

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 THREE
Mind Only, No Mind, Never Mind!
The Chittamatra and Shentong Views

SOURCEBOOK



RADICAL REJECTION

PARTING FROM EXTREME VIEWS ABOUT REALITY

Part Three

Mind Only, No Mind, Never Mind!

The Chittamatra and Shentong Views

Sourcebook Table of Contents & Course Overview

I. Table of Contents

- A. This Overview (2 pages)
- B. Reading List (2 pages)
- C. Summary Outline of the entire Madhyamakavatara (1 page)
- D. Detailed Outline of the Madhyamakavatara section for Course Three (1 page)
- E. Topical Syllabus (3 pages)
- F. Sourcebook Readings (too many pages!)

II. Required Sources:

- A. **Mipham** and Chandrakirti, *Introduction to the Middle Way: A Commentary on Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara*, Trs. Padmakara Translation Group, Shambhala, Boston, 2002:
 - 1. Root Text: Refuting the Cittamatra Viewpoint (v. 6:45-97), pp. 74-81
 - 2. Commentary by Mipham, pp. 228-260
- B. **Dzongsar** Khyentse, *Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara with commentary by Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche*, Khyentse Foundation, 2003, pp. 155-210
- C. **KTGR**: Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, *Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness*, Trs. Shenpen Hookhan, Zhyisil Chokyi Gyatsal, Auckland 2001
- D. **Sourcebook** for Radical Rejection Course Three

III. Reference Materials:

- A. Radical Rejection Course One Sourcebook
- B. Radical Rejection Course Two Sourcebook
- C. Radical Rejection Handouts

IV. Prerequisite Readings:

- A. Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, Shunyata, pp. 187-206.
- B. Gampopa, *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, Trs. by Guenther or Khenpo Konchok, Chapter XVII The Perfection of Wisdom Awareness.

V. Optional Source:

- A. The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, *Commentary on The Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyu Siddhas: The Quintessential Oral Instructions of Glorious Dusum Khyenpa Explaining [Chandrakirti's] Entrance to the Middle Way:*
 - 1. *Chapter Six Part One*, Nitārtha 1998, pp. 273-299
 - 2. *Chapter Six Part Two*, Nitārtha 1999, pp. 1-128
- B. This is a long but great commentary - we will not use this but you can!
- C. To order please contact: Tashi Wangmo, Publications Manager, Nitārtha Institute, at twangmo@nitarthainstitute.ca. Each one is \$32.00 CAN / \$26.00 US plus shipping and handling of around \$15.00. To order, email Tashi with your complete shipping address AND phone number and whether you would like to pay by check or credit card, and she will confirm the final cost with you then.

VI. Themes of The Five Courses:

- A. Emptiness and the path of refutation
- B. Refutation of truly existent things
- C. Refutation of truly existent mind
- D. Refutation of truly existent persons
- E. Refutation of truly existent emptiness

VII. Threefold Logic for Course Three:

- D. Ground: Appearances are not different from mind
- E. Path: Rejecting belief in truly existing consciousness or mind
- F. Fruition: Mind is empty

VIII. Classes in Course Three:

- A. Introduction, Review, and Overview
- B. The Chittamatra View: Part I
- C. The Chittamatra View: Part II
- D. Refuting Mind without an Object
- E. The Shentong View and its Differentiation from Chittamatra
- F. Refuting the Alaya and Mind Only
- G. Refuting the Dependent Nature & The Superiority of Madhyamaka
- H. Purpose and Status of the Chittamatra View

IX. Logistics:

- A. Eight Tuesdays 3/29, 4/5, 4/12, 4/19, 4/26, 5/3, 5/10, 5/17, 7:00-9:15 pm
- B. Review Day Sunday, April 10, 10-5 (**not March 19 as advertised**)
- C. Teachers: Nancy Murphy, Michele Laporte, Derek Kolleeny
- D. Location: SMCNY - Shambhala Training Hall
- E. Posture: Sitting

Radical Rejection
Parting from Extreme Views about Reality
PART THREE
THE MIND ONLY & SHENTONG VIEWS

Reading List

Page #

II. The Cittamatra View – Part I

- A. **Root Text:** Verses 6:45-47, p. 79
- B. **Dzongsar** Commentary: pp. 155-162 (top) = 8
- C. **Mipham** Commentary: pp. 228-229 (top) = 2
- D. **KTGR: Stage Two: The Cittamatra Approach**, *Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness*, by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, pp. 27-41 = 15
- E. **Sourcebook:** *The Lankavatara Sutra*, Trs. by Suzuki & Goddard, excerpts = 3 pages 10
- F. **Total Reading:** 28 + verses

III. The Cittamatra View – Part II

A. Sourcebook:

- 1. The Analysis of the Three Self-Natures (Tri-svabhava-nirdesa), Vasubandhu, *Mind Only: A Philosophical and Doctrinal Analysis of the Vijnanavada*, Thomas E. Wood, University of Hawaii Press, 1991, pp. 31-39 = 9 14
- 2. The Three Natures, from The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, *Commentary on The Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyu Siddhas*, Nitārtha 1998, pp. 292-298 = 7 18
- 3. Chapter Six – Chittamatra, from *The Treasury of Knowledge*, by Jamgon Kontrul, translated by Elizabeth Callahan (unpublished draft manuscript – *do not circulate this!*), pp.1-10(bottom) and 15(mid)-17 = 12 25

B. Total Reading: 28

IV. Refuting Mind without an Object (ML)

- A. **Root Text:** Verses 6:48-61, pp. 74-76
- B. **Dzongsar** Commentary: pp. 162 (top) – 178 (middle) = 17
- C. **Mipham** Commentary: pp. 229 (top) – 234 (bottom) = 6
- D. **Sourcebook:** The Prasangha School's Critique of Cittamatra, summarized from *Unique Tenets of the Middle Way Consequence School*, Daniel Cozort, Snow Lion, Ithaca, 1998 = 3 39
- E. **Total Reading:** 26 + verses

V. Shentong and its Differentiation from Cittamatra (DK)

A. Sourcebook Readings:

- 1. The Mahavaipulya Tathagathagarbha Sutra, translated by William H. Grosnick, in *Buddhism in Practice*, Ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. Princeton University Press, 1995, excerpt, pp. 94-96 = 3 42
- 2. The Lion's Roar of Queen Srimala, from *A Treasury of Mahayana Sutras: Selections from the Maharatnakuta Sutra*, translated by The Buddhist Association of the United States, Garma C.C. Chang, General Editor, The 44

Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park and London, 1983, excerpt on pg. 378 = 1/2

3. *Buddha Nature: The Mahayana Uttaratantra*, translated by Rosemarie Fuchs, Snow Lion Publications, New York, 2000, excerpt on pg. 23 = 1/2 45
4. The Shentong School, from *Ascertaining Certainty about the View: Chapter Seven, Section Three from the Treasury of Knowledge*, by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye with commentary by Khenpo Tsultrim yamtso Rinpoche, Translated by Michele Martin, pp. 186-191 = 6 50
5. The Superiority of Great Madhyamaka to Mind Only, from *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Dudjom Rinpoche, Trs. by Gyurme Dorje with Matthew Kapstein, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1991, pp. 178-186 = 9 46
- B. **KTGR: Stage Five: The Shentong Approach**, *Progressive Stages of Meditation on Emptiness*, by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, pp. 65-69 = 5
- C. **Total Reading: 24**

VI. Refuting Mind Only (NM)

- A. **Root Text:** Verses 6:62-71, pp. 76-78
- B. **Dzongsar** Commentary: pp. 178 (middle) – 188 (middle) = 11
- C. **Mipham** Commentary: pp. 234 (bottom) – 245 (middle) = 12
- D. **Total Required Reading:** 23 + verses
- E. **Optional - Sourcebook:** The Thirty Verses (Trimsika), Vasubandhu, *Mind Only: A Philosophical and Doctrinal Analysis of the Vijñānavāda*, pp. 49-56 = 7 54

VII. Refuting the Dependent Nature & The Superiority of Madhyamaka (ML)

- A. **Root Text:** Verses 6:72-83, pp. 78-79
- B. **Dzongsar** Commentary: pp. 188 (middle) – 196 (middle) = 9
- C. **Mipham** Commentary: pp. 245 (middle) – 253 (bottom) = 9
- D. **Total Required Reading:** 18 + verses
- E. **Optional - Sourcebook:** Talk 17: Shentong-Madhyamaka, from *A Presentation of the Two Truths in the Three Yanas and the Mahayana Philosophical Traditions*, by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Trs. by Jules Levinson, Nalanda Translation Committee, 1992, pp. 188-201 = 14 59

VIII. Purpose and Status of the Cittamatra View (NM)

- A. **Root Text:** Verses 6:84-97, pp. 80-81
- B. **Dzongsar** Commentary: pp. 196 (middle) – 210 (bottom) = 15
- C. **Mipham** Commentary: pp. 253 (bottom) – 260 (middle) = 8
- D. **Sourcebook:** Provisional and Definitive Meaning, from *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, Dudjom Rinpoche, pp. 187-190 = 4 73
- E. **Total Reading:** 27 + verses

**The Madhyamakavatara By Chandrakirti
Summary Outline Based Upon
Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche's Commentary**

- I. Preamble (v. 1:1-4), pp. 143-147**
- II. The First Five Grounds (v. 1:4-5:4), pp. 148-160**
- 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**
- V. The Qualities of the Ten Grounds (v. 11:1-9) pp. 331-333**
- VI. The Ultimate Ground of Buddhahood (v. 11:10-51) pp. 334-348**
- VII. Conclusion (v. 11:51-56) pp. 349-354**

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

Emptiness of Phenomena: Refuting the Cittamatra Viewpoint (v. 6:45-97), pp. 74-81

A. The Cittamatra View (v. 6:45-47), p. 79

B. The Logical Reasoning (v. 6:48-83), pp. 74-79

- 1. Refutation of consciousness devoid of outer objects (v. 6:48-55), pp. 74-76**
 - a) Refutation of the dream example (v. 6:48-53)
 - b) Refutation of the example of black lines (v. 6:54-55)
- 2. Refutation that consciousness arises in the absence of an object due to the potential of latent tendencies in the mind (v. 6:56-61), p. 76**
 - a) The Chittamatra position (v. 6:56)
 - b) Refutation of inherently existent potential (v. 6:57-61)
- 3. Refutation that inert objects manifest by the ripening of habitual propensities latent in the consciousness (v. 6:62-71), pp. 76-78**
 - a) The Chittamatra position (v. 6:62-64)
 - b) Refutation (v. 6:65-71)
 - (1) Absurd consequences (v. 6:65-67)
 - (2) Inconclusive arguments (v. 6:68-71)
 - (a) Example of deluded meditation experience (v. 6:69-70)
 - (b) Example of deluded visual perception (v. 6:71)
- 4. Refutation of dependent nature as inherently existent (v. 6:72-83)pp.78-79**
 - a) Refutation of reflexive awareness (v. 6:73-76)
 - (1) Not established by inference (v. 6:73-75)
 - (2) No direct evident (v. 6:76-77)
 - b) As applied to the two truths (v. 6:78-83)

C. Why the Cittamatra View was taught (v. 6:84-93), pp. 80-91

- 1. Correct interpretation of the sutras that teach Mind Only (v. 6:84-93)**
 - a) What the sutras say (v. 6:84-86)
 - b) Mind Only does not mean the negation of extramental objects (v. 6:87-90)
 - c) Conclusion (v. 6:91-93)
- 2. Sutras that teach the Cittamatra view are expedient not ultimate (v. 6:94-97), p. 81**

RADICAL REJECTION

PARTING FROM EXTREME VIEWS ABOUT REALITY

Part Three

Mind Only, No Mind, Never Mind!

The Chittamatra and Shentong Views

Topical Syllabus

- I. Intro, Review, Overview, Synopsis**
 - A. How to approach the Madhyamaka
 - B. Views of the various schools - represent our own habitual patterns
 - C. Overview of the Madhyamakavatara
 - D. Four extremes and arising from other
 - E. Major points of the Chittamatra View
 - F. The Shentong Distinction
 - G. The Examples, especially dreams and deluded perception
- II. The Chittamatra View Part I**
 - A. Mind Only
 - B. The Three Natures
 - C. Alayavijnana, the eighth consciousness, dependent reality, has three parts
 - 1. Independent of duality – it manifests from mind’s own latent tendencies without outer objects
 - 2. Exists substantially/inherently, exists as base of reality
 - 3. On the ultimate level it is inconceivable and inexpressible
- III. The Chittamatra View Revisited**
 - A. Historical Overview
 - B. Major sources – sutras, shastras, compilations and critiques
 - C. Neyartha and Nitārtha
 - D. Differences within the Chittamatra view
 - E. The Dream example
- IV. Refuting Mind without an Object**
 - A. Refutation of consciousness devoid of outer objects (v. 6:48-55), pp. 74-76
 - 1. Refutation of the dream example (v. 6:48-53)
 - a) Absurd consequences
 - b) Doesn’t demonstrate inherent existence
 - c) Doesn’t demonstrate unreality of external world in waking state
 - d) Shows that all phenomena exist in illusory manner
 - 2. Refutation of the example of black lines (v. 6:54-55)

- a) Untenable consequences of objectless consciousness
 - b) Distinguishing mind over objects in relative truth
 - B. Refutation that consciousness arises in the absence of an object due to the potential of latent tendencies in the mind (v. 6:56-61), p. 76
 - 1. The Chittamatra position (v. 6:56)
 - a) True existence of dependent reality, alayavijnana
 - b) We see things because we have the potential to see them
 - 2. Refutation of inherently existent potential (v. 6:57-61)
 - a) Throughout the three times
 - b) They exist dependently not inherently
 - c) Importance of “difference” or “otherness”
 - d) Concluding that the reasoning is circular
 - e) Therefore cannot establish mind
 - f) If really there, then can’t share same potential
 - C. Madhyamaka accepts alayavijnana only relatively not ultimately like Chittamatra

V. **Shentong and its Differentiation from Cittamatra**

- A. Tatagatagarbha
- B. Empty of Self
- C. Empty of Other
- D. Mind Only and Primordial Wisdom
- E. Three Three Natures

VI. **Refuting Mind Only**

- A. Refutation that inert objects manifest by the ripening of habitual propensities latent in the consciousness (v. 6:62-71), pp. 76-78
 - 1. The Chittamatra position (v. 6:62-64)
 - 2. Refutation (v. 6:65-71)
 - a) Absurd consequences (v. 6:65-67)
 - (1) Blind should see when awake
 - (2) If not, they should not see anything in dream state
 - b) Inconclusive arguments (v. 6:68-71)
 - (1) Example of deluded meditation experience (v. 6:69-70)
 - (a) Example of yogi visualizing all as skeletons
 - (b) Skillful means of Chandrakirti
 - (2) Example of deluded visual perception (v. 6:71)
 - (a) The three natures (revisited)
 - (b) Two kinds of dependent reality and ultimate truth
 - B. Direct sense consciousness and the establishment of phenomena as valid
 - C. Impact on the karmic process
 - D. Mind alone binds us to or frees us from samsara
 - E. Shentong view of primordial awareness

VII. **Refuting the Dependent Nature & The Superiority of Madhyamaka**

- D. Refutation of inherently existent dependent nature (v. 6:72-83), pp. 78-79
 - 1. Refutation of reflexive awareness (v. 6:73-76)

- a) Not established by inference (v. 6:73-75)
- b) No direct evidence (v. 6:76-77)
 - (1) Memory is not valid proof since it is unsubstantial
 - (2) If reflexive awareness were admitted, memory would be impossible
 - (3) Memory can occur even w/o inherently existing reflexive awareness
 - (4) Since no valid cognition to prove existence of dependent reality, not tenable
 - (5) Shentong view of reflexive awareness
- 2. As applied to the two truths (v. 6:78-83)
 - b) It cannot be located in either of the two truths
 - c) Without a perfect understanding of two truths, liberation is impossible
 - d) Difference between Chittamatra view of dependent reality and Madhyamaka view of conventional reality

VIII. Purpose and Status of the Chittamatra View

- A. Correct interpretation of the sutras that teach Mind Only (v. 6:84-93)
 - 1. What the sutras say (v. 6:84-86)
 - a) Principal purpose is to refute ideas of a creator
 - 2. Mind Only does not mean the negation of extramental objects but that mind is the main, primary factor (v. 6:87-90)
 - 3. Conclusion – otherwise it leads to absurd consequences (v. 6:91-93)
- E. Sutas that teach Chittamatra view are expedient not ultimate (v. 6:94-97), p. 81
 - 1. Expedient and ultimate or definitive teachings
 - 2. The Buddha Nature and Shentong teachings
 - 3. Relation to the three turnings
 - 4. Skillful means of expedient teachings
- D. Not falling to extremes in our understanding/view
 - 1. Importance of correct understanding of two truths
 - 2. Not mixing up the two truths
 - 3. Shentong view of the two truths
- E. Applying Rangtong to view and Shentong to path

The Lankavatara Sutra

Self-Realization of Noble Wisdom

Excerpts

Translated by Suzuki and Goddard

The Blessed One replied: My teaching of no-birth and no-annihilation is not like that of the philosophers, nor is it like their doctrine of birth and impermanency. That to which the philosophers ascribe the characteristic of no-birth and no-annihilation is the self-nature of all things, which causes them to fall into the dualism of being and non-being. My teaching transcends the whole conception of being and non-being; it has nothing to do with birth, abiding and destruction; nor with existence and non-existence. I teach that the multitudinousness of objects have no reality in themselves but are only seen of mind and, therefore, are of the nature of maya and a dream. I teach the non-existence of things because they carry no signs of any inherent self-nature. It is true that in one sense they are seen and discriminated by the senses as individualized objects; but in another sense, because of the absence of any characteristic marks of self-nature, they are not seen but are only imagined.

The Blessed One replied, saying: Mahamati, the error in these erroneous teachings that are generally held by the philosophers lies in this: they do not recognize that the objective world rises from the mind itself; they do not understand that the whole mind-system also arises from the mind itself; but depending upon these manifestations of the mind as being real they go on discriminating them, like the simple-minded ones that they are, cherishing the dualism of this and that, of being and non-being, ignorant to the fact that there is but one common Essence.

When appearances and names are put away and all discrimination ceases, that which remains is the true and essential nature of things and, as nothing can be predicated as to the nature of essence, it is called the "Suchness" of Reality. This universal, undifferentiated, inscrutable, "Suchness" is the only Reality, but it is variously characterized by Truth, Mind-essence, Transcendental Intelligence, Noble Wisdom, etc. This Dharma of the imagelessness of the Essence-nature of Ultimate Reality is the Dharma which has been proclaimed by all the Buddhas, and when all things are understood in full agreement with it, one is in possession of Perfect Knowledge, and is on his way to the attainment of the Transcendental Intelligence of the Tathagatas.

