructions of its presumed Sanskrit original,² the text's centrality to the pre-classical period of Indian dialectics is not in question. The FBXL occupies a pivotal position between the medical–dialectical framework of the *Carakasamhitā* and the systematic epistemology of the *Nyāyasūtras*, and abounds in the mention and use of cunning rejoinders (*jāti*) and arguments of the consequence type (*prasaṅga*). Indeed, on the chronology that most scholars accept, the FBXL is the earliest extant Buddhist treatise devoted systematically to the theory and practice of debate.³

Yet the precise character of this manual—what kind of debate it teaches, and what this reveals about its place in the development of Indian dialectics—has not been adequately addressed. I do not use the expression ‘manual of Buddhist logic’ or ‘manual of Buddhist proto-logic’, since I have serious reservations about the term ‘logic’ being applied to the contents of the FBXL. This is not to deny that there is a considerable resemblance to the family of ‘logic’ as we understand it in the West, albeit pertaining more to the field of informal logic and the theory of argumentation.⁴ The text of the FBXL leaves no doubt about it being conceived in the context of debate and argumentation—that is, Indian dialectics—inasmuch as terms familiar to the pre-classical period of Indian logic are used throughout.



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The classification that first suggests itself is *vitandā*: the refutation-only debate defined at *Nyāyasūtra* 1.2.3 as *jalpa* without the establishment of a counter-position. The text's surface invites it. Chapter 2 is given over to points of defeat; Chapter 3 stages exchanges in which an opponent's thesis is taken apart step by step; Chapter 4 catalogues twenty rejoinders whose correspondence with the *Nyāyasūtra*'s *jāti* was established by Kajiyama (1991) and refined by Gillon and Katsura (2016). This paper argues that the classification nevertheless fails, and that the way it fails tells us something about the state of Indian dialectic when the text was composed. The evidence against it is not marginal. It comes from Chapter 1, which lays down a rule for establishing theses; from Chapter 2, whose example of a situation of non-defeat is a Buddhist inference; and from Chapter 3, where the Buddhist argues that the arhat and *nirvāṇa* exist and the text then calls the exchange debate in accord with dharma.

Kajiyama (1991, p. 107) has already framed the FBXL as a text whose purpose is “to teach how to refute opponents’ syllogistic arguments in order to defend Buddhist doctrines”—anticipating the substantive reading developed here. What the present paper adds is threefold. First, it tests the *vitandā* classification against Matilal’s (1998) criterion of illocutionary negation⁵ and shows that the FBXL’s debater fails it: he does not withhold assertoric force but exercises it, so that his position is an asymmetry in the burden of proof rather than an abstention from commitment. Second, it recovers the text’s own normative vocabulary—contentious debate (諍論) set against the correct treatise (正論) and debate in accord with dharma (如法論)—and shows that this binary cross-cuts the *Carakasamhitā* and *Nyāyasūtra* typologies rather than mapping onto either. Third, it shows that 如法論 is applied to exchanges that move from refutation to positive proof, so that the text has no term marking the distinction on which the *vitandā* category depends.

The argument proceeds in seven stages, followed by a conclusion. Section 2 addresses the authorship question to the extent that it bears on the text’s dialectical character. Section 3 examines the FBXL’s opening framework and its programmatic justification for debate as dharma-defense. Section 4 turns to Chapter 1, where the treatise sets out its eight rubrics and its four means of knowledge. Section 5 presents the close reading of Chapter 2 and its catalogue of defeat. Section 6 treats Chapter 3 and its extended worked exchanges. Section 7 sets out the typologies of debate available in the *Carakasamhitā* and the *Nyāyasūtras* and asks where the FBXL falls within them. Section 8 tests the *vitandā* classification against Matilal’s criterion of illocutionary negation, and sets out what the text does instead.

2. Authorship and Dialectical Context

The *Fangbian Xin Lun* survives only in the Chinese translation of Jijiaye (吉迦夜) and Tanyao (曇曜), completed in 472 CE.⁶ Neither the original Sanskrit text nor any Tibetan translation is extant. Tucci (1929) produced a Sanskrit re-translation from the Chinese, and Kajiyama (1991) a Japanese translation and analysis. A German translation of the whole text was published by Kang (2007), and an English translation has now been completed by Gillon and Katsura, Chapter 1 in 2016 and Chapters 2 to 4 in 2025.⁷

The question of authorship has attracted limited but significant scholarly attention. The Song-dynasty edition of the Chinese canon ascribes the text to Nāgārjuna, and this attribution has been revived and defended by Kajiyama (1991, p. 113), who argues on the basis of structural parallels with the *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa* and the *Vigrahaṣyāvartanī* that the FBXL is an early work of Nāgārjuna, composed before his *Madhyamakakārikā*. Tucci (1929, p. xi) rejected the Nāgārjuna ascription, noting that many works of unknown authorship were attributed to the great dialectician. Gillon (2008, p. 21) reports Lindtner’s rejection of the Nāgārjuna attribution on the grounds that “while Nāgārjuna always argued by *reductio ad absurdum* (*prasaṅga*), the Fang Bian Xin Lun nowhere discusses *reductio ad absurdum*.” The

question thus remains unresolved. What can be established with reasonable confidence is the text's approximate period: the FBXL post-dates the *Carakasamhitā*'s debate taxonomy and pre-dates the *Nyāyasūtras* in their received form, placing it in a transitional phase of Indian dialectical development, likely between the second and fourth centuries CE.⁸

More pertinent to the present argument than the identity of the author is the sectarian affiliation of the text. The FBXL's opening chapter leaves no doubt that the text is composed from a Buddhist standpoint and for Buddhist purposes: the initial dialogue between master and student is framed entirely in terms of defending the correct dharma (*saddharma* 正法) against heterodox (外道) opponents. This does not, however, entail that the dialectical techniques themselves are exclusively Buddhist in origin. On the contrary, the FBXL's twenty *xiangying* share extensive structural overlap with the *Nyāyasūtra*'s list of *jāti* (futile rejoinders), as Kajiyama (1991, pp. 107–17, and Tables I–II) has demonstrated in detail. The text operates within a shared dialectical culture while subordinating its techniques to a distinctly Buddhist institutional purpose.

This dual character—techniques drawn from the common dialectical milieu, purpose defined by Buddhist dharma-defense—is precisely what makes the question of classification difficult to settle. It would suit the *viṭaṇḍā* reading if the FBXL developed no epistemology of its own and advanced no positive theses; Section 4 shows that it does both. The interest of the text lies rather in the fact that it does both while framing the whole enterprise as dharma-defense, and while recommending throughout a class of rejoinders that the *Nyāyasūtra* would come to classify as sophistical.

3. Opening Framework: Debate as Dharma-Defense

The FBXL opens not with a doctrinal exposition but with a dialogue. A student asks why a treatise on debate (論) should be composed at all, and the master replies with what amounts to a programmatic justification for the entire text. This opening exchange deserves close attention, for it establishes the frame within which all subsequent dialectical instruction is to be understood.

The student's objection is not a rhetorical concession. It articulates a serious Buddhist reservation about the practice of debate itself: those who compose treatises of debate, the student says, typically give rise to hatred and arrogance; they disturb their own minds and lose the virtue of gentleness; they make a display of the faults of others while praising their own. Sages and spiritual nobles have therefore renounced the practice of contentious debate (諍論) and keep it at a distance “as one keeps away from a vessel of poison.” If the aim is to benefit oneself and others, the student concludes, one should abandon the method of contentious debate altogether.⁹

The master's reply does not dismiss this objection. It grants that debate is dangerous and framed by motives of victory, profit, and fame, but distinguishes such debate from the kind the treatise will teach. If, the master argues, the world has no treatises on debate at all, then the confused will become numerous, deceived by perverse wisdom and sophistical eloquence, and will fall into evil rebirths. One who has mastered debate, by contrast, can discriminate for himself the empty characteristics of good and bad, so that heterodox teachers and adherents of wrong views (眾魔外道邪見之人) cannot disturb, harm, or obstruct him.¹⁰ The treatise is composed, on this account, not for victory but for the benefit of sentient beings, and specifically for the protection of the correct dharma (*saddharma* 正法). The master closes the defense with a horticultural analogy: just as, in order to cultivate mango fruits (菴婆羅果), one plants a thicket of thorn-brambles (荊棘之林) around the orchard to protect the fruits, so too in composing this treatise the aim is to protect the correct dharma and not to seek fame.¹¹ Therefore, the master concludes, the student's earlier ob-

jection to those who engage in long contentious debate does not apply here: “for the sake of protecting the dharma, it is right to compose a treatise” (為護法故應造論).

Three features of this opening tell in favor of the *vitandā* classification, and it is worth setting them out at their strongest before the following sections test them. First, the purpose of debate is specified in defensive terms. The master does not propose that the student should go forth and establish new theses, convince interlocutors of Buddhist positions, or advance a ‘positive philosophical program’. The aim, as stated here, is to protect the correct dharma by neutralizing those who attack it. That is the posture of the *vitandā* debater as defined in both the *Carakasamhitā* and the *Nyāyasūtras*: one who seeks to demolish the opponent’s thesis without being obliged to establish a counter-thesis.¹²

Second, the master’s analogy reinforces the asymmetry. The mango-and-thorn-bramble metaphor presupposes that the fruit already exists and needs only to be protected; the thorns do not produce the mangoes but guard them. This is not the posture of the *vāda* debater, who engages in honest inquiry and must defend their own thesis as rigorously as they attack their opponent’s. It is, on the face of it, the position of someone for whom the truth is settled and only its defense remains. It is also, strikingly, the posture of *Nyāyasūtra* 4.2.50, which uses precisely the same image: “*Jalpa* and *vitandā* (the two types of bad debate) are meant for preserving the true view (truth), just as the thorns and branches are used for the protection of the (tender) sprout of the seed” (Matilal 1998, p. 50). The parallel should not be pressed further than it goes. NS 4.2.50 licenses *jalpa* and *vitandā* jointly for the protection of ascertained truth, so the shared image places the FBXL on the *vigrahya* side of Caraka’s division without discriminating between the two Nyāya kinds.¹³

Third, the master explicitly frames the composing of the treatise as an act of compassionate service to sentient beings: “for the purpose of benefiting sentient beings, I compose this correct treatise.”¹⁴ By locating the motivation in the alleviation of confusion rather than in the pursuit of knowledge, the text signals that its dialectical techniques are instrumental—means (*upāya* 方便) in the precise Buddhist sense—rather than ends in themselves. The title of the text, *Fangbian Xin Lun* (方便心論), literally “Treatise on the Heart of Expedient Means,” already encodes this instrumental orientation.

