

RADICAL REJECTION
PARTING FROM EXTREME VIEWS ABOUT REALITY

A Graduate Level Course
Based upon the Madhyamakavatara by Chandrakirti
With Commentary by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche
And Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche

PART TWO
THE MYTH OF CREATION

SOURCEBOOK



Āryadeva

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Part Two

The Myth of Creation

Sourcebook Table of Contents

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6. Causes and Conditions
7. The One Hundred Dharmas, Parts I and II
8. Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, Excerpt from *The Presentation of Madhyamaka in the Treasury of Knowledge*, Nitartha Institute, New Brunswick, 2002, pp. 38-39
9. Dzokchen Ponlop Rinpoche, *Bodhi*, Volume 6, No. 4, Nalandabodhi, Seattle, 2003, Experiencing the Two Truths: The Middle Way View of Shunyata, Part II, pp. 28-38
10. Jeffrey Hopkins, *Emptiness Yoga: The Tibetan Middle Way*, Ed. Joe B. Wilson, Snow Lion, Ithaca, 1987, Inducing Realization, pp. 187-203

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Reading List

- I. Fixation on Past and Future, Causes and Results, Origination** **9/21 DK**
1. Root Text: verses 6:8, p. 69
 2. Handouts: Types of Causes and Results
 3. Optional Reading: Introduction to Mipham, pp. 42-52
- II. Production from Self: Creationism** **9/28**
1. Root Text: verses 6:9-13, pp. 69-70
 2. Dzongsar Commentary: pp. 86-103 = 17 (questions optional)
 3. Mipham Commentary: pp. 183-187 = 5
 4. Total Reading: 22 + verses
- III. Production from Other - Part One: The Search for an Ultimate** **10/5**
1. Root Text: verses 6:14-33, pp. 70-72
 2. Dzongsar Commentary: pp. 103-120 (top) = 17
 3. Mipham Commentary: pp. 187-192; 195b-203b = 14 (skip 192-195)
 4. Total Reading: 31 + verses
- IV. The Two Truths, Slight Return** **10/12**
1. Root Text: n/a
 2. Dzongsar Commentary: pp. 120-141 = 21
 3. Handout: *Experiencing the Two Truths: The Middle Way View of Shunyatha, Part II*, Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Bodhi Volume 6, No. 4 (Summer 2004), pp. 28-38 = 11
 4. Total Reading: 32 or 49 + verses
 5. (Optional: Mipham Commentary: pp. 192-195; 208-221 = 17)
- V. Production from Other - Part Two: The Search for Roots** **10/26**
- A. Readings:**
1. Root Text: verses 6:34-44, pp. 72-74
 2. Dzongsar Commentary: pp. 141-155 (middle) = 14
 3. Mipham Commentary: pp. 203-208; 221-228 = 12
 4. Total Reading: 26 + verses

VI. Production from Both and Neither – It's a Material World 10/30 or 11/2??**A. Readings:**

1. Root Text: verses 6:98-103, pp. 82
2. Dzongsar Commentary: pp. 211-219 (bottom) = 9
3. Mipham Commentary: pp. 260-266 = 7
4. Jeffrey Hopkins, *Emptiness Yoga: The Tibetan Middle Way*, Ed. Joe B. Wilson, Snow Lion, Ithaca, 1987, Inducing Realization, pp. 187-203
5. Optional: Dzongsar Commentary: pp. 220-226 = 7
6. Total Reading: 33 or 40 + verses

VII. Conclusion: Appearances are Mere Dependent Arisings 11/9 DK**A. Readings:**

1. Root Text: verses 6:104-119, pp. 82-85
2. Dzongsar Commentary: pp. 225-231; 235-236 = 9
3. Mipham Commentary: pp. 266-281 = 16
4. Optional: Dzongsar Commentary pp. 219-225; 231-235; 236-243 = 20
5. Total Reading: 23 or 43 + verses

Course One Handouts

1. The Four skills of Madhyamaka with correlation to the overall logic of the text
2. The Stages of the Path of Meditation – Shamatha & Vipashyana
3. The Path – Wheels, Noble Paths, Paramitas and Topics
4. The Two Truths in the Four Schools
5. Syllogism in Buddhist Logic
6. Obstacles, Travelers, Bhumis, Results
7. The Six Paramitas

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The Myth of Creation

Overview

Conceptual mind relies on the past to explain the present and uses the present to justify the future. Our conceptual world is built upon the belief in the logical sequence of cause and result, which entails freezing things moment by moment into real entities. When we analyze the possible ways this scheme of causation might actually operate, we discover that this conceptual framework has no logical coherence. Our belief in the validity of our reality and its moment-to-moment creation from the past dissolves into spontaneity.

I. Themes of The Five Courses:

- A. Aspects of emptiness and its path
- B. Refutation of truly existent things
- C. Refutation of truly existent mind
- D. Refutation of truly existent persons
- E. Refutation of truly existent emptiness

II. Threefold Logic for Course Two:

- A. Ground: Existing things must be produced
- B. Path: Refutation of the four alternative means of true production
- C. Fruition: Establishing dependent arising as the true nature of things

III. Classes in Course Two:

- A. Fixation on Past and Future, Causes and Results, Origination
- B. Production from Self: Creationism
- C. Production from Other - Part One: The Search for an Ultimate
- D. The Two Truths, Slight Return
- E. Production from Other - Part Two: The Search for Roots
- F. Production from Both and Neither – It's a Material World
- G. Conclusion: Appearances are Mere Dependent Arisings

IV. Topics & Contemplations:

- A. Causation – process, types, parts, etc.
- B. Refuting production from the four alternatives
- C. Tenants systems – Samkhya, Vaibhaishaka, Sautrantika

V. Root Text Readings:

- A. Phenomena do not arise from self (v. 6:8-13), pp. 69-70
- B. Phenomena do not arise from other – Part I (v. 6:14-44), pp. 70-74
- C. Phenomena do not arise from both self and other (v. 6:98), pp. 82
- D. Phenomena do not arise without cause (v 6:99-103), p. 82

VI. Commentary Readings:

- A. Dzongsar: pp. 86-155; 211-219; 225-231 and 235-236
- B. Mipham: pp. 183-192; 195-208; 221-228 and 260-281
- C. Optional Mipham: pp. 192-195 and 208-221
- D. Optional Dzongsar: pp. 219-225; 231-235 and 236-243

VII. Dates:

- A. Tuesdays 9/21, 9/28, 10/5, 10/12, 10/26, 11/2(?), 11/9
- B. Possibly Saturday, 10/30, to replace voting day, 11/2
- C. Possible Review Day Saturday, September 25, 10-5

VIII. Sources:

- A. Mipham and Chandrakirti, *Introduction to the Middle Way: A Commentary on Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara*, Trs. Padmakara Translation Group, Shambhala, Boston, 2002
- B. Dzongsar Khyentse, *Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara with commentary by Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche*, Khyentse Foundation, 2003
- C. Radical Rejection Course One Sourcebook
- D. Radical Rejection Course One Handouts
- E. Radical Rejection Course Two Sourcebook

IX. Pre-Requisite Readings:

- A. Chögyam Trungpa, *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, “Shunyata”, pp. 187-206
- B. Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, *Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness*
- C. Gampopa, *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, Trs. by Guenther or Khenpo Konchok

Radical Rejection
Parting from Extreme Views about Reality

Part Two
The Myth of Creation

Detailed Syllabus

- | | | |
|-------------|---|--------------|
| I. | Fixation on Past and Future, Causes and Results, Origination | 9/21 |
| | A. Madhyamaka – the Middle Way | |
| | B. History, lineage and the Madhyamakavatara | |
| | C. The Tibetan traditions and commentaries | |
| | D. Use of Reasoning - inferential valid cognition versus direct valid cognition | |
| | E. Combining Practice & Study, Importance of Mind Training | |
| | F. Four Sections of the text and the Four Reasonings | |
| | G. The Four Extreme Views | |
| | H. Causation and the myth of creation | |
| | I. Causes and results – overview, types and mechanics | |
| II. | Production from Self: Creationism | 9/28 |
| | A. Causes and results – review types and process | |
| | B. Compartmentalizing - momentary existence | |
| | C. General model of karmic relation | |
| | D. Problems with this model | |
| | E. The Samkya View | |
| | F. Self creation means cause and result are identical | |
| | G. Identity in general, time and nature | |
| | H. Problems with this view | |
| III. | Production from Other - Part One: The Search for an Ultimate | 10/5 |
| | A. Establishing otherness | |
| | B. Momentary existence, slight return | |
| | C. Simultaneity – that special moment | |
| | D. Problems: randomness, timing | |
| | E. Accepting an illogical world | |
| | F. Using logic to challenge this complacency | |
| | G. Motivation and view – relevance of the two truths | |
| IV. | The Two Truths, Slight Return | 10/12 |
| | A. What is all this fuss about true, inherent existence? | |
| | B. Types of existence defined | |
| | C. What does empirical experience prove? | |

- D. What are things empty of?
- E. Stages of sophistication in conceptualizing ultimate truth
- F. Types of relative truth – mistaken and unmistaken
- G. Is there a basis for imputation?
- H. The merely relative vs. relative truth
- I. Ultimate rejection – nothing to reject

V. Production from Other - Part Two: The Search for Roots 10/26

- A. Can nirvana change samsara?
- B. The need for analysis and debate
- C. Can logic actually refute anything?
- D. Destruction of relative truth by analysis
- E. Can anything withstand logical analysis?
- F. Extreme views – what are they and how do we live with them?
- G. Freedom from extremes – eternalism and nihilism
- H. Common experience and the wonder of causal efficacy
- I. Attributes of causal efficacy:
 - 1. Disintegration
 - 2. Non-repetition
 - 3. Not randomly
 - 4. Alaya and its function
 - 5. No need for alaya
- J. Provisional and definitive teachings
- K. Habitual patterns and the search for roots

VI. Production from Both and Neither – It's a Material World 10/30 or 11/2??

- A. Finality of exclusion: this or that
- B. Very essence and elemental causes
- C. Anarchy
- D. Can something come out of nothing?
- E. Absurd consequences
- F. Is there life after death?
- G. Living with contradiction

VII. Conclusion: Appearances are Mere Dependent Arisings 11/9

- A. Why the lack of inherent existence is not readily apparent
- B. Lack of inherent existence does not destroy appearances
- C. Phenomenal appearance and lack of inherent existence are not contradictory
- D. Production and lack of inherent existence are not contradictory
- E. What is the bid deal about dependent arising?
- F. Result of this analysis – halting of the thought process
- G. Purpose of study - why analysis is useful in this process