But, Mahamati, if you *assert* that there is such a thing as Noble Wisdom, it no longer holds good, because anything of which something is asserted thereby partakes of the nature of being and is thus characterized with the quality of birth. The very assertion: "All things are un-born" destroys the truthfulness of it. The same is true of the statements: "All things are empty", and "All things have no self-nature", both are untenable when put in the form of assertions. But when it is pointed out that all things are like a dream and a vision, it means that in one way they are perceived, and in another way they are not perceived; that is, in ignorance they are perceived but in Perfect-knowledge they are not perceived. All assertions and negations being thought-constructions are un-born. Even the assertion that Universal Mind and Noble Wisdom are Ultimate Reality, is thought construction and, therefore, is un-born. As "things" there is no Universal Mind, there is no Noble Wisdom, there is no Ultimate Reality. The insight of the wise who move about in the realm of imagelessness and its solitude is pure. That is, for the wise all "things" are wiped away even the state of imagelessness ceases to exist.

Then said Mahamati to the Blessed One: Pray tell us, Blessed One, about Universal Mind and its relation to the lower mind-system?

The Blessed One replied: The sense-minds and their centralized discriminating-mind are related to the external world, which is a manifestation of itself and is given over to perceiving, discriminating, and grasping its maya-like appearances. Universal Mind (*Alaya-vijnana*) transcends all individuation and limits. Universal Mind is thoroughly pure in its essential nature, subsisting unchanged and free from faults of impermanence, undisturbed by egoism, unruffled by distinctions, desires and aversions. Universal Mind is like a great ocean, its surface ruffled by waves and surges but its depths remaining forever unmoved. In itself it is devoid of personality and all that belongs to it, but by reason of the defilements upon its face it is like an actor who plays a variety of parts, among which a mutual functioning takes place and the mind-system arises. The principle of intellection becomes divided and mind, the functions of mind, the evil out-flowings of mind, take on individuation. The sevenfold gradation of mind appears: namely, intuitive self-realization, thinking-desiring-discriminating, seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and all their interactions and reactions take their rise.

The discriminating-mind is the cause of the sense-minds and is their support and with them is kept functioning as it describes and becomes attached to a world of objects, and then, by means of its habit-energy, it defiles the face of Universal Mind. Thus Universal Mind becomes the storage and clearing-house of all the accumulated products of mentation and action since beginning-less time.

Between Universal Mind and the individual discriminating-mind is the intuitive-mind (*manas*) which is dependent upon Universal Mind for its cause and support and enters into relation with both. It partakes of the universality of Universal Mind, shares its purity, and like it, is above form and momentariness. It is through the intuitive-mind that the good non-out-flowing emerges, are manifested and are realized. Fortunate it is that intuition is not momentary for if the enlightenment which comes by intuition were momentary the wise would lose their "wiseness" which they do not. But the intuitive-mind enters into relations with the lower mind-system, shares its experiences and reflects upon its activities.

* * *

If the evolving mortal-mind were of the same nature as Universal Mind the cessation of the lower mind-system would mean the cessation of Universal Mind, but they are different for Universal Mind is not the cause of mortal-mind. There is no cessation of Universal Mind in its pure and essence-nature. What ceases to function is not Universal Mind in its essence-nature, but is the cessation of the effect-producing defilements upon its face that have been caused by the accumulation of the habit-energy of the activities of the discriminating and thinking mortal-mind. There is no cessation of Divine Mind which, in itself, is the abode of Reality and the Womb of Truth.

* * *

Mahamati then asked the Blessed One, saying: Pray tell us, Blessed One, what clear understandings an earnest disciple should have if he is to be successful in the discipline that leads to self-realization?

The Blessed One replied: There are four things by the fulfilling of which an earnest disciple may gain self-realization of Noble Wisdom and become a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva: First, he must have a clear understanding that all things are only manifestations of mind itself; second, he must discard the notion of birth, abiding and disappearance; third, he must clearly understand the egolessness of both things and persons; and fourth, he must have a true conception of what constitutes self-realization of Noble Wisdom. Provided with these four understandings, earnest disciples may become Bodhisattvas and attain Transcendental Intelligence.

As to the first; he must recognize and be fully convinced that this triple world is nothing but a complex manifestation of one's mental activities; that is devoid of selfness and its belongings; that there are no striving, no comings, no goings. He must recognize and accept the fact that this triple world is manifested and imagined as real only under the influence of habit-energy that has been accumulated since beginningless past by reason of memory, false-imagination, false-reasoning, and attachments to the multiplicities of objects and reactions in close relationship and in conformity to ideas of body-property-and-abode.

As to the second; he must recognize and be convinced that all things are to be regarded as forms seen in a vision and a dream, empty of substance, un-born and without self-nature; that all things exist only by reason of a complicated network of causation which owes its rise to the discrimination and attachment and which eventuates in the rise of the mind-system and its belongings and evolvments.

As to the third; he must recognize and patiently accept the fact that his own mind and personality is also mind-constructed, that it is empty of substance, unborn and egoless. With these three things clearly in mind, the Bodhisattva will be able to enter into the truth of imagelessness.

As to the fourth; he must have a true conception of what constitutes self-realization of Noble Wisdom. First, it is not comparable to the perceptions attained by the sense-mind, and neither is comparable to the cognition of the discriminating and intellectual-mind. Both of these presuppose a difference between self and not-self and the knowledge so attained is characterized by individuality and generality. Self-realization is based on identity and oneness; there is nothing to be discriminated nor predicated concerning it. But to enter into it the Bodhisattva must be free from all presuppositions and attachments to things, ideas and selfness.

MIND ONLY

A Philosophical And Doctrinal Analysis of the Vijñānavāda

THOMAS E. WOOD

The Tri-svabhāva-nirdēśa (TSN) is usually ascribed to Vasubandhu, but this attribution is questionable for a number of reasons.

(1) There are four manuscript sources — two in Sanskrit and two in Tibetan [Tola and Dragonetti (1983)]. One of the Tibetan texts attributes the work to Vasubandhu and the other attributes it to Nāgārjuna. Nāgārjuna, of course, has nothing to do with the matter, but the very fact that a text of the TSN in the Bstan-'gyur is ascribed to him throws some doubt on Vasubandhu's authorship of the text.

(2) There are differences (*vide infra*) between the TSN and the Triṃśikā, which was written by Vasubandhu the Vijñānavādin.

(3) Unlike most of the major writings of the Vijñānavādins, the TSN has no commentary on it. This would be somewhat unusual if it were in fact a work of Vasubandhu's.

Since the TSN was certainly not written by Nāgārjuna and may not have been written by Vasubandhu, it cannot be said for certain who wrote it. Nevertheless, the TSN is an important work of the Vijñānavāda. It consists basically of a lengthier account of the doctrine of the three self-natures (or three non-self-natures) than is found in either the Madhyānta-vibhāga or the Triṃśikā.

The Sanskrit text and a translation of it are given below.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE THREE SELF-NATURES

1. The imagined (*kalpita*), the other dependent (*paratantra*) and the perfected (*pariṣpanna*): these are the three natures which are to be thoroughly understood by the wise.

*kalpitaḥ paratantraś ca pariṣpanna eva ca /
trayaḥ svabhāvā dhīrāṇaṃ gambhīraṃ jñeyam iṣyate //*

2. The dependent nature (*paratantra*) is that which appears; that which is imagined (*kalpita*) is the manner in which the

dependent nature appears. The dependent nature is so-called because its modifications arise on the basis of causes and conditions; the imagined nature is so-called because it is only imagination (*kalpanāmātra*).

*yat khyāti paratantra 'sau yathā khyāti sa kalpatah /
pratyayādharma-vṛttivāt kalpanāmātra-bhāvatah //*

3. The eternal non-existence of that appearance in the manner in which it appears (*yathākhyānam*) is known as the self nature of the perfected nature (*pariṇispanna-svabhāva*), because it is unchanging (*ananyathātva*).

*tasya khyātur yathākhyānam yā sadāvidyamānatā /
jñeyah sa pariṇispannah svabhāvo 'nanyathātvatah //*

4. What then appears? A false idea (*asaṅkalpa*). How does it appear? As a duality. What is the non-existence (*nāstīā*) of this duality? It is that in virtue of which there is the nature (*dharmatā*) of being devoid of duality (*advaya-dharmatā*).

*tatra kiṃ khyāty asaṅkalpah katham khyāti dvayātmanā /
tasya kā nāstīā tena yā tatadvaya-dharmatā //*

5. What is the imagination of the non-existent (*asaṅkalpa*)? It is the mind (*citta*), because whatever is imagined as an object and whatever causes such imagination is entirely false.

*asaṅkalpo 'tra kaś cittaṃ yatas tat kalpyate yathā /
yathā ca kalpayaty artham tathātyaniam na vidyate //*

6. The mind (*citta*) is two-fold, as cause (*hetu*) and effect (*phala*). As cause it is called the store consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*), and as effect it is called the evolved consciousness (*pravṛtti-vijñāna*). The latter is seven-fold.

*tad dhetu-phala-bhāvena cittaṃ dvividham īsyate /
yad ālayākhyā-vijñānam pravṛtyākhyam ca saptadhā //*

7. The *ālaya-vijñāna* is called "citta" because it collects the seeds (*bījas*) of the impurities and impulses (*vāsanās*). The second (i.e. the *pravṛtti-vijñāna*) is called "mind" (*citta*) because it evolves as the diverse appearances of things.

*saṅkleśa-vāsanā-bījaiś citatvāc cittaṃ ucyate /
cittaṃ ādyaṃ dvitīyaṃ tu cūrākāra-pravṛttitah //*

8. Collectively all eight consciousness are called the false imagination (*abhūta-kalpa*), and it is said to be three-fold: the fruition (*vaipākika*), the causal (*naimitika*) and the mere appearance (*prātibhāsika*).

*samāsato 'bhūta-kalpah sa caīṣa trividho matah /
vaipākikas tathā naimitiko 'nyah prātibhāsikah //*

9. The *ālaya-vijñāna* is called the root consciousness (*mūla-vijñāna*) because it is the fruit. The other two (i.e. the causal and the mere appearance) are called the evolved consciousnesses because they are modifications that depend on the distinction of the seer, the seen and knowledge.

*prathamam mūla-vijñānam tad vipākātmakam yatah /
anyah pravṛtti-vijñānam drśya-dṛg-vitti-vṛttitah //*

10. The profundity of the three natures consists in being and non-being, duality and nonduality, impurity and purity, and non-difference of the characteristics.

*sad-asatvād dvayaikatvāt saṅkleśa-vyavadānayoḥ /
lakṣaṇābhedataś ceṣṭā svabhāvānām gabhīratā //*

11. The imagined nature (*kalpita-svabhāva*) is said have the characteristic of existence (*sat*) and non-existence (*asat*),

because it is thought to exist, but is totally non-existent (*atyantābhāva*).

*sattvena ghyate yasmād atyantābhāva eva ca /
svabhāvaḥ kalpitās tena sad-asal-lakṣṇo mataḥ //*

12. The other dependent nature (*paratantra-svabhāva*) is said to have the characteristic of existence and non-existence because it exists as an illusion (*bhrānti*) but does not exist in the manner in which it appears.

*vidyate bhrānti-bhāvena yathākhyānam na vidyate /
paratantra yatas tena sad-asal-lakṣṇo mataḥ //*

13. The perfected nature (*niṣpanna-svabhāva*) is said to have the characteristic of existence and non-existence because it is the nature of nonduality and is the non-existence of duality.

*advayaṭvena yac cāsti dvayaśvabhāva eva ca /
svabhāvas tena niṣpannaḥ sad-asal-lakṣṇo mataḥ //*

14. The nature which is imagined (*kalpita-svabhāva*) by the ignorant is said to be both dual and unitary, because the object that is imagined has a two-fold nature and because the existence of that non-existence (*tad-asattvaika-bhāva*) is unitary.

*dvaivīdhyāt kalpiūrthasya tad-asattvaika-bhāvataḥ /
svabhāvaḥ kalpito bālair dvayaikatvātmako mataḥ //*

15. The other dependent nature (*paratantra-svabhāva*) is both dual and unitary because its appearance as a duality exists, and because its existence as a mere appearance (*bhrānti-mātra*) is singular.

*prakhyānād dvaya-bhāvena bhrānti-mātraika-bhāvataḥ /
svabhāvaḥ paratantrākhyo dvayaikatvātmako mataḥ //*

16. The perfected nature is said to be both dual and unitary because it is essentially the existence of duality and also because it is essentially a single nonduality.

*dvaya-bhāva-svabhāvatvād advayaika-svabhāvataḥ /
svabhāvaḥ pariniṣpanno dvayaikatvātmako mataḥ //*

17. The imagined nature and the other dependent nature are characterized by impurity; but the perfected nature is characterized by purity.

*kalpitāḥ paratantraś ca jñeyam saṃkleśa-lakṣaṇam /
pariniṣpanna iṣṭas tu vyavadānasya lakṣaṇam //*

18. The perfected nature is to be understood as non-different from the imagined nature, for the imagined nature is essentially the unreal duality, and the perfected nature is essentially the non-existence of that duality.

*asad-dvaya-svabhāvatvāt tad-abhāva-svabhāvataḥ /
svabhāvāt kalpiūj jñeyo niṣpanno 'bhīna-lakṣaṇaḥ //*

19. The imagined nature is to be understood as non-different from the perfected nature, for the perfected nature is essentially nondual, and the imagined nature is essentially the non-existence of that duality.

*advayaṭva-svabhāvatvād dvayābhāva-svabhāvataḥ /
niṣpannāt kalpitās caiva vijñeyo 'bhīna-lakṣaṇaḥ //*

20. The perfected nature is non-different from the other dependent nature, because the other dependent nature exists differently from the way in which it appears, and

because the perfected nature is essentially the non-existence of that appearance.

*yathākhyānam asad-bhāvāt tathāsatva-svabhāvataḥ /
svabhāvāt paratantrākyān niṣpanno 'bhinna-lakṣaṇaḥ //*

21. The other dependent nature is to be understood as non-different from the perfected nature, because the perfected nature is essentially the unreality of duality, and because the other dependent nature lacks the nature of existing as it appears.

*asad-dvaya-svabhāvavād yathākhyānās-svabhāvataḥ /
niṣpannāt paratantrō 'pi vijñeyo 'bhinna-lakṣaṇaḥ //*

22. A particular order of the natures is set out according to the conventions about them and according to the order in which they are entered. They are as follows.

*krama-bhedaḥ svabhāvānām vyavahārādhikārataḥ /
tat-praveśādhikārāc ca vyutpatty-arthaṃ vidhiyate //*

23. The imagined nature is that which exists only conventionally (vyavahāra); the dependent nature is the cause (vyavaharātmaka) of that which exists only conventionally; the perfected nature is that which destroys that which exists only conventionally.

*kalpito vyavahārātmā vyavahartrātmako 'paraḥ /
vyavahāra-samucchedaḥ svabhāvaś cānya iṣyate //*

24. One enters first into the other dependent nature which is the non-existence of duality; then one enters into the imagined nature, the unreal duality which exists in it.

*dvayābhāvātmakaḥ pūrvam paratantrāḥ praviśyate /
tataḥ praviśyate tatra kalpamātram asad-dvayam //*

25. Then one enters the perfected nature which is in (*atra*) the dependent nature. The perfected nature is the existence of the non-existence of duality (*dvayābhāva bhāva*); consequently it, too, is said to exist and to not exist.

*tato dvayābhāva-bhāvo niṣpanno 'tra praviśyate /
tathā hy asāv eva tadā asti nāstīti cocyate //*

26. These three self natures have the characteristic of being nondual and ungraspable, because the imagined nature does not exist, the other dependent nature does not exist as such (i.e. in the way that it appears), and the perfected nature is essentially the non-existence of this manner of appearance.

*trayo 'py ete svabhāvā hi advayālabhya-lakṣaṇāḥ /
abhāvād atathābhāvāt tad-abhāva-svabhāvataḥ //*

27. It is like a magically produced elephant which appears through the power of a *mantra*. The elephant is a mere appearance (*ākāra-mātra*). It does not exist at all.

*māyā-kṛtaṃ mantra-vaśāt khyātiḥ hasty-ātmanā yathā /
ākāra-mātram tatrāsti hasti nāsti tu sarvathā //*

28. The imagined nature is the elephant; the other dependent nature is the apparitional form of the elephant; the perfected nature is the non-existence of the elephant in the other dependent nature (*tatra*).

*svabhāvaḥ kalpito hasti paratantras tad-ākṛtiḥ /
yas tatra hasty-abhāvo 'sau pariniṣpanna iṣyate //*

29. Due to the root consciousness (*mūla-citta*), the false imagination (*asaikalpa*) appears as a duality. That duality is entirely unreal. All that exists there is a mere apparitional form (*ākṛtīmātra*).

*asatkalpas tathā khyāti mūla-cittād dvayātmanā /
dvayam atyantato nāsti tatrāsty ākṛi-mātrakam //*

30. The root consciousness (*mūla-vijñāna*) can be compared to the *mantra*; suchness (*tathatā*) to the piece of wood; imagination (*vikalpa*) to an appearance of the elephant; and duality to the elephant.

*mantravan mūla-vijñānam kāṣṭhavat tathatā matā /
hasty-ākāravat eṣṭavyo vikalpo hastivad dvayam //*

31. As soon as one understands the three characteristics and the true nature of things (*artha-tattva*), there occurs — simultaneously — knowledge, abandonment and attainment.

*artha-tattva-prativedhe yugapal lakṣaṇa-traye /
parijñā ca prahāṇam ca prāptiś ceṣṭā yathākramam //*

32. There, knowledge is non-perception, abandonment is non-appearance, attainment is perception without any object as cause. The last is direct realization.

*parijñānupalambho 'ra hānir akhyānam iṣyate /
upalambho 'nimittas tu prāptiḥ sāksāt-kṛyāpi sā //*

33. Duality disappears through the non-perception of duality; through the disappearance of duality, the perfected nature, which is the non-existence of duality, is understood.

*dvayasyānupalambhena dvayākāro vigacchati /
vigamāt tasya nispanno dvayābhāvo 'dhigamyaite //*

34. Similarly, in the case of magic, the non-perception of the elephant, the disappearance of its form, and the perception of the piece of wood, take place simultaneously.

*hasitino 'nupalambhaś ca vigamaś ca tad-ākṛteḥ /
upalambhaś ca kāṣṭhasya māyāyām yugapad yathā //*

35. Through the restraint of thought, through the perception that discriminative intelligence (*buddhi*) is useless, through the adherence to the three-fold knowledge, through the effortless attainment of liberation (*mokṣa*):

*viruddha-dhī-kāraṇatvād buddher vaiyarthya-darśanāt /
jñāna-trayānuvṛttiś ca mokṣāpatter ayatnataḥ //*

36. By means of the perception of "mind only" (*citta-mātra*), there is the non-perception of the external object which is known; through the non-perception of the external object, there is the non-perception of mind (*citta*).