The significance of this opening framework extends well beyond the FBXL itself. In the late Ming period, the monk Zhencheng (鎮澄, 1546–1617) deployed the tools of *yinming* (因明)—the formal apparatus of Buddhist reasoning—together with the authority of scripture (聖言量 *āptāgama*) to challenge Seng Zhao’s (僧肇, 384–414) celebrated thesis on the non-motion of things (Lin 2019). Zhencheng’s project shares with the FBXL the conception of logical rigor as an instrument for the defense of correct doctrine. It differs from it in a respect that Section 4 makes significant: Zhencheng’s proofs rest on 聖言量, scriptural testimony deployed as a probative instrument, where the FBXL ranks 隨經書 fourth among its four means of knowledge and denies that it can settle a disputed thesis. No textual dependence is claimed, and none is known; the comparison is offered as a contrast.¹⁵

What the opening framework establishes, then, is not merely a motivation but a constraint. Everything that follows—the analysis of points of defeat, the dialectical demonstrations, the twenty rejoinders—is governed by the purpose of dharma-defense. Whether a defensive purpose also confines the instruction to refutation is a further question, and it is the one the following sections answer. The frame does not by itself settle what the reader is being trained to do within it.

4. Chapter 1: The Eight 論法 and the Four Means of Knowledge

Chapter 1 of the FBXL, the “Ming zao lun pin” 明造論品, is ordinarily mined for its opening dialogue and then set aside. The practice is difficult to defend on grounds of proportion alone: on Katsura’s reckoning, the chapter occupies more than half the whole treatise,

running from T 23b6 to 26a28 against the two columns or so allotted to each of Chapters 2 and 3.¹⁶ It is also where the treatise sets out its constructive apparatus, and any classification of the text must accommodate what it finds there.

After the exchange discussed in Section 3, the master is asked to specify what a reader of the treatise will come to grasp, and answers that the treatise distinguishes eight rubrics (八種義), also called the eight 論法: example (譬喻 **dr̥ṣṭānta*), tenet (隨所執, cf. **siddhānta*), excellence of statement (語善 **vākya-praśaṃsā*), deficiency of statement (言失 **vākya-doṣa*), reason for knowledge (知因 **jñāna-hetu*), timely statement (應時語 **prāpta-kāla-vākya*), specious reason (似因非因 **hetvābhāsa*), and objection based on wording (隨語難, cf. **vāk-chala*).¹⁷ Four of the eight—example, tenet, excellence of statement, reason for knowledge—govern the construction of arguments rather than their demolition, and the remainder of the chapter expounds all eight at length. Katsura has observed that the number recalls the eight means of proof (*sādhana*) listed in the *hetuvidyā* section of the *Yogācārabhūmi*, and that the resemblance places the FBXL nearer to the *Carakasamhitā* and the *Nyāyasūtra* than to the later Buddhist logical tradition.¹⁸ Three features of the chapter's exposition bear directly on the question of classification.

4.1. A Norm for Those Who Would Establish a Thesis

The second of the eight rubrics is the tenet (*suisuozhi* 隨所執, **siddhānta*), glossed in the summary as a definitively settled matter (*jiujing yi* 究竟義) and expounded later as what is firmly established by adducing many reasons in accordance with what one holds. In expounding it, the text lays down a general rule: everyone who wishes to put forth a thesis (*liyi* 立義) should rely on four kinds of knowledge—perception (*xianjian* 現見, **pratyakṣa*), inference (*bizhi* 比知, **anumāna*), knowledge through analogy (*yuzhi* 喻知, **upamāna*), and knowledge in accordance with scripture (*sui jingshu* 隨經書, **āgama*).¹⁹

4.2. The Ranking of the Means of Knowledge

The FBXL does not merely list its four means; it ranks them. Perception is the most basic, because the other three depend on it: one who has seen fire together with smoke can afterwards infer fire from smoke.²⁰ The ranking is then qualified in a doctrinally specific way. Asked which perception is most real, the text answers that what the five faculties know is sometimes deceptive—the mirage, the whirling firebrand, the stump taken at night for a man—and that what stands highest is wisdom rightly observing things: one who attains the wisdom of emptiness, 空智, sees truly.²¹ The treatise therefore has an epistemology, and it is a Buddhist one, since the corrective placed above sense-perception is a Buddhist attainment. Scripture stands fourth, and not nominally: in the worked illustration of the third kind of tenet, an opponent presses a proponent of the self through all four means in order and dismisses the fourth, on the ground that scripture is difficult to construe and says both that souls exist and that they do not.²² The objection is an opponent's, but the sequence and the ranking are the author's, and nothing in the chapter retracts it.

4.3. A Stated Tenet, and an Author Who Argues

Under the same rubric, the text surveys the tenets of ten schools—Buddhists, fire-worshippers, grammarians, physicians, Vaiśeṣikas, Sāṃkhyas, Yoga, Jains, radical monists and radical pluralists—and it includes its own, listing the twelve conditions, the four truths, the thirty-seven factors and the four fruits as 佛正義, the Buddha's true teachings.²³ Shortly afterwards the author intervenes in his own person. Introduced by 論者言, "the author says," he rules that anyone who holds these doctrines to be either the same or different argues without genuine grounds, since the one alternative falls into the extreme of suffering and the other into the extreme of happiness, and concludes that this is not the meaning of the Buddha's teaching.²⁴ The passage is not a challenger's move within a staged exchange,

and it is not a report of another school's position; it is the treatise asserting a doctrinal constraint in its own voice. That is not merely to hold a position; it is to declare one and to rule on how it is to be construed.

5. Chapter 2: The Points of Defeat

Chapter 2 opens with a transitional statement linking the eight categories of argument (八種論法) treated in Chapter 1 to a new topic: defeat-situations.²⁵ The chapter's declared subject is the defeat-situation (*fuchu* 負處, **nigrahassthāna*)—the conditions under which a debater is judged to have lost. What follows is short, some two columns of the Taishō, and it is not a system. Seventeen faults arrive in five bursts—three together, then four, then three added singly, then one after a digression on the kinds of proper question, then six in a closing list—separated by exchanges on other matters. The *Nyāyasūtra*'s twenty-two points of defeat are enumerated and ordered; the FBXL's seventeen accumulate.

Here we find two rubrics that are not procedural at all. The first is the method of argumentation (*yufa* 語法), under which an argument is either genuine (*shiyu* 是語) or specious (*feiyu* 非語). The example given is instructive: if someone claims that the four great elements (四大) are causes of the body, a challenger may object that the four great elements also constitute other things—why, then, claim that they constitute the body alone? That argument is specious; an argument not open to such an objection is genuine.²⁶

The second rubric is the defeat-point (*fuyi* 負義), and the text illustrates it: the opponent asserts that sound is permanent because it lacks form, like space; the challenger responds that sound, unlike space, is apprehended by a sense-faculty, is subject to resistance (有對有礙), and is produced like a pot, whereas space is not a produced thing, and therefore cannot serve as an example.²⁷ The exchange runs two further turns and closes with an inference in the author's own voice: sound differs from a pot, yet it is apprehended by the ear, and therefore it is not permanent. The chapter then puts the converse question “what kind of statement does not fall into defeat?” and answers it with a second argument—conditioned things and consciousness are produced and therefore non-eternal, *nirvāṇa* is unproduced and therefore eternal—of which it says that an argument so worded is correct.

Both rubrics assess arguments. What makes a statement specious is that its formulation invites an objection; what makes it a defeat-point is that its example will not bear the weight put on it. Both are faults of the kind Chapter 1 collects under specious reasons (似因), and the two arguments the chapter offers as correct are correct in the same sense—well formed, not merely well conducted. Neither rubric recurs. The four terms introduced here each occur once in the treatise, all of them before 26b19, and from that point the chapter uses *fuchu* alone, most often in the formula 墮負處, “falls into a situation of defeat.”²⁸

From 26b21 the chapter turns to what can be objected to, and the faults accumulate. Three come first: a statement in inverted order (語顛倒), a statement whose reason is not sound (立因不正), and one whose example is unlike the case (引喻不同). Four follow: failing to ask what should be asked and failing to answer what requires an answer; stating one's essentials three times without making oneself understood; failing to understand the opponent's essentials after they are stated three times.²⁹ Three more are added singly: failing to notice that the opponent's argument is deficient, so that a third party has to point it out; finding fault where the opponent was in fact correct; and failing to grasp what everyone else present has grasped. The chapter marks the gravity of these defeat-situations with a striking simile: defeat-situations are “the great thorns of debate” (議論之大棘刺), a deep fault that one should recognize and quickly keep far away from.³⁰ A digression on the three kinds of proper question follows, and then one further fault: speaking so softly and quickly that the hearers cannot follow. Six more are named together at the close: say-

ing too little, saying too much, saying nothing to the purpose, speaking at the wrong time, repeating oneself, and abandoning one's own thesis.

The correspondences between these faults and the lists of the *Carakasamhitā* and the *Nyāyasūtra* have been established three times over, by Tucci, by Kajiyama, and most fully by Katsura, who tabulates all seventeen against both. Nothing is added to that work here. A concordance answers the question which item corresponds to which; it does not answer the question what kind of fault each item names, and the second cannot be read off the first. Table 1 therefore reproduces the correspondences on Katsura's authority and adds a classification.