**The Madhyamakavatara
By Chandrakirti**

**Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche's Commentary
Summary Outline**

- I. Preamble (v. 1:1-4), pp. 143-147**
- A. Title and homage, pp. 143-144
 - B. Three causes of Bodhisattvas (v1:1), pp. 144-145
 - C. Praise of compassion (v. 1:1-2), p. 145
 - D. The three types of compassion (v. 1:3-4), pp. 145-147
- II. The First Five Grounds (v. 1:4-5:4), pp. 148-160**
- A. The First Ground, Perfect Joy (v. 1:4-17), pp. 148-153
 - B. The Second Ground, Immaculate (v. 2:1-10), pp. 153-156
 - C. The Third Ground, Luminous (v. 3:1-13), pp. 156-160
 - D. The Fourth Ground, Radiant (v. 4:1-2), p. 160
 - E. The Fifth Ground, Hard to Keep (v. 5:1-4), pp. 160-161
- III. The Sixth Ground, Clearly Manifest (v. 6:1-226), pp. 161-324**
- A. Preamble (v. 6:1-7) pp. 161-165**
 - B. Using Reason to Disprove the Self of Phenomena (v. 6:8-119) pp. 165-281**
 - 1. Refutation of self-production (v. 6:9-13), pp. 183-187
 - 2. Refutation of other-production (v. 6:14-97), pp. 187-260
 - a) General refutation of other-production on the ultimate level (v. 6:14-33), pp. 187-221
 - b) No naturally existent other-production even conventionally (v. 6:34-44), pp. 221-228
 - c) Refutation of the Chittamatra position (v. 6:45-97), pp. 228-260**
 - 3. Refutation of both self and other production (v. 6: 98), pp. 260-261
 - 4. Refutation of uncaused production (v. 6:99-103), pp. 261-266
 - 5. Conclusion and replies to the objections against the refutation of the four theories of production (v. 6:104-113), pp. 266-278
 - 6. A reasoned demonstration that production is no more than dependent arising (v. 6:114-115) pp. 278-279
 - C. Using Reason to Disprove the Self of Persons (v. 6:120-178) pp. 281-309**
 - 1. Refutation of the belief that the self is a concrete entity (v. 6:121-149) pp. 282-298
 - 2. The self is a mere dependent imputation (v. 6:150-179) pp. 298-309

D. The Categories of Emptiness Established by Reasoning (v. 6:179-226) pp. 309-324

1. Detailed Categorization - Sixteen Kinds of Emptinesses (v. 6:181-218), pp. 314-321
2. Abridged Classification - Four Kinds of Emptinesses (v. 6:219-223), pp. 322-323

IV. The Final Four Grounds (v. 7:1-10:1) pp. 324-330

- A. The Seventh Ground, Far Progressed (v. 7:1), pp. 324-325
- B. The Eighth Ground, Immovable (v. 8:1-3), pp. 325-328
- C. The Ninth Ground, Perfect Intellect (v. 9:1), pp. 328
- D. The Tenth Ground, Cloud of Dharma (v. 10:1), pp. 329-330

V. The Qualities of the Ten Grounds (v. 11:1-9) pp. 331-333

- A. An exposition of the twelve groups of one hundred qualities that manifest on the first ground (v. 11:1-4), p. 331
- B. The adaptation of these qualities to the following grounds (v. 11:5-9), pp. 332-333

VI. The Ultimate Ground of Buddhahood (v. 11:10-51) pp. 334-348

- A. The Attainment of Buddhahood (v. 11:10-16), pp. 334-337
- B. What is the goal, namely Buddhahood? (v. 11:17-51), pp. 338-348

VII. Conclusion (v. 11:51-56) pp. 349-354

**The Madhyamakavatara By Chandrakirti
Jamgon Mipham's Commentary
Detailed Outline for Course Two**

I. Detailed Refutation of Self-production (v. 6:8-13), 69-70

A. A refutation of this theory according to Buddhapalita and Chandrakirti

1. On the Ultimate Level (v. 6:8-11), p. 69

a) Production from a cause with which the effect is identical

- (1) Production accomplishes nothing
- (2) Production is untenable
- (3) Production is logistically impossible; there is no point at which it might occur
- (4) Seeds would be produced ad infinitum

b) The theory that causes and effects are identical in nature

- (1) If causes and effects are identical in nature, they should not be observed at different moments
- (2) The identity of cause and effect contradicts the samkya admission that causes modulate and change into their effects
- (3) An identify of nature precludes differences of shape and so forth
- (4) The fact that causes and effects are observed at different moments disproves their identify of nature
- (5) If cause and effect are of the same nature, it follows that both terms should be equally perceptible or otherwise in their different phases

2. On the Relative Level (v 6:12), pp. 69-70:

a) There is no such thing as self-production in ordinary experience

B. A refutation following Nagarjuna's reasoning in the Mulamadhyamaka-karikas (v. 6:13)

II. Detailed Refutation of Production from Other (v. 6:14-97), pp. 70-74

A. From the point of view of Absolute Truth (v. 6:14-31), pp. 70-4

1. The Refutation (v. 6:14-21), pp. 70-71

a) A refutation through revealing unwanted consequences of production in which cause and effect are considered to be inherently other

- (1) In general
- (2) Things could arise from things of a different type (v. 6:14)
- (3) Things would arise without any predictability (v. 6:14-16)
- (4) The timing of cause and effect would not hold (v. 6:17-20)

2. **Answer to Objections based upon ordinary experience (v. 6:22-31), pp. 71-72**
 - a) **An outline of the two truths in relation to subject and object distinguished as mistaken and unmistaken**
 - b) **For the subject, the unmistaken consciousness, the refutation of other production cannot be disproved by empirical experience**
 - (1) Valid cognition which investigates relative truth
 - (a) Difference between valid and invalid cognition
 - (b) How cognition evaluates its object
 - (2) Valid cognition conventionally does not validate valid cognition ultimately
 - c) **For the object, the two truths, the refutation of other production cannot be disproved by empirical experience**
 - (1) The mistaken object which is true on the relative level
 - (2) The unmistaken object which is true on the ultimate level
3. **The Concluding Summary**
 - a) What can and cannot be invalidated by ordinary experience
 - (1) Unable to invalidate the ultimate true
 - (2) The only way empirical experience can invalidate our position
 - (3) Thus the opinion of ordinary beings cannot prevail

B. From the point of view of Relative Truth (v. 6:32-44), p. 72-74

1. **The refutation (v. 6:32-36)**
 - a) The meditation of Aryas would destroy phenomena
 - b) Conventional truth would resist analysis
 - c) If something is established as true even conventionally, it cannot be disproved ultimately
2. **Refutation of an objection (v. 6:37-38)**
3. **Advantages of this refutation (v. 6:38-44)**
 - a) Freedom from extremes
 - b) Demonstrates connection between karmic cause and effect
 - (1) Even in the absence of the alaya
 - (2) Effects are not produced ad infinitum
 - (3) Effects are not produced randomly
4. **Scriptures are provisional or definitive**

III. Refutation of Other Extremes and Conclusion

A. Phenomena do not arise from both Self & Other (v. 6:98), p. 82

1. **Both were already refuted separately**
2. **This position is simply untenable**

B. Phenomena do not arise from no cause (v 6:99-103), p. 82

1. **The theory of uncaused production**
2. **General refutation**
 - a) If true, then effects would exist constantly

- b) If true, then effects would arise from anything
- c) If true, then nothing would ever arise

3. Specific refutation of belief in no after life

- a) Lack of evidence
- b) Contradicts the ultimate status of things

C. Dependent arising as the truth of all phenomena (v. 6:104-115), p. 82-85

1. General statement

2. Objections and replies

- a) If there is no inherent existence, this should be evident to everyone
- b) If there were no ground of appearance, nothing could be perceived on the conventional level
 - (1) The example doesn't prove anything
 - (2) There is no contradiction in phenomena appearing without being inherently produced

3. Presentation of production as dependent arising (v. 6:114-115)

D. The Result of the Analysis (v. 6:116-119), pp. 84-85

- 1. Prevention of incorrect conceptions
- 2. Halting of thought processes
- 3. The need for the analysis

CAUSES AND CONDITIONS

Neither from itself nor from another,
 Nor from both,
 Nor without a cause,
 Does anything whatever, anywhere arise.
By Nagarjuna, Mulamadhyamaka Karika I:1

Result Example: A	B
A moment of eye consciousness seeing lasagne.	A moment of a clay pot.

Causes:

1. **Direct** – That which produces directly, which can produce its specific result without requiring other causal phenomena to come between it and its result.

The moment of eye consciousness before this moment.	The moment of clay pot before this moment.
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2. **Indirect** – That which produces indirectly, a cause that, although being a cause producing its specific result, is itself unable to produce it directly. It produces the continuum of causes of its specific result, due to which it indirectly produces it.

Any of the moments of eye consciousness before the directly preceding moment.	Any of the moments of the clay pot before the directly preceding moment.
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3. **Substantial** – That which primarily produces the continuum of its own substance as its specific result. For example, the first moment of a sense consciousness that is the cause for the second moment of sense consciousness.

Any moment of any consciousness before this moment.	The lump of clay.
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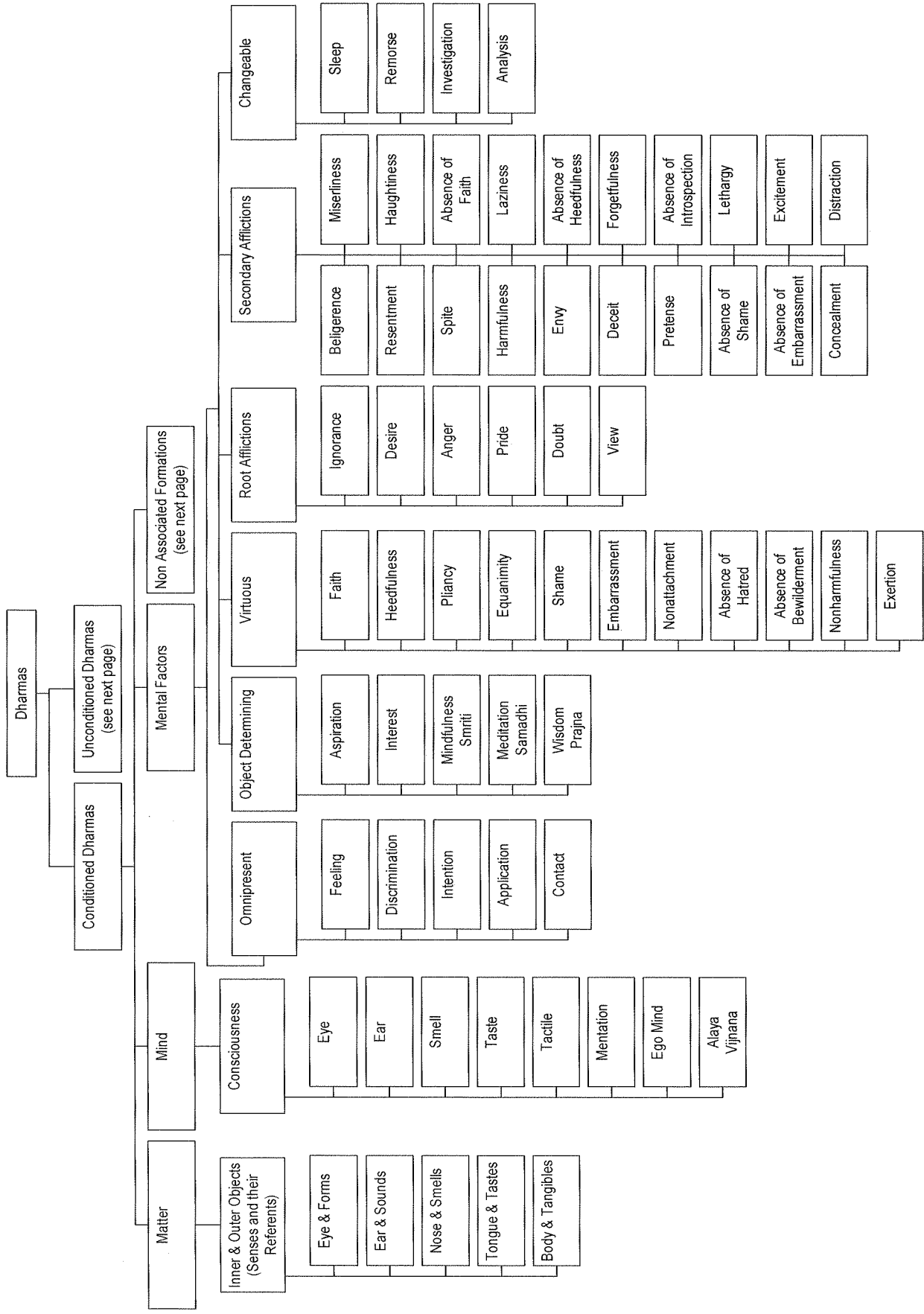
4. **Cooperative** – That which primarily produces something that is not the continuum of its own substance as its specific result. It assists the substantial cause in the production of the result.