*cittamātropalambhena jñeyārthānupalambhatā /
jñeyārthānupalambhena syāc cittānupalambhatā //*

37. From this two-fold non-perception, there is the perception of the fundamental nature of things (*dharmadhāu*); through the perception of the fundamental nature of things there is the perception of that which is all-pervading (*vibhūva*).

*dvayor anupalambhena dharmadhātūpalambhatā /
dharmadhātūpalambhena syād vibhūvopalambhatā //*

38. Having perceived the all-pervading and having attained the good of oneself and others, the sage attains the supreme enlightenment (*anuttarā-bodhi*) which consists of the three bodies of the Buddha.

*upalambha-vibhūvaś ca sva-parārtha-prasiddhiḥ /
prāpnoty anuttarām bodhiṃ dhīmān kāya-trayātmikām //*

The Three Natures

From: *The Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyü Siddhas*

Commentary by Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche

For those reasons, whatever is an entity that is the dependent nature
Is a cause for the existence of imputed things.
It arises without external apprehended objects;
It exists; and it has a nature that is not an object of any elaborations.
(47.)

At this point, we have briefly discussed the chittamatra view based on Chandrakirti's root verses. Verse 46 shows the assertion of the alayavijnana, and verse 47 shows the assertion of the three natures. Verse 45 shows the emptiness. It also indicates the assertion of a self-aware, or reflexive, awareness. Reflexive awareness consciousness, or self-awareness consciousness, is indirectly shown through these verses. These three verses give a complete overview of the chittamatra view.

For those reasons, whatever is an entity that is the dependent nature
Is a cause for the existence of imputed things
It arises without external apprehended objects;
It exists; and it has a nature that is not an object of any elaborations.
(47.)

This verse shows the three natures and is also a very important verse. The three natures teaching actually sums up the whole view of the Chittamatra school. Once you understand the three natures, then the True and False Aspectarian schools and their subschools are very easy to understand. We have discussed the three natures a number of times in the past, but we will now, once again, briefly discuss them.

The first nature is the imputed nature, the parikalpita. According to the seventh and eighth Karmapas' view, the imputed nature is based on the other-powered nature, the paratantra. The appearance aspect of the paratantra is the basis on which the conceptual mind imputes different things, such as the self of person and the self of phenomena. In relative truth, the imputed nature is the object of an ordinary being's consciousness. It exists as an object of an ordinary being's consciousness, but it cannot withstand the analysis of prajna. In short, it is the superimposition of the self and phenomena imputed through the influence, or power, of ignorance and its tendencies. On the basis of this duality, we superimpose different imputations.

It is said very clearly in the seventh Karmapa's *Pramana* literature that the imputed nature happens not at the level of perception, but at the level of mind consciousness: the conceptual mind, the sixth consciousness. That's the reason why it is called "imputed," because the conceptual mind consciousness, which has an inconceivable

number of aspects of imputations, exists at that level of imputation, or thought. It does not exist by way of its own characteristics.

The imputed nature has an inconceivable number of varieties of labels, or imputations. In general, when we classify the imputed nature, there are two basic divisions: the imputation of self and the imputation of phenomena. When we subdivide those two divisions, there are an inconceivable number of levels of subdivisions.

The second nature is the paratantra, the other-powered nature, or the dependent nature. It is said that the paratantra is the partially arising aspect of the alayavijnana and the seeds of different habitual tendencies. The paratantra is in the nature of consciousness that is not pure. It's an impure nature, and it is not ultimate. This is one aspect of the paratantra.

It is called the "dependent," or "other-powered," nature because it is dependent on the habitual tendencies and the seeds of the different imprints that exist in the continuum of the alayavijnana. It is also called the "dependent," or "other-powered," nature because even if it wanted to exist longer, it does not have the power to remain. That's very much like the nature of impermanence—the produced, or compounded, nature of things. They arise and then they cease. They have no power to remain. Also, there is no power, or no control, to alter the seeds. They remain as long as it is necessary to remain. For example, when we suffer, we do not have the power to make the experience shorter, or when we experience pleasure, we don't have the power to make it last longer. These experiences are dependent on the karmic seeds and conditions coming together. Therefore, it is called "dependent" nature.

All the impermanent phenomena, or compounded phenomena, are included in the dependent nature, such as an individual being's body and mind, the experiencer and the experienced object, self and other, and so forth. All of these are included in the paratantra, which is the basis for the imputations. It's very interesting. Next year, I think we should spend more time looking at the chittamatra view in our tenet class.

The habitual imprints, habitual patterns, or latent predispositions, that are imprinted on the alayavijnana are divided into three basic types. One type is the habitual imprints of elaboration. (This is a rough translation.) The second imprint is the imprint of the view of the self. The third imprint is the imprint, or tendency, of becoming. Like in the twelve nidhanas, there is one called "becoming" or "existence," that's what we're referring to.

The first habitual imprint of elaborations is the cause, or seed, of all imputations. It's the seed of all the superimpositions that we engage in from the very ordinary level of form to the level of complete enlightenment, buddhahood. We have so many different imputed, or superimposed, labels, terms, and so forth. These are the cause, or the seeds, of such elaborated concepts. So labels, or superimpositions, are the first type of imprints that we have in the *alayavijnana*.

The second latent predisposition basically refers to the habitual seed, or subtle tendency, that gives rise to the thought of and the clinging to the self of person as "I." It is also connected to clinging onto the notion of "my," which is connected to the self of phenomena. "My skandhas," and so forth, right? This second type of imprint is called the "imprint of the view of self." (Rinpoche talks with the translators in Tibetan.) I think we'll change the name of the first imprint to the "tendency to elaborate" (Rinpoche laughs). That's why we like these long sadhanas so much (laughter). They're very elaborate (laughter). If I give you a short and pithy one, nobody will take me seriously (laughter). The tendency for higher empowerments, more heads, more arms, longer sadhanas, more karma practices, all of these are in the first tendency (laughter). More meetings (laughter). Thus, the second imprint is the tendency of self-clinging.

The third imprint is the seed that causes the future aspects to mature or ripen, which is connected more to the self of phenomena. This is what is imprinted on the *alayavijnana* through the engagement of the sixth consciousness—through the interaction of the sixth consciousness with the object in concordance with virtuous and nonvirtuous actions. Most of the experiences of the phenomenal world arise from the third tendency. In short, we can say that the *paratantra* is the aspect of appearances that we experience as duality, which arise from ignorance and its tendencies. The *paratantra* appears as the outer universe, as a container, and beings are contained within the different realms, such as our body, and so forth. At the same time, it appears as one's mind consciousness, the apprehender, or experiencer. Therefore, both the habitual tendencies as seeds and the effects that arise from those seeds are seen as the *paratantra*. The imprints that we make and plant as seeds are the *paratantra*. The results that we experience as the world outside—our thoughts, emotions, and perceptions—are also the *paratantra*.

Another division of the *paratantra* is the *paratantra* that is beyond total afflictions; it's complete purification. There are two *paratantras*. The first one is experienced as the duality that is caused by habitual tendencies, or latent predispositions, of the impure

mind. The second one, the pure nature of consciousness, does not necessarily totally abide or exist in either the nature of affliction or in the nature of complete purification. Its nature is naturally pure; therefore, it is not totally afflicted. But it is not completely in nature of purity because it is still stirred by certain incidental, or adventitious, stains. That's very interesting, isn't it? They're saying that it's pure, but it's still covered a little bit by the incidental stains. Therefore, it's neither totally pure or totally afflicted. We should change the name so that it reflects that it is neither totally afflicted or completely purified: the impure paratantra and the pure paratantra. There are many ways to divide the paratantra. This is just one more way (laughter, Rinpoche laughs) of dividing it.

The third nature, the perfectly existing, or thoroughly established, nature, the parinishpanna is described as the paratantra that is completely free from the imputed nature. When the pure dependent nature is free from the imputed nature of the superimpositions, that is the ultimate state: the emptiness of other. The final state of paratantra itself is not empty, but it is empty of all the superimpositions, imputations, and so forth. It's free from all elaborations.

The parinishpanna can be divided in many different ways. One way of dividing it is into the unchanging parinishpanna and the unmistaken parinishpanna. The first division is the two selflessnesses. The nature of the two selflessnesses is the unchanging nature. The unmistaken parinishpanna is the emptiness nature. It seems to refer to the self-aware, or reflexive, awareness consciousness wisdom that directly realizes the nature of parinishpanna. That consciousness wisdom aspect of self-awareness is seen as unmistaken. In the Chittamatra school, *rang-rik* (Tib. rang rig) is usually called "self-awareness" or "reflexive awareness," but here they are calling it "consciousness wisdom." There's really not much difference, they're just different interpretations. Any questions?

Q1: Rinpoche, in your last presentation of the dependent nature, there were two parts: neither the completely pure nor the completely afflicted. Then, you said that the thoroughly established nature was the dependent nature that is completely free of the imputed nature. If it is completely free of the imputed nature, that would seem to imply that some aspect of the dependent nature would be completely pure.

DPR: When the dependent nature reaches the parinishpanna stage, it becomes completely pure in its own state. But when it is posited as the paratantra, then there is a sense of a mixture. It is similar to the idea of the path in general in the mahayana. It's mixed: half pure and half impure. Then it becomes more and more pure, or less

and less impure, depending upon what level of path you are on. The completely pure stage doesn't happen until you've reached the end of the bhumis—complete enlightenment. The paratantra is similar. Even though we are talking about a pure aspect of the paratantra, it is still in the state of being partially covered by stains.

Q1: Could you say that the first division of the other-powered nature, which is connected with the latent predispositions, is more ground, and that the second division, which is not really one or the other, is more path?

DPR: I think that the second one may be more like the ground, because the first one arises from that basis. The second one is beyond such expressions of totally afflicted or totally pure. In some ways, its nature is inexpressible or inconceivable. We can't conceive it as being totally afflicted or as being totally pure at this stage.

Q1: Wouldn't that second one be the same as the parinishpanna?

DPR: In some cases, yes, it is called the "pure paratantra." The pure paratantra would not be much different from the parinishpanna. That's why I'm saying that there are these different ways to classify the three natures. One way of classifying it is to say that the pure paratantra is not different from the parinishpanna. Does that help?

Q1: Yes, thank you.

DPR: You're welcome. This is the basic idea of the three natures, which is only briefly discussed in the root verses and commentary. We need to look very closely at these three verses, because the rest of the refutations come from them. Chandrakirti starts with the refutation of the paratantra.

Q2: A point of clarification on the thoroughly established nature. It is sometimes said that the thoroughly established nature is a quality of the dependent nature—the dependent nature being empty of the imputational nature. Other times, it's been asserted that it's a thing unto itself. It's like the dependent nature disperses, and the thoroughly established nature is the really true thing. In your presentation of the two types, or two aspects, of the thoroughly established nature, the emptiness nature seems to be of the quality type, which is the dependent nature that is empty of the adventitious stains of the imputational nature. The second one, the self-aware consciousness, or reflexive awareness, seems to be a separate thing that is not included in the dependent nature. How do these two things relate to the dependent nature?

DPR: Self-awareness and...?

Q2: The emptiness nature—the dependent nature being empty of the imputational nature. Maybe I've misunderstood. The crux of the issue seems to be the relationship between the thoroughly established nature and the dependent nature.

DPR: The thoroughly established nature is the clear seeing of the impure paratantra nature not existing in the nature of the imputations. The impure paratantra appears as the imputations, right? It does not exist in that nature primordially—from the beginning. This emptiness is realized through the nonconceptual wisdom of self-aware consciousness. They're saying that it is the realization of the selflessness of phenomena. It's the seeing of all phenomena—imputed and paratantra phenomena—as empty, or selfless. When the impure paratantra is thoroughly processed, it becomes the basis, or the ground, of the realization of the parinishpanna. Basically, the parinishpanna, as we discussed earlier, is the second aspect of the wisdom: the unmistakable parinishpanna. That unmistakable parinishpanna wisdom clearly sees the nature of selflessness, which is also not separate from the pure paratantra. So self-awareness is connected to the parinishpanna. The wisdom aspect is self-awareness.

Q2: It sounds like the pure dependent nature is almost an object pole, and the parinishpanna is like a cognitive pole, but they're actually inseparable. There's just two ways of talking about it.

DPR: Say that again.

Q2: The dependent nature, which has these impure imputations on it, is realized to be free of those imputations, but there is still a pure dependent nature there. In this discussion, the consciousness that's realizing this is described as the pure thoroughly established nature, as if there is a pure dependent nature and a pure thoroughly established nature, but in fact they would just be one thing.

DPR: I think it's something like that.

Q3: I couldn't help but notice the similarity between the description of the parinishpanna as not being empty of itself, but as being empty of the elaborations and the obvious connection to the shentong doctrine. I was wondering how strong that connection might be, if there is any?

DPR: Very strong (laughter).

Q3: Thank you (laughter, Rinpoche laughs).

DPR: It depends on whose interpretation of shentong we are referring to. This is something that we must understand very clearly. When we say “shentong,” there’s not just one shentong view. Everybody seems to think that there’s just one view of shentong, but that’s not true. There are the two basic interpretations of shentong. In Tibetan, one is known as the *ying shentong* (Tib. dbying gzhan stong) and the other is *selwa shentong* (Tib. gsal ba gzhan stong). Ying shentong has more emphasis on the dharmata: the ultimate space, or ultimate nature. Like in Maitreya’s teachings on the dharmata. I’m just using it as an example; I’m not saying that his text is a shentong text. In ying shentong, there’s more emphasis on emptiness than in selwa shentong. In selwa shentong, there’s more emphasis on luminosity. This is the way that some of the great scholars have grouped it (Rinpoche laughs).

So there’s not just one interpretation. Then, within these two schools, there are many teachers whose interpretations differ slightly. Some are more closely associated with the Chittamatra school and some are less associated. There are also some madhyamika masters who classify shentong into the Chittamatra False Aspectarian school. So it really depends on whose interpretation you’re referring to. Generally, there is a similarity, but that doesn’t mean that they are the same. Just because they use the same term, it doesn’t mean they have the same view. For example, madhyamika scholars will use the term “vase,” just like ordinary people do, but when they analyze the vase, they have quite a different view of it than ordinary people have. Just because they use terms like the “three natures,” the shentong scholars say that it does not necessarily make shentong a part of the Chittamatra school. Therefore, you have to look whose interpretation of shentong you are referring to. Some extremist shentong views will definitely be connected to the Chittamatra school, maybe even to the Samkhya school (laughter). Just kidding (laughter, Rinpoche laughs). Who am I to say? I’m just repeating it, like in the Prasangika school (laughter).

We should have “The Seven Points of View Training” slogans. The first one could be: Do not generalize the shentong view (laughter, Rinpoche laughs). For those of you who are interested in shentong, it might be worthwhile to look into the literature of Shakya Chokden. A great prasangika master of the Nyingma school said that it’s very easy to refute the shentong view that exists in Tibet, except for the view of one shentong master—Shakya Chokden. To refute Shakya Chokden’s view is very difficult. So he must have a very subtle detailed way of presenting the shentong view. It would be interesting to look at it. We have a connection to Shakya Chokden

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A Systematic Presentation of
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By Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé

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Chapter Six Chittamātra

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1) An explanation of the Chittamātra system

This has three sections:

- (1) The meaning of the term and its etymology
- (2) The summary of its seven bases
- (3) The characterization [of the Chittamātra system]

a) The meaning of the term and its etymology

The Chittamātras state that consciousness is real (*bden pa*).

Those who assert that entities (*dnegos po*) that are other than mind do not exist in any way, and that mind, which is mere consciousness, exists as a real entity (*bden pa'i dnegos po*) are known as Chittamātras or Proponents of Cognition (Vijñaptivādins).^a The *Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*¹ says:

O Sons and daughters of the Victors: all these three realms are simply mind (*sems tsam*). [498]

Since they take the meaning of that quotation to properly reflect the way things are and practice taking that to mind, they are also known as Yogācāras.

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b) The summary of its seven bases

This has two parts:

- (1) An overview
- (2) An extensive explanation

aa'. An overview

They condense the entire Mahāyāna path into seven bases.

The Chittamātras condense the whole Mahāyāna path into seven bases (*gzhi*), following what is stated in the *Abhidharma Sūtra*:^b

^a For a useful article on the term *vijñapti* (Tib. *nam rig*), translated here as 'cognition,' see Hall (1986).

^b The *Abhidharma Sūtra* (San. not available, Tib. *Chos mngon pa'i mdo*) is no longer available except for quotations found in other texts. One such text is the *Compendium of the Mahāyāna*, which states that it is based on the *Abhidharma Sūtra*.

The source of knowable objects; the natures; engaging those;
the causes and results; the divisions;
the three trainings; and the results—the relinquishments
and wisdoms—are what make the [Mahā]yāna outstanding and distinguished.

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bb.' An extensive explanation

This has seven parts:

- (1) The source of knowable objects
- (2) The [three] characteristics of [knowable objects]
- (3) [How] to engage the import of those
- (4) The causes and results [in the Mahāyāna]
- (5) The divisions [of the Mahāyāna path]
- (6) The three trainings
- (7) The results of purification

1". The source for knowable objects

The source of knowable objects is the all-basis consciousness.

The source (*gnas*) of knowable objects is taught to be the all-basis consciousness (*ālaya vijñāna*, *kun gzhi'i mam shes*), so that we will become skilled in understanding the dependently originated causes of all phenomena. There are four points involved in ascertaining this [topic].

- (1) The reasons that the all-basis exists are given in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intention*:²

The appropriating consciousness^c is profound and subtle.
All seeds flow [in it], like a river.
It is wrong to regard it as a self;
thus I do not teach it to the immature.

- (2) The characteristics [of the all-basis] are as described in the *Abhidharma Sūtra*:

The expanse of beginningless time
is the source of all phenomena.
Since it exists, there are beings
and the attainment of nirvāṇa.

[The all-basis consciousness] is the cause for the arising of all thoroughly afflicted phenomena since it holds [such] seeds completely on the basis of the habitual

This verse summarizes the subject matter (and titles) of the ten chapters of the *Compendium of the Mahāyāna*, which Jamgön Kongtrül condenses into the seven bases of the Chittamātra. For more information see Keenan (1992).

^c San. *ādānavijñāna*, Tib. *len pa'i mam shes*.

tendencies for all thoroughly afflicted phenomena. Since it can become anything, it is also not obscured. [499] It is also not something virtuous or unvirtuous, it is, therefore, indeterminate (*lung du ma bstan pa*).