Table 1. The points of defeat in *Fangbian Xin Lun* Chapter 2, in the order of the text.³¹

No.	Fault	Parallel	Kind
1	語顛倒 a statement in inverted order	—	conversational
2	立因不正 a wrong reason	CS 13 <i>viruddha</i> ; NS 3 <i>pratijñāvirodha</i>	evaluative
3	引喻不同 an unlike example	—	evaluative
4	應問不問 failing to ask what should be asked	CS 3 <i>anuyojoyasyānanuyoga</i> ; NS 19 <i>paryanuyojoyopekṣaṇa</i>	conversational
5	應答不答 failing to answer what should be answered	NS 16 <i>apratibhā</i>	conversational
6	三說法要不令他解 stating the essentials three times without being understood	NS 8 <i>avijñātārtha</i>	conversational
7	自三說法而不別知 failing to grasp them after three statements	CS 1 <i>aparijñāna</i> ; NS 15 <i>ajñāna</i>	comprehension
8	共他論彼義短闕而不覺知 failing to notice the opponent's argument is deficient	—	comprehension
9	他正義而為生過 finding fault where the opponent is correct	CS 2 <i>ananuyojoyasyānuyoga</i> ; NS 20 <i>niranuyojoyānuyoga</i>	comprehension
10	眾人悉解而獨不悟 failing to grasp what everyone else grasps	NS 14 <i>ananubhāṣaṇa</i>	comprehension
11	言輕疾聽者不悟 speaking too softly and quickly to be followed	—	delivery
12	語少 saying too little	CS 8, NS 11 <i>nyūna</i>	conversational
13	語多 saying too much	CS 9, NS 12 <i>adhika</i>	conversational
14	無義語 saying nothing to the purpose	CS 11 <i>anarthaka</i> ; NS 7 <i>nirarthaka</i>	conversational
15	非時語 speaking at the wrong time	CS 6 <i>kālātītavacana</i> ; NS 10 <i>aprāptakāla</i>	conversational
16	義重 repeating oneself	CS 12, NS 13 <i>punarukta</i>	conversational
17	捨本宗 abandoning one's own thesis	CS 4, NS 1 <i>pratijñāhāni</i> ; NS 4 <i>pratijñāsamnyāsa</i>	dialectical

Sorted by kind, the seventeen fall very unevenly. Two concern the goodness of an argument: 立因不正 names a reason that does not establish what it is adduced for, and 引喻不同 an example unlike the case it is adduced to illuminate. One is dialectical in the strict sense, since a debater who abandons his own thesis has given up what he undertook to defend. The remaining fourteen identify no defect in anything the loser has argued. They identify a failure in how he has conducted himself, or in what he has taken in.

Nine of the fourteen are familiar from the modern literature on conversation. Saying too little and saying too much offend against Grice's maxim of quantity, and saying nothing

to the purpose against relation; speaking at the wrong time, repeating oneself and stating things in inverted order offend against manner, as does failing to make oneself understood after three attempts, which is a failure of perspicuity; and failing to ask what should be asked or to answer what should be answered are failures of cooperation itself. Todeschini has shown that a substantial part of the *Nyāyasūtra*'s twenty-two points of defeat admits the same treatment, and Keating has since argued more generally that the Nyāya points of defeat are best understood as conversational rather than formal failings. No novelty is claimed here for that framework. What is claimed is that the FBXL's list contains a class of fault the framework does not reach.³²

Where the Gricean Account Runs Out

Five of the seventeen fall outside that account. Four are not failures of speaking but failures of understanding. A debater loses if, after his opponent has stated the essentials three times, he still does not distinguish them; if he fails to notice that his opponent's argument is deficient, so that a third party has to point it out; if he raises an objection where his opponent was in fact correct; and if everyone present has grasped the point, and he alone has not. In none of these has he said anything wrong. He has been slow.

Grice's maxims govern a speaker, as does the cooperative principle from which they derive, and so in consequence does every analysis built upon them, Todeschini's and Keating's included. There is no maxim a hearer can violate by failing to follow. The FBXL nonetheless treats comprehension as a condition of standing in the exchange, and penalizes its absence exactly as it penalizes prolixity or irrelevance. The fifth item falls outside in a different direction: speaking too softly and too quickly to be followed is not a violation of any conversational norm but a failure of audibility, and it lies below the level at which maxims operate at all.

These five are nearly a third of the catalogue, and two of the four faults that have no counterpart in either the *Carakasamhitā* or the *Nyāyasūtra* are among them. The conclusion is not that Grice is the wrong instrument. It is that the FBXL's conception of a well-conducted debate is symmetrical in a way that his is not: it distributes responsibility for the success of an exchange across both parties, and treats comprehension as an obligation rather than a capacity.

Two kinds of evidence should be kept apart at this point. That the FBXL requires competence of both parties, penalizing the hearer who fails to follow as readily as the speaker who fails to be clear, shows that it conceives debate as a jointly governed practice. It does not show that the practice is more than refutation: a manual of refutation-only debate could impose the same conditions on both sides, and the points of defeat apply in *vitaṇḍā* no less than in *jalpa*. The evidence that bears on the classification is of a second kind, namely items that presuppose, or exhibit, a thesis held by the manual's own side. Chapter 2 supplies one of each, and they are not of equal strength.

The chapter's extended concluding illustration of the defeat-point of abandoning one's own thesis (捨本宗) makes the pedagogical orientation vivid. A Brahmanical opponent argues that the self (神) is permanent because it is not apprehended by the senses, like space; when pressed, the opponent shifts ground from "not apprehended" to "not produced," and this shift is diagnosed by the challenger as a contradiction with the original thesis, hence a defeat-point.³³ The example is placed at the climax of Chapter 2's elaboration of defeat-conditions. This is the one fault in the chapter that is dialectical in the strict sense, and it carries a consequence for how the treatise is read. Abandoning one's thesis is a fault only for a debater who has one. A manual that trains its reader to avoid incurring it presupposes that he holds a position and has undertaken to defend it—which is precisely what Vātsyāyana urges against the *vaitaṇḍika*. The inference should not be pressed harder than it

will bear. In the FBXL's illustration, the fault is incurred by the Brahmanical proponent, and a manual might teach its reader to detect in an opponent a fault that his own practice makes impossible. What cannot be deflected in that way is the chapter's answer to its converse question, reported above. Asked what kind of statement does not fall into defeat, the text answers with an argument of its own: conditioned things and consciousness are produced and therefore impermanent; *nirvāṇa* is unproduced and therefore permanent. Of this it says that an argument so worded is correct, and that this is not a situation of defeat.³⁴ The exemplar of the debater who does not lose is not a debater who has declined to assert. It is a Buddhist asserting a Buddhist thesis and giving the reason for it, and a manual of *vitāṇḍā* could not have chosen that example.

6. Chapter 3: Debate in Accord with Dharma

If Chapter 2 teaches the reader to identify defeat, Chapter 3 demonstrates the practice of refutation through extended worked examples. It is a short chapter³⁵ and dialectically the most sustained portion of the treatise, presenting a series of exchanges in which a proponent (立) advances a thesis and an objection (難) is raised against it. The exchanges turn on substantive philosophical questions: the existence of a permanent self, the reality of *nirvāṇa*, and the relationship between action and its cessation. In all three, the Buddhist occupies the objector's role and his opponent the proponent's.

The first exchange opens with a proponent asserting the existence of beings (眾生), and with them of life-forces and souls (壽者、命者), on the grounds that they are apprehended by the sense-faculties.³⁶ Residueless *nirvāṇa*, not being so apprehended, he takes not to exist, and the soul (神) he argues to be eternal: the fruit of arhatship exists at one moment only and neither before nor after it, and what has prior and posterior absence in this way does not exist at all, as a second head or a third hand does not; the soul is not like this, and is therefore eternal. The challenger's response is methodical: just as water beneath the roots of a tree is not seen and yet exists, so arhatship is 非是無法, not a non-existent thing, and the proponent has not discharged his burden.³⁷ The proponent's argument is dismantled step by step, and it is dismantled with the treatise's own apparatus: the second-head comparison is rejected because the absence of a second head presupposes a first, whereas the denial of arhatship is a denial without remainder, so that the two are not parallel and the example does not hold. This is the move Chapter 4 will name 喻破, the breaking of the example, and the simile that answers it reappears in that chapter doing the opposite work—adduced against the permanence of the self, on the ground that water beneath tree-roots is equally unapprehended and yet impermanent.³⁸ Each round closes with a formula of approval, 名為如法論也, which Gillon and Katsura render “this, then, is said to be a debate according to [proper] teachings,” and the formula does not discriminate by the direction of the argument: two of its three occurrences follow a positive conclusion directly, that karma is not destroyed and that *nirvāṇa* definitely exists. What the phrase marks is conformity to the dharma of debate, not the demolition of a thesis.³⁹

The pattern intensifies in the *nirvāṇa* exchange. The proponent denies *nirvāṇa* on the grounds that it is not apprehended by the senses. The challenger responds with the ocean analogy: just because one cannot count the drops of the ocean does not mean the ocean does not exist; so too with *nirvāṇa*: though it cannot be apprehended, in reality it exists of itself.⁴⁰ The proponent is then pressed further: if *nirvāṇa* is denied, the proponent must explain what extinguishes karmic consequences; just as a great fire is the cause of a forest's destruction, there must be some cause for the cessation of karma, and if *nirvāṇa* exists, this cessation is explained.⁴¹ The challenger's moves are not exclusively destructive. He exposes contradictions and demands explanations the proponent cannot supply, and he also

argues that *nirvāṇa* exists because otherwise the fruits of karma could not be destroyed—an inference to a positive conclusion with its reason stated.⁴²

The chapter's final exchange introduces a formal constraint on the length of an exchange. Gillon and Katsura identify it as the *ṣaṭpakṣī*, the six-step exchange attested at *Nyāyasūtra* 5.1.39–43 and set out its steps.⁴³ After a series of moves and counter-moves on the permanence of the self, the exchange is stopped rather than won. The objector rules that anything further the proponent says can only repeat what he has said, and that repetition is itself a defeat-point; and he extends the ruling to his own side, since a sixth question would carry the same fault, though the proponent, having erred himself, would have no standing to press it. The general rule that an answer runs out at the fifth turn is stated only in Chapter 4.⁴⁴ What matters is not the number of turns but the shape of the constraint: it binds both roles alike, and it makes a debater's own conduct a condition of his standing to prosecute a fault in the other. Chapter 2 was found to distribute responsibility for a well-conducted exchange across both parties rather than loading it on the speaker, and the constraint here does the same at the level of procedure.