a. external: the object of sense consciousness, the visual form	The action of the potter
b. internal: the eye sense faculty	

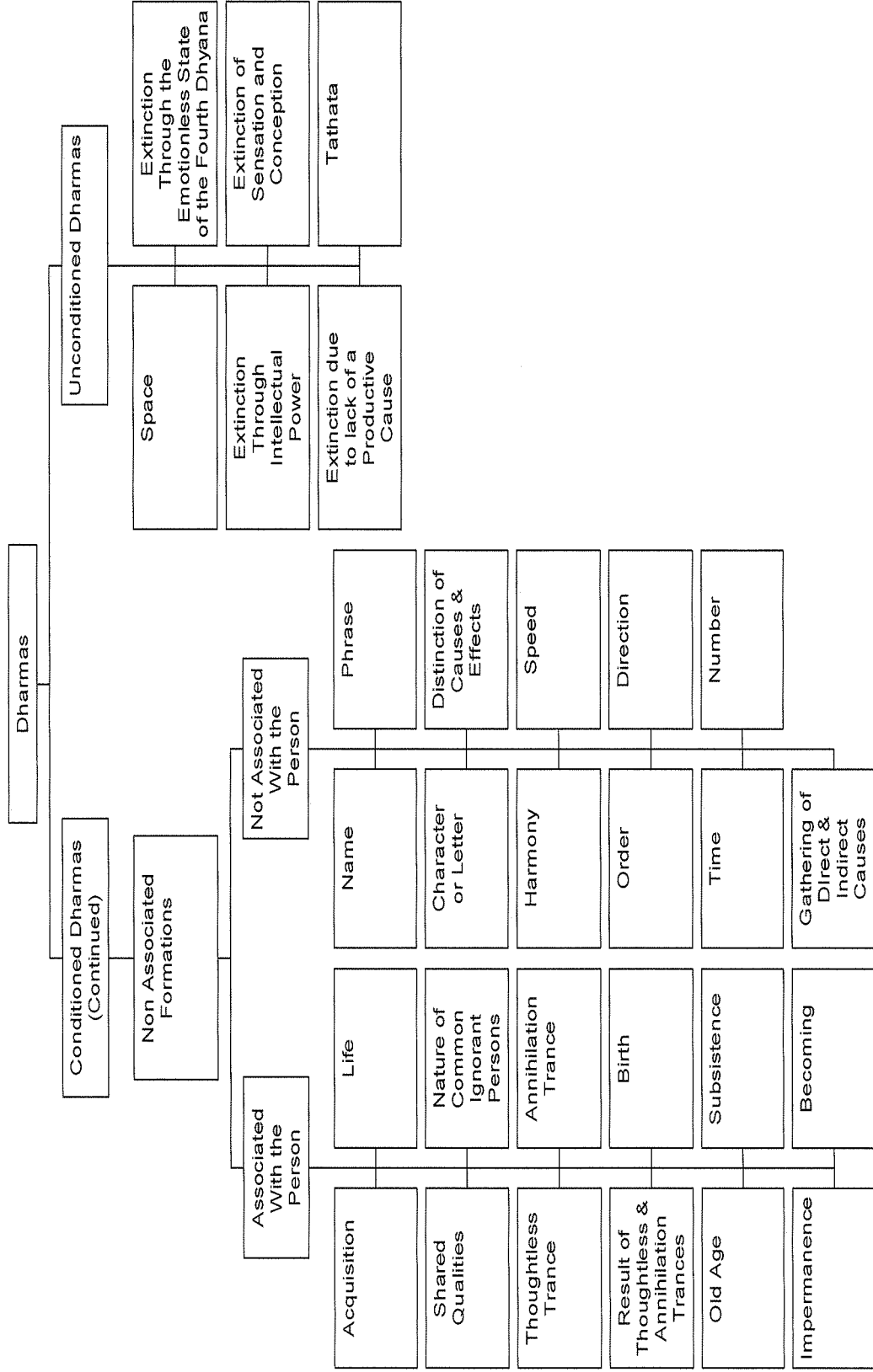
Types of Conditions:

1. **Causal condition** – That which assists or aids the arising of its specific result.
2. **Immediately preceding condition** – That which primarily produces mere clear and aware consciousness as its specific result
3. **Object condition** – That which primarily produces a consciousness with the aspect of that thing itself as its specific result.
4. **Dominant condition** – That which primarily produces its specific result by its own power.

The One Hundred Dharmas I



The One Hundred Dharmas II



II) The analysis of the cause is *the argument that is like vajra slivers* which shatter the rock mountain of wrong views of the realists. It teaches the door to complete liberation that is signlessness.

a) The formulation of the reason

A sprout as the subject is without real arising, because it is without arising from itself, from others, from both, and from neither, for example, a reflection.

b) The modes of the proof

The inclusion [of the reason in the predicate] can not go beyond these four extremes, be it through the power of things, from the side of the object, for the perspective of reasoning, or, [just] in [mere] arising. Thus, by thinking that it is easy to understand, [the masters] did not discuss it in detail in the texts.

The proof the subject property has four parts:

1) The proof of the reason of being without arising from itself

The Enumerators assert that a sprout is merely a manifestation of the primal substance, and that this primal substance is its nature. Therefore, it arises from its own nature that exists already, i.e., from a permanent thing. If this were the case, then it would not be justified that the seed through the power of which the sprout has arisen ceases [to exist], and thus the arising of the seed would be endless. [But] if they accept that the cause—the seed—does not cease, then one would not find the result, i.e., the arising of the sprout as well as its color and form. [Furthermore,] if something arose from itself, all [the different things] that are agents and their objects would be one.

2) The proof of the reason of being without arising from something other

The scholars of realism say: "The way that you negate the arising from itself that the Enumerators assert [536] is good, but arising from something other is established through valid cognition. The reasons for this are as follows: Factually concordant types of consciousness arise from the four conditions, and [, in general,] most things arise from causal and dominant conditions. Both causes and results are not just merely mentally imputed, but are established from the object's own side and [still] arise after the completion of examination and analysis."

There are many reasonings to negate this, but they are all contained in two:

a) arising from something other is not possible

b) in the context of arising, something other is not possible

a) From all what is not a cause [for something given], all [kinds of things] that are not a result [of this] would arise, because [, for example,] a barley seed and a rice seed are equal in that they are both something other than a rice sprout, and [this otherness] is established through their own entity. There is inclusion for the following reason: If they were established as something other in this way, they would be [things in the] present that do not depend on each other, such as a left

and a right horn. If they were cause and result even in this case, it would make no sense that the substantial [cause] which is a rice seed does not produce a barley sprout.

b) In the context of arising, something other is not possible: If one asserts that a sprout arises from a seed, it is not appropriate to also assert that these two are substantially other and different. The reasons for this are as follows: A mode of being substantially other that is established from the side of the object is not possible in non-simultaneous [phenomena], and the simultaneity of cause and result is refuted through reasoning. Thus, an arising of the result that is simultaneous with the ceasing of the cause—as in the case of [two] beams of a scale that rise up and sink down [simultaneously]—is not possible. Moreover, the simultaneity of cause and result is also refuted through the examination of whether an [already] existing result or a non-existing result is produced.⁷⁸

3) The proof of the reason of being without arising from both

Since this [possibility] is implicitly refuted through the refutation of the two [possibilities that were just discussed], its negation is not described in detail [in the texts].

4) The negation of being without a cause

If things arose without a cause, this would have completely absurd consequences, such as that they would either arise all the time or never. Just like a lotus in the sky, they would be something that is not suitable to appear, but this contradicts the fact that we see the clear appearance of actions that are causes and results. [There are certain] mistaken philosophical systems which assert that the non-existence of former and later lives is proved, and then cling to [the erroneous idea] that body and mind possess the essential character of the elements. [537] [However,] it is taught in detail that these [philosophical systems] exist [only] due to [such a] mistaken direct perception that apprehends the elements.

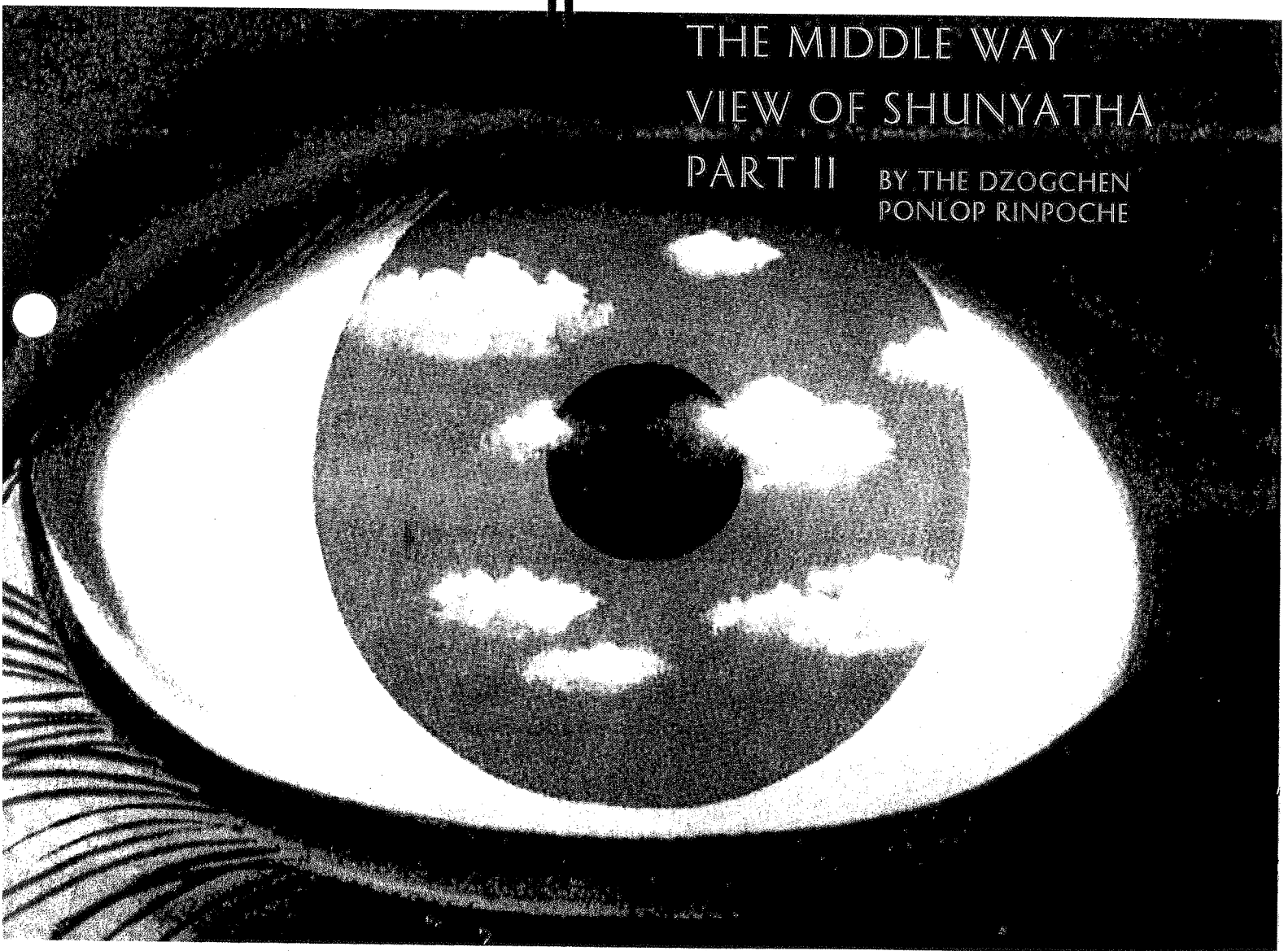
III) The analysis of the result is *the negation of arising from existence and non-existence* [of the result at the time of the cause], which is an elaboration of the negation of arising from something other. From among the doors to complete liberation, it teaches the one of wishlessness.