- (3) As for when [the all-basis consciousness] is counteracted (*ldog pa*): it functions (*'jug*) as long as beings are in *samsāra*, but it is reversed with the attainment of arhatship. This accords with the teaching:^d

That, like a flowing river,
is reversed with [the attainment] of arhatship.

When one becomes a buddha, it is counteracted in the sense of being transformed, as is said:^e

Whatever is of the all-basis consciousness
becomes mirror[like] wisdom.

- (4) [The all-basis consciousness] is distinctly different from a creator, such as *Īshvara*. *Īshvara* and the like are considered to be a single creator or a permanent self. The all-basis is notably superior in that it is asserted that each and every sentient being has it, and it is of the nature of the momentary dependent origination that is the opening for entities.^f

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2". The [three] characteristic of [knowable objects]

This has three parts:

- (1) The dependent characteristic, the basis for designation
- (2) The imagined characteristic, what is designated
- (3) The consummate characteristic, the pervader

a". The dependent [characteristic], the basis for designation

As for the three characteristics: the dependent characteristic arises from that [all-basis consciousness].

^d **where?** Can't find this in *Theg bsdus* or *dGongs 'grel*.

^e **where?** Can't find this in *Theg bsdus* (although there is reference to this ch. 10, *rnam shes phung po gnas gyur ba'i phyir me long lta bu dang mnyam pa nyid...ye shes la dbang 'bor ba...*) or *dGongs 'grel*

^f Dependent origination that is the opening for entities (*svabhāva-vibhāgin*, *ngo bo nyid mam par 'byed pa'i rten cing 'brel 'byung*): Jamgön Kongtrül discusses this type of dependent origination in Part Two of Book Six (vol. 2, 426) of the *Treasury of Knowledge*. There he describes it as referring to the fact that "all outer and inner phenomena are emanated from the all-basis consciousness." (*Phyi nang gi chos thams cad kun gzhi'i mam par shes pa las sprul*). This is found in Asaṅga's discussion of the all-basis consciousness in the first chapter of his *Compendium of the Mahāyāna*, where he says, "All phenomena arise in dependence upon the all-basis. That is the opening for entities." (*Gang kun gzhi mam par shes pa la brten nas chos mams 'byung ba de ni ngo bo nyid mam par 'byed pa can*).

It is the imagination of what is unreal; it arises from the power of habitual tendencies,
does not remain for an instant, and is governed by what proceeds it.

[Knowable objects] are categorized in terms of the three characteristics.⁸ First, the dependent characteristic⁹ is what arises from that all-basis consciousness. It is what appears as perceived aspects (*zung cha'i mam pa*)—that is, what appears as the phenomena of the skandhas, dhātus, and āyatanas—and it is what appears as the perceiving aspects (*'dzin cha'i mam pa*). [As such,] it is referred to as “the imagination of what is unreal.”¹⁰

- Because [the dependent nature] arises due to the power of its own habitual tendencies, which are previous seeds of similar types, it is [dependent] in terms of its *causes*.
- Because its nature (*rang gi ngo bo*) is that it does not remain for a second moment once it comes into existence, it is [dependent] in terms of its *entity*.
- Because subsequent [moments of the dependent nature] are generated as similar types, and because such later [moments] are governed by the previous ones, it is [dependent] in terms of its *results*.

In brief, [the dependent nature] is the basis of designation (*gdags gzhi*) for the imagined [characteristics] and is part (*cha*) of the all-basis. It is the imagination of what is unreal, which is the mere cognition (*viñaptimātra*, *nam rig tsam*) characteristic of [all beings in] the three realms. [500] Its nature (*ngo bo*) is that it is substantially present.¹¹ From the perspective of delusion, it arises from causes and conditions.

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b". The imagined [characteristic], what is designated

On top of that substantially existing basis for designation,
mistakenly, a self, mine, and so forth are imagined.

On top of that dependent [nature], which (as just described) is the basis for designation and exists substantially, [there is what is imagined]. The mental consciousness, which is the imagination of what is unreal, mistakenly inflates (*sgro btags pa*) persons and phenomena, and

⁸ San. *trilakṣhaṇa*, Tib. *mtshan nyid gsum*. Also known as “three natures” (San. *trisvabhāva*, Tib. *rang bzhin gsum*).

⁹ San. *paratantra*, Tib. *gzhan dbang*.

¹⁰ Imagination of what is unreal (San. *abhūtaparikalpa*, Tib. *yang dag min pa'i kun rtog*): see Appendix I for a discussion of this key term.

¹¹ “Substantially present” (*rdzas su grub pa*) and “substantially existent” (*rdzas su yod pa*) are synonyms in the Chittamātra system. They are used to describe both the dependent characteristic and the consummate characteristic, and, therefore, do not necessarily mean “truly existent” (*bden par grub pa*).

imagines a self (*bdag*), “mine,” names, reasons, and so forth.^k [Imagined characteristics] appear although ultimately they do not exist substantially in any way, like the floating hairs^l [seen by someone with an eye disease]. They are only what are perceived by a deluded mind. [All] references (*dmigs pa*) to any [imagined characteristic as existent] are contrary to liberation (*thar pa'i mi mthun phyogs*). The imagined aspect is utterly nonexistent, like the horns of a rabbit.

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c”. The consummate [characteristic], the pervader

What is unconditioned, empty of the imputedly existent object of negation, is cognition empty of duality and nonconceptual: it exists ultimately.

The consummate^m is what is unconditioned, empty of the imagined [characteristics], which are the objects of negation: imputedly existent. It is consummate in that it is nothing other than the nonconceptual cognition (*shes pa*) empty of the duality of percept and perceiver; and it is the observed objects of [the path of] purification (*nam par dag pa'i dmigs pa*).

Imagined [characteristics] exist simply as designations, because they do not exist as entities (*dnogs por ma grub pa*). Dependent [characteristics] exist substantially, because they are able to perform functions. The consummate [nature] exists ultimately, because it is the object of nonconceptual [cognition].

Consequently, in the sūtras, teachings that list nonexistentsⁿ (*med pa'i nam grangs*) are presentations of imagined [characteristics]. Teachings on illusions, dreams, mirages, and the like are about the dependent [nature]. The presentations of nonconceptuality and the unconditioned teach the consummate [nature].

Āchāryas have given various accounts of their categorizations, of which the most well-known for the majority of Tibetan [āchāryas] are the following.

The imagined [characteristic] is twofold:

- (1) Imagined [characteristics] devoid of any characteristics (*mtshan nyid chad pa'i kun brtags*) are that which in fact do not exist, but are conceptually imputed, such as the belief in a self (*bdag lta*) or [the notion of] substantial presence.

^k The imagined characteristics (San. *parikalpita*, Tib. *kun brtag*) are all that is imputed on the basis of the dependent nature: all conceptual labels, universals or generally characterized phenomena (*spyi mtshan*), the idea of a self or true existence.

^l Floating hairs (San. *kesha/keshonḍuka*, Tib. *skra shad 'dzag pa*; falling hairs) are the result of an eye disorder (San. *timira*, Tib. *rab rib*). They are usually called “floaters”, defined as “a bit of optical debris (as a dead cell or a cell fragment) in the vitreous humor or lens that may be perceived as a spot before the eye” They “are spots before the eyes, usually in the form of dots, threads, beads, or circles, due to cells and cell fragments in the vitreous humor and lens.” (Merriam-Webster Unabridged 2.0)

^m San. *pariniṣpana*, Tib. *yongs grub*.

ⁿ An example of such teachings is found in the *Heart Sūtra*: “There are no forms, no sounds, no smells, . . .”

- (2) Categorical imagined [characteristics] (*mam grangs pa'i kun brtags*) are both object-universals (*don spyi*), which appear to thoughts, [501] and the appearance of the dualism of perceived objects and perceiving subjects for the nonconceptual sense consciousnesses.^o

The dependent [characteristic] has two aspects:

- (1) The impure dependent [characteristic] (*ma dag gzhan dbang*) is the mind and mental factors of [beings in] the three realms, which [though] not dual, appear as a duality due to habitual tendencies.^p
- (2) The pure dependent [characteristic] (*dag pa gzhan dbang*) is the cognition (*shes rig*) [of noble beings during meditative equipoise] in which there is no dualistic experience (*myong ba gnyis med*), and it is the cognition of noble beings during the subsequent state,^q which do not fixate on appearances.

The consummate [nature] is also twofold:

- (1) The unchanging consummate [nature] (*'gyur med yongs grub*) is dharmatā, empty of both the dependent (the basis for delusion) and the imagined (delusion [itself]). It is a nonimplicative negation, suchness, and what is unconditioned.
- (2) The unerring consummate [nature] (*phyin ci ma log pa'i yongs grub*) is the nondual cognition (*shes pa*), which is what remains (*shul*) when [cognition] is empty of the duality of percept and perceiver. It is reflexive awareness (*rang rig*), real (*bden pa*), and substantially present. The path and its observed objects (*dmigs pa*) are included with this [unerring consummate] from the point of view that they are what accompany [or aid the realization of the consummate nature].

From the perspective of conventions (*vyavahāra, tha snyad*), the imagined [characteristics] are the actual conventions; the dependent [characteristic] is the basis for conventions; and the consummate [characteristic] is beyond the level of conventions.

^o The appearance of subject and object as two discrete, separate things (*tha dad du snang ba*) to a sense consciousness is a nominal imagined [characteristic]. The object (the sense object) is not the imagined, neither is the perceiving subject (the sense consciousness). However, when they appear as a duality, that is a categorical imagined characteristic. (ALTG)

^p There is a difference between “the dualistic appearances of perceived object and perceiving subject” (*gzung 'dzin gnyis snang*) and “dualistic appearance” (*gnyis snang*). The dependent nature has dualism (*gnyis snang*) in that it has an externally oriented aspect and an internally oriented aspect (*kha phyi bltas dang nang bltas*), but it does not separate its perceived object from the perceiving cognition. (ALTG)

^q The mind during the subsequent state (*rjes shes*) is the mind during subsequent state of attainment (San. *prīṣṭhalabdha*, Tib. *rjes thob*), i.e., the period between states of meditative equipoise. Although often translated as “post-meditation,” it refers to the level of realization of emptiness that is attained when emerging from meditative equipoise. Bodhisattvas then apply this realization to seeing the illusion-like nature of all appearances and experiences while they engage in the six pāramitās. A synonym for the subsequent state of attainment is “the samādhi in which [appearances are seen to be] illusion-like” (*sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin*).

From the perspective of the use of these conventions (*tha snyad du 'jug pa*), the imagined [characteristic] is used for the delusion of dualistic appearances. The dependent [characteristic] is used for the referents (*don can*) that are free from that [imagined nature]. The consummate nature is used for suchness.

The examples for those are shown clearly in the case of a magical illusion. The mantras that create the emanation and the small piece of wood serving as the basis for the emanation [equate to] the fundamental mind^r and thusness (*tathātā, de bzhin nyid*). From those, the image (*ākāra, nam pa*) of the appearance of the elephant is the dependent [characteristic]. “Elephant” is the imagined [characteristic]. That [an elephant] does not exist in that [illusion of an elephant] is the consummate [characteristic].

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3”. [How] to engage the import of those

The practical engagement of those [three characteristics involves:] a threefold absence of discouragement; four abandonments; devoted interest; knowing the absence of any reference; abandoning imagination; and seeing correctly. Thus, they enter [the paths of] engagement through belief, seeing, meditation, and completion.

As for engaging the characteristics [of knowable objects], there are four [aspects to be considered] in order to realize their import.

- (1) Who are the individuals that engage these? They are [bodhisattvas] who have gathered the two accumulations of the Mahāyāna.
- (2) What causes this engagement? [502]
 - The strengths generated by roots of virtue.
 - The three types of attitudes free from discouragement: having the attitude that all sentient beings will achieve buddhahood; having the attitude to engage in the pāramitās; and having the attitude, “I will not be impeded by anything.”

^r This example is used in Vasubhandu's *Definitive Presentation of the Three Natures* (*Trisvabhavanirdeśa, Rang bzhin gsum nges par bstan pa*). The following explanation derived from that text may be helpful.

- The fundamental mind (*rtsa ba'i sems*) is the all-basis consciousness, which is the dependent characteristic, and correlates to the mantra.
- Thusness (*tathātā, de bzhin nyid*) is the consummate nature and is equated to the piece of wood, the underlying basis out of which the illusion is created.
- The mere image (*ākāra-mātra, nam pa tsam*) of the elephant is the dependent characteristic.
- “Elephant” means the concept “elephant,” which is the imagined characteristic.

Apprehending the appearance of the elephant as separate from the mind perceiving it is the imagined characteristic. (Of course, any thought about the elephant, such as “This is a beautiful elephant,” is the imagined characteristic.)

- The four abandonments: abandoning the mental engagements of shrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas; abandoning doubts about the Mahāyāna; giving up sectarianism towards the dharma; and casting aside conceptuality.
- Engaging in shamatha and vipashyanā with devoted interest.

(3) How does one engage [these three characteristics as a path]? By means of the habitual tendencies of studying, one investigates the classifications of names, entities (*dn̄gos po*), essence (*ngo bo nyid*), and specifics (*bye brag*), thereby coming to an understanding that the three characteristics are not observable reference points (*dmigs pa med pa*). One engages those in three stages: (1) by knowing that everything is merely imputedly existent (*btags yod tsam*); (2) by understanding everything to be merely cognition (*viññapti, mam rig*); (3) and by reversing the idea (*'du shes*) of [everything being] mere cognition (*viññaptimātra, mam rig tsam*).

In brief, one enters the path by understanding fully the delusion of the imagined; abandoning the imagination of the dependent [nature]; and seeing directly the consummate.

(4) What are the periods or phases of engagement? One engages the path gradually: first one [enters] the paths of accumulation and preparation with engagement through belief (*mos spyod*); then one [proceeds] on the paths of seeing, meditation, and completion.

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4". The causes and results [in the Mahāyāna]

The conduct of the six pāramitās are [both] the causes and the results.

The conduct of the six pāramitās are the causes that initially give rise to the graduated path of that engagement, and they are the culminating results.

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5". The divisions [of the Mahāyāna path]

Gradual progression is divided into ten bhūmis.

Engaging [the path of] the Proponents of Cognition (Vijñaptivādins) by [practicing] the six pāramitās results in the divisions of ten bhūmis, Very Joyful and the others. [This discussion] includes the way one progresses through the bhūmis by means of the pāramitās, the way one attains the bhūmis, and the length of time it takes to progress [through the bhūmis]. [503]

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6". The three trainings

The trainings are the three types of higher trainings.

The six pāramitās described above are included within the three trainings and are the sources of training for bodhisattvas.

The higher training in ethical conduct is of three types: the ethical conduct of restraint and the others.⁸ The term “higher” is used to mark that these [trainings] are distinguished from the Hīnayāna by the engendering of bodhichitta and other [qualities].

The higher training of the mind is to practice the bodhisattvas’ heroic stride samādhi and the others⁹ in order to meditate on the pāramitās, to mature sentient beings, and to achieve all the qualities of a buddha.

The higher training in knowledge is the relinquishment of all concepts and characteristics, and it is spontaneously and nonconceptually accomplished. It experiences states subsequent [to meditative equipoise] as illusionlike. This is the pāramitā of knowledge.

In general, the trainings of bodhisattvas are immeasurable, but if they are abbreviated, they are contained within these [three trainings].

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7”. The results of purification

The results are the excellences of relinquishment and wisdom.

The results that develop from those [trainings] are [twofold]: (1) the excellence of relinquishment, which is the conquering of the afflictive and cognitive obscurations, and (2) the excellence of wisdom, which is the three kāyas—the svabhāvakāya, sambhogakāya, and the nirmāṇakāya—and their essence or characteristic—the dharmakāya. [The dharmakāya] is endowed with five attributes: it is a transformation; the basis for positive qualities; nondual; permanent; and inconceivable. It is the source that radiates the immeasurable and inconceivable qualities of a buddha.

Some topics related to the bhūmis, paths, and so forth will be explained later [in this text].¹⁰ Those who wish to understand those in detail should refer to earlier Tibetan works, such as Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltsen’s *Tree [of Jewels]*.³

⁸ The three types of ethical discipline are: the ethical discipline of restraint (*śdom pa’i tshul khrims*), the ethical discipline of gathering the virtuous dharma (*dge ba’i chos sdud pa’i tshul khrims*), and the ethical discipline that benefits others (*sems can gyi don bya ba’i tshul khrims*). (*Compendium of the Mahāyāna*)

⁹ One list of four types samādhis are: the heroic stride (*dpa’ bar ’gro ba*), sky-treasury (*nam mkha’ mdzod*), the stainless (*dri ma med pa’i ’od*), and the lion’s majestic air (*seng ge nam bsgyings*).

The *Compendium of the Mahāyāna* gives: illuminating the Mahāyāna (*theg pa chen po snang ba*), accumulating all merit (*bsod nams thams cad yang dag par bsags pa*), the excellent royal samādhi (*ting nge ’dzin gyi rgyal po bzang skyong*), and the heroic stride (*dpa’ bar ’gro ba*).

¹⁰ The bhūmis and paths are presented in Book Nine, Part One.

I have taken the assertions of earlier Tibetan [masters] as the basis for this presentation, and [followed] the tradition that maintains that Maitreya's Dharma Treatises^v and the texts of Asaṅga and his brother, [Vasubhandu,] are Chittamātra.

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c) The characterization [of the Chittamātra system]

This has two parts:

- (1) The general explanation
- (2) The actual characterization [of Chittamātra]

aa'. The general explanation

The root of their assertions is that other than being mere cognition, external referents do not have even the slightest existence, like dreams.

The root of the Chittamātra's general assertion is that external referents (*phyi rol gyi don*) do not have even the slightest existence, other than being mere cognition (*viññaptimātra*, *nam rig tsam*), like appearances in dreams. They give the following reasons:

- Referents, such as forms, and everything such as the arising and ceasing of those [referents] are only mental appearances (*śems snang*), like the floating hairs [seen by someone with an eye disease] or the appearance of two moons [when you press on your closed eyelids].
- If external referents truly existed (*bden par yod pa*), it would follow that they would exist for the nonconceptual wisdom of noble beings abiding in meditative equipoise; and yet they do not exist for [noble beings in that state].
- What appears to the six kinds of beings seems to be distinctly different even though [their perception] is not affected by superficial causes for [perceptual] error, as in the example of one thing, such as a river, being seen, due to their positive or negative karma, as nectar by gods, water by humans, as pus and blood by hungry ghosts, and molten metal by beings in the hot hells due to their positive or negative karma.

Furthermore, the Chittamātra use many scriptural references and reasonings to refute external referents and prove that [all phenomena] are mere cognition (*viññaptimātra*, *nam rig tsam*).