The cumulative effect of Chapter 3 is therefore two-sided. The weighting is real: across its extended demonstrations the chapter models the challenger's role far more often than the proponent's, and the opponent's arguments are ordinarily introduced in order to be dismantled. The instruction is nonetheless not confined to refutation, since the Buddhist responses argue for the existence of the arhat and of *nirvāṇa*, and press the opponent to state a reason on pain of conceding the point. What the reader who masters this chapter acquires is not the discipline of a debater who advances no thesis; it is the discipline of a debater who advances his thesis late, and only when the opponent's alternative has collapsed.⁴⁵ That is a difference in the distribution of the burden of proof rather than the difference between *vitaṇḍā* and *vāda*.

7. Situating the FBXL Within the Typology of Debate

Sections 5 and 6 showed that the FBXL's dialectical instruction is asymmetric but not exclusively refutational: the reader is armed predominantly for the challenger's role, but is neither prohibited from advancing theses nor left without instruction in how they are established. The task of the present section is to situate this structural finding within the typologies of debate that the Indian tradition itself provides. Two such typologies are relevant: the binary classification found in the *Carakasamhitā* and the tripartite classification codified in the *Nyāyasūtras*. A third deserves mention at the outset, because it is Buddhist and is the one a Buddhist author might have been expected to reach for: the *hetuvidyā* section of the *Yogācārabhūmi* divides debate into six kinds, among them contentious debate (諍論) and debate in accord with what is correct (順正論).⁴⁶ The FBXL uses none of this vocabulary. What it does use, 正論 and 如法論 against 諍論, stands closer to the *Yogācārabhūmi*'s 順正論 against 諍論 than to anything in the *Nyāyasūtra*, and the resemblance sharpens the difficulty rather than resolving it: the categories against which the text has been classified are not the categories in which it classifies itself. Before turning to the typologies, however, the technical centerpiece of the FBXL—the twenty *xiangying* of Chapter 4—deserves brief discussion, both because of what they contribute to the text's structural profile and because of what has been said about them in the scholarly literature.

7.1. The Twenty Xiangying and the Nyāya Jāti

Chapter 4 of the FBXL (“Xiangying pin” 相應品) presents twenty rejoinders, each deployed against an opponent's syllogism proving the permanence of the self (*ātman*). The text names them serially, and they fall into recognizable groups: parity rejoinders in 同

and 異, contradictory pairs (到/不到, 相違/不違, 疑/不疑), and rejoinders turning on excess and deficiency (增多, 損減).⁴⁷

The correspondence between these twenty *xiangying* and the *jāti* of *Nyāyasūtra* Chapter 5 has been established in detail by Kajiyama (1991, pp. 108–17; see especially Table II, p. 117), who compares the twenty *xiangying* side by side with the NS *jāti* list and—where parallels exist—with the *prasaṅgas* Nāgārjuna deploys in the *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa* and the *Vigrahavyāvartanī*. Several correspondences are direct and secure: the eighth *xiangying* (遍同, “pervasive sameness”) answers to the NS’s *sādharmya-sama*; the eleventh (不到, “non-reaching”) to *aprāpti-sama*; the twelfth (到, “reaching”) to *prāpti-sama*; the tenth (時同, “temporal sameness”) to *ahetu-sama*; and the first and second (增多 and 損減) to *utkarṣa-sama* and *apakarṣa-sama* respectively. Other correspondences are less secure: for nine of the twenty *xiangying*, Kajiyama’s table leaves the Sanskrit column blank, indicating either that the correspondence is uncertain or that no single NS *jāti* maps cleanly onto the Chinese term.

What matters for the present argument is not the completeness of the correspondence but its structural character. Each of the twenty *xiangying*, Kajiyama argues, operates as a *prasaṅga* or *prasaṅga-jāti*: a consequence-drawing rejoinder that takes a commitment of the opponent’s and shows that it generates an unwanted implication.⁴⁸ Kajiyama’s identification of the *xiangying* as *prasaṅgas* has not gone uncontested. Lindtner’s objection, often reported at second hand as the claim that the FBXL nowhere discusses *prasaṅga*, is in fact different and more interesting. What he finds implausible is that Nāgārjuna, “whose predilection for arguing merely by way of *prasaṅga* is well-known, should recommend conventional rules of debate in order to vindicate the Dharma”; he adds that the treatise never figures in the later Svātantrika–Prāsaṅgika controversy, where its tenets would have given it a decisive role.⁴⁹ The objection concerns authorship, not the structure of the twenty, and it leaves Kajiyama’s structural identification untouched. It is also, for the present argument, a point in favor. The feature Lindtner found incongruous—a treatise that recommends the conventional apparatus of debate in order to defend the *saddharma*—is precisely what Sections 4–6 have shown the FBXL to be. Lindtner drew an authorship inference from it; nothing here requires one.

A further complication should be registered. The internal morphology of the list gives some support to a different Sanskrit reconstruction: six of the twenty names end in 同, and three form contradictory pairs, which is the shape of the *Nyāyasūtra*’s *-sama* series rather than of a *prasaṅga* series. Kajiyama’s identification rests on lexicographical grounds—Hirakawa’s index and Wogihara’s dictionary—rather than on the internal evidence of this list. The present paper does not attempt to adjudicate. It notes only that the two proposals are not equivalent in their consequences, since a parity rejoinder asserts a symmetrical counter-instance, where a *prasaṅga* exhibits a contradiction internal to the opponent’s position.⁵⁰

7.2. The Carakasamhitā and Nyāyasūtra Typologies

With the structural character of the twenty *xiangying* established, the question of typology can be posed directly. Where does the FBXL fit within the categories that the Indian tradition itself uses to classify kinds of debate?

Two typologies are relevant. The earlier, found in the *Carakasamhitā* (Vimānasthāna 8), divides debate into two kinds. The first is *sandhāya sambhāṣā*—amicable discussion conducted among colleagues, in a spirit of cooperation (compare *sandhāya*, “agreeing with”), where the aim is the joint discovery of the truth of a subject matter. The second is *virghya sambhāṣā*—hostile debate conducted against an adversary, in a spirit of opposition (compare *virghya*, “seizing against”), where the aim is victory. Caraka treats the second kind as legitimate under constrained conditions while warning about the dialectical hazards attending it (see Preisendanz 2009; Matilal 1998). Matilal (1998, pp. 38–39) draws attention

to the Socratic parallel in Plato's *Meno* 75c–d, where Socrates distinguishes the debate of “the clever, disputatious and quarrelsome” from the debate of “friendly people.”⁵¹

The second typology, elaborated in *Nyāyasūtra* 1.2.1–3 and discussed at length by Vātsyāyana in his commentary, refines Caraka's binary into a tripartite scheme. *Vāda* (NS 1.2.1) is honest philosophical inquiry: both parties advance theses and counter-theses, defend them with reasons and examples, and accept the criteria of evidence and non-contradiction. The aim is the establishment of truth. *Jalpa* (NS 1.2.2) retains the formal structure of *vāda* but licenses tricks, casuistry, and illegitimate rejoinders (*jāti*); the aim is victory, not truth. *Vitaṇḍā* (NS 1.2.3) is not a coordinate third member but a sub-species of the second. The sūtra reads *sa pratipakṣasthāpanāhīno vitaṇḍā*, “that [*jalpa*] which lacks the establishment of a counter-position is *vitaṇḍā*”; the pronoun resumes the *jalpa* of NS 1.2.2. The classification is therefore conjunctive, and to establish it one must establish both conjuncts: that the debate is *jalpa*, and that the *pratipakṣasthāpanā* is absent.⁵² Matilal (1998, pp. 50–51) renders *vitaṇḍā* as “refutation-only” debate and discusses Vātsyāyana's argument that this third kind is only rationally sustainable if the refutation is understood non-committally: an argument whose philosophical implications are the subject of Section 8 below.

One half of the placement is straightforward. In Caraka's binary, the FBXL is *vigraha sambhāṣā*: the opening frames the encounter as an assault to be repelled, the treatise is organized around defeat-conditions and rejoinders, and nothing in it answers to the cooperative inquiry of *sandhāya sambhāṣā*.⁵³ Within the *Nyāyasūtra*'s refinement, the first conjunct is provisionally satisfied by the combined evidence of the text's adversarial orientation, its concern with victory and defeat, and its authorization of *jāti*-type rejoinders. No one of these would be diagnostic on its own, since such techniques can be taught for use in other kinds of debate; it is their combination, together with the absence of anything answering to the cooperative inquiry of *vāda*, that places the text on the *jalpa* side.

The second conjunct is where the classification fails, and Vātsyāyana is precise about what it requires. Considering whether the sūtra might be reformulated as “*jalpa* lacking a counter-thesis,” he refuses the change: “Then let *vitaṇḍā* be [defined as] “that [*jalpa*] devoid of a counter-thesis”? But that statement which is characterized by the refutation of the counter-position is the *vaitaṇḍika*'s position; it is only that he does not, having declared some object as what is to be proved, establish it. Therefore let [the sūtra] stand as it is worded.”⁵⁴ What the *vaitaṇḍika* lacks is therefore not a position but the undertaking to establish one. The distinction matters, because on the looser formulation the FBXL would qualify: its objector does hold a position, and holds it throughout. What he also does, and what the *vaitaṇḍika* by definition does not, is declare that *nirvāṇa* exists and supply a reason for it. Chapter 1 states the norm that whoever wishes to establish a thesis must rely on the four means of knowledge, and prints the Buddha's own tenets among those of the schools; Chapter 3's Buddhist responses argue for the existence of the arhat and of *nirvāṇa*, and press the opponent to state a reason on pain of conceding the point. On the *Nyāyasūtra*'s own criterion this is *jalpa*, not *vitaṇḍā*.

