

Tenets of the Sautrantika School
Root Text by Konchok Jigmey Wangpo
Commentary by Geshe Lhundrup Sopa
Translated by Jeffrey Hopkins
Published in Cutting Through Appearances

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- I) Sutra School: Assert true existence of
 - A) External objects
 - B) Self-cognizing consciousness
- II) Sutra School Divisions
 - A) Followers of Scripture use sutras or scripture of Buddha.
 - B) Followers of Reasoning, use examples.

Types of Assertions on the Basis or Bases of our experience:

- Regarding Objects, i.e. what is known, etc.
- Regarding Object-possessors, i.e. what knows.

III) Assertions Regarding Objects, i.e. what is known etc.

- A) Two Truths or sides to the Truth of the Object
 - 1) Ultimate:
 - (a) Specifically characterized (ultimate truth in this view): can perform a function, i.e. it exists by way of its specific nature.
 - (b) Ultimate Truth: object has its own subsistence without depending on concepts or imputation, i.e. it is a functioning thing, specific, impermanent, compounded, truly existent.
 - 2) Relatives:
 - (a) Generally characterized: anything ascribed to objects or objects that is uses conceptuality in any way.
 - 3) Notes:
 - (a) Obscured and Conceptual Consciousness: Obscured [from direct perception] Truth: only exists by imputation or concept, i.e. non-functioning, truth for obscured awareness, generally characterized, permanent, uncompounded, false yet existent.
 - (b) Self of phenomena and persons is Obscured and False: it does not exist even conventionally.
- B) Three Types of Objects:
 - 1) Appearing Object - Subject side
 - (a) Conceptually, images appear (and are false because image appears as the real object.)
 - 2) Conceived Object - Object Side
 - (a) Generic Images - The image is the conceptual consciousness itself.
 - (b) Notes:
 - i There is a difference between this image and conceived reality or they could be the same, i.e. truth was gotten at through inference or some imaginary thing was brought to mind (appearing image was "seen" thus true) whose conceived object ("what was supposed to be") was not, or does not exist or ever will.
 - ii Each person's images are generic (not single, but a sample reduced to a single "image") created by their history and experiences etc. Generic image means there is a process of exclusion of all other objects to create image.
 - iii These images are permanent only in the sense of existing for time but not forever, yet they do not disintegrate moment by moment like impermanent objects.
 - 3) Engaged Object - Object Side, Specific "Things"

- (a) Perceptually, object really appear, thus are true, thus they are ultimate.
- 4) Summary/Notes:
 - (a) Inference or conceptuality ("fire is over there") may be correct but its appearing object ("the image or idea or smoke and fire") is false always due to its still being an image (because conceptuality uses images not real objects.) However, it is correct in its conceived object ("a fire is over there") or object of engagement ("fire is over there and I should warn someone".) This image or idea is for example, an image from memory, an imaginary construct etc. and is the conceptual consciousness itself.
 - (b) Note: True means not mistaken in regard to the Appearing Object.
- C) Negative and Positive Phenomena:
 - 1) Uses elimination of objects not in question ("non-cow") or inclusion (includes object and objects not in question) "that cow".
 - 2) Two types of negative:
 - (a) Affirming (something is implied from negation)
 - (b) Non-affirming (nothing is implied.)
- D) Manifest and Hidden Phenomena:
 - 1) Realized by direct prime (first/new) cognition
 - 2) Realized by inference, conceptuality or knowledge.
 - 3) Note: This means all objects of knowledge, including functioning things are hidden because they can only be known conceptually
- E) The Three Times
 - 1) The pastness of an object is its destructed-ness after it exists, with the object in the present functioning yet being other than its pastness. It occurs after the thing. In this way, its pastness is unchangeable or permanent.
 - 2) The future of an object is also permanent because it exists only in the object as a potential thus it occurs before the thing (conceptually).
 - 3) The present of the object is that which has been produced and has not ceased.
- F) Single and Different Phenomena:
 - 1) Single phenomenon: appears single to conceptuality (thus different objects with same name are single)
 - 2) Different phenomenon: appears different to conceptuality ("pillar" and "pot", "chien" and "dog" [dog in French and dog in English because for non-french speakers, no concept arises for "chien." although the entity may be the same.)
 - 3) Notes:
 - (a) Many combinations exist of different and one phenomena classifications and should be understood fully to understand how difference and oneness interact in our minds.
 - (b) The phenomenon's isolate is the word, e.g. dog, pot, which stands for the phenomenon.
- G) Directionally partless particles (like atoms) and temporally partless moments of consciousness are deemed ultimate because:
 - 1) To followers of the Great Exposition and Sutra Followers of Scripture because they are irreducible
 - 2) To followers of Sutra Followers of Reasoning because they are capable of performing the function of producing effects (they are experienced in the now)
- H) Cause and Effect:
 - 1) The followers of the Great Exposition say that they occur simultaneously
 - 2) The followers of Sutra maintain that causes exist prior to results
- II) Assertions Regarding Object Possessors (Subjects)
 - A) The Person
 - 1) Scripture Followers: aggregates as continuum are person
 - 2) Reasoning Followers: mental consciousness is person
 - B) Consciousnesses: Two types: prime and non-prime.
 - 1) Prime: New, incontrovertible knower, i.e. valid.

- (a) Direct:
 - i Sense
 - ii Mental
 - iii Self-cognizing/reflexive
 - iv Yogic
- (b) Inferential
- 2) Non-prime:
 - (a) Subsequent cognitions:
 - i Cognitions subsequent to the first moment of a direct cognition
 - (b) Wrong consciousness:
 - i Mistaken in regards to object of engagement (i.e. seeing a fault in the eye).
 - ii But this is not mistaken consciousness which is mistaken regarding its appearing object as in an inference
 - iii However, inference does not confuse the appearing object, an image, with the object of engagement and conceived object.
 - (c) Doubt:
 - i Tending towards wrong understanding
 - ii Neutral or going both ways
 - iii Tending towards correct understanding
 - (d) Correct assumption:
 - i Conceptual consciousness which understands something.
 - (e) Awareness to which an object appears but is not noticed:
 - i Non-conceptual and unmistakable cognition, yet object is not noticed.
- C) Terms:
 - 1) Definition: an object of hearing that cause the meaning of its object to be understood.
 - 2) Two types of terms of objects of expression:
 - (a) Terms that express types
 - (b) Terms that express collections.
 - 3) Two types of terms for manners of expression:
 - (a) Terms that express qualities
 - (b) Terms that express qualificands (property and property possessor)

III) Assertions on the Paths

- A) Objects of Observation of the Paths
 - 1) Sixteen aspects of the four truths
 - 2) Two types of selflessness of the Person:
 - (a) Coarse: not permanent, non-unitary, non-independent
 - (b) Subtle: not self-sufficient, i.e. unable to exist by itself.
- B) Objects Abandoned by the Paths
 - 1) Conception of self of persons (no self of phenomena is asserted by either school here)
 - 2) Afflictive ignorance: obstructs liberation from cyclic existence
 - 3) Non-afflictive ignorance: obstructs liberation from omniscience
- C) Nature of the Paths
 - 1) Cognition of emptiness of self is not direct, but aggregates are apprehended as empty of self of persons.
 - 2) Emptiness (an uncompounded phenomenon) is not directly cognized, but cognition is of mind and body as no longer qualifying as containing or being etc. a self.

IV) Assertions on the Fruits of the Paths

- A) There is no Buddha who falls from afflictions and attains enlightenment.
- B) Scriptural collections of discipline, sets of discourses etc. of Great Vehicle are not the words of the Buddha.