^v Maitreya's Dharma Treatises (*Byams pa'i chos sde*) are the following five texts:

1. Ornament of Clear Realization (San. *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*; Tib. *mNgon rtogs rgyan*)
2. Ornament of the Sūtras (San. *Sūtrālaṅkāra*, Tib. *mDo sde rgyan*)
3. Differentiation of the Middle and the Extremes (San. *Madhyāntavibhāga*, Tib. *dbUs mtha' rnam 'byed*)
4. Differentiation of Phenomena and Their Nature (San. *Dharmadharmatāvibhāga*, Tib. *Chos dang chos nyid mam 'byed*)
5. Highest Continuum (San. *Uttaratantra*, Tib. *rGyud bla ma*)

mind; rather they are falsities or imputed existents. We should know this accords with the explanations given by many scholars, such as Lakṣhmīkara.¹⁰

Karma Tinlé¹¹ commented:

Both Chittamātra [sub-schools] must be called Proponents of Cognition (Vijñaptivādins), or Chittamātras, because they assert each momentary, partless consciousness, which is free from percept and perceiver, to be ultimate reality. If, however, [the criteria] for applying that [name Chittamātra] is only to assert that appearing referents (*don snang*) are mind, there would be the fault of encompassing too much in that it would apply to Sautrāntikas, and not encompassing enough in that it would not apply to the [Proponents of] False Images.

Both [Chittamātra sub-schools] assert that reflexively aware, self-illuminating consciousness, which is without percept and perceiver, is the ultimate. [In the ordinary state] it is covered by the obscurations of dualistic appearances; thus when one attains the qualities of a noble being, that [consciousness] is simply separated from dualistic appearances. [508]

Some Tibetans cite the teachings of the āchārya Vasubhandu¹² as a scriptural [source] for these [Chittamātra views]. This is simply the mistake of those who speak deviously in that they are not distinguishing between [Vasubhandu's] assertion that wisdom is truly existent (*bden grub*) and the [Chittamātra] statement that consciousness is truly existent.

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2". The ancillary [characterization]

This has two parts:

- (1) The āchāryas who are the assertors of those [Chittamātra positions]
- (2) The way that [Chittamātra view] is refuted

a". The āchāryas who are the assertors of those [Chittamātra positions]

This is the system of five hundred earlier āchāryas and others.

There are Tibetans^{dd} who unanimously say that with the exception of *The Ornament of Clear Realization*, all the other Dharma Treatises of Maitreya teach the Chittamātra. Some assert that the *Highest Continuum* keeps to the meaning (*don du gnas*) of the Madhyamaka. [Others] assert that the final wheel of dharma presents only the Chittamātra, not the Madhyamaka. There are those who say, "Asaṅga¹³ and his brother, [Vasubhandu,] were the co-founders of this chariot-system, and all their texts are Chittamātra. The [Proponents of] Real Images and of False Images and other [subdivisions] appeared among their followers. Dignaga¹⁴ and his son, [Dharmakīrti,]¹⁵ asserted the positions of both the [Proponents of] Real Images and the [Proponents of] False Images." Others state, "The noble Nāgārjuna also asserted both those positions." And some say, "Although Asaṅga was a Mādhyamika āchārya, that does not

^{dd} This is a reference to the view of Tsongkhapa and his followers, i.e., the Gelug school.

conflict with his having composed Chittamātra treatises, like Vasubhandu's [composition of] the *Treasury of Abhidharma*.^{ee}

There are many such statements expressing individual points of view. The great omniscient dharma lord of Jonang [Dolpopa]¹⁶ taught:

The final wheel of dharma and the middle [texts]^{ff} of Maitreya's Dharma Treatises do not present the Madhyamaka that Tibetans assert. They do, however, teach the Madhyamaka expounded by the Victor and his heirs. Tibetan assertions concerning the thought of the major texts of the noble [Nāgārjuna], such as his Collection of Reasonings,¹⁷ and similar works, are quite limited and by no means final.

The great exalted one of Jonang and his followers maintain (*dam 'cha'*) that Asaṅga and his brother were Mādhyamika āchāryas and that their [system of] philosophical tenets is the Great Madhyamaka (*dbu ma chen po*).

If you wonder, "In that case, which āchāryas founded the Chittamātra system?" [509] There were five hundred Mahāyāna āchāryas: great exalted ones of earlier times, Avitarka^{gg} and others. "Others" includes some of their followers and the systems of some later Proponents of the Mere Cognition (Vijñaptimātra).

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b". The way that [Chittamātra view] is refuted

All the faults of the Realists are refuted by the texts of the noble [Nāgārjuna].

[The system of the Proponents of] False Images and [the philosophical systems] below them assert that appearances are pervaded by delusion. Their positions (*'jog pa*) concerning delusion and [the triad of] objects, actions, and agents (*bya byed*) is such that they cannot comprehend that there is no truly existing substratum (*gzhi rten bden grub med pa*). They are, therefore, referred to as Realists.^{hh} These lower [philosophical tenet systems] do—in

^{ee} Vasubhandu's *Treasury of Abhidharma* (San. *Abhidharmakosha*, Tib. *Chos mngon pa'i mdzod*) is an explication of the Vaibhāṣika's abhidharma doctrine. He wrote it prior to his conversion to the Mahāyāna, but the point of this statement is that teachers sometimes compose texts on philosophical systems that are not their final view.

^{ff} Maitreya's five Dharma Treatises are grouped as three: the two *Ornaments*, the two *Differentiations*, and the *Highest Continuum*. Thus, the middle texts are *Differentiation of the Middle and the Extremes* and *Differentiation of Phenomena and Their Nature*.

^{gg} Tāranātha states in his *History of Buddhism in India*, "There were about five hundred preachers of the Doctrine like *mahābhāṭṭāraka* Avitarka, Vigatārāgadvaṣa, Divyākaraḡupta, Rāhulamitra, Jñānātala, *mahā-upāsaka* Saṅgātala and others. ... All [those] Mahāyānas were followers of the path of Yogacāryā." (Tāranātha. 1990).

^{hh} San. *Vastusatpadārthavādin*, Tib. *dNgos por smra ba* or *dNgos po yod par smra ba*, Proponents of [Truly] Existing Entities or "Substantialists"). "Realists," as used in Buddhist philosophy, refers to those who are

relationship to a specific basis for negation [that they consider to be] truly existent (*dgag gzhi bden grub*)—refute a specific object of negation imagined by a philosophical system lower [than themselves]. Nevertheless, in the end, all the intellectual faults of the philosophical tenets of Realists are refuted properly [only] by the noble [Nāgārjuna's] major texts, called the Collection of Reasonings,¹⁸ and those of his followers. [Those texts] elucidate the special feature of the Madhyamaka: knowing how to posit [the triad of] objects, actions, and agents despite the nonexistence of a substratum.

Consequently, the *Synopsis of the View Asserted [by Mañjushrī]*¹⁹ says:

In the main texts of the Vaibhāṣikas, Sautrāntikas,
and Yogacharyās
there is some truth and [also things that are] not true.
[Only] the Madhyamaka tradition is entirely true.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CHITTAMĀTRA AND THE MADHYAMAKA

Some say there are major differences between the Chittamātra and the Madhyamaka in terms of ground, path, and result and in other ways. However, the principal distinction between the two Mahāyāna schools is that [the Chittamātras] assert that reflexively aware, self-illuminating cognition, empty of the duality of percept and perceiver, exists ultimately and the Mādhyamikas do not. When explaining the Chittamātra [system of] philosophical tenets, the *Compendium on the Heart of Wisdom*²⁰ and other texts²¹ say:

Consciousness free from percept and perceiver
exists ultimately.

In their sections that present the Madhyamaka [system of] philosophical tenets, these texts²² say:

The wise do not assert that
consciousness exists ultimately.

said to assert the true existence of entities (what the entities are differs according to the school). It should be understood that these schools, of course, do not use the term for themselves: Chittamātra do not consider themselves Realists. Thus, this statement should be understood to be from the perspective of the Madhyamaka systems.

The Prasangika School's Critique of Chittamattra (From Daniel Cozort, *Unique Tenets of the Middle Way Consequence School*)

Chandrakirti's Critique of Chittamattra (pp 97-101)

Chandrakirti's critique of Chittamattra comes in the context of the second part of his explanation of the famous tetralemma of the Madhyamika School with respect to production, the inquiry into whether things are produced from things that are different from them. This is found in the sixth chapter of the *Entrance to the Middle Way*, verses 45-71 and 84-97 (the intervening verses are concerned with refuting the notion of self-consciousness). The following is a summary of his arguments:

1. The Chittamattra School points out that in a dream, there is an apprehension of a dream-object, and one can later remember that dream-object, even though there is no external object. For them, the absence of the object after the dream shows that it had no external existence whereas its recollection when one is awake shows that consciousness truly exists. However, this is fallacious; if a subsequent recollection could establish the existence of an (inherently existent) mind, an external object would also be established, since it was recalled as an external object (VI.48-49).

2. Similarly the Chittamattra School likes to point out that the objects of a dream function just like external objects, since a dream-object can be the cause of attachment. Thus, they say that there really is no difference between a dreaming and waking mind, nor between internal dream-objects and so-called external objects. However, this does not establish the true existence of the dreaming mind, but rather only proves that *both* a waking mind and a dreaming mind are false. Both a dream consciousness and a waking consciousness are mistaken with respect to their objects, for their objects to not inherently exist even though that is the way they appear. Hence, the visual object, the eye, and the eye consciousness are all false. When one awakens from the sleep of ignorance, one understands that one's ordinary cognition was mistaken, just as upon awakening from a dream one realizes that the dream-objects did not exist. (VI.50-53).

3. As another illustration of perception without an external object, the Chittamattra School likes to point to the instance of persons with the eye disease amblyopia who see "falling hairs" in front of them. However, this example establishes merely that the awareness is defective, without valid perception, and thus not truly existent, since people with good vision see nothing in the place where "falling hairs" are seen. If a mind were truly existent, it could not be contradicted by the perceptions of others; hence, others would also see the falling hairs. (VI.54-55). (This, then is like the example of dreaming: perception "without an object" occurs only when one's consciousness is under the control of a distorting force such as sleep or amblyopia; and if the consciousness in question truly existed, its objects would absurdly exist for others.)

4. The Chittamattra contention that the appearance of objects and the perception of them arise from seeds that are in the mind-basis-of-all is not feasible. A potential must be the cause of either a present consciousness or a future consciousness. If it is the cause of a present consciousness, then as

a cause it would exist at the same time as its effect, which is absurd, since a cause must exist prior to its effect. On the other hand, if it were the cause of a future consciousness, it would not exist when its effect did, in which case it would have no connection to it (VI.56-61).

5. If the appearance of objects is dependent only on karmic seeds, and not on one's sense organs, then the blind absurdly should be able to see things while awake just as they do when they are asleep and dreaming (VI.62-67).¹

6. A yogin can perceive the ground to be covered with skeletons as the result of meditative stabilization. If the mind truly existed, its object would always be visible to others, but that is obviously not the case here, since others do not see the skeletons. The same holds true with respect to a hungry ghost's perception of blood and pus in a river. If the blood and pus truly existed, everyone would see those substances there. The Chittamatra reply that the hungry ghost's perception would be like that of a person with amblyopia is inadmissible, for there is nothing invalid about the hungry ghost's perception (VI.69-71).

7. The notion of self-consciousness (a consciousness that non-dualistically realizes a consciousness that in turn apprehends an object) is refuted. If the dependent natures that consciousness experiences are one entity with it, they are not apprehended-objects of that consciousness; how then can consciousness be posited, since there is nothing separate from it that it can be said to know? That is, how could consciousness be known if there is no object for it to know? The Chittamatra School replies that a consciousness knows itself. In fact, they maintain that only if a consciousness knew itself could recollection of that consciousness come about at a later time. However, this is both unnecessary and absurd. It is unnecessary because recalling the object experience previously serves as a sufficient cause for the recollection of the awareness; we remember, "I saw blue," for instance, and that serves as recollection not only of blue but of the *seeing* of blue. It is absurd because something posited as truly existent, as both the consciousness and its self-consciousness are. Also, self-consciousness is absurd because something cannot be both agent and recipient of action, just as a sword cannot cut itself nor an eye see itself (VI.72-77).²

8. The Chittamatrins have rejected the conventions of the world without warrant; they have fallen from both conventional truths and from ultimate truths (since they assume the true existence of consciousness) (VI.78-83).

9. The scriptures upon which the Chittamatra School relies either have been misinterpreted in the sense that they have been treated too literally or have not been understood to be merely provisional teachings for those incapable of hearing the more profound doctrine of the emptiness of inherent existence. First, in some sutras such as the *Sutra on the Ten Grounds*, Buddha said "The three realms are mind-only" just to indicate that, rather than a god who created the world and beings, the creative agency is only the intentional actions of beings. Second, in sutras such as the *Descent into Lanka Sutra*, Buddha taught that what appear to be external objects are actually mental

¹ This is another variation on the argument about the dream state. The Chittamatra School has argued that waking and dreaming objects are equivalent in terms of being able to produce consciousness.

² The analogies are in Chandrakirti's Autocommentary 104.7-5.1.

forms, but he did this only to help certain persons give up their attachment to forms and to make it easier for some to later understand the non-inherent existence of consciousness. Buddha said that both forms and consciousnesses equally exist conventionally and equally do not exist ultimately (VI.84-97).

The Prasangika Rebuttal of the Chittamattra Refutation of External Objects (pp 107-109)

According to those Gelukba authorities, the Prasangika rebuttal of the Chittamattra refutation of external objects includes the arguments listed below. That the Gelukbas feel free to extend the analysis of mind-only beyond Chandrakirti is clear: only the second through fifth arguments are drawn directly from Chandrakirti.³ The first four are direct replies to points made by the early Chittamattra school:

1. The Chittamattra refutation of partless particles does not preclude the existence of external objects.
2. Several of the examples used by the Chittamattra School to establish the feasibility of consciousness in the absence of external objects in fact only indicate that consciousness lacks true existence.
3. The Chittamattra use of ultimate analysis to refute external objects does not refute their conventional existence.
4. The Chittamattra assertion of simultaneous observation of both subject and object is not possible.

In addition to those four direct replies, another seven arguments and contradictory consequences are asserted:

5. Scriptures—the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras and the abhidharma scriptures—say that both form and consciousness conventionally exist but do not ultimately exist.
6. There is no conventional validly cognizing consciousness that refutes external objects.
7. Objects that were mere mental representations could not appear to conventional valid cognition.
8. Whatever is one entity with mind would absurdly be mind.
9. Although the existence of a mind-basis-of-all would entail the non-existence of external objects, a mind-basis-of-all does not exist.
10. Without external objects, nothing would exist.
11. Without external objects, shared objects of perception would be impossible.

³ Chandrakirti's *Entrance to the Middle Way* is a direct source for the second (VI.48-53), third (VI.78-83), fourth (VI.72-77) and fifth (VI.32) arguments.

The Mahāvaiṣṇava Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying on the Vulture Peak near Rājagṛha in the lecture hall of a many-tiered pavilion built of fragrant sandalwood. He had attained buddhahood ten years previously and was accompanied by an assembly of hundreds and thousands of great monks and a throng of bodhisattvas and great beings sixty times the number of sands in the Ganges River. All had perfected their zeal and had formerly made offerings to hundreds of thousands of myriad legions of buddhas. All could turn the irreversible wheel of the dharma. If a being were to hear their names, he would become irreversible in the highest path. Their names were Bodhisattva Dharma-Wisdom, Bodhisattva Lion-Wisdom, Bodhisattva Adamantine Wisdom (Vajra-mati), Bodhisattva Harmonious Wisdom, Bodhisattva Wonderful Wisdom, Bodhisattva Moonlight, Bodhisattva Jeweled Moon, Bodhisattva Full Moon, Bodhisattva Courageous, Bodhisattva Measureless Courage, Bodhisattva Transcending the Triple World, Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāptā, Bodhisattva Fragrant Elephant, Bodhisattva Fine Fragrance, Bodhisattva Finest Fragrance, Bodhisattva Main Treasury, Bodhisattva Sun Treasury, Bodhisattva Display of the Standard, Bodhisattva Display of the Great Standard, Bodhisattva Stainless Standard, Bodhisattva Boundless Light, Bodhisattva Bestower of Light, Bodhisattva Stainless Light, Bodhisattva King of Joy, Bodhisattva Eternal Joy, Bodhisattva Jeweled Hand, Bodhisattva Treasury of Space, Bodhisattva King of Light and Virtue, Bodhisattva Self-Abiding King of Dharmas, Bodhisattva Dharani, Bodhisattva Destroying All Ills, Bodhisattva Relieving All the Ills of Sentient Beings, Bodhisattva Joyous Thoughts, Bodhisattva Satisfied Will, Bodhisattva Eternally Satisfied, Bodhisattva Shining on All, Bodhisattva Moon Brightness, Bodhisattva Jewel Wisdom, Bodhisattva Transforming into a Woman's Body, Bodhisattva Great Thunderclap, Bodhisattva Spiritual Guide, Bodhisattva Not Groundless Views, Bodhisattva Freedom in All Dharmas, Bodhisattva Maitreya, and Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. There were also present bodhisattvas and great beings just like them from countless buddha lands, whose number equaled sixty times the number of sands in the Ganges River. Together with an uncountable number of gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinmaras, and mahoragas [all divine and quasi-divine beings], they all gathered to pay their respects and make offerings.

At that time, the Buddha sat up straight in meditation in the sandalwood pavilion and, with his supernatural powers, put on a miraculous display. There appeared in the sky a countless number of thousand-petaled lotus flowers as large as chariot wheels, filled with colors and fragrances that one could not begin to enumerate. In the center of each flower was a conjured image of a buddha. The flowers rose and covered the heavens like a jeweled banner, each flower giving forth countless rays of light. The petals all simultaneously unfolded their splendor and then, through the Buddha's miraculous powers, all withered in an instant. Within the flowers all the buddha images sat cross-

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I N P R A C T I C E

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legged in lotus position, and each issued forth countless hundreds of thousands of rays of light. The adornment of the spot at the time was so extraordinary that the whole assembly rejoiced and danced ecstatically. In fact, it was so very strange and extraordinary that all began to wonder why all the countless wonderful flowers should suddenly be destroyed. As they withered and darkened, the smell they gave off was foul and loathsome.

But at that point the World-honored One realized why the bodhisattvas were perplexed, so he addressed Vajramati ("Adamantine Wisdom"), saying, "O good son. If there is anything in the Buddha's teaching that perplexes you, feel free to ask about it." Bodhisattva Vajramati knew that everyone in the whole assembly was perplexed, and so addressed the Buddha, saying, "O World-honored One, why are there conjured buddha images in all of the innumerable flowers? And for what reason did they ascend into the heavens and cover the world? And why did the buddha images each issue forth countless hundreds of thousands of rays of light?" Everyone in the assembly looked on and then joined his hands together in respect. At that point, Bodhisattva Vajramati spoke in verses, saying:

Never ever have I witnessed
A miraculous display like today's.
To see hundreds of thousands and millions of buddhas
Seated in the calyxes of lotus flowers,
Each emitting countless streams of light,
Filling all the fields,
Scattering the dirt of false teachers,
Adorning all the worlds!
The lotuses suddenly wilted;
There was not one which was not disgusting.
Now tell us,
Why did you display this conjured vision?
We see buddhas more numerous than
The sands of the Ganges,
And incalculable transfigured forms.
Never before have I seen
The like of what I am witnessing now.
I wish you would give us a clear explanation.