Two objections might be entered against this result. The first is that the FBXL does not self-describe as *vitaṇḍā*: the Sanskrit term does not appear in the Chinese, and while the text does classify its own genre—as 正論 and 如法論, against the 諍論 it repudiates—it does so in its own vocabulary and never in the *Nyāya* categories. That is true, and it cuts both ways. A text that never claims the category cannot be convicted of failing to live up to it; but neither can it be assigned to the category on the strength of resemblance alone. The second objection is anachronism. If Kajiyama's dating is correct, the FBXL pre-dates the received *Nyāyasūtra*, and its author cannot have been applying, or failing to apply, categories that were not yet codified. This has force against a charge of inconsistency and none against

the classification itself, which is offered as an analytical instrument rather than as a report of authorial intention. The question is whether the instrument fits. It does not.

The Nyāya typology is not, however, the only one available, and it is not the text's own. The FBXL's opening dialogue is built on a contrast of terms. The student's objection is directed at 諍論, contentious debate, which the spiritually noble avoid as they avoid a vessel of poison and which whoever would benefit himself and others should abandon; the master's reply does not deny this, but distinguishes what he is composing from it—造此正論, "I compose this correct treatise."⁵⁵ The contrast sorts exchanges out by whether they serve the true teaching. Nothing in it corresponds to the *pratipakṣasthāpanā* on which the *vaiṭaṇḍā* definition turns, and nothing in it separates proof from refutation.

The result of this section is therefore mixed. The FBXL is a manual of *vigrahya sambhāṣā* in Caraka's terms, and that much is secure. It is not a manual of *vaiṭaṇḍā* in the *Nyāyasūtra*'s terms, though it satisfies the first of that definition's two conjuncts. Section 8 tests the result against the philosophical criterion the tradition itself developed for identifying a coherent *vaiṭaṇḍika*.

8. Refutation, Assertion, and the Burden of Proof

Section 7 found that the FBXL fails the *Nyāyasūtra*'s own criterion for *vaiṭaṇḍā*, since its objector undertakes the *sthāpanā* that the *vaiṭaṇḍika* declines. That result can be tested a second time, against a criterion drawn not from the definition but from the philosophical difficulty the category raises—and it is worth testing, because a classification that fails on two independent grounds fails for a reason rather than on a count of passages. The difficulty is old. If the *vaiṭaṇḍika* refutes the opponent's thesis *p*, does this not commit him to *not-p*, and if so, how does his practice differ from the thesis-establishing *jalpin*'s? Matilal's response, drawing on Searle, is that a refutation need not be an assertion at all: it may withhold assertoric force rather than reverse it. That response is correct, and it holds for a good part of what the FBXL's objector does. It does not hold for all of it. The present section states the objection, fixes the criterion the reply supplies, and shows where the FBXL falls outside it.

8.1. The Objection to *Vaiṭaṇḍā* and Matilal's Criterion

The objection to *vaiṭaṇḍā* is stated by Matilal (1998, p. 51), who attributes it to "philosophers from Vātsyāyana onwards," as follows.⁵⁶ The *vaiṭaṇḍika*, by refuting the opponent's thesis *p*, must be understood as accepting its contradictory, *not-p*; the debater should then be required to defend *not-p* by citing a reason. Should *not-p* be duly defended, the *vaiṭaṇḍika*'s stance is abandoned, and the practice collapses into *jalpa* or *vāda*. Should such a defense be refused, the claim to rationality is forfeited, and the debate can be closed without awarding victory to the refuter. On this analysis, *vaiṭaṇḍā* is either self-dissolving (if the refuter accepts the counter-thesis) or irrational (if defense of the counter-thesis is refused).

Matilal grants that the objection is "arguably sound" if the refuter's negation is understood propositionally, that is, as the assertion of a negative proposition. A propositional negation leaves the illocutionary force of assertion unchanged: the negation of "there is an after-life" is the asserted proposition "there is no after-life." A refuter who asserts the propositional negation has indeed taken on a counter-thesis and must defend it. But this, Matilal argues (1998, p. 52), is not the only way to understand negation. Drawing explicitly on Searle's speech-act theory (Searle 1969, pp. 32–33), Matilal distinguishes propositional negation from illocutionary negation.⁵⁷ An illocutionary negation negates the speech act itself rather than the propositional content it contains; it amounts not to "I assert *not-p*" but to "I do not assert *p*." Applied to the debate context, this yields a refutation that is commitment-free: the *vaiṭaṇḍika* withdraws from the assertion of *p* without thereby committing to *not-p*.

The move is not to say “there is no after-life,” but to say “I do not say there is an after-life”, and the same can be said of *not-p* in the same breath without self-contradiction.

Matilal’s Sañjaya example makes the point concrete. The ancient sceptic Sañjaya, when asked about after-life, answered both (a) “I do not say there is an after-life” and (b) “I do not say there is no after-life.” The standard charge was that Sañjaya contradicted himself. But (a) and (b) are contradictories only if read as propositional negations of each other; read as illocutionary withdrawals of both assertive acts, they are consistent. Indeed, they express a single, coherent stance of commitment-refusal. Matilal concludes (1998, p. 53) that “the notion of illocutionary negation in speech-act theory fits well here with the context of debate.” Refutation can be performed without taking a counter-position, and the dilemma dissolves.⁵⁸

Two things should be kept apart in this, because they have different standing. The dilemma is the tradition’s: whatever its attribution, it is a demand that Nyāya itself pressed against the *vaitaṇḍika*, and it is pressed in the tradition’s own terms—undertake the defense of your counter-thesis or forfeit the claim to be arguing rationally. The resolution is not. Illocutionary negation is a modern analytical instrument, brought to the problem by Matilal by way of Searle, and what it yields is a reconstruction of what a *vaitaṇḍika* would have to be doing for the practice to answer the demand. Applied to a text, it is a test and not a definition. Its value here lies in its provenance: the criterion it supplies is reached by a route wholly independent of NS 1.2.3, so that when it returns the same verdict as Section 7, the two results are not one result counted twice.

8.2. Application to the FBXL

Matilal’s distinction supplies a criterion, and the criterion is exacting. Illocutionary negation is not a weaker or more guarded form of assertion; it is the withholding of assertoric force altogether, so that a debater who says “I do not say there is an after-life” has made no claim about the after-life and cannot be asked to defend one. On Matilal’s reconstruction, then, a practice counts as *vitaṇḍā* only if the moves it models withhold that force, and not merely if they are directed against an opponent. The condition is his rather than the *sūtra*’s: it states what a *vaitaṇḍika* would have to do for his practice to be defensible, not what the *Nyāyasūtra* requires before the classification applies. Applied to the FBXL, the criterion returns a negative answer.

Consider again the *nirvāṇa* exchange discussed in Section 6. Had the Buddhist confined himself to the ocean analogy, the *vitaṇḍā* reading would be secure, since the analogy attacks the pervasion on which the opponent’s inference depends, and attacking a pervasion commits one to nothing about the entity in question. The passage does not stop there. It concludes 涅槃亦然，雖不可覺實自有之⁵⁹—*nirvāṇa* is likewise; though it cannot be apprehended, in reality it exists—and that is not the withdrawal of an assertion but an assertion. The same holds of 非是無法 said of the arhat, and of the demand that the opponent state a reason on pain of recognizing that *nirvāṇa* definitely exists. Katsura, reconstructing the exchange, describes these moves as ones in which “the Buddhist objector tries to prove his own position that *nirvāṇa* exists.”⁶⁰

What the FBXL’s debater does is not illocutionary withdrawal; it is the management of a burden.⁶¹ He holds that the *saddharma* is true and that *nirvāṇa* exists, declines in the ordinary course of an exchange to shoulder the proof, and asserts once the opponent’s alternative has collapsed. The formula recurs across the chapter: the opponent must state a reason, and failing that must concede the point.⁶² That is a distribution of dialectical labor rather than an abstention from commitment. Sañjaya’s *amarāvikkhepa*, Matilal’s exemplar of commitment-refusal, is precisely the opposite posture: Sañjaya declines to say, whereas the FBXL’s debater says late.

What the treatise puts in place of refutation-only debate is visible in a sequence rather than in any single move: refutation first, establishment last. The commitment is present from the start, in Chapter 1's norm for whoever would establish a thesis and in Chapter 2's exemplar of a statement that does not lose; what is postponed is not the commitment but its discharge. The demand that closes these exchanges is stated by the text: the opponent must give a reason, and if he cannot, either the thesis he has advanced collapses or the Buddhist's stands (n. 62). Across the worked exchanges, until the proponent has discharged the burden attaching to his own thesis the objector owes nothing, and when the proponent fails the objector states a thesis of his own, as established rather than as offered for examination. This is a deferred discharge of the burden of proof, and it is not an intermediate position between *vitaṇḍā* and *vāda*: the Nyāya typology sorts debates by whether a party undertakes the establishment of a counter-position at all, and has no place in which to record when he undertakes it.

9. Conclusions

The classification with which this paper began is the one the text's surface invites. A treatise given over to points of defeat, worked exchanges in which an opponent's thesis is dismantled step by step, and twenty rejoinders answering to the *Nyāyasūtra*'s *jāti* all point toward *vitaṇḍā*, the refutation-only debate of NS 1.2.3. What this paper has done is test that classification first against the traditional definition and then against Matilal's philosophical reconstruction of the problem, and the interest of the result lies in where the test fails.