One might ask, "What kind of a result is it that arises—one that exists [already] at the time of the cause, or, one that does not exist [at that time]?" It is surely well-known that, on the conventional level, the Autonomists accept the latter [way of arising]. Nevertheless, this argument [that negates arising from existence and non-existence] is excellently established because of the following: If the result existed at the time of the cause, then it would already be established in dependence on something other. What

⁷⁸ This refers to the third of the five Centrist reasonings (see the following point III), i.e., the negation of arising of a result that exists or does not exist at the time of the cause.

EXPERIENCING THE TWO TRUTHS

THE MIDDLE WAY
VIEW OF SHUNYATHA
PART II BY THE DZOGCHEN
PONLOP RINPOCHE



Le Faux Mirroir by René Magritte

The main focus of the Mahayana path, and especially of the Madhyamaka schools, is the realization of the union of compassion and emptiness. This is so because, from the Mahayana point of view, the relative practices of loving kindness and compassion lead one to the ultimate truth of realizing emptiness. Because the state of genuine compassion is difficult to reach, it is important for us to look into our hearts and discover what compassion towards sentient beings really is. The practice of compassion can be viewed as even more important than the generation of bodhichitta, the heartfelt wish to establish all beings in the state of enlightenment, since there is no bodhichitta without compassion. Thus, it is extremely important for Mahayanists to first contemplate the nature of interdependence and the karmic chain of cause and effect, and then to cultivate compassion and loving-kindness, which are the main practices of the relative truth.

THREE TYPES OF COMPASSION

Chandrakirti begins his text, *Entrance to the Middle Way*, with a discussion of three types of compassion. The first type is called *compassion with a reference point or object*. Here the object of our compassion is all sentient beings. The second is the *compassion of dharma*, or the desire to bring the realization of the true nature of phenomena to the hearts of all sentient beings. The third type of compassion is known as *nonreferential compassion*, which is ultimate compassion, or the union of compassion and emptiness. It is possible to categorize compassion as being of two types: referential compassion and nonreferential compassion.

When we are engaged in the first type of compassion, *compassion with a reference point*, we practice generating compassion towards sentient beings when we see them suffering. However, in order to genuinely see someone else's suffering, we must first clearly see our own suffering. While it is generally easy to see someone's suffering when it appears to us in a visible, external form, it is impossible to genuinely feel and thoroughly experience the suffering of others deep within our hearts without first experiencing our own suffering. For that reason, the contemplation of the Four Noble Truths is a very important practice, not only for the Hinayana path, but also for the Mahayana path, because it is through the Four Noble Truths that we see our own

suffering and the causes of suffering very clearly. The contemplation of these truths also enables us to see the suffering of other sentient beings more clearly, precisely and sensitively.

Once we have developed this view, we can cultivate compassion with the thought, "I want to help these beings. I want to alleviate their suffering." The noble heart of compassion reaches out saying, "I want to do something. I want to sacrifice my own time, my own energy, my own happiness and wealth for the happiness and joy of other sentient beings." This is a very important bodhisattva practice. The ability to see another's suffering truly and genuinely is essential in the beginning stage of cultivating and generating compassion.

The second type of compassion is known as the *compassion of dharma*; here "dharma" refers mainly to phenomena, the focus or reference for this type of compassion. At this stage, we see that all phenomena are impermanent and that their nature is emptiness. We see that beings will continue to engage in the confused cause and effect actions that give rise to so much suffering unless that nature of impermanence is recognized together with the nature of emptiness. Therefore, we reflect on the cause and effect relationship of suffering, with the particular recognition that it is through one's own ignorant mind and its actions that suffering is generated. We see many levels of suffering all over the world, and we recognize that those who suffer are suffering because they do not understand the true nature of the causes of their suffering. Accordingly, at this level of our practice, we cultivate a special compassion—an even stronger compassion—towards sentient beings by acknowledging that it is just this lack of understanding of the true nature of phenomena that allows their sufferings to arise so solidly. In cultivating this type of compassion, we are saying that we want to help others, not only to alleviate their suffering temporarily, but also to cause them to realize the true nature of phenomena, the true nature of mind. That is a very strong compassion. There is a deeper sense of love and a deeper sense of caring.

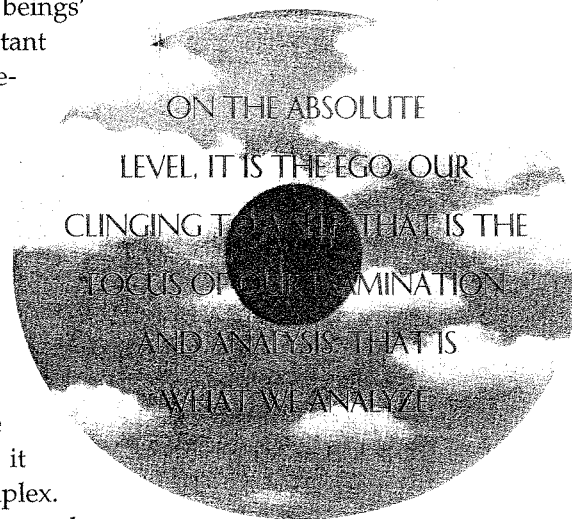
The third type of compassion is known as *nonreferential compassion*, compassion without any reference points. This compassion is seen as nonconceptual wisdom, the wisdom element of compassion and love. Usually we have no words to express the nature of this compassion. It is totally beyond any type of concept. It is very simple to experience, but very difficult to understand or express. One of our lineage masters, Pawo Tsuglak Trengwa, or Pawo Rinpoche, a heart son of the eighth Karmapa Mikyo Dorje, wrote in his commentary that there is perhaps only one example that could possibly convey what the experience of nonreferential compassion is like. He says that it is like a mother who has been separated for a long time from her only child and, coming into contact with her child again, sees that her child is suffering deeply. At the very first sight of her child, the mother experiences a compassion without words, without any thought or concept. There is a genuine experience of love when she sees that suffering. This is something like nonreferential compassion; of course, it is just an example to help us conceptualize it.

We can see that, in the beginning, our practice is conceptual. We are trying to see our suffering, and we are trying to see the suffering of others. Initially, we are communicating on a conceptual level. At some point, however, our practice develops into nonconceptual experience, nonconceptual feeling or sensation. Suffering and compassion both become nonconceptual; they are no longer theoretical. At that point, compassion becomes so simple and so real.

SELFLESSNESS

When it comes to the absolute or ultimate truth, the main practice of the bodhisattva is the complete realization of emptiness, selflessness, or egolessness. Why is the realization of selflessness such an important practice? It is important because, in order to cultivate a genuine heart of compassion, one needs to work with the idea of selflessness. As long as we have a strong ego-centered mind, no matter how hard we try, our compassion will still be limited. It will always be tainted by the self-centered view. However much we try to open our heart and practice compassion, that compassion will remain an ego-centered compassion. When our compassion is ego-centric, it is not fully dedicated to the happiness of others. Our compassion is not arising from a heart that is willing to fully sacrifice its own desires to end the suffering of other sentient beings. In order for a bodhisattva to be a genuine bodhisattva, to be wholeheartedly a bodhisattva, fully dedicated to other sentient beings' happiness and to the ending of their suffering, it is important to realize selflessness. It is essential to discover this awareness, to discover this wisdom of shunyata, so that ego-centered mind is not so important.

This is very difficult to do because we are so habituated to ego-clinging. Because of this habitual tendency, so many complexities have developed in our mind-stream—layer after layer of dualistic perceptions, thoughts, emotions and concepts—that we cannot identify their beginning or end or even tell where we are in the middle of it all. So it becomes quite difficult to realize egolessness. The very complexity of our confusion makes it appear that Madhyamaka reasoning must be equally complex. However, the actual Madhyamaka view of shunyata is not complex at all. It is simple, easy, and straightforward. It simply speaks about emptiness. The logical reasonings found in Madhyamaka, such as those pertaining to the four extremes,¹ only appear to be difficult because they are directed toward cutting through each level and each layer of our conceptual clinging and the labeling process.



GOING TO THE OTHER EXTREME

On the absolute level, it is the ego, our clinging to a self, that is the focus of our examination and analysis. That is what we analyze. We try to discover selflessness, the egoless nature of our mind, and how to transcend the layers of clinging, the layers of our conceptual or habitual tendencies. This is a process that we undergo in analytical meditation as well as in resting meditation. The Madhyamaka view suggests that because we have such a strong sense of clinging onto the existence of ego, the existence of both a personal self and the self of phenomena, the first

1. The Middle Way school employs the tetralemma, a four-fold dialectic, as a method for investigating and exposing the assumptions we hold about existence and causality, as well as revealing the fallacies of all such beliefs. For example, regarding beliefs about existence, there are four logical alternatives: 1) believing that things exist, 2) believing that things do not exist, 3) believing that things both exist and do not exist, or 4) believing that things neither exist nor do not exist. Each of these views is regarded as an "extreme" view, as it holds onto a position inclining toward existence (eternalism) or nonexistence (nihilism) and therefore misses the actual reality of the ways things are, which is beyond all conceptual fabrications.