At that time the World-honored One spoke to Vajramati and the other bodhisattvas, saying, "Good sons, there is a great *vaipulya-sūtra* called the *Tathāgarbha*. It was because I wanted to expound it to you that I showed you these signs. You should all listen attentively and ponder it well." All said, "Excellent. We very much wish to hear it."

The Buddha said, "Good sons, there is a comparison that can be drawn between the countless flowers conjured up by the Buddha that suddenly withered and the innumerable conjured buddha images with their many adorn-

ments, seated in lotus position within the flowers, who cast forth light so exceedingly rare that there was no one in the assembly who did not show reverence. In a similar fashion, good sons, when I regard all beings with my buddha eye, I see that hidden within the *kleśas* of greed, desire, anger, and stupidity there is seated augustly and unmovingly the tathāgata's wisdom, the tathāgata's vision, and the tathāgata's body. Good sons, all beings, though they find themselves with all sorts of *kleśas*, have a tathāgarbha that is eternally unsullied, and that is replete with virtues no different from my own. Moreover, good sons, it is just like a person with supernatural vision who can see the bodies of tathāgatas seated in lotus position inside the flowers, even though the petals are not yet unfurled; whereas after the wilted petals have been removed, those tathāgatas are manifested for all to see. In similar fashion, the Buddha can really see the tathāgarbhas of sentient beings. And because he wants to disclose the tathāgarbha to them, he expounds the sūtras and the dharma, in order to destroy *kleśas* and reveal the buddha nature. Good sons, such is the dharma of all the buddhas. Whether or not buddhas appear in the world, the tathāgarbhas of all beings are eternal and unchanging. It is just that they are covered by sentient beings' *kleśas*. When the Tathāgata appears in the world, he expounds the dharma far and wide to remove their ignorance and tribulation and to purify their universal wisdom. Good sons, if there is a bodhisattva who has faith in this teaching and who practices it single-mindedly, he will attain liberation and true, universal enlightenment, and for the sake of the world he will perform buddha deeds far and wide."

At that point, the World-honored One expressed himself in verses, saying:

It is like the wilted flowers;
Before their petals have opened,
One with supernatural vision can see
The unstained body of the Tathāgata.
After the wilted flowers are removed,
One sees, without obstacle, the Teacher,
Who, in order to sever *kleśas*,
Triumphantly appears in the world.
The Buddha sees that all kinds of beings
Universally possess the tathāgarbha.
It is covered by countless *kleśas*,
Just like a tangle of smelly, wilted petals.
So I, on behalf of all beings,
Everywhere expound the true dharma,
In order to help them remove their *kleśas*
And quickly reach the buddha way.
I see with my buddha eye
That in the bodies of all beings
There lies concealed the buddhagarbha,
So I expound the dharma in order to reveal it.

A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras

Selections from the Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra

大寶積經

Translated from the Chinese by
The Buddhist Association of the United States
Garma C. C. Chang, General Editor

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protection, he can completely know suffering, eradicate all causes of suffering, realize the complete cessation of suffering, and follow in its entirety the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

"Thus, there are in all eight noble truths mentioned; however, the Buddha teaches them only [in terms of] four noble truths. The meaning of the nonactive four noble truths is perfectly realized only by Tathāgatas, Worthy Ones, Perfectly Enlightened Ones, and is beyond the capacity of Aśhats and Pratyekabuddhas. Why? Because nirvāṇa is not to be realized by any dharma, whether superior or inferior, whether low, middle, or high.

"What does it mean that the Tathāgatas perfectly realize the nonactive truths? The Tathāgatas, the Worthy Ones, the Supremely Enlightened Ones, completely know suffering; have eradicated all causes of suffering, which are the defilements; have realized the complete cessation of all suffering, [even that] derived from the aggregates of a mind-created body; and have followed in its entirety the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

"World-Honored One, the term 'cessation of suffering' does not imply the destruction of anything. Why? Because the cessation of suffering has no beginning, no action, no origination, and no end; it is ever-abiding, immovable, intrinsically pure, and free from the shell of defilements.²³

"World-Honored One, the Tathāgata has achieved inconceivable Dharmas more numerous than the sands of the Ganges. Dharmas which embody the wisdom of liberation and which are referred to as the Dharma-body. World-Honored One, when this Dharma-body is not apart from defilements, it is called the Tathāgata-embryo.²⁴

"World-Honored One, the Tathāgata-embryo is the Tathāgata's knowledge²⁵ of emptiness. The Tathāgata-embryo has never been seen or realized by any Śrāvaka or Pratyekabuddha. It is perceived and witnessed only by the Buddhas.

"World-Honored One, the knowledge of emptiness of the Tathāgata-embryo is of two kinds. What are the two? The first is the knowledge that the Tathāgata-embryo is empty; that it is apart from all defilements and apart from knowledge which does not lead to liberation. The second is the knowledge that the Tathāgata-embryo is not empty; that it contains inconceivable Dharmas more numerous than the sands of the Ganges, which embody the Buddhas' wisdom of liberation.

"World-Honored One, the advanced Śrāvakas can, through faith, gain access to these two knowledges of emptiness. World-Honored One, the knowledge of emptiness possessed by the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas is connected with and revolves around the four wrong views. Therefore, no Śrāvaka or Pratyekabuddha has ever perceived or realized the complete cessation of suffering. Only the Buddha has realized it directly; he has eradicated all defilements and followed in its entirety the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

"World-Honored One, of the four noble truths, three truths are impermanent, and one truth is permanent. Why? The three noble truths [of suffering, the cause of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering] belong to

Buddha Nature

The Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra

by

Arya Maitreya

♦

written down by

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Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé
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Furthermore, these four aspects in the given order are inconceivable, for the following four reasons:

[The buddha element] is pure and yet has affliction. [Enlightenment] was not afflicted and yet is purified. Qualities are totally indivisible [and yet unapparent]. [Activity] is spontaneous and yet without any thought.

Constituting what must be realized, realization, its attributes, and the means to bring it about, accordingly the first is the cause to be purified and the [latter] three points are the conditions.

The Fourth Vajra Point: The Element

The perfect buddhakaya is all-embracing, suchness cannot be differentiated, and all beings have the disposition. Thus they always have buddha nature.

The Buddha has said that all beings have buddha nature "since buddha wisdom is always present within the assembly of beings, since this undefiled nature is free from duality, and since the disposition to buddhahood has been named after its fruit."

Essence, cause, fruit, function, endowment, manifestation, phases, all-pervasiveness of suchness, unchangingness, and inseparability of the qualities should be understood as intended to describe the meaning of the absolute expanse.

Just as a jewel, the sky, and water are pure it is by nature always free from the poisons. From devotion to the Dharma, from highest wisdom, and from samadhi and compassion [its realization arises].

[Wielding] power, not changing into something else, and being a nature that has a moistening [quality]: these [three] have properties corresponding to those of a precious gem, the sky, and water.

4 The Superiority of Great Madhyamaka to Mind Only

From: *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamental and History*. Dargen Dargalhe.

[84a.4-92a.6] This system, according to which the relative is empty of its own essence and the ultimate empty of other entities, is variously revealed in both the intermediate and final promulgations. However, in particular, the presence of profound, radiant and non-dual pristine cognition, the nucleus of the sugata, as the ground of emptiness is extensively taught in the piṭaka of the final transmitted precepts, and in those which speak of all things as merely appertional aspects of mind.

Derived from these [precepts], certain masters of the past have been obliged to admit that the mind is ultimately real and thereby originated the school of the Viññānavāda [proponents of consciousness], which is one of those known at the present day as the four philosophical systems. While not reaching the genuine intention, that mind described as the mind of which all things are merely appertional aspects partakes of two circumstances, one under which its intention is directed to the consciousness of the ground-of-all, and the other under which its intention is directed to the absolute reality (*chos-nyid yongs-grub*).

When the former is intended, it is said not to be the ultimate truth because it is impermanent, the bewildered subject and object being relative appearances. For example, the *Sūtra of the Adornment of Pristine Cognition's Appearance which Penetrates the Scope of All Buddhas* says:

Śāradvauṇputra, that which is called mind includes the consciousness of mind and intellect, the mental body, the faculty of the intellect and the base of the intellect. This is what is called the mind. If you ask how emptiness relates with it, Śāradvauṇputra, the mind is empty of the mind. In it there is no actor. If there were some actor, then its actions would be experienced as such by others. The mind is not manifestly conditioned even by the mind.

Though it is taught that all things are merely appertional aspects of mind, there is no occasion so to speak in connection with the ultimate truth, for the pristine cognition transcending mind, intellect and all

aspects of consciousness is revealed in the ultimate truth. Accordingly, it is said in the *Sublime Sūtra of the Descent to Lankā*:

One who has become without mind, intellect, the consciousness of the intellect, conceptualising thoughts and perception, will become receptive to the uncreated doctrine. O Mahamati, since the doctrine which is apparitionless and divorced from conceptualising thoughts is revealed, this ultimate reality is without order or orderly intervals.



Maitreya

And also [Ch. 3, vv. 40-1]:

Having renounced the mind and intellect,
Consciousness, perception and thoughts,
The pious attendants who have obtained the
conceptualising doctrine

Become the sons of the Conqueror.

Through the distinctions of [buddha-]field
and [bodhisattvas'] receptiveness,

[They gain] the virtuous pristine cognition of the Tathāgata.

There are, in addition, proponents of the Mind Only philosophical system who hold that consciousness is not transcended in the ultimate truth. But this is simply a subjective perception of saṃsāra, unable to sublimate the world. The ultimate truth is characterised as the uncorrupted expanse, and as the obscurationless pristine cognition which realises it, namely, the supramundane, individual, intrinsic awareness of the sublime beings.

The distinction between these two [views] has been extensively taught in passages such as the following from that [same] sūtra of the greater vehicle [*Descent to Laṅkā*, p.64]:

In this context, Mahamati, pristine cognition is of three kinds: mundane, supramundane and most supramundane. Of these, that which having been created is destroyed is destroyed is pristine cognition. Moreover, Mahamati, that which falls into the dichotomy of being symbolic or non-symbolic, that which falls into the dichotomy of being and non-being, and that which is created from causes of diverse character, is consciousness; whereas that which is characterised as utterly transcending the dichotomy of symbolic and non-symbolic is pristine cognition. And yet again Mahamati, that which is characterised as accumulating them is consciousness, and that which is characterised as diminishing them is pristine cognition.

Now these three kinds [of pristine cognition respectively] generate the realisation of individual and general characteristics, the realisation of that which is created and destroyed and the realisation of that which is neither created nor ceases. The mundane pristine cognition is that of the extremists who manifestly cling to theses of being or non-being and of all ordinary childish persons. The supramundane pristine cognition is that of all pious attendants and self-centred buddhas who openly cling to thoughts which fall into individual and general characteristics. The most supramundane pristine cognition is the analytical insight of the buddhas and bodhisattvas into apparitionless reality. It is seen to be without creation or cessation, for they comprehend the selfless level of the Tathāgata who is free from theses concerning being and non-being.

Furthermore, Mahamati, that which is characterised as unattached is pristine cognition, and that which is characteristically attached to various objects is consciousness. And again, Mahamati, that which is characterised as being produced from the triple combination [of subject, object and

their interaction]¹⁷¹ is consciousness and that characterised as the essential nature which is not so produced is pristine cognition. Then again, Mahamati, that which is characterised as not to be attained is pristine cognition, since each one's own sublime pristine cognition does not emerge as a perceptual object of realisation, [but is present] in the manner of the moon's reflection in water. On this it must be said [Ch.3, vv.38-9]:

*The mind accrues deeds and so forth,
But pristine cognition breaks them down;
By discriminative awareness, too, the apparitionless
Reality and powers are well obtained.
It is the mind which objectifies.*

And similarly it is said in the *Sublime Sūtra of Clouds of Precious Jewels* (*Āyurāṇameghasūtra*, T 231):

This doctrine genuinely transcends all written and spoken words. It genuinely transcends the entire range of expressions. It genuinely transcends all verbalisation. It is free from all conceptual elaboration and free from all that is accepted or rejected. It is free from all opening and closing, and free from all sophistry. It is not to be analysed and is not within the range of sophistry. It genuinely transcends the range of sophistry. It is non-symbolic, free from symbolism and genuinely transcends the range of symbolism. It genuinely transcends the range of the childish. It genuinely transcends the range of all demons, and genuinely transcends the range of all conflicting emotions. It genuinely transcends the range of all conflicting emotions. It genuinely transcends the range of consciousness. It does, however, lie within the range of the indeterminate, dynamic, quiescent and sublime pristine cognition. The individual, intrinsic awareness of these attributes is a topic which is taintless, uncovered, pure, bountiful, supreme, sacred, perfect, permanent, firm, enduring and imperishable. Whether the tathāgatas have appeared or not, this expanse of reality is exclusively present.

The inconceivability of the ultimate, sublime pristine cognition, extensively revealed by such quotations, does not lie within the path [followed] by the proponents of the Mind Only system. It is admitted that this naturally radiant, intrinsic awareness, the perception free from the subject-object dichotomy, is itself the true basis of buddhahood, and it is held that the subject is dependently real. It is therefore difficult for anyone holding consciousness to exist substantially in ultimate reality to understand literally the selflessness of phenomena. In the same vein the *Sūtra of the Descent to Laṅkā* (Ch.10, vv.359 and 358) also says:

Being mind only, it is apparitionless.
 Being apparitionless, it is uncreated.
 These middle paths
 Have been explained by myself, and others too.
 Realising that there is only mind,
 External substances are clarified.
 By reversing the pattern of conceptualising thought,
 That path becomes the middle one.

So it is that this intention of the final transmitted precepts, abiding in the Great Madhyamaka of definitive meaning, is clearly revealed in the commentaries of great bodhisattvas¹⁷² and in the compositions of the two promulgators who were masters of the greater vehicle [Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga] along with their followers. Although certain masters may well have developed other systems and tenets elsewhere out of necessity, it is difficult to estimate whether they are ordinary or sublime beings. There may well be occasion to speak in the manner [of these masters] owing to various basic intentions once one has reached the level of the sublime ones, but childish persons like ourselves should understand the importance of not accumulating evil deeds which renounce the doctrine, having clung to a single extreme [view].

If this system [of Great Madhyamaka] were also to be described as Mind Only because the three essential natures are taught therein, then the three essential natures are extensively revealed, too, in the intermediate transmitted precepts such as the *Intermediate Mother*:

Maitreya, regard any imaginary form as not substantially existent. One might regard any conceptualised form as substantially existent because thoughts exist substantially, but do not confer independent status upon it. Then you should regard the very form of reality as being disclosed by ultimate reality, for it is neither substantially existent nor not substantially existent.

And again in the *Epiphany of the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness in Eight Thousand Lines* (*Aṣṭaśaṣṭkāpñānārtha*, T 3809, vv.27-9):

The transcendental perfection of discriminative awareness
 Genuinely depends on three teachings:
 The imaginary, dependent and absolute alone.
 By negative expressions and the like
 All that is imaginary is refuted.
 By apparition and other such similes
 The dependent is correctly revealed.
 Through the fourfold purification¹⁷³
 The absolute is well known.

Other than the transcendental perfection
 Of discriminative awareness,
 The buddhas have no teaching.

Similarly, in the master Nāgarmītra's *Introduction to the Three Bodies* (*Kāyaṭrayāvatāramukha*, T 3890), the three essential natures are also summarised as the causal basis for the attainment of the three buddha-bodies, and in the *Commentary [on the Introduction to the Three Bodies, Kāyaṭrayavṛtti*, T 3891] composed by the proponent of the Great Madhyamaka, Jñānacandra, the same point is explained. Despite all the definitive structures of the three essential natures which have been set forth in all such texts of Great Madhyamaka, those who propound that they belong not to the Madhyamaka tradition but just to that of Mind Only have not even seen these relevant texts. As the *Sūtra of the Descent to Laṅkā* (Ch.10, vv.256-7) says:

One who relies on Mind Only,
 Does not discern external objects.
 Relying on the apparitionless,
 Mind Only should be transcended.
 Relying on the genuine object of reference,
 The apparitionless should be transcended.
 A yogin who abides in the apparitionless
 Does not perceive the greater vehicle.

Accordingly, after Mind Only has been provisionally taught and then genuinely transcended, the apparitionless Madhyamaka is taught; and when that too has been transcended, the apparitional Madhyamaka is revealed. If that is not reached, it is said that the profound meaning of the greater vehicle is not perceived. It is, in general, erroneous to describe everything expressed by the word *mind* as the Mind Only doctrine; for there are occasions when the abiding nature free from all extremes, [known] inclusively as the nature of just what is, the genuine goal, the natural nirvāṇa, the expanse of reality, the mind of inner radiance, and the intellect of Samantabhadra, is indicated by the word *mind*. The *Long Mother* says:

Subhūti, that mind is not the mind.
 The nature of that mind is inner radiance.
 One should not therefore mistake that which is spoken of as mind-as-such, the inner radiance transcending the mind of saṃsāra and its mental events, for the Mind Only system which does not transcend consciousness. The latter is characterised in the *Sūtra of the Descent to Laṅkā* (Ch.3, v.32 and Ch.10, v.486) as follows:
 Connected with propensities of conceptualising thought,
 The diversity which arises from the mind

And appears externally to mankind,
Is the mundane Mind Only [view].

There is indeed a distinction between the mundane and the supra-mundane Mind Only which is identical in meaning to the distinction between consciousness and pristine cognition, as previously explained. Similarly, those terms revealed in the most profound [sūtras] of the greater vehicle which are synonyms of mind should be likewise known. It would indeed be a grave error to equate the tenets of mundane Mind Only with the great Sage's buddha-body of reality and the mass of its inseparable enlightened attributes, exceeding all the sands of the River Ganges, which are inclusively known as the uncorrupted expanse, the inconceivable expanse, ultimate virtue, unchanging and firm reality, truth in the ultimate abiding nature of reality, the primordially liberated buddha-body, freedom from all conceptual elaborations of the four extremes, and renunciation of the two concepts of selfhood. These are spontaneously present, utterly transcending the phenomena of consciousness.

In general, those whose intelligence is authoritative, without falling into prejudice, do not differentiate between the two modes of emptiness [*rang-stong* and *gzhan-stong*] when abiding in the Madhyamaka [view], which is the summit of the four philosophical systems dependent on different traditions of promulgation which have been precisely enumerated. This is clearly understood through the respective treatises of the two great masters, Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, whom the Conqueror had prophetically declared would comment on the intention of the definitive meaning; and in conformity with them, it has been similarly explained by the all-knowing dialectician Ratnakarāsānti, the venerable Bhavya, the Guru of Suvarṇadvīpa,¹⁷⁴ the lord Atiśa and others. Even the master Haribhadra gives confirmation of it because, when explaining the intention of the *Ornament of Emergent Realisation* [in his *Mirror Commentary*, T 3791], he resolves that this non-dual pristine cognition alone is the genuinely existing essence. He then asserts this resolution to be made through the sequence of [discriminative awareness] produced by reflection, or through the yoga produced by the meditation of a yogin on the third level.¹⁷⁵ And he additionally confirms this by explaining the recognition of just what is to be pristine cognition, and by explaining, in his commentary on the essential buddha-body, that the remaining three buddha-bodies, through which it abides, are reality.

In this way, the emptiness directly revealed through the intermediate promulgation is claimed to have the definitive meaning of outright explicit negation in order that it might cut through the egotism of the co-emergent intellect in corporeal beings; as well as through the view of self, which is newly postulated by the philosophical systems of the eternalistic extremists; and through the subjective, conceptual elabora-

tions of those of our own [Buddhist] philosophical systems which promulgate substantial existence.¹⁷⁶ Since [this intermediate promulgation] reaches that one meditates on emptiness when meditating on nothing at all, and realises just what is when nothing at all is perceived, that [reality] and its significance are indeed perceived. The view of this [promulgation] is therefore in the range of understanding or proper realisation of selflessness.

It is difficult to destroy attachment to superficial characteristics (*mshun-'dzin*).¹⁷⁷ However, in order for the discriminative awareness born of study and thought to refute it, the Prasaṅgika and Svāntarika reasoning which cuts through conceptual elaboration is sharp. But when the experiences of meditation are established, it is this tradition of the Great Madhyamaka, as taught in the third promulgation, which is supremely profound and vast. This naturally present pristine cognition, the ultimate truth of the naturally pure expanse, is the original abiding nature of all things, and it is the pristine cognition to be experienced by individual intrinsic awareness. As it is said in Rāhula's *Praise of the Mother* [*um-la bsod-pa*, T 1127, attributed to Nāgārjuna]:

Homage to the Mother of the conquerors of the three times,

Who is the ineffable, unthinkable, inexpressible

Transcendental perfection of discriminative awareness,

Essential nature uncreated and unceasing as the sky,

Within range of the individual intrinsic awareness

That is pristine cognition.

And [in the *Sūtra of Extensive Play*, Ch. 25, v. 1]:

I have found a nectar-like doctrine

Profound, calm, unelaborate, radiant and uncompounded.

By such quotations, the inconceivable pristine cognition has been illustrated, and through the vision of its nature the ultimate truth is perceived. It is wrong to refer to the mere emptiness, which is nothing at all, as the ultimate truth.

Thus, absolute reality is the pristine cognition of the non-dual nature of just what is. It is indicated by the words buddha-body of reality or essential buddha-body which genuinely transcends the phenomena of consciousness. Yet, also comprised within this doctrine, which is misrepresented as the philosophical system known as the Mind Only, are: the definitive order of the three continua as taught in the way of secret mantra;¹⁷⁸ the definitive order of the ground, path and result of purification and so forth which are adhered to by followers of the greater vehicle in both its causal and resultant aspects, and which include [the terminology] of deities, mantras, embodiments of indestructible reality, supreme bliss, emptiness endowed with all supreme aspects, the im-

perishable seminal point which is the fundamental support of body, speech and mind; and also the uncommon definitive order of the ground, path and result.

One should know that the intention of the final promulgation, even though not within the path upheld by the proponents of intrinsic emptiness (*rang-stong-pa*), is without contradiction by examining, one by one, the commentaries of the great lords of the tenth level and the teachings belonging to the tantrapitaka of the way of secret mantra.

Therefore, while the intention of the final transmitted precepts is not the same as that of the mundane Mind Only system in any of its forms, the purposes of the lower phases of the vehicle are gradually gathered within the higher, so that [Mind Only and the like] are not contradictory apart from their vindication of an extreme position. Indeed, one must truly comprehend that the great distinction of the higher over the lower phases is a feature of the precious teaching of the sublime Sugata. Otherwise, after one had been given teaching on suffering, selflessness, impurity and impermanence according to the first promulgation and everything had been established as emptiness according to the intermediate transmitted precepts, if one were then to grasp literally the meaningful intention revealed according to the final transmitted precepts concerning bliss, purity, permanence and true self,¹⁷⁹ without knowing how to accept them with an attitude confident in the four kinds of reliance, one would engage in conceptualising thoughts which would confuse those who require training and wrongly scrutinise the teaching.

With an intention directed toward this, the *Commentary on the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle* (p. 74) says accordingly:

To sum up, there are four kinds of individuals who do not possess the eye which perceives the nucleus of the rathāgata. If you ask who these four are, they are as follows: ordinary persons, pious attendants, self-centred buddhas and bodhisattvas who have newly entered the vehicle. As it has been said,¹⁸⁰ "O Transcendent Lord, this nucleus of the rathāgata is not within the range of those who fall into views concerning worldly existence, who openly delight in deception and whose minds waver towards emptiness."

This same point can also be proven thoroughly from all the transmitted precepts and treatises, but here one will suffice.

P R A J N A E D I T I O N S

Ascertaining Certainty About the View

Chapter Seven, Section Three

from

The Treasury of Knowledge

by

Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye

commentary by

Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche

translated & edited

by

Michele Martin

5.2.4.2. The Shentong School

The next section deals with the shentong school.

The particular and uncommon yogacara [madhyamaka] system

[Is to] realize that there is nothing other than mind, that even [this] mind does not exist.

[And] that both [perceived and perceiver] do not exist; [you then rest in] the dharmadhatu, which is [described through] seven-vajra points.

Within the philosophical system of the madhyamaka, there is the system of the yogacara-madhyamaka [another name for shentong], which is ornamented with many particular and uncommon key points and secret teachings. Their way of ascertaining the view through listening and reflecting is found in the *Mahayanasutralankara*, which is one of the five texts of the Great Regent Maitreya. A quote states: "Once the mind or the intellect has understood that phenomena are nothing other than mind, you comprehend that the mind does not exist at all. Once those who are intelligent have understood that both do not exist, they rest in the dharmadhatu that is not involved with dualistic perception or subjects and objects." This passage is extremely important and it is good to memorize it and think about it. The first step is to understand that the perceived object is nothing other than mind. Since the perceived object does not truly exist, then the mind that perceives it, the perceiving subject, also does not exist. "Those who are intelligent," refers to male and female bodhisattvas. Once they have understood that both perceived and perceiver do not exist, they rest in the dharmadhatu free of dualistic perception. These are the steps of meditation that you can do. It is very good to reflect and meditate on this often.

Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye comments on this: "First you come to the conclusion that all phenomena are only mind and are not

established as other or separate from it. By reason of this, it is proven that perceived objects have no inherent characteristics. Having also concluded thereby that the perceiving subject has no inherent characteristics, you ascertain the flawless dharmadhatu, empty of both perceived object and perceiving subject, possessing the very nature of luminosity and endowed with the seven vajra points. "Ascertained" means that you come to complete certainty, you have no doubt whatsoever. The seven-vajra points refer to the seven divisions of the *Mahayanaautatantrasastra*. The first three deal with the Buddha, the dharma and the sangha, and the fourth deals with the potential or the buddha nature, [kham]. The fifth deals with enlightenment, the sixth with its various qualities, and the seventh with activity.

The root verse on the shentong school continues:

[The tathagatagarbha is] the heart essence of all sentient beings and [fully manifest in] Buddhas.

[It is] not similar to the self of the individual, [because it is] free of mental elaboration.

[In its essential nature] samsara and nirvana are inseparable;

it is free of a mere lack of self [in the individual].

[Free of being] with and without appearance, [it is the ultimate that] even transcends dependent arising.

The commentary states: "Although what is called "suchness" or "the sugatagarbha" abides within and pervades equally all phenomena, sentient beings, Buddhas and so forth, it abides as the heart essence within sentient beings and appears as fully manifest in Buddhas." A metaphor for abiding as the heart essence within sentient beings is the sesame seed. The sesame seed has within it sesame oil, but it needs to be processed in order to bring out that oil. In the same way, the heart essence of sentient beings is the sugatagarbha or suchness, but since all the obscurations have not been purified away, the heart essence is not apparent; the Buddhas, however, have purified all obscurations and

therefore the heart essence is fully manifest in the Buddhas. The tathagatagarbha is also called the heart essence of the Buddhas because its essential nature is unchanging; however, this unchanging nature is not in any way similar to the self of an individual, which we have been refusing all along as an essence in an individual self. The heart essence of the Buddhas is not similar to the self of the individual, which is asserted by non-Buddhists, meaning mainly the Hindu tradition, to be permanent, autonomous and independent. Why? Because it is free of all mental elaborations. The commentary continues: "Although in its essential nature [that is in the essential nature of the suchness or the sugatagarbha] samsara and nirvana are inseparable, depending on the context, it is presented in three phases." These three phases refer to how much has been purified: whether it is on a coarse level where nothing has been purified, or on a more refined level where it is been partially purified, or on a very refined level where everything has been completely purified.

The commentary states: "Through realizing emptiness of the no-self of the individual, you become liberated, because ultimate reality has been there singly, by itself from time without beginning." We have seen that when two things are established in dependence on each other they belong to the realm of apparent reality. If ultimate truth were established in relationship to relative truth, then it would become something that would fall into the realm of apparent reality. To avoid this, it is stated that it is there singly, all by itself, from beginningless time, pure, and that is why the truth of ultimate reality is asserted as being single here.

The commentary: "Further since you are liberated from grasping onto either appearance and non-appearance or from grasping onto seeing a thing or a non-thing, it [this buddhanature] is called 'the unconditioned which is the truth of ultimate reality' or 'the real unconditioned.'" The reason for calling it "the real unconditioned" is because, as we saw before, the shentong school asserts that when you attain the level of buddhahood, you attain the qualities that are spontaneously present: they are there in

the beginning; they are there as you move along the path and they are fully manifest at the time of realization. These qualities must be present from the beginning. If they were not, then they would be created by moving along the path, and therefore, conditioned, or composite. Since they would be made up from causes and conditions, they would be relative and subject to disintegration. That is why it is said here that buddha nature is unconditioned, in order to emphasize that it is not something created or newly arisen along the path.

There is another description of the tathagatagarbha which states that: "Since it is taught that ultimate reality itself transcends dependent arising, ultimate reality is not presented as dependently arisen." That is rather shocking if you have been studying the middle turning of the wheel of the dharma, which asserts that everything arises dependently. But here you are speaking about the ultimate and within this shentong school, ultimate reality transcends even dependent arising for the reasons that were spoken of above.

The next section of the root text states:

*[The tathagatagarbha] is empty of temporary faults [and] not empty of unexcelled qualities.
There is nothing to add or subtract; it is realized by self-arisen awareness.*

What is shown through the root verse here is that from the point of view of its essential nature, there are no stains. It is empty of stains from the point of view of its essential nature, but not empty of spontaneously present qualities. Supreme qualities are present spontaneously within the tathagatagarbha and there are no adventitious, incidental or temporary stains. With respect to its essential nature, there is nothing to add or subtract. Why is that? Because there are no stains to remove and there are no qualities to be added on. There is nothing to be abandoned and there is nothing to be taken up. It

transcends needing to develop or take something up and to eliminate or throw something away.

These qualities are not realized by merely listening or reflecting on the teaching. These are limited in their effect, as we saw before. Listening and reflecting are to develop conviction in the view, to be clear about what the view is, and to work through your doubts. Realization of these qualities in the tathagatagarbha only comes through meditation with an awareness that knows its own nature. That awareness is flawless and self-arisen.

The next section of this root verse states:

It is taught that ordinary beings, shravakas, pratyekabuddhas, and immature bodhisattvas

Do not master the view of the tathagatagarbha,

It is not an object of inferential cognition because it transcends words and concepts.

Since for those other than aryas, its mode of being is difficult to comprehend,

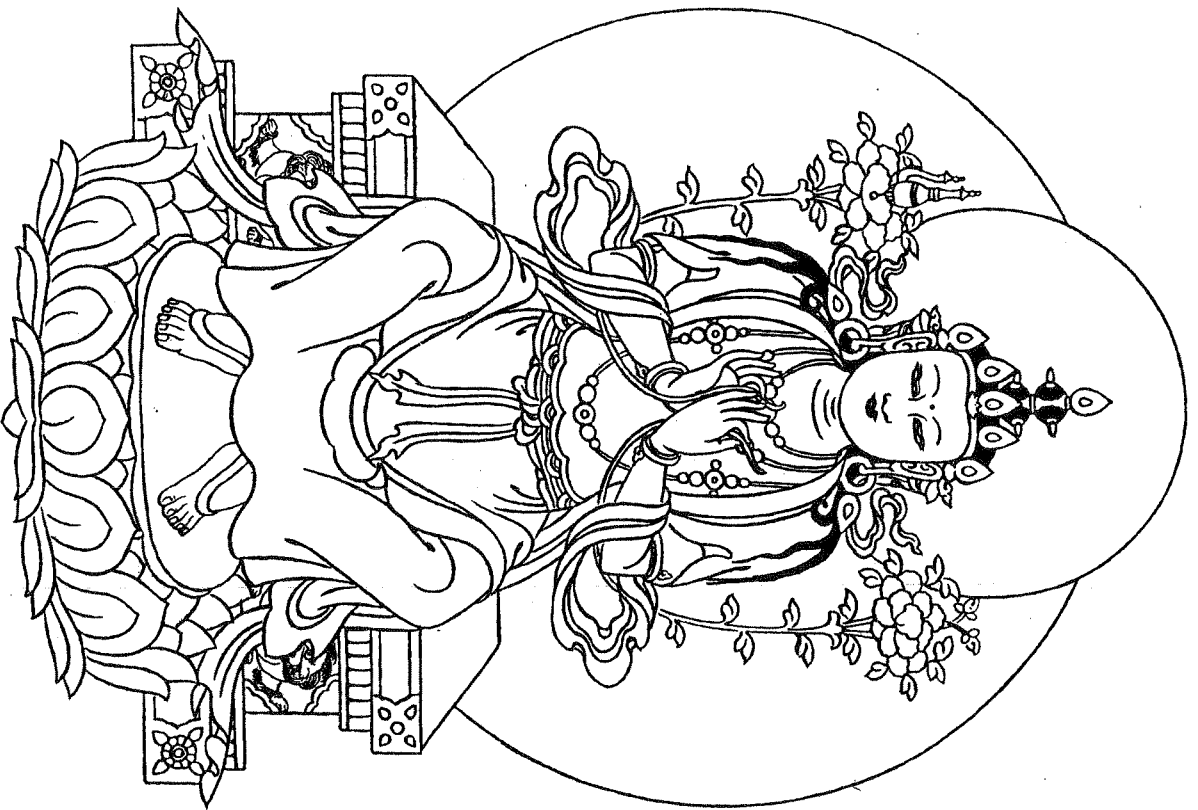
It has become an object of debate. Here it is not discussed in detail.

Rinpoche gave commentary here on the root verse where it says "It is taught that ordinary beings." "Ordinary" refers to beings who have not realized the first level of the bodhisattva. They have not realized emptiness or mind's true nature. Shravaka and pratyekabuddhas we have seen before, and immature bodhisattvas or beginning bodhisattvas are those on the path of accumulation. Once you take the bodhisattva vows, you are considered a bodhisattva, and you pass through many stages. There are bodhisattvas on the first path, the path of accumulation [a bodhisattva on the first level or bhumi is on the third path of seeing]. Immature bodhisattvas cannot master the view of the tathagatagarbha, which means that they cannot realize it just as it is in its very nature.

Through study, you understand it in an inferential way. Through inferential reasoning you can say, "Oh, yes it must be like this." But you do not really have a direct and clear experience of it. Why is that? Due to the lower level of realization, you can only understand it through inferential processes. The processes of inferential reasoning all depend on words and concepts. Since the tathagatagarbha transcends words and concepts, the means you are using to get at what you want to get at, really are not adequate to the task – they can only get you part way.

There is a reasoning that formulates these statements: Given the sugatagarbha, it is not an object that you can reach through inferential reasoning, because the sugatagarbha transcends words and conception, therefore, "Since for those other than arya [an arya is just the Sanskrit for noble ones], "noble" means they have realized the true nature of the mind, and therefore they are bodhisattvas on the first level] its mode of being is difficult to comprehend, it has become an object of debate. Here it is not discussed in detail.

There were a lot of debates about what it is. Therefore Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye does not discuss it here in detail. If you want to study this, a good place is the *Mahayanauttaratantra*. In the fourth chapter dealing with the potential or the tathagatagarbha, there are three reasons given, ten presentations and nine examples of how it gets covered over by these stains. It has been translated into English, as *The Changeless Nature*. You can get it from Samye Ling or some bookstores. You can study that. There is also a book with some commentary on it by Thrangu Rinpoche, called *The Buddha Nature*. So you can also look at that. You can also do retreats with this text. You can read the root verse and then practice meditation and so forth. You can do single sessions like that as well.



Arjya Maitreya

III: *Triṃśikā*

The Thirty Verses (*Triṃśikā*) of Vasubandhu is one of the most important texts of the *Vijñānavāda*. Xuan Zang's magnum opus is his commentary on the *Triṃśikā*, called the *Cheng wei shilun* (Sk. *Vijñaptimātratā-siddhi*), which is the root text or foundational text of the *wei shi* (Consciousness Only) school of Chinese Buddhism. There is also a commentary (*īkā*) on the *Triṃśikā* by Śhīramati. Fortunately, a Sanskrit manuscript of the *Triṃśikā* and Śhīramati's *īkā* was discovered by Prof. Sylvain Lévi in Nepal in the 1920s.

The *Triṃśikā* will be discussed in this chapter and the next. This chapter continues the discussion of the *Vijñānavādins'* doctrines about emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and the three self natures (*tri-svabhāvas*). The next chapter will focus on what the *Triṃśikā* says about *nirvāṇa* and Buddhahood.

The first verse of the *Triṃśikā* states the general philosophy: what are called selves (*āman*) and entities (*dharmas*) are simply the transformations of consciousness (*viññāna-pariṇāma*). Verses 2-18 give some of the details of these transformations, which are said to be three-fold: i.e. the store consciousness (*ālaya-viññāna*), the thinking consciousness (*mano-viññāna*), and the six sense-based consciousnesses. Verses 20-24 present the doctrine of the three self natures (also called the three non-self natures). Verses 25-30 return to the general topic of mind only (*viññaptimātratā*). The two concluding verses describe the ultimate reality which is attained by the Buddhas.

THE THIRTY VERSES (*TRIMŚIKĀ*)

1. The usages of the terms "*āman*" and "*dharma*" are manifold, but both terms just refer to the transformations of consciousness (*viññāna-pariṇāma*). That transformation is three-fold.

*āma-dharmopacāro hi vividho yah pravartate /
viññāna-pariṇāme 'sau pariṇāmah sa ca tridhā //*

2. The three-fold transformations are fruition, thinking and representations of objects. The first, which is also known as the store consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*), is the fruition (*vipāka*) of all the seeds.

*vipāko mananākhyāś-ca vijñaptir-viśvayasya ca /
latālayākhyam vijñānam vipākaḥ sarva-bījakaṃ //*

3. The store consciousness is the perception, abiding in, and grasping of what is unperceived (*asamvītiaka*). It is always associated with touch, attentiveness, knowledge, conception and willing.

*asamvītiakopādi-sthāna-vijñaptikaṃ ca tat /
sada spāśā-manaskāra-vi-śanjñā-cetanānvitam //*

4. The feeling that pertains to it is that of indifference. The store consciousness is undelimited and undefined. Touch etc. are also indifferent in feeling. The store consciousness is constantly evolving like a torrent of water.

*upekṣā vedanā tatānivrāvyākṛtaṃ ca tat /
tathā sparśādayas-tac-ca vartate srota-saughavai //*

5. In the state of Arhatship there is a turning away (*vyāvṛtti*) from the store consciousness. The second transformation of consciousness, called the *mano-vijñāna*, evolves when it takes the store consciousness as an object and support. The essential nature of the *mano-vijñāna* is to think.

*tasya vyāvṛttir-arhate tad-āśrīya pravartate /
tad-ālamban manonāma vijñānam mananātmakam //*

6. It is always associated with the four defilements which are obscured and undeveloped: self-regard, self-delusion, self-pride and self-love.

*kleśaiś-caturbhūḥ sahitaṃ nivrāvyākṛtair-sadā /
ātma-dṛṣṭy-ātma-mohātmā-mānātmā-sneha-sanjñitair //*

7. Wherever the *mano-vijñāna* arises there are the associated mental states of touch etc. which are of the same nature. The *mano-vijñāna* does not exist in the Arhat, nor in the state of cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*), nor in the world transcending path (*lokottara mārga*).

*yatra-jaś-tanmayair-anyair-sparśādyaiś-cārhatā na tat /
na nirodha-samāpattau mārga lokottare na ca //*

8. This is the second transformation of consciousness. The third transformation of consciousness is the perception of the six-fold objects. The *mano-vijñāna* is good, bad and neither (*advaya*).

*dvitīyaḥ parivāṇo yaṃ tṛtyaḥ sad-viśhasya yā /
viśvayavopalabdhiḥ sā kuśāṭakūśalādvayā //*

9. These six-fold objects are the mental associates (*caittas*) that are universal, specific and good, as well as the primary defilements, secondary defilements and the three kinds of feelings.

*sarvatragair-viniyataiḥ kuśalaiś-caitasair-asau /
saṃprayuktā tathā kleśair-upakleśaiś-trivedanā //*

10. The universal mental associates are touch etc. The specific mental associates are desire, resolve and memory, together with concentration and thought. The good mental associates are faith, sense of shame, fear of censure,

*ādyair-sparśādayaiś-chandādhimokṣa-smṛtayah saha /
samādhi-dhībhyaṃ niyataiḥ śraddhātā hrīr-apatrapā //*

11. the triad of non-covetousness etc., courage, equanimity, vigilance and harmlessness. The primary defilements are attachment, anger, delusion,

*alobhādi-tryaṃ vīryaṃ praśrabdhīḥ sūpramādikā /
ahimsā kuśālāḥ kleśā rāga-praigra-mūḍhayaḥ //*

12. pride, false views and doubl. The secondary defilements are anger, enmity, jealousy, spite, envy, parsimony, deceit,

*māna-dṛg-vicikitsās-ca krodhropanḥane punaḥ /
mṛkṣaḥ pradāśa īryātha mātsaryaṃ saha māryyā //*

13. deception, intoxication, harmfulness, pride, shamelessness, lack of integrity, sluggishness, restlessness, lack of faith, laziness, idleness, forgetfulness,

*śāḍhyaṃ mado 'vīriṃsā hrī-atrapā styānam-udbhavaḥ /
āśradhyaṃ-atha kauśḍyaṃ pramādo muṣṭiḥ smṛtiḥ //*

14. distraction and thoughtlessness. Remorse, sleepiness, reasoning and analysis, which are of two kinds, are also secondary defilements.

*vikṣepo 'saṃprajanyaṃ ca kaukṛyaṃ middham-eva ca /
vīlarkaś-ca vicāraś-cesy-upakleśā dvaye dvividhā //*

15. The five sense-consciousnesses arise in the store consciousness — either together or separately — depending on causes and conditions, just as waves originate on water.

*pañcānāṃ mūla-vijñāne yathā-pratyayaṃ-udbhavaḥ /
vijñānānāṃ saha na vā taratgāṇāṃ yathā jāle //*

16. The *mano-vijñāna* arises at all times, except in the case of those who are born in the realms of beings without thought (*asaṃjñika*), those who are in the two mindless trances

(*saṃāpatti*), or those who are in states of stupor or unconsciousness (*acittaka*).

*manovijñāna-sambhūtiḥ sarvadāsaṃjñikā-ṛte /
saṃāpatti-dvayāṃ middhāṃ murchanā-d-apy-acittakāḥ //*

17. This three-fold transformation of consciousness is imagination (*vikalpa*). What is imagined (*yad vikalpyate*), therefore, does not exist. Consequently, everything (*idaṃ sarvaṃ*) is nothing but representations of consciousness (*vijñapti-mātraka*).

*vijñāna-pariṇāmo 'yaṃ vikalpo yad-vikalpyate /
tena tan-nāsti tenedanī sarvaṃ vijñaptimātrakaṃ //*

18. Since there is the store consciousness which contains all seeds, there are the transformations of consciousness; these transformations proceed depending upon mutual influences. From this imagination arises.

*sarva-bījāṃ hi vijñānaṃ pariṇāmas-tathā tathā /
yāy-anyaṃya-vaśād yena vikalpaḥ sa sa jāyate //*

19. Due to the habit-energy (*vāsanā*) of actions and the two-fold grasping, as soon as a previous maturation has been exhausted another maturation arises.

*karmāno vāsanā grāha-dvaya-vāsanayā saha /
kaṣṇe pūrva-vipāke 'nyad-vipākaṃ janayanti tat //*

20. Whatever thing (*vastu*) is imagined by whatever imagination is purely imaginary (*parikalpita*). That which is purely imaginary has no self nature (*svabhāva*).

*yena yena vikalpena yad-yad vastu vikalpyate /
parikalpiṭva evāsau svabhāvo na sa vidyate //*

21. Imagination itself, which arises depending on causes and conditions, has a self nature, which is that of being dependent (*paratantra-svabhava*). The perfected nature (*pariṇāmanā*), on the other hand, is that which is the eternal absence (*rahitatā*) of the purely imagined nature in the dependent nature.

*paratantra-svabhāvas-tu vikalpaḥ pratyeyodbhavaḥ /
niṣpannas-tasya pūrveṇa sadā rahitatā tu yā //*

22. For that very reason, the perfected nature is neither the same nor different from the dependent nature. It is like impermanence etc. As long as the perfected nature is not seen, the dependent nature is not seen, either.

*ata eva sa naivāṇyo nūnanyah paratantrataḥ /
anivartitātivad vācya nādirjste 'smiṇ sa dṛṣyate //*

23. Corresponding to the three-fold nature (*svabhāva*) there is the three-fold absence of self nature (*niḥsvabhāvatā*). The absence of self nature of all *dharmas* was taught by the Buddha with a secret intention (*sandhāya*).

*trivichasya svabhāvasya trivichāṇ niḥsvabhāvatām /
sandhāya sarva-dharmāṇāṁ deśitā niḥsvabhāvatā //*

24. The imagined nature is without self nature by definition. The dependent nature, again, does not come into existence by itself, and accordingly lacks a self nature. The perfected nature is absence of self nature itself (*niḥsvabhāvatā*).

*prathamam laksanenaiva niḥsvabhāvo 'paraḥ punaḥ /
na svayam-bhāva etasyey-aparā niḥsvabhāvatā //*

25. The true nature of mind only (*viññaptimūtratā*) is the true nature (*paramārtha*) of all *dharmas*, because, remaining as

it is at all times (*sarvakālaṁ tathā-bhāvāt*) it is suchness (*tathatā*).

*dharmāṇāṁ paramārthaś-ca sa yatas-tathatāpi sah /
sarva-kālaṁ tathābhāvāt saiva viññaptimūtratā //*

26. As long as consciousness does not abide in mind only (*viññaptimūtratva*), the attachment of the subject-object distinction will not cease.

*yāvad-viññaptimūtratve vijñānaṁ nāvastisṭhati /
grāha-dvayasāṁśayus-tāvan-na vinivartate //*

27. If a person places something before himself, thinking "This is consciousness only," he does not abide in consciousness only.

*viññaptimūtram-vedam-ity-api hy-upalambhataḥ /
sthāpayann-agrahaṇ kincit tannātre nāvastisṭhate //*

28. When the mind no longer seizes on any object (*ālambana*) whatever, then the mind is established in the nature of mind only (*viññānamūtratva*). When there is nothing that is grasped, that is mind only, because there is no grasping.

*yada tv-ālambanam vijñānaṁ naivopalabhate tadā /
sthitam vijñānamūtratve grāhyābhāve tad-agrahaṭ //*

29. That is the supreme, world-transcending knowledge (*jñāna*), without mind (*acitta*) and without support or object (*anupalambha*). From the abandonment of the two-fold faults, there occurs the revulsion (*parāvṛtti*) of the store-consciousness.

*acitto 'nupalambho 'sau jñānam lokottaram ca tat /
āśrayasya parāvṛttir dvichā dauṣṭhyā-hānataḥ //*

30. That alone is the pure realm (*dhātu*), unthinkable, good, unchanging, blissful, the liberation body (*vimukti-kāya*), the *dharm*a-body (*dharm*a-*kāya*), so-called, of the great sage.

*sa evānāśravo dhātur-acintyaḥ kuśalo dhruvaḥ /
sukto vimuktikāyo 'sau dharmākāyo yaṃ mahāmuneḥ //*

Trīmś. 29 asserts that the supreme, world transcending knowledge of the Buddha is devoid of mind (*acitta*). This verse raises a couple of fairly obvious questions. First of all, how could any knowledge (*jñāna*) be said to be devoid of mind? And secondly, how could the state of Buddhahood — or anything else for that matter — be said to be devoid of mind (*acitta*), given that the Vijñānavādins held that everything is mind only?

It is fairly easy to see the *doctrinal* motivations for this assertion. According to fundamental Buddhist teachings, mind consists of an ever-changing aggregate of conditioned *dharmas*. That is why in the early Buddhist teachings it was held that one had to extinguish the mind (along with all other conditioned and compounded *dharmas*) in order to escape from what is conditioned, impermanent and *samsāric*. Therefore, insofar as the Vijñānavādins wished to maintain the orthodoxy of their own teachings, or at least to show their continuity with the earlier teachings, they were necessarily committed to the view that the highest world transcending knowledge (*nirvikalpa jñāna*) is *acitta*.

Although the doctrinal motivation for Trīmś. 29 is clear enough, the assertion that everything is mind only, on the one hand, and the assertion that Buddhahood is *acitta*, on the other, are pretty clearly inconsistent. Other (though related) inconsistencies show up in a number of different places in the Trīmśikā. Consider Trīmś. 25, for example. This verse says: "The nature of mind only (*viññaptimātrā*) is the true nature (*paramārtha*) of all *dharmas* because, remaining as it is at all times, it is suchness (*tathatā*).” This verse, in other words, identifies the essence of mind only (*viññaptimātrā*) with what is immutable and unchanging (i.e. suchness, *śūnyatā* etc.) However, Trīmś. 21 asserts that it is of the essence of mind that it is mutable (lit. that it “arises depending on

causes and conditions” (*pratyayodbhava*) and that it has the “self nature of being dependent on causes and conditions” (*paramānta-svabhāva*).

The problem, then, is that the Trīmśikā asserts three propositions that as a set are inconsistent:

- (1) Trīmś. 21 and 24: The essence of mind (*paramānta-svabhāva*) is that it arises and perishes depending on causes and conditions.

- (2) Trīmś. 25(a)-(b): The true nature of things (*dharmāṇāṃ paramārthatā*) is immutable and unchanging (and therefore does not depend on causes and conditions).

- (3) Trīmś. 25(d): The nature of mind only (*viññaptimātrā*) is identical with the true nature of things.

Note that in Sanskrit the essence (*svabhāva*) of an entity *x* is the same thing as the abstract property that is designated by adding the suffix *-tā* to “*x*.” For example, the essence of Blue (*nila-svabhāva*) is the same thing as Blueness (*nilatā, nilatva*). For exactly the same reason, the essence of mind (*viññapti-svabhāva, viññāna-svabhāva, paramānta-svabhāva*) is the same thing as *viññāna(mātra)tā* or *paramānta-svabhāva*. The inconsistency in (1)-(3) above is that Trīmś. 21 asserts that the former is mutable, whereas Trīmś. 25(d) — in conjunction with 25(a) — asserts that the latter is immutable.

The identity of the essence (*svabhāva*) of mind with *viññapti(mātra)tā* is just a matter of what is meant by these words, i.e. it is just a truth of semantics. Nevertheless, it is of interest to note that the equation between the essence (*svabhāva*) of a thing *x* and the abstract property *x-tā* or *x-tva* was explicitly recognized in the Indian tradition. For example, in Aṣṭādhyāyī 5.1.119, Pāṇini states as a meaning rule (*asya bhāvas-tva-talau*) that the suffixes “-tā” and “-tva” have the sense of “the nature of (*bhāva*).” Explicit recognition of this equation was also given by the Buddhist tradition. For example, in his autocommentary on the *svārthānumāna-paricheḍa* of the Pramāṇa-vārtika (67), Dharmakīrti lays it down as a condition of adequacy of any theory of language that it should be able to account for the fact that the “essential nature of the sky is skyiness” (*śāśya svabhāvaḥ kṛtatvam*). In short, the contradiction described in (1)-(3) involves a violation of a rule of language (or

Talk 17: Shentong-Madhyamaka

For the sake of all sentient beings, who are limitless in number as space is limitless in extent, I will achieve the precious rank of complete buddhahood. In order to accomplish that, I will exert myself at listening to, reflecting upon, and meditating upon the view of shentong, or empty-of-other. Thereby, I will actualize the nonconceptual wisdom that is free from all complexity. . Thinking in this way, turn your mind toward supreme enlightenment, and listen.

We have an auspicious coincidence. As we are about to discuss the view of shentong or empty-of-other, we have thunder, the dragon-voice. I hope that this means that the view of shentong will become renowned everywhere.

In regard to explaining the view of the empty-of-other or shentong school, there are three sections. The first of which is settling or determining just what the two truths are. The second is the way in which this view of shentong is free from the faults of the mind only system. The third section is the explanation of the way in which the rangtong and shentong views are different.

In regard to the first section, settling decisively, resolving just what the two truths are, there are four lines to the root verse. The way in which Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye has gone about this is extremely good. The four lines of the verse say . . . (Thunder! Laughter.)

Mere incorrect conceptuality exists conventionally.

Apprehended and apprehender are merely imputed by mind. They do not exist.

Wisdom, free from complexity, is their dharmatā.

Although adventitious stains exist there, separation from them is suitable.

Rinpoche is drawing from the commentary given by Jamgön Kongtrül upon his own root verses and picking out those portions of it that explain most directly the lines from the root verse. I am going to go through it in the same way. The first line is given in the context of severing the complexity of relative phenomena. It speaks about the fact that incorrect conceptuality exists in a relative way, is a relative phenomenon. Such consciousness appears as various sorts of appearances. It appears in various ways.

The second line of root verse,

Apprehended and apprehender are merely imputed by mind. They do not exist.

means that the subjects and objects that appear for that conceptuality, the factor of the apprehended and the apprehender, are merely designated by mind, just imputed by mind. For that reason, they do not exist even conventionally.

In the third line,

Wisdom, free from complexity is their dharmatā.

wisdom refers to wisdom that is devoid of complexity. It is the wisdom that is empty, the wisdom of emptiness. The relationship between that wisdom and these consciousnesses that are just incorrect conceptuality is that the wisdom is their reality, their nature, their dharmatā. They are something that exists in a somewhat superfluous relationship to that wisdom. The wisdom itself is truly existent. These more superficial source of consciousnesses that are incorrect conceptuality are like guests or something that is hosted by that wisdom. They do not have to be there. They do not necessarily belong there.

The fourth line of the root verse,

Although adventitious stains exist there, separation from them is suitable.

The relationship between these consciousnesses and that wisdom is that the consciousnesses are like stains. They are adventitious or superfluous. They do not exist in the nature of that wisdom. For that reason, it is entirely fitting, appropriate, suitable that wisdom would separate from them. They could be objects that are abandoned or discarded. Such stains are incidental. They do not truly exist. At this point I am just giving an abbreviated commentary on the meaning of these verses. Later the translator will translate the text and make it intelligible. That will become available to the Ngetön school and to translators and to others who would like to study this shentong system. At this point we are going through it in a brief way. The meaning of the passage we just considered is that the imagined nature, the conceptuality is merely relatively existent. The objects that are imputed, designated by such conceptuality such as the difference of the apprehended and the apprehender, are false. They are not true phenomena. Never mind their not existing ultimately, they do not even exist relatively. As for wisdom, wisdom is of the nature of freedom from complexity. The various complexities are themselves not true. Because they are not truly existent, truly established, one can separate from them, abandon them. That is the way in which that complexity exists. It is something that is suitable to be discarded. The great scholars of this middle way empty-of-other or

madhyamaka-shentong system say that when one is involved in the work of severing the complexities and determining what the view is, it is necessary to distinguish what exists from what does not exist. If one does not assert existence and nonexistence, if one does not distinguish that which exists from that which does not exist even in a relative or conventional way, if one has no assertions whatsoever in the way the middle way consequence school or madhyamaka prāsaṅgika school does not make any assertions about such things, then there is no basis for one's analysis and it is not possible to proceed. Therefore, they feel that it is vitally necessary to make such distinctions. In this empty-of-other or shentong school, one speaks of the ultimate as wisdom free from complexity. This wisdom that is free from complexity is the dharmatā of