Section 3 showed that the text's opening dialogue frames debate programmatically as dharma-defense. Section 4 showed that Chapter 1 states a general norm for whoever would establish a thesis, ranks four means of knowledge with perception above scripture and the wisdom of emptiness above both, and prints the Buddha's own tenets among those of the schools. Sections 5 and 6 showed that the asymmetry of Chapters 2 and 3 is real but not exclusive: Chapter 2 penalizes failures of understanding as well as failures of speaking, and Chapter 3's Buddhist responses argue for the existence of the arhat and of *nirvāṇa*. Section 7 found that the FBXL satisfies the first conjunct of the *Nyāyasūtra*'s definition and fails the second, since its objector undertakes the *sthāpanā* that the *vaitaṇḍika* declines. Section 8 found that it fails a second and independent test: measured against Matilal's reconstruction of what a coherent *vitaṇḍā* would require, its refutations exercise assertoric force rather than withholding it. What it teaches in place of refutation-only debate is a deferred discharge of the burden of proof, for which the Nyāya typology has no category.

Several questions remain open. The philological identification of 相應 with *prasaṅga*, proposed by Kajiyama on lexicographical and structural grounds, remains contested, and the internal morphology of the twenty leaves the **sama* reconstruction open. A full study of the Chinese terms' rendering of Indian dialectical vocabulary would be a valuable adjunct to the present argument. The FBXL belongs to a small group of logical texts translated into Chinese before Xuanzang, with the *Rushi lun* 如實論 (T 1633) and the *Huizheng lun* 迴諍論 (T 1631); for the sequence of these translations see Lin (2014, p. 64). Buddhist logic proper reached China only with Xuanzang's translations in the seventh century, and remained, as Harbsmeier observes, marginal in Chinese intellectual life (Harbsmeier 1998, pp. 358–60). The text was not, however, wholly forgotten. It is glossed in Huilin's *Yiqiejing yinyi* 一切經音義 (T 2128), compiled around the turn of the ninth century; it is cited by Fazang in his *Shier men lun zongzhi yiji* 十二門論宗致義記 (T 1826); and it is cited twice, as a work of Nāgārjuna, by the Japanese Sanlun scholar Chinkai 珍海 (1091–1152) in his *Sanron myōkyō shō* 三論名教抄.⁶³ What part it played in the substance of later East Asian Buddhist logic, as distinct from its bare transmission, has not been investigated; the comparison with Zhencheng drawn in Section 3 is offered as a contrast, not as evidence of continuity.

Recognizing that the FBXL is not a *vitandā* manual is not a merely negative result. It locates the text at a point where a rich technical vocabulary for debate was available but where the FBXL itself had not organized that vocabulary through the distinction that sorts debates by what their participants owe one another, and it shows a Buddhist author, at that point, treating proof and refutation as a single undivided art in the service of the *saddharma*.

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Notes

- ¹ The reading is standard in the secondary literature; see Tucci (1929); Kajiyama (1991); Matilal (1998); Gillon and Katsura (2016); Gillon (2008).
- ² The Chinese title renders something like “Treatise on the Heart of Expedient Means”: 方便 standardly renders *upāya* or *upāyakaushalya*, 心 renders *hrdaya*. The Sanskrit itself is unrecovered, and Gillon (2008, p. 21) records three conjectures: **Upāya-kauśalya-hrdaya*, Frauwallner’s **Prayoga-sāra*, and Tucci’s **Upāya-hrdaya*—the last of which Kajiyama (1991, p. 107) also adopts, and which has become the conventional Indological designation. The Chinese title is therefore used throughout, **Upāyahṛdaya* being reserved for contexts where Indological scholarship on the reconstructed Sanskrit is in view.
- ³ The *Kathāvatthu* (third–second c. BCE) records structured Buddhist debate but is not a manual; Nāgārjuna’s *Vigrahavyāvartanī* and *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa* are polemical refutations of specific positions rather than debate-training treatises. On the FBXL’s temporal priority within the Buddhist tradition, see Kajiyama (1991, p. 113) (placing the FBXL after the *Carakasamhitā* and before the *Nyāyasūtras*); Gillon (2008, pp. 20–22). The first Chinese translation, by Buddhahadra 佛陀跋陀羅 (Eastern Jin, early fifth century), is lost; the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* registers the extant version as a second translation of the same text—第二出，與東晉覺賢出者同本—citing the catalogues of Daohui and Sengyou (T 55, no. 2154, p. 540a7). The translation of 472 CE by Jijiaye and Tanyao thus represents the second transmission to East Asia of an Indian text already well established.
- ⁴ The structural parallels with the Greek dialectical tradition—particularly Aristotle’s *Topics* (esp. Book VIII), the *Sophistical Refutations*, and the refutation-only practice of the Socratic *elenchus*—are striking but lie outside the scope of the present argument. Both traditions develop second-order reflection on the conduct of debate, both distinguish honest inquiry from victory-oriented disputation, and both catalogue fallacies and defeat-conditions. The crucial disanalogy is institutional: the FBXL frames its dialectical program as *dharma-defense*, a framing without direct Greco-Roman counterpart.
- ⁵ The distinction should not be confused with that between *prasajya-pratiṣedha* and *paryudāsa*, non-implicative and implicative negation, which operates on the scope of the negation within an assertion rather than on the force of the act: a *prasajya-pratiṣedha* is asserted, whereas an illocutionary negation is not an assertion of the content at all. On the Buddhist distinction see Kajiyama (1973). The present argument uses only Matilal’s notion.
- ⁶ T 32, no. 1632. The translation is recorded at *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 2 (T 55, no. 2145, pp. 13b6–12), which dates it to the second year of the Yanxing 延興 era, 472. The Sanskrit underlying 吉迦夜 is not securely reconstructed: the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* (s.v. 吉迦夜, Chu and Radich 2013) gives Kivkara as the basic entry, with Kiṅkara from other sources and Hirakawa’s **Kim-kārya* as alternatives; the name appears in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 at T 55, no. 2154, p. 539b13, among the Northern Wei translators. Tucci (1929, p. xi) romanizes the name as “Ki Kia Ye”. The Chinese form 吉迦夜 is used here as the primary designation. On this translator’s activity under the Northern Wei, see also Kajiyama (1991, pp. 107–17); Gillon and Katsura (2016, p. 195).

- 7 The modern scholarship on the FBXL is predominantly Japanese. Ui's edition of 1925 and Tucci's Sanskrit retroversion of 1929, on both of which see [Muroya \(2016, p. 13\)](#), were followed by [Kajiyama \(1991\)](#) and, more recently, by [Ishitobi \(2006\)](#), whose 2006 monograph re-collates the Chinese and supplies a Japanese translation; [Ishitobi \(2009\)](#) treats the text's linguistic strategy, and [Ishitobi \(2023\)](#) devotes its third chapter to the FBXL, with a section entitled 「インド論理学史における『方便心論』の反論理学」, subtitled 「論詰論法の論理形態」, on the anti-logic of the *Fangbian xin lun* in the history of Indian logic and the logical form of refutational argumentation (p. 264); I have not been able to consult the volume and report its contents from the National Diet Library record; the text's logical procedure and standpoint are treated by [Harada \(1991\)](#) and [Kimura \(2006\)](#), its date and authorship by [Ichimura \(1995\)](#), and its manuscript transmission by [Muroya \(2016\)](#). The Chinese literature is smaller: [Yao \(1995\)](#) surveys a century of *yinming* 因明 scholarship, [Shen \(1987, 2004\)](#) treats the points of defeat and argues that the text is anti-logical (反邏輯), [Zheng \(2007\)](#) situates it within the Chinese tradition, [Shi \(2006\)](#) expounds it chapter by chapter, and [Guo and Du \(2015\)](#) reconstruct the circumstances of its translation. That Shen and Ishitobi should converge on an anti-logical characterization is notable, and it bears on the present argument without settling it: a claim about the text's stance toward logic is distinct from a claim about how it distributes dialectical burdens, and the two may both hold. For the wider transmission of Indic epistemology into Chinese, see the studies collected in [Lin and Radich \(2014\)](#).
- 8 [Tucci \(1929, p. xii\)](#) argued for a date prior to the *Nyāyasūtras* on the grounds that the FBXL reflects “ancient theories, which are akin much more to the classification of the heuristical categories, as contained in *Carakasamhitā*, than to the present redaction of NS.” [Kajiyama \(1991, p. 113\)](#) places the FBXL after the *Carakasamhitā* and before the received *Nyāyasūtra* and argues for authorship by Nāgārjuna (ca. 150–250 CE), pre-dating his *Madhyamakakārikā*. [Gillon \(2008, pp. 20–22\)](#) situates the text in the broader pre-classical period without committing to a specific date.
- 9 「問曰：不應造論。所以者何？凡造論者，多起悲憫憊貢高、自擾亂心少柔和意，顯現他惡、自歎己善。如斯眾過智者所呵，是故一切諸賢聖人、無量方便斷諍論者，常樂遠離如捨毒器。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 23b9–13). Translation: [Gillon and Katsura \(2016\)](#), pp. 196–97. Chinese passages are quoted from the CBETA digital edition ([CBETA 2025.R3](#)) and cited by Taishō page, column and line; the apparatus markers of the digital edition are not reproduced. Translations are my own except where attributed to [Gillon and Katsura \(2016, p. 197\)](#).
- 10 「若達論者，則自分別善惡空相，眾魔外道邪見之人無能惱壞作障礙也。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 23b18–19). Translation after [Gillon and Katsura \(2016\)](#), p. 198.
- 11 「又欲令正法流布於世，如為修治菴婆羅果，而外廣植荊棘之林，為防果故。今我造論亦復如是，欲護正法、不求名聞。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 23b20–24). Translation after [Gillon and Katsura \(2016, p. 198\)](#). The imagery of cultivating fruits by surrounding them with thorn-bramble has a notable parallel in *Nyāyasūtra* 4.2.50, on which see [Matilal \(1998, p. 50\)](#), and the discussion above.
- 12 On the *viṇṇā* category in the *Carakasamhitā*, see [Preisendanz \(2009\)](#). For the *Nyāyasūtra* definition, see NS 1.2.3 and the discussion in [Matilal \(1998, pp. 45–51\)](#).
- 13 *tattoṽdhyavasāyasamrakṣaṇārthaṃ jalpavitāṇḍe bījaprarohasamrakṣaṇārthaṃ kaṇṭakaśākhāvaraṇavat* (NS 4.2.50; [Thakur 1997, p. 281](#)). The parallel with the FBXL's mango-and-bramble image is noted by [Gillon and Katsura \(2016, p. 198 n. 11\)](#).
- 14 「故我為欲利益眾生，造此正論。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 23b19–20). Translation: [Gillon and Katsura \(2016, p. 198\)](#).
- 15 See [Lin \(2019\)](#), *passim*. Zhencheng's use of *yinming* reasoning and scriptural authority (聖言量 *āptāgama*) in his *Wu buqian zhengliang lun* (物不遷正量論, “Treatise on the Correct Measure of the Non-Motion of Things”) provides a later comparative case of Buddhist reasoning employed in the defense of doctrine; no historical continuity, textual dependence, or line of transmission between his work and the FBXL is claimed.
- 16 [Katsura \(2015–2018, p. 21\)](#). The chapter divisions are: Ch. 1, T 23b6–26a28; Ch. 2, 26a29–27a4; Ch. 3, 27a5–c7; Ch. 4, 27c8–28c17.
- 17 T 32, no. 1632, pp. 23c5–7. The Sanskrit equivalents follow [Katsura \(2015–2018, p. 22\)](#). The order of enumeration differs from the order of exposition; see [Gillon and Katsura \(2016, p. 201 n. 23\)](#).
- 18 [Katsura \(2015–2018, p. 22\)](#), citing Yaita's edition of the *hetuvidyā* section. Katsura notes further (p. 23) that the debate manual of the Spitzer manuscript likewise recognizes four *pramāṇas*; see [Franco \(2004, vol. 2, p. 486ff.\)](#).
- 19 「隨所執者，名究竟義」 (T 32, no. 1632, p. 23c9); 「隨其所執廣引因緣立義堅固，名為執相」 (p. 23c25); 「凡欲立義，當依四種知見。何等為四？一者現見、二者比知、三以喻知、四隨經書」 (pp. 23c29–24a1). 隨所執 is not the standard Chinese rendering of *siddhānta*, which is 悉檀; the identification is made by [Katsura \(2015–2018, p. 22\)](#) and by [Gillon and Katsura \(2016\)](#), both of whom register the difficulty. The treatise alternates between 隨所執 in the enumeration and 執, 執相, 執法 in the exposition. Compare *Carakasamhitā* 3.8.37, quoted by [Gillon and Katsura \(2016, p. 204 n. 35\)](#) from Ernst Prets. [Funayama \(2014, p. 39\)](#) lists 現見 as Jijiaye's rendering of *pratyakṣa*, quoting this passage.
- 20 「此四知中，現見為上。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 25a26–b2); [Gillon and Katsura \(2016, p. 220\)](#).
- 21 The passage is at T 32, no. 1632, pp. 25b3–7.
- 22 「若隨經書證有神者，是事不可。經書意亦難解，或時言有或時言無，云何取信？」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 24a8–10).
- 23 T 32, no. 1632, pp. 24a13–15; the ten schools at pp. 24a13–b4. [Gillon and Katsura \(2016, p. 200 n. 19\)](#) caution that the list enumerates the topics on which each school holds tenets rather than the tenets themselves; the argument here does not rest on the list but on the passage cited in the next note.