La Trahison des Images by René Magritte. (Translation of line of painting: This is not a pipe.)

approach we should take is to go to the opposite extreme; that is, the extreme view that nothing exists whatsoever. We already have so many problems with clinging to existence that in order to get rid of that clinging, in order to find the "middle way," we must go to the other extreme. Once we have gone to the extreme of nonexistence, our habitual tendencies will naturally bring us back to our clinging to existence. For example, no matter how far you move away from a very, very strong magnet, it will pull you back toward itself. Then, once more, we push toward the other extreme, saying that nothing exists—it is emptiness, shunyata. Then again we turn back, until eventually this oscillation between the two poles of existence and nonexistence slows down and stops in the middle. This approach leads to the discovery of the middle path. We could call this approach the "extreme path to the middle," which is in some sense a very profound method.

THE NON-AFFIRMING NEGATION & THE MIDDLE WAY

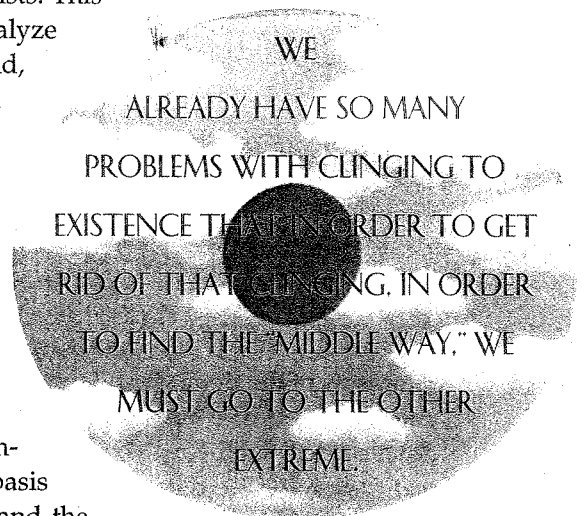
When we first approach the Madhyamaka view, what we hear about initially is the ultimate truth that says nothing exists; everything is shunyata, emptiness, nothingness. The method used first is the non-affirming negation, which throws us into the extreme of the completely nonexistent. This is a great shock. At first, we have the unshakeable view that everything exists, and then suddenly, nothing exists. The term "non-affirming negation" refers to a statement that negates something and does not posit or affirm something else to take its place. There is simply nothing left. One goes on, negating every aspect of existence, one after the other, no matter what it may be. In this way we are propelled from the extreme of existence to nonexistence. Because we are completely saturated with the view of existence, the Madhyamaka approach is to take us to the other extreme, where nothing exists whatsoever, which is represented by the non-affirming negation. After we transcend the view of existence through negation, then the next step in the Madhyamaka path brings us back into the middle. At this point, from the perspective of the Madhyamaka view, both existence and nonexistence are extreme positions; the absolute truth is beyond any extreme, beyond any view of existence or nonexistence. While the absolute truth refutes existence, it also goes beyond nothingness, beyond nonexistence. That is why the great

master Saraha said that clinging onto existence is very foolish, and clinging onto nonexistence is even more foolish.

RELATIVE TRUTH

The appearances that we experience—the sensory perceptions and their objects and conceptual mind and its objects—are all experiences of relative truth, which relates to how things appear, how they manifest. There is a certain quality of truth in those experiences. One great Tibetan Madhyamaka master of the twentieth century, Gendun Chopel, said, “When my fingertips experience the pricking of a needle, then I feel that things do exist.” However, he goes on to say that when he engages in analysis using Madhyamaka logic, reasoning and contemplation, he feels that nothing solid and real exists. This is a very good illustration of the two truths. When you analyze phenomena, there is nothing solid and real to be found, but when left unanalyzed, experiences are quite vivid and sharp.

In some sense the notion of two truths seems sophisticated and complicated. However, it is quite simple and we can actually see the two truths in our daily living experience. For instance, logical mind says that if we put our finger into a fire, the fire will burn it. There is a certain sense of validity in that thought, which is called the relative truth. However, when we ask, “What is fire? What is finger?” we are engaging in analysis and questioning. In doing this we find that there is a gap between the basis of the label and the label itself, between the term “fire” and the basis of that term. Are they one and the same, or are they different? They are different. So why do we think that when we say “fire” we are referring to the phenomenon fire? What is the connection between the label and the object labeled?

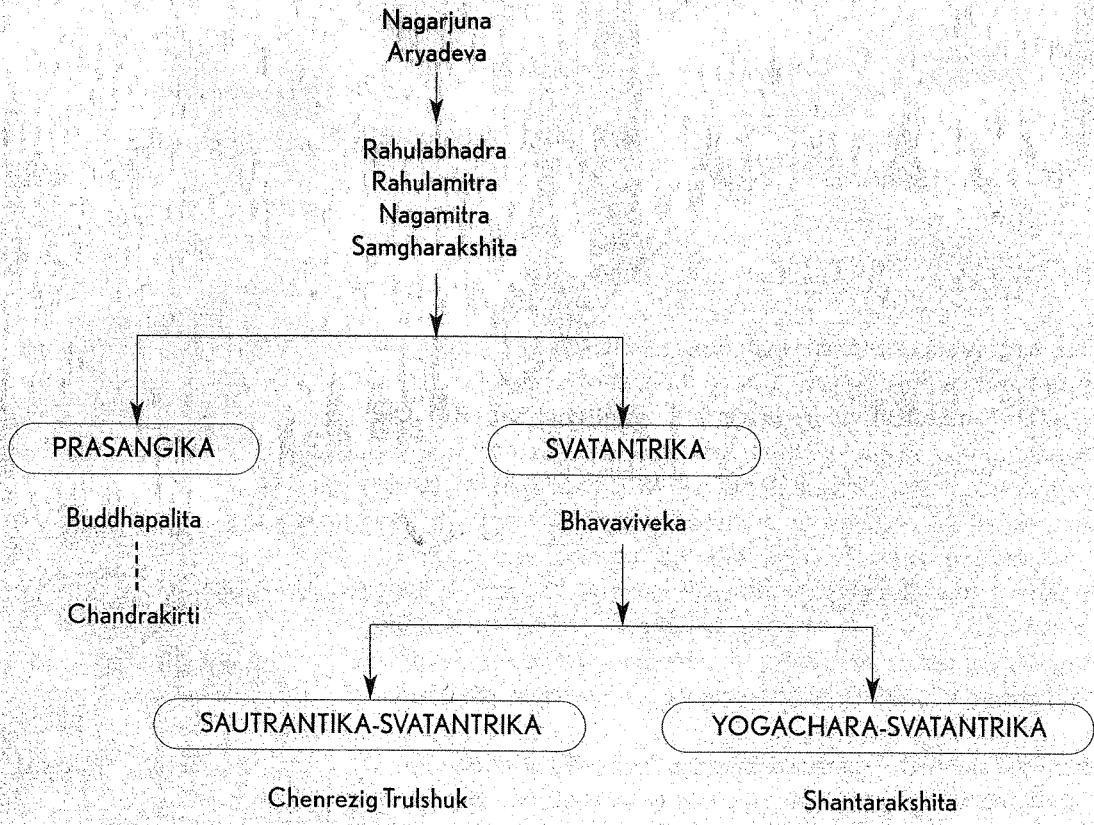


LABEL AND BASIS OF LABEL

In Prasangika terminology, we speak of the *basis of the label* and the *label*, which includes the labeling process itself. When you really think about it, the relationship between the two—between the label and the basis of the label—is not close. It is only our samsaric education that teaches us to perceive these two things as one: the label “fire” and the phenomenon itself that is the basis of that label are seen as one and the same. We rarely see the difference between the two. When we do see the difference, we find that what we think “fire” to be is not what it really is. What our conceptual mind thinks fire to be as a term, or as a label, is different from what the phenomenon or basis actually is.

In other words, the label that we use simply does not exist beyond our conceptual mind. There is nothing that exists in the nature of a label, such as fire, water, or table, which is external to our mind. When you look at labels, it is very easy to see their relative nature. They are irrelevant to the phenomenon in its own state. Therefore, the first step in Madhyamaka analysis is to see the

MADHYAMAKA SCHOOLS



difference between the two—between the basis of the label and the label itself, or the labeling processes of the mind. Based on that contemplation, we can say that the basis of the label is not the label itself. The basis is free from the label and it is free from the labeling process. It is free from conceptual theory. For example, our actual experience of the world of the elements, such as fire or water, goes beyond concept, thought and label. This is our first analysis.

Second, we analyze the basis of the label itself. What is it that we are labeling as a table? What is the basis of the label "table"? The basis is not just one entity; it has many parts. It has a top, sides, and so forth and when we analyze each part, we find that each part has different parts. If we analyze each part further and further, we will come to the point of seeing the atomic particles of the table. When we further analyze each atomic particle, we find even smaller sub-atomic particles. Finally, we go beyond all parts and arrive at the smallest possible unit, the irreducible "partless" particle. When we then break down the partless particle through analysis, nothing solid and real is found. Therefore, modern physics and Madhyamaka reasoning come to almost the same conclusion regarding the existence of external phenomena. Whereas, when nothing existing is found at the atomic level, Madhyamaka logic calls that state "emptiness," or "shunyata," modern science prefers to use labels like quarks or strings or energy fields, which suggest that there is still something to hold onto. Even though there is nothing, these terms create an illusion that there is something to hold onto. Consequently, for modern physicists, there is no experience of groundlessness—no experience of the rug being pulled out from under your feet. However with Madhyamaka analysis, we do feel this sense of complete groundlessness, which we call shunyata, or emptiness.

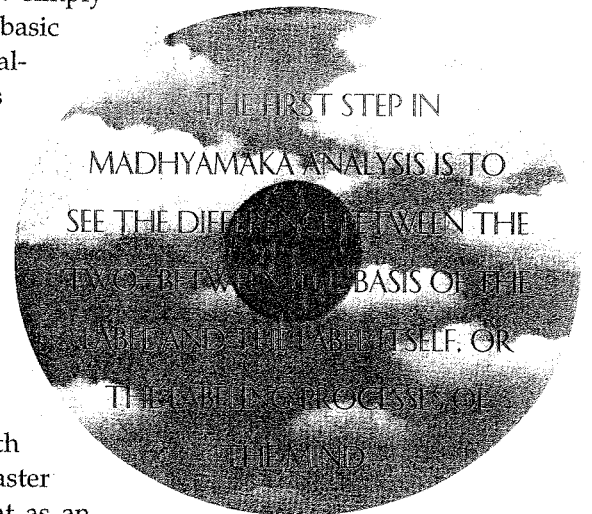
Thus the first step in Madhyamaka reasoning is the complete refutation of any notion of existence. We analyze and we destroy, we refute and we transcend any kind of clinging onto

existence whatsoever. That is the function of the non-affirming negation; there is a complete sense of negation in the absolute truth.

ACTUAL ABSOLUTE TRUTH

Nevertheless, the Madhyamaka point of view does not require us to get stuck there, but to go beyond that negation to find the real nature of phenomena, which transcends both existence and nonexistence, eternalism and nihilism. The first stage process of complete negation is sometimes called "nominal absolute truth," which means that it can be categorized as absolute truth or ultimate truth, but it is not really the complete absolute truth. Shantirakshita and Lama Mipham distinguish between this first stage of nominal absolute truth, and the second stage called actual absolute truth, which is not simply descriptive of genuine reality, but is the reality itself, the basic state. This basic state of reality goes beyond all conceptualization, beyond all existence and nonexistence, and is called "freedom from all elaborations." At this stage, we are experiencing the absolute truth, free from elaborations of existence or nonexistence. Accordingly there is nothing to hold onto, not even a real or correct view.

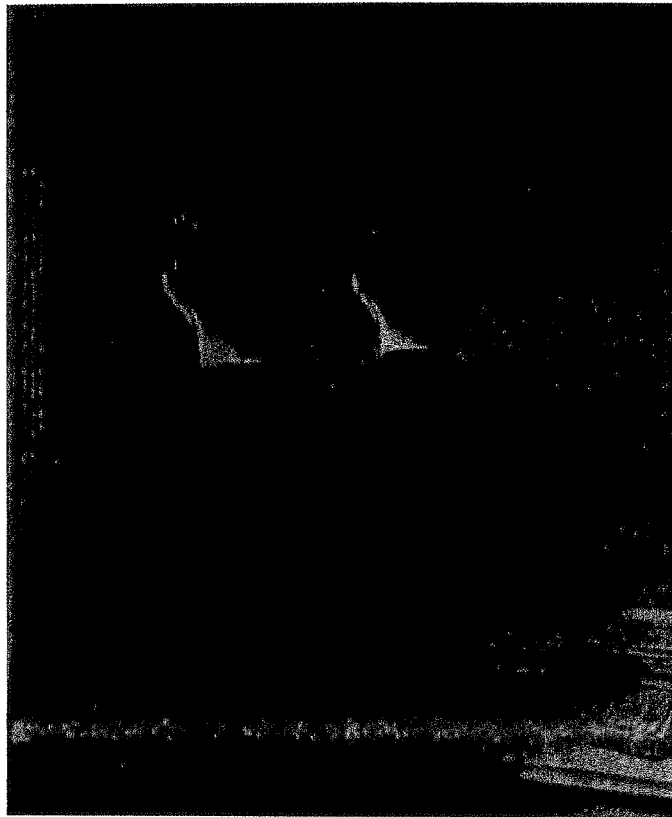
Buddha said that emptiness is also empty or nonexistent. When traveling along the path of realization, it is first of all necessary to embrace the stage of complete negation because of our strong clinging to existence. Afterwards we may go beyond that stage. Both Shantirakshita and the great Prasangika Madhyamaka master Shantideva had the same approach. Shantideva said that as an antidote to clinging onto existence, we have to familiarize our mind with the notion that nothing exists. When, after deep contemplation, we are thoroughly familiar with that notion, then that notion should also be abandoned. This is why it is such a skillful means of finding the absolute truth.



THE SVATANTRIKA MADHYAMAKA SCHOOLS

As regards the two truths, the relative truth and the absolute, the views of the Svatantrika Madhyamaka and the Prasangika Madhyamaka encompass several different approaches. Within the Svatantrika Madhyamaka school, the relative truth is asserted in two different ways because Svatantrika masters have expressed different views. The differences in these two views of relative truth provoked a split in the Svatantrika Madhyamaka school, dividing it into two sub-schools, known as the Sautrantika-Svatantrika Madhyamaka and the Yogachara-Svatantrika Madhyamaka.

The first view in the Svatantrika Madhyamaka school, propounded by its founder, the master Bhavaviveka, asserts that the relative truth is most in accordance with the view of the Hinayana school known as the Sautrantika school. Bhavaviveka said that relative truth is established



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through reasoning and that it is correct to say that, relatively speaking, there are outer phenomena. According to this view, atomic partless particles and tiny, indivisible moments of consciousness—in other words, the thread of consciousness—do exist as true and valid things. Accordingly there are subject and object, and this accords with the Hinayana view of atomic theory that identifies partless particles, as well as with the theory of the six consciousnesses. This school became known as the Sautrantika-Svatantrika Madhyamaka school, which separates phenomena in the world from the mind itself.

The second view in the Svatantrika Madhyamaka school is that of Shantirakshita. This view asserts that the relative truth is more in accordance with the Chittamatra or Mind Only school of the Mahayana. This second school became known as the Yogachara-Svatantrika Madhyamaka school, as Yogachara is another name for the Chittamatra school. According to this view, everything is the creation of our own mind; all appearances, all the illusions that we experience, are reflections of our mind. Therefore, in this view nothing exists beyond our own mind and perceptions. This view says that while we see objects that appear to be physically distant, that appear to be far away from our mind, these objects are actually very close; in fact, these appearances and our mind are of one nature. The objects we apprehend are reflections of our mind. A similar message is printed on the side-view mirrors of cars in many parts of the world: "Objects in the mirror are closer than they appear". Likewise, the objects that we experience in the world are actually closer to us than they appear to be.

While the Yogachara-Svatantrika school accepts the Chittamatrin view of relative phenomena, it accepts the Madhyamaka view of shunyata as far as the absolute truth is concerned. The Yogachara-Svatantrika school does not say that Chittamatra is correct in the absolute sense, but only that Chittamatra is correct in its understanding of the relative truth. Shantirakshita says that the best way to look at and to understand relative truth is through the lens of the Chittamatrin school. In the relative sense, it is valid to say that relative truth is mind's projection—so everything exists in one's mind.

There are two ways of looking at the "mind only" view however. The more fundamentalist view says that there is no external thing whatsoever because everything is just the mind's projection. The second interpretation says that what is meant by "mind only" is that whatever we experience through our perceptions or our conceptual mind is unique to us. The way each individual sees the world is unique to that person. It is his or her own unique experience. That is the sense in which it is called "mind only." How can we assert anything outside our own mind? Everything is our interpretation of our own mind. This way of understanding the Chittamatra school's view of relative truth does not deny external existence; rather, it asserts that the unique ways that each of us perceive external objects and conceive of the things outside of us are completely within our mind.

It is also said to be "mind only" because everything is a creation of one's karma and karma comes from the movements of one's mind. So everything is rooted first of all in the movement of our thoughts, in our motivations or intentions, which are of paramount importance in our karmic chain of cause and effect. Consequently, all our actions that are accumulated karmically through body and speech are rooted in our mental movements, in our motivation or intention to do something, such as the intention to harm other sentient beings or the intention to help them. From that point of view, everything is a creation of our mind.

When we look at the relative and absolute truths, we see that, in terms of relative truth, Bhavaviveka and Shantirakshita have slightly different views, which are both contained within the Svatantrika Madhyamaka school. However, in terms of absolute truth, there is no difference between any of the Madhyamaka schools. As far as the absolute truth is concerned, they all agree upon one truth, and that is the truth of shunyata, emptiness, or egolessness.

THE
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PRASANGIKA MADHYAMAKA

When it comes to the Prasangika Madhyamaka school, the two truths are quite tricky because the Prasangika Madhyamaka school does not assert any view of its own in terms of relative truth. Chandrakirti says that in the conventional sense, on the level of relative truth, everything exists and functions when it is not analyzed. Everything is valid in accordance with its function provided that it is not analyzed. However, when relative phenomena are subjected to analysis, that analysis will neither establish nor prove the true existence of anything in the relative truth. He says that this is so because if you can establish or prove something through analysis, then that is the absolute truth. If something truly exists even after thorough analysis, if something truly exists in that nature, then that becomes the absolute reality.

Chandrakirti explains that if one could establish through reasoning that something in relative truth truly existed, then when one looked at the absolute truth, there would appear to be two contradictory views. One view would say that reasoning and logic prove a truly existing nature,

whereas the other view would say that logic and reasoning prove that nothing truly exists, which is a contradictory view. Chandrakirti says if this were so, then emptiness would be something that acts like an antidote to the existence of relative truth, or a weapon that we bring in to destroy it. From this perspective, because our experience of relative truth is so solidly real for us, we would have to bring in emptiness, a distinctly separate, ultimate truth, to destroy it so it could then become empty. This in turn would mean that emptiness is not the nature of phenomena, that the absolute truth is not the nature of relative truth. Therefore, if you separate these two truths too widely, then you lose the actual reality, and that is a problem.

Accordingly, the Prasangika view of Chandrakirti asserts that the two truths are inseparable; they are in one nature right from the beginning. When you see relative truth, its nature is absolute truth. There is nothing that separates these two. You cannot find any instance of relative truth, no matter how solid and real it seems, which exists separate from or outside of the absolute nature. Chandrakirti's view asserts the inseparability of appearance-emptiness; and therefore, the inseparability of conventional and ultimate truth should be how we understand the two truths. When we see a form, hear a sound, or experience a thought, as much as we experience these appearances as being vividly clear and real, to that same degree we can also experience them in the nature of emptiness.

When we practice according to the Madhyamaka view, as far as the relative truth is concerned, we are trying to see clearly how we cling onto experiences, how we cling onto the subject-object relationship. That is very important. Do not worry about shunyata. Try first of all to see your clinging; see how you solidify your relative experiences—how you solidify your pain, your happiness and joy, and how these experiences become so important to you that you cannot even sleep at night. Our experience is so real, so important, and so bothersome to us that we cannot even have a good night's sleep. This is why the starting point is to try to see how we solidify our experiences. When we look at this process, we are not necessarily looking at anything as solid as an external phenomenon; we can simply look at our experience of a thought or a theory. Sometimes a simple theory taken up in a community becomes very solidified. Then, later on, for the sake of that theory, we might risk our lives. When you really look at that, it is pretty mindless. Yet it is interesting to see how we solidify a particular concept and then become so attached to it.

These, then, are the two truths according to the Madhyamaka view and it is very important to understand them. Understanding the two truths is not just a question of knowing the views of the Svatantrika and Prasangika schools, or the views of Bhavaviveka and Shantirakshita. It is not a question of how they disagree or how they agree. It is more a question of realizing how we experience the relative truth, how we experience the view of absolute truth. We can be someone who holds the Svatantrika view. We can be someone who holds the Chittamatin view. We can be someone who holds the Shravaka view. When we have the experience of holding a particular view, we need to know these two truths so we can see beyond it. "Yes, I am holding onto the true existence of atomic phenomena" or mental phenomena or what have you. It is important to see that and to experience it clearly, and then to apply the absolute view, to see to what extent we can experience the absolute truth and how much we can experience the relative truth in a more transcendent way. ●

Experiencing the Two Truths: The Middle Way View of Shunyata, Part II, by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche was originally presented as part of a series of talks on Madhyamaka at Samye Ling, Scotland, in May 2000. Edited by Helen Silman, Carole Fleming and Cindy Shelton.

Emptiness Yoga

The Tibetan Middle Way

Jeffrey Hopkins

Edited by Joe B. Wilson

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12 Inducing Realization

COMMENTS ON THE REFUTATION OF PRODUCTION

Though we live in the midst of these things appearing to exist inherently, somewhere deep in the mind, this solidity must bother us. Depending on our predispositions, the tension of questioning these concrete appearances is more or less near the surface, more or less affecting us. But in any case we have a feeling not to consider it, a feeling that it cannot be figured out. For, we are faced with the overwhelming appearance of things as inherently existent. Even when exposed to Buddha's teaching and to the reasonings that refute true existence, we still feel that these appearances are "there" and that these reasonings are incredible. What has appeared to us for countless lifetimes makes us resist coming to a conclusion, and eventually when we understand a little about emptiness, it seems even painful.

We have a network of anxiety and, based on it, a network of desires and hatreds. When we do not investigate objects and just take them at face value, it seems as if we are down to bare facts. We feel that here is something that matters, that, for example, our life, or future, or happiness is at stake.

In support of the inherently existent I and this network of desires and hatreds, we need inherently existent production of help and harm. However, emptiness means that there is no inherently existent production of harm when someone stops you on the street at midnight, beats you up, and takes your money. You would certainly feel that there was an inherently existent effect there — you were beaten up and you have no more money! However, if you understand it well, there is no way for any kind of production *as we understand it*, qualified by inherent existence, to occur.

We can destroy the exaggerations of harmer and the harmed that are created by the conception of true existence — these being almost all of what we experience. Still, we cannot deny conventionally existent harmer and harmed without deprecating what does indeed exist. Conventionally and validly, of course, there are help and harm. However, we have a strong sense that help and harm are analytically findable, existing from their own side, concretely, most palpably. Conventionally, within the context of cause and effect not being analytically findable, it is important to value cause and effect even though they are not analytically findable. For, though we exaggerate the status of cause and effect, the removal of that exaggeration does not mean that cause and effect are removed; rather, the removal of the exaggeration yields greater understanding and appreciation of cause and effect. This is difficult. How could you not concretely find that one person's arm was cut off and another's was not? But if you can probe these reasonings, it is said that you will be able to see your own arm being cut off, and there will be nothing to point to which is the cutting off of the arm, the person whose arm is being cut off, or the arm that is cut off, all within not denying that the arm is being cut off.

For instance, ultimately there is no production from other, but conventionally there is production of effects that are other than their causes. Still, this does not mean that there are two levels of reality, one that is the ultimate level

of emptiness and one that is our normal world. It would be incorrect to say that when we rise from meditating on emptiness, forget the absence of inherent existence, and again fall into ignorance, we are then in the conventional level. For, our ordinary misperceptions of inherently existent objects do not constitute the conventional level. Inherent existence is an object of ignorance and does not exist, not even conventionally. Rather, we must see the compatibility of the ultimate and the conventional. We must *act within* the context of understanding the non-concreteness of phenomena, knowing that these things are unfindable.

Dzong-ka-ba and his followers say that the consciousness that certifies, or establishes, the existence of a conventional truth is a valid cognition. Others, however, say that conventionally existent phenomena are posited by ignorance. For the Ge-luk-ba system, ignorance falsely certifies the *portion* of perception that is the appearance of inherent existence, but there is also a portion of correct appearance that is certified by conventional valid cognition. The appearance of objects is partly right and partly wrong, but it is not that the underside is wrong and the topside is correct. Everything throughout the appearance is colored by falsity. In other interpretations of the Consequence School, it is felt that because every portion of the object is affected by the false appearance of inherent existence, the whole object is posited by ignorance.

From the way that many speak of conventional and ultimate truths, it might seem that they are two levels of operation on the same object. However, the aim is to practice a union of conventional truths and ultimate truths, realizing that conventional truths only nominally exist and that ultimate truths negate only inherent existence and not existence in general.

“Conventional truth” (*samvrti-satya*) can also be translated as “concealer-truth” or “truth-for-a-concealing-consciousness”. The “concealer” is ignorance because ignorance conceals, obscures, or obstructs perception of the

actual nature of phenomena. These objects are truths for a concealer, ignorant consciousness; however, a "concealer-truth" is not an object that is posited by ignorance, but a phenomenon that is a *truth* for ignorance. A "truth" is what exists the way it appears, whereas conventional objects falsely appear — even in direct perception — to be inherently existent; hence, conventional objects are not truths in fact. Ignorance affirms this false appearance of inherent existence and, therefore, is the concealer of suchness. Everything that we see is a concealer-truth, taken by ignorance to exist the way it appears, but actually appearing one way and existing in another; these appearances are fraudulent. Meditative investigation is used to penetrate this falsity.

The Reasoning

Almost everything with which we come into contact is compounded, produced. We have a very firm sense that all these products are there in and of themselves. If we want to find out if these products are really there in the way that they appear, one technique is to examine how they are produced. For, if we can refute their substantially established production, we can negate this very solid, bold, and forthright appearance as if they are right there in their own right.

First, decide whether these appearances are permanent or not. This can be done easily. These are impermanent and hence must be products. Once they are products, we have only four choices. Production has to be either caused or causeless; if it is caused, then there are three choices — the effect has to be produced from a cause that is either the same as itself, different, or both same and different.

In order to succeed, you have to tie the reasoning to these very forceful appearances. What we usually do is to take the things appearing here as data, as facts, and then try to figure out an intellectual system that will accord with them. What is needed here is quite different. We have to figure

out some way to extricate our minds from these wrong appearances so that we will quit assenting to them; then we have to destroy the wrong appearances themselves so that things will appear correctly. This Buddhist system is opposite to what we are accustomed to.

Many people talk about quieting the mind down, about ceasing the frozen overlay we put on things and experiencing them more the way they are. Perhaps this is a way of getting closer to the innate mind; artificial conceptions are being quieted, and the mind is being withdrawn from intellectually acquired ideas. There is no question that if we can do this, we will perceive the world differently. However, even if you could completely keep the mind away from even the innate conceptions, the appearance of phenomena would still be wrong. By sinking down into appearances, you are getting deeper into your problem and, in a sense, identifying it more, but your realization is getting no deeper. As mentioned before, it is insufficient merely to withdraw the mind from things. Although attempting to put people more into the present moment, these systems do not have any means of actually opposing our wrong conceptions and wrong appearances. Their method of opposing is merely to push them out of the way.

The system here, however, is to provide a weapon explicitly countering wrong conceptions. We have to get to the point where, when we look at our object of meditation, we will understand that one of its qualities is that it is not produced from self, other, both, or without causes. These four points have to move your mind deeply; they have to be able to show you that things do not exist in the way that they appear. The non-production of things in these four ways contradicts how things appear. Thus, with this, the very appearance of phenomena will begin to change. The refutation of production of the four extreme types is like a diamond weapon.

Whether this reasoning works for you or whether you will have to find some other reasoning is something to be

discovered by playing with these reasonings and getting into them, learning how they work. The four positions of production from self, other, both, or causelessly are the only possibilities of inherently existent production. We get upset because it looks as if the Buddhists are forcing people like the Sāṃkhyas and Nihilists into positions they would not themselves accept. We may even feel to support the side being refuted. However, when you meditate, you have to throw yourself to the Buddhists' side; play the Buddhists' game for a while and get into it. This will work itself down into your mind and cause your natural resistance to come out. Then you really have to start looking at it, from inside.

Since these phenomena are not permanent, they must be products. If they are produced and this production is findable — as being from self, other, both, or causelessly — then this appearance of things as findable is correct. If their production cannot be found, then what is appearing is not right. We have a very important matter to decide here; it will apply to all phenomena. Throw your mind completely into this, put all your energy behind it. There is a lot at stake: if there is no findable production, then we are wrong in our usual way of living. These meditations change the appearance of things. Normally, when things appear and we assent to the way they appear, the appearance becomes even more encrusted. Then, we make up systems and freeze this appearance of inherent existence all the more. Reasonings such as these that refute inherently existent production do just the opposite; they change the way things appear, making it easier not to assent to that appearance. Meditation on emptiness is a real antidote.

This reasoning in which the four extreme types of production are refuted is an analysis of causation. Jang-gya calls this both a "refutation of production from the four extremes"²⁴⁸ and "diamond fragments".²⁴⁹ The reasoning refuting production of an effect that is existent, non-existent, both existent and non-existent, or neither is also sometimes called a "refutation of production from the four

extremes", though here Jang-gya calls it a "reasoning refuting production of the existent and the non-existent".²⁵⁰ Such a reasoning is an investigation into effects. To investigate both causes and effects, one uses the reasoning Jang-gya calls a "refutation of production of the four alternatives"²⁵¹ — of one cause producing one effect, one cause producing many effects, many causes producing one effect, and many causes producing many effects. The reasoning of a lack of being one or many and the sevenfold reasoning are analyses of entities.

When analyzing causes, you are not taking what is in front of you and thinking of it as a cause but are thinking of the causes that produced it. Since its causes are not in front of you, in order to do this reasoning you must reflect on something you are not seeing. This, in my opinion, makes it difficult for the reasoning to appear to the mind. Although many treatises present this investigation of production by way of causation, Chandrakīrti advises yogis to start out using the sevenfold reasoning (which will be explained in chapters fourteen through nineteen). Perhaps it is easier to understand because it is an investigation into an entity, an investigation of the thing itself. As that entity presently appears to us, it is not necessary to think of something else.

Again, with the reasoning refuting production of the existent, the non-existent, both, and neither, you have to think of your object of meditation as an effect. You are not thinking just of the entity of the object itself but of the fact that it is an effect. You have to think about the object in terms of something else, not just the entity appearing to you. The same is true for the reasoning refuting production of the four alternative types — one cause producing one effect, one cause producing many effects, and many causes producing many effects. You have to think about something that is not appearing to you, and thus you may not have a sufficiently vivid sense of what is being refuted for the reasoning to affect it.

In the reasoning that refutes production from the four

extremes, or the reasoning that refutes the existent or non-existent, or the reasoning that refutes the four alternatives, you must think of something else in relation to the subject of the reasoning; they depend on your having understood that production is essential to that subject. In order for the diamond fragments, for instance, to work, your mind must be imbued with the fact that whatever you are taking as your object is indeed a product. Compared to the sevenfold reasoning, this can be almost abstract or imaginary for a beginner, even though it is not.

In the sevenfold reasoning, you are basically refuting two positions, sameness and difference of the basis of designation and the designated phenomenon, both of which are right there in your imagination. You can point to something right there, identifying the basis of designation — such as the collection of arms, legs, and a trunk, for example — and the designated phenomenon — the body. However, when you analyze causes, they are not quite in your field of vision. You have to put more thought into it. When you are analyzing effects, it is indeed true that your object is an effect, but this fact is not obvious just through its appearance. We are not always impressed by a thing's being an effect; however, we are impressed by the thing itself.

This is only to say that it can be difficult to apply the reasoning of the diamond fragments. Still, once you can use these reasonings, they will apply to what is right in front of you. If something exists in the way it appears, then it must be produced from itself, from some other, from both, or neither. If you can slowly go through these and eliminate them, you will see that the non-affirming negative that is the emptiness of truly existent production is a quality of this object itself. This will show you that its current solid appearance is incorrect and that you should not assent to this appearance. Although you have to approach this reasoning through a lot of thought, in the end you must bring it back to what you are seeing.

For instance, if you leave the analysis of production from

inherently existent others at mere words, it will not mean much. You have to develop the sense of other such that you can look at, for instance, your chair as being just other. Once you can see things as beings, in their nature, other, then you can use these reasonings that get at inherently existent otherness.

We take things to be others from their own side and nevertheless designate a relationship between them despite their otherness. We need to investigate this feeling of otherness and see just how sensible it is. For example, if you write letters at random on a blackboard, it is easy to see that they are all other. But when you put them together in a word, you no longer perform the activity of making them so other. For instance, take the word "work". It is one word; the letters are related and are usually seen as one unit. However, if you put the same letters in the wrong order, they become very other. Put them back in the right order again, and you suddenly feel them coalesce. At some point when you are putting them together and they are very close, they come together and become locked into a unit. Something very powerful substantializes things over and beyond what is actually there.

If we did not substantialize things, if this coalescing were very light and were just considered a mental fabrication, we would be convinced of the error of such gross substantialization quite easily. However, this is not the case. This substantialization differentiates the external world from ourselves.

We might be willing to accept, at least philosophically, that the external world is not as grossly other as we see it, but when we are faced with an external existent that seems to have its own being, we definitely feel that it exists in its own right. At that time it impinges upon us with tremendous force, and we feel very strongly that we have to accept it as independent.

We go to sleep every night; appearances impinge on us, and we are totally convinced. The fact that dreams are

wrong does not itself make waking life wrong, but the very same tendency towards substantialization that convinces us that dream objects are external real objects convinces us now that the external world exists from its own side.

Another way to look at this is to take all these things that appear and wipe out this sense of substantiality that convinces you they are there in and of themselves. Identify what it is in dreams that impinges on you; get at it, feel it, understand it, and then do away with it utterly in waking experience. When you have done that, try to come up with something that will prove to you that these waking appearances are substantially established external objects.

For instance, if a loud noise suddenly happens nearby, there is something very bold, forthright, and solid right there. If you are tuned into your experience, you will feel right then that the reasonings we are discussing here are wrong, that things do happen, that these happenings are findable. However, when you analyze and get into your investigation, intently attempting to find what is appearing to you, you will not be able to come up with such massive, solid, bold, seemingly findable and forthright happenings as are appearing to your mind. These forthright happenings are production — something that is appearing or happening in front of you. Moreover, production is not just production of an entity; the product's coming into your ken — your perception of it — is also produced.

These products cover a certain spot, but activities cover this spot also. When some bad event happens, that is production of trouble. It is produced, and then it ceases. It seems to be a findable thing, and then it is no longer there. Suppose, for instance, your house is destroyed. You have feelings of inherent existence about the house, about its destruction, about what it will cost to replace all your possessions, about what is there. This kind of harm, the harm induced by the conception of true existence, can be eliminated.

What if I were sitting next to you and someone came

along and cut off my ear? You would certainly feel that my ear was cut off, but even an experience of something as forceful as that, when you know how to analyze, becomes transformed. For, this analysis is not a vague process of turning your mind away from events. When you analyze, you are more engaged than you ever were before in your life. It is said, "One who knows emptiness is aware," more perceptive, more awake, more conscientious. It is not that when an event happens you superimpose emptiness on it or turn your head away from it in order to remember its emptiness. The only way that you can get into emptiness is to get more into objects. When you realize emptiness, you will become more familiar with objects; your mind will be more brilliant, more clear. By turning your mind away from experiences, you will never get to emptiness. You have to go right to the thing itself as it is happening and let it happen again and again mentally. Then, analyze. You can, without analyzing, turn the mind away to some sort of a vacancy, but in doing so you are just tricking yourself.

There is a different vacancy that is the absence of inherent existence in suffering. If suffering were not empty of true existence, if this vacancy were not there, suffering would be firm and massive. It would always be there, and you could never get over it; if it existed from its own side, it would be uncaused and, therefore, not caused by ignorance; it would not be a mistake of understanding. Once that were the case, then correct understanding could not get rid of suffering. However much we may now feel that pain is indeed massive and existing in and of itself, it is not that way at all. Suffering is empty of existing from its own side, it is caused by ignorance, and thoroughly understanding emptiness will get rid of it.

So much of our experience of pain is induced by our conception of inherent existence that if we were to get rid of some of this mistaken conception, we would say that there is no longer any pain, for whatever pain was left would be almost unrecognizable. Even beyond that, it is said that

when you become fully accustomed to cognizing emptiness there is pleasure in everything. This is a special power of meditation; it is said that many who do not understand emptiness also have some of these powers.

When searching for an object with one of these reasonings, you are unable to find anything, and a vacancy appears to your mind. This vacancy is the absence of inherent existence, the analytical unfindability, of the object you are seeking. The appearance of such a vacancy is the mental image that is the "appearing object"²⁵² of the initial view of the middle way. As you become used to this vacancy, the image will disappear. Finally, only the vacancy will be left — the vacancy itself will be the appearing object. That is direct cognition. On the path of preparation (the second of the five paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation, and no more learning), the imagistic element as well as the sense of subject and object becomes less and less until it disappears completely at the path of seeing. Until that time, the vacancy that is a negation of inherent existence is realized through the medium of an image.

At the beginning of the path of preparation, yogis can ascertain a subject and an object — the wisdom consciousness and its object, emptiness. As they progress along the path of preparation, they can no longer ascertain the sense of an object, even if they were to reflect on it. By the time they have reached the end of the path of preparation, they can no longer ascertain the appearance of the subject either. Both subject and object are still appearing, but they can no longer ascertain either one. Finally, the sense of subject and object vanishes, and yogis have direct cognition of emptiness. At this point, they are on the path of seeing; their mental consciousness is a path of seeing.

All Buddhist schools of tenets speak of five paths: accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation, and no more learning. These paths are developments of a consciousness over time. It helps to imagine them. Imagine finding the vacancy that is a negation of inherent existence — there still

being a sense of subject and object. Then imagine subject and object disappearing in terms of ascertainment but still subtly appearing to the mind. Then imagine there being merely a vacancy fused with mind; this would be the path of seeing, which is non-dual in the sense that there is no appearance of subject and object, no appearance of conventional phenomena, no appearance of inherent existence, no appearance of conceptual images, and no appearance of difference. Then, imagine that the meaning of the vacancy is so vivid that it eliminates a certain level of the conception of inherent existence. The things that are overcome through cognizing emptiness on the path of seeing are called objects abandoned through seeing, and due to this one cognition, you will no longer have that level of defilement for the rest of infinite time. Among the four noble truths — true sufferings, true sources, true cessations, and true paths — these abandonments are true cessations. True cessations last forever.

When you take refuge in Buddha, his Doctrine, and the Spiritual Community, your actual refuge is the Doctrine, verbal and realizational — mainly the latter. Thus, when you take refuge in the Doctrine, true cessations should appear to your mind. These are not just something temporary, like having no desire for food at present. True cessations are absences of things that will never occur again. There will be a time when, due to cognition of emptiness, desire will never appear again. It will become utterly nonexistent through the power of its antidote, a consciousness with an opposite mode of apprehension. True cessations are not just absences of things due to the incompleteness of the conditions for their production, such as the lack of desire for food when intensely involved in some other activity; they are absences of afflictive emotions brought about by the realizations that act as their antidotes.

The main refuge is true cessations. How are they achieved? Through true paths. Thus, true cessations and paths are the actual objects of practice and hence the actual

refuge. The teacher of this refuge is Buddha, who laid out what should be practiced in order to attain exactly what he attained. The Spiritual Community are the indispensable friends who help us to understand and practice this refuge of true paths in order to attain true cessations.

The direct cognition of emptiness is such that it will bring about a true cessation of a certain level of the afflictions. Although meditative suppression can yield a sense of bliss, clarity, non-conceptuality, and even greater intellectual power, if you want utterly and forever to get rid of desire, hatred, and ignorance, merely suppressing them is not enough. You have to destroy them by means of their antidote, direct cognition of emptiness. How can you arrive at this direct cognition of emptiness? Through inference. The meaning of the vacuity that appears to an inferential cognition is that these concrete events and objects to which we are accustomed do not exist as they appear. This vacuity has to keep meaning this for you because otherwise, it will become a vacuity of nothingness.

At the level of direct cognition, you do not have to worry about sustaining the meaning of the cognition, you do not have to think about whether the force of the intent of your cognition is still there or not, you do not have to keep reminding yourself what you are looking for and not finding. Your mind is at a level where all these are there. However, with our kind of conceptual cognition or, even more so, with its precursor, correct assumption, we have to sustain the intention of our cognition.

A strong sense of being unable to find what you were formerly sure could be found must be maintained — once you are impressed, you have to sustain that impression. If, when meditating on emptiness, you merely race through the reasonings, get to the point of utter vacuity, and are no longer impressed with it, that vacuity has become mere nothingness. At that time you are cultivating a wrong view, an impediment to the path, because you have lost the sense of the object of negation, inherent existence, and are now

becoming accustomed to a view that nothing exists. When done properly, one is deeply impressed with not being able to find the object of negation. For instance, when I was studying at the Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center in New Jersey, a student came one day to see Geshe Wangyal, the founder and main teacher, at a time when Geshe-la was away. The student was very impressed by the fact that Geshe-la was not there. He went into the monastery and asked someone who would definitely have known of Geshe-la's presence if he was there. This person told him that he was not. The student probably even thought, "Geshe-la's car is not here," and he may have even wondered about the monastery and looked to see if he was there. The student was truly impressed by Geshe-la's absence — he was impressed by it for months. He did not forget that Geshe-la was not there because it meant something to him.

The absence of an object of negation is a negative. There is a negative right here with us which is our absence of inherent existence. This negative is not a negation performed by a person. "Negation" can be viewed in two ways, from the point of view of two types of agents: one type of negator — not the kind of negation we are speaking of here — is a person who is thinking about and meditating on the right view, thereby negating or ceasing the wrong view; the other type of negator is a negative that negates something in the sense of being the absence of it — here, an emptiness of inherent existence. This latter negative is not as if there is something there always punching away at inherent existence and destroying it. It is a mere absence of the object of negation.

This negative exists. It is not non-existent, as the word might seem to imply. Even non-affirming negatives are phenomena, but this does not mean that when emptiness is cognized, the meditator thinks that this negative is an emptiness. Realization of emptiness is merely the non-finding of the object of negation. You do not enter into any

thought, "This is emptiness." A consciousness that thinks such would be a valid cognition of conventional phenomena, for it is dealing with the *existence* of something, in this case emptiness.

Furthermore, even though a non-affirming negative exists, to cognize this non-affirming negative does not mean to cognize its existence. This is technical but very helpful to know. For example, when you cognize a book, you cognize the existence of that book. Your eye consciousness is both the certifier of the book and the certifier of the existence of that book. However, when you cognize emptiness, it is different, for you are not cognizing the existence of emptiness. Thus, the uncommon certifier of emptiness is a consciousness directly cognizing emptiness, and through its power — or also through the power of an inferential realization of emptiness — the existence of emptiness is later understood without any further cogitation.

When emptiness is directly cognized, the emptinesses of all phenomena including emptiness itself are directly cognized but without any sense of their difference. Because the cognition is direct, the cognition of the absence of inherent existence of all phenomena and the cognition of the absence of inherent existence of that absence of inherent existence do not have to be serial. With inferential cognition (which is necessarily a conceptual cognition) it is serial, but a direct cognition is a different type of mind. A direct cognition of emptiness is a wisdom consciousness of meditative equipoise that simultaneously realizes the emptiness of inherent existence of all phenomena.

The point of this discussion is to emphasize that we are searching to find the inherent existence of the object. This needs to be remembered; otherwise, when searching, you will think that you are seeking emptiness. In fact, you are searching to find the inherent existence of an object such as your body, but come up with an utter vacuity. This utter vacuity is called "emptiness", although you are not seeking to identify it as such. You are to remain with the feeling that

concrete objects such as these now appearing to our minds do not exist. What the student saw and remembered was that Geshe-la was not at the monastery. He did not turn around and say, "This is the absence of Geshe-la at the monastery."