- 24 T 32, no. 1632, pp. 24b6–9; translation compare Gillon and Katsura (2016, pp. 210–11).
- 25 「已說如上八種論法。復有眾多負法，今當宣說。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 26b1–2). “The eight kinds of argumentative method have been explained above. There are further many defeat-situations, which shall now be expounded.”
- 26 「問曰：何名語法？答曰：如言四大是假名。所以者何？為色等法之所成故。復有人言：四大實有。何以知之？堅是地性乃至動是風性，故知為實。更相違返，便生諍訟。如有言：地是成身因緣，餘大亦爾。難曰：地等亦能成一切物，云何而言唯成身乎？是名非語。若不如是，是名是語。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 26b2–9). “Question: What is called the method of argumentation? Answer: For example, [one party] says: ‘the four great elements are a mere designation.’ Why? Because they constitute form and the other dharmas. Another party says: the four great elements really exist. How is this known? Because solidity is the nature of earth, and so on up to motion as the nature of air; this is how their reality is known. The two positions oppose each other, and dispute arises. Suppose one party says: earth is the cause and condition of the body, and so too for the other great elements. The challenger says: but earth and the rest can also constitute all things—why, then, claim that they constitute the body alone? This is called improper speech. If not so, this is called proper speech.”
- 27 「問曰：何為名負？答曰：如言聲常，無形色故，如空。難曰：聲雖無形而為根覺，有對有礙，如瓶造作。而虛空性非是作法，何得為喻？此名負義。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 26b9–13). 有對 is glossed as resistance, the existence of a solid object that occupies space and obstructs, and is synonymous with 有礙 (Skt. *pratigha*, *sapratigha*; DDB, s.v. 有對); 有對有礙 is therefore better taken as a single expression than as two predicates. 如瓶造作 is *kṛtakatva*, the standard reason for impermanence, so that the refutation turns on the challenger’s own positive inference. The two further turns at pp. 26b13–17; the argument that does not fall into defeat at pp. 26b17–19: 「諸行與識作故無常，涅槃非作故常。如此之言句味真正，名非負處。」
- 28 語法 (T 32, no. 1632, p. 26b2), 是語 and 非語 (p. 26b9) and 負義 (p. 26b13) each occur once in the treatise; 負處 occurs twenty times, fourteen of them in the formula 墮負處. On 是語 and 非語 I follow Gillon and Katsura (2025, p. 290 n. 7), who render the pair as true and false argumentation and gloss it as genuine against specious, reading 語 as argumentation rather than as speech. On 負義 the same translators render 義 as “case,” giving an instance of a situation of defeat rather than a distinct category; no Sanskrit equivalent has been proposed.
- 29 「復次應問不問、應答不答，三說法要不令他解，自三說法而不別知，皆名負處。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 26b26–28). “Again, failing to ask what should be asked; failing to answer what should be answered; stating the essentials three times without making the other understand; failing to discriminate after the other has stated [the essentials] three times: all these are called defeat-situations.”
- 30 「如此負處，是議論之大棘刺，為深過患，應當覺知速宜遠離。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 26c3–4). “Such defeat-situations are the great thorns of debate, a deep fault; one should recognize them and quickly keep far away.”
- 31 The points of defeat in *Fangbian Xin Lun* Chapter 2, in the order of the text. The correspondences in the third column are Katsura’s (2015–2018, pp. 25–26), following earlier lists by Tucci (1929, p. xxii) and Kajiyama (1984, pp. 7–8); the Sanskrit names the parallel item and is not a reconstruction of the Chinese. The classification in the fourth column applies to the FBXL’s list the distinction between conversational and formal failings drawn by Todeschini (2010) and Keating (2021) for the *Nyāyasūtra*; the categories of comprehension and delivery are added here. The text neither numbers the faults nor presents them as a list. Items 1, 3, 8 and 11 have no counterpart in either list.
- 32 Grice (1989, pp. 26–27). Todeschini (2010); Keating (2021). Todeschini (2010, p. 51 n. 6) lists the FBXL among the texts that treat this subject briefly, without pursuing it.
- 33 「難曰：汝前言非覺、今言不作，是違本宗。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 26c28–29). “The challenger says: you previously said ‘not apprehended’; now you say ‘not produced.’ This contradicts your original thesis.”
- 34 「問曰：何等之義不墮負處？答曰：諸行與識作故無常，涅槃非作故常。如此之言句味真正，名非負處。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 26b17–19). “Question: What kinds of cases (義) are situations of not falling into defeat? Answer: [For example, someone says that] because all conditioned things (諸行) and consciousness (識) are produced, they are non-eternal; and because *nirvāṇa* is not produced, it is eternal. The [argument formulated] with such words and phrases (言句味) is correct. This is said not to be a situation of defeat (負處).” Translation: Gillon and Katsura (2025, p. 291), who take 句味 as rendering *padakāya*.
- 35 Katsura (2015–2018, p. 21). Chapter 3 occupies T 32, no. 1632, pp. 27a5–c7; Chapter 1, pp. 23b6–26a28.
- 36 「若人說有眾生乃至亦有壽者命者。何以知之？為根覺故。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 27a6–7). The argument for the eternality of the soul follows at pp. 27a8–11. Both are translated in Gillon and Katsura (2025, pp. 297–98), with reconstructed Sanskrit; on 壽者 and 命者 see *ibid.*, p. 297 n. 46. 為根覺 is passive. It might alternatively be construed as “because there is faculty-cognition [there must be an experiencer]”, giving the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika inference to the *ātman* from cognition; but the text’s own usage excludes this. At p. 26b16 the same construction stands in parallel with an unambiguous 為...所 passive: 「聲雖異瓶，而為根覺為耳所聞，是故無常」, “though sound differs from a pot, it is apprehended by a faculty and heard by the ear and is therefore impermanent.”
- 37 「難曰：如樹根、地下水，不見言無。阿羅漢者亦復如是，非是無法。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 27a12–13). “The challenger says: this is like [saying that] water beneath the roots of a tree does not exist because it is not seen. Arhatship too is likewise; it is not a non-existent thing.” Translation from Gillon and Katsura (2025, p. 298).
- 38 喻破, the seventeenth of the twenty 相應 (T 32, no. 1632, p. 27c29), is expounded at pp. 28b11–13, where the simile of p. 27a12 recurs.

- 39 T 32, no. 1632, pp. 27a21–22, 27b3–4, 27b12–13; the chapter closes at p. 27c7 with the variant 如是等名正法論也. Translation from Gillon and Katsura (2025, p. 300).
- 40 「如大海水不知幾滄，可言無耶？若不知滄數而猶有海，涅槃亦然，雖不可覺實自有之。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 27a18–20). “Just as one does not know how many drops are in the ocean, can one therefore say it does not exist? If, not knowing the number of drops, the ocean nonetheless exists, *nirvāṇa* is likewise: though it cannot be apprehended, in reality it exists of itself.”
- 41 「譬如大火焚燒山林故，火是滅因。今此業報是何滅因而得滅耶？若得涅槃則便散壞。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 27a27–29). “For example, because a great fire burns a mountain forest, the fire is the cause of its destruction. Now what do these karmic consequences have as their cause of destruction? If *nirvāṇa* is attained, they are at once scattered and destroyed.”
- 42 「又諸業報不可毀滅，故有涅槃。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 27a26–27).
- 43 Gillon and Katsura (2025, pp. 301–4), with the six steps distinguished at T 32, no. 1632, pp. 27b14–c7.
- 44 「凡問答者，答極至於五，過此更言皆名為過。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 28c7–8). “In question-and-answer exchange, the answer reaches its limit at the fifth [turn]; beyond this, anything further said is a fault.” The numeral 五 might alternatively be read as the five members of a proof (*pañcāvayava*). The text excludes that reading twice over. The governing phrase is 凡問答者, in all cases of question and answer, so the unit counted is the exchange and not the member of a proof; and Chapter 3 counts the turns of a debate by ordinal and raises precisely the question a five-turn ceiling would raise: 「欲以第五而止過者...設第六人更可問乎？答曰：第五之人已成於過，何有第六得為問耶？...由第五故是第六人便得為問。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 27b28–c7), where the Song, Yuan, Ming and Palace editions (宋元明宮) read 五人, the fifth person, for 五. Gillon and Katsura (2025, p. 313) render the line “In all cases of question and response (問答), responses are limited to five (五). To go beyond this by saying more is said to be an error.”
- 45 The Madhyamaka locus classicus for the absence of a thesis is *Vigrahavyāvartanī* 29, *nāsti ca mama pratijñā*, on which see Westerhoff (2010). Nothing of the kind is claimed for the FBXL: its objector defers his thesis, he does not disclaim one.
- 46 「云何論體性？謂有六種。一、言論，二、尚論，三、諍論，四、毀謗論，五、順正論，六、教導論。」 (T 30, no. 1579, pp. 356a19–20). The *Yogācārabhūmi* postdates the FBXL and no dependence is suggested; the point is that a Buddhist typology of debate was formulated and that the FBXL does not employ it.
- 47 「如斯難者，有二十種，一曰增多、二曰損減、三說同異、四問多答少、五答多問少、六曰因同、七曰果同、八曰遍同、九不遍同、十曰時同、十一不到、十二名到、十三相違、十四不違、十五疑、十六不疑、十七喻破、十八聞同、十九聞異、二十不生。是名二十問答之法。」 (T 32, no. 1632, pp. 27c25–28a2). At 十四不違 the Song, Yuan, Ming and Palace editions read 不相違, which makes the pair 相違/不相違 and the patterning of the contradictory pairs more regular than the Taishō text alone suggests; the point bears on the reconstruction of 相應 discussed below.
- 48 Kajiyama (1991, p. 108) writes: “The *Upāyahrdaya* criticizes this syllogism of the opponent’s by means of twenty *prasaṅgas* (*hsiang-ying*: *reductio ad absurdum*), or what are called *jāti*s in the *Nyāyasūtra*, which our text regards as valid arguments.” The Chinese-Sanskrit correspondence is grounded by Kajiyama in two lexicographical works, which he cites as Hirakawa et al. (eds.), *Index to the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Part One (Sanskrit-Tibetan-Chinese), Tokyo 1973: p. 259, and U. Wogihara (ed.), *Bonwa Daijiten* (Sanskrit-Japanese Dictionary), Tokyo 1974: p. 877a; the references are given here in his form and the works are not independently consulted. The identification is a philological proposal rather than an established equivalence; the present paper accepts it at the structural level (the *xiangying* behave as *prasaṅgas*) without taking a position on its lexicographical adequacy. Katsura (2014, p. 103 n. 5) restates the same point: the FBXL lists the twenty not as erroneous criticisms but as proper ones.
- 49 Lindtner (1982, p. 17 n. 44). Gillon (2008, p. 21) reports the objection as the claim that “the *Fang Bian Xin Lun* nowhere discusses *reductio ad absurdum*,” which compresses it considerably. Lindtner further allows that, if the text fell into oblivion in India at an early date, “it is quite possible that Nāgārjuna composed it ‘from a desire to defend the Saddharma’,” citing T 32, no. 1632, pp. 23b19–20—the passage discussed in Section 3.
- 50 Lindtner’s objection turns on what the Chinese text does not contain a word for, and its force depends on the assumption that the Chinese renders a Sanskrit original with reasonable fidelity. That assumption has been questioned: Hattori has suggested to Gillon and Katsura (2016, p. 195) that 吉迦夜 may have compiled the treatise from whatever material on Indian argumentation was available to him. On that supposition, the absence of a term for *prasaṅga* would be evidence about the Chinese rendering rather than about the Indian source.
- 51 On the *Carakasamhitā*’s binary classification, see Preisendanz (2009) (for detailed analysis of CS *Vimānasthāna* 8.15–26 and 8.27–66) and Matilal (1998, pp. 38–39). I leave aside the complication that Matilal (1998, p. 41) also reports a later Caraka passage in which the hostile category (*viṣṭhya saṁbhāṣā*) is itself subdivided into *jalpa* and *vitandā*, thus approaching the NS tripartite from within the Caraka text; on the scholarly disagreement over how to read this passage, see Preisendanz (2009) and Kang (2006).
- 52 *Nyāyasūtra* 1.2.3 and *Nyāyabhāṣya* ad loc. (Thakur 1997, p. 41), where Vātsyāyana states the antecedent explicitly: *sa jalpo vitandā bhavati*, “that *jalpa* becomes *vitandā*.” Dasti and Phillips (2017, p. 213) render the sūtra “That becomes destructive debate (*vitandā*) when there is no effort to establish a counterthesis.”
- 53 On the institutional setting that gave such debates their stakes—public disputation before a king or at court, with patronage, revenue and conversions turning on the outcome—see Bronkhorst (2007). He argues that winning a public philosophical debate

amounted to something close to winning a court case, so that the rules of debate were shaped to win actual debates rather than ideal ones (2007, p. 277).

- 54 *astu tarhi sa pratipakṣahīno vitaṇḍā? yad vai khalu tat pratipakṣapratīṣedhalakṣaṇam vākyam sa vaitaṇḍikasya pakṣah/na tv asau sādhyam kañcid arthaṁ pratijñāya sthāpayatīti/tasmād yathānyāsam evāṣṭo iti* (Nyāyabhāṣya ad Nyāyasūtra 1.2.3, Thakur 1997, p. 42). Translation mine; cf. Chattopadhyaya and Gangopadhyaya (1967, p. 136), and Shokhin (2001, p. 181). That the *vaitaṇḍika* is granted a position while lacking its *sthāpanā* is discussed by Solomon (1976, p. 113) and, for the later tradition, by Keating (2021).
- 55 T 32, no. 1632, pp. 23b9–13 and 23b19–20; translations in Gillon and Katsura (2016, pp. 197–98), who render 正論 as “corrective treatise” and note that 論 is used in this text both for “treatise” (*śāstra) and for “debate” (*vāda) (ibid., p. 197 n. 3).
- 56 Matilal (1998, p. 51) gives no textual locus for the argument, and the passage most often associated with it, Nyāyabhāṣya ad NS 1.2.3 (Thakur 1997, pp. 41–42), says something different: there Vātsyāyana grants the *vaitaṇḍika* a *pakṣa* while denying him a *sthāpanā*, and upholds the sūtra’s wording (see Section 7.2 above). The dilemma as Matilal states it appears to be a composite, developed by Uddyotakara and later Naiyāyikas.
- 57 Searle (1969, pp. 32–33). For Matilal’s application, see Matilal (1998, p. 52).
- 58 Matilal (1998, p. 52) also discusses Nāgārjuna’s *catuṣkoṭi* negation in these terms, treating Nāgārjuna as a *vaitaṇḍika* in the relevant structural sense.
- 59 The force of 自 here is disputed. Katsura (2015–2018, p. 31) renders “in fact it exists on its own (i.e., independently of the senses)”; Gillon and Katsura (2025, p. 299 n. 57) report Goshima’s view that 自 merely completes the four-character phrase and carries no such sense. Nothing in the present argument turns on the point, since the existential claim stands on either reading.
- 60 Katsura (2015–2018, p. 32), introducing what he labels Buddhist Argument 1; he repeats the characterization at p. 33.
- 61 The vocabulary of burdens and entitlements used here is that of contemporary argumentation theory, where the obligation to defend a standpoint when challenged is the second of the ten rules in van Eemeren and Grootendorst’s (2004) code of conduct for reasonable discussants (2004, p. 191), corresponding to rule 3 of their fuller discussion procedure, which is also the rule that allocates the burden of proof (2004, pp. 139–40); for its application to early Nyāya see Keating (2021). Neither tradition has an abstract term for the burden itself, but both have its counterpart: *sthāpanā* on the Nyāya side, which Vātsyāyana glosses as *sādhana*, proving (Nyāyabhāṣya ad NS 1.2.1, Thakur 1997, p. 39), and in the FBXL the norm for whoever would establish a thesis discussed in Section 4.1. The description offered here is nonetheless analytical, and no claim of influence or anticipation is intended in either direction.
- 62 The demand recurs. At T 32, no. 1632, p. 27b12 the exchange closes 「當說因緣；若不能說，當知涅槃決定實有」—“one should state the reason; if one cannot, one should know that *nirvāṇa* definitely and really exists” (Katsura 2015–2018, p. 34). The same demand, with the consequence differently formulated, occurs twice earlier in the chapter, at pp. 27a20–21 and 27a29–b4, where the opponent who cannot state a reason is told instead that his thesis perishes of itself (Katsura 2015–2018, pp. 31, 33; Gillon and Katsura 2025, pp. 299–300).
- 63 These three testimonia are collected by Muroya (2016, pp. 20, 24–25), whose study of the Kongōji and Kōshōji manuscripts is the fullest recent treatment of the text’s transmission; they are cited here in his form and have not been independently examined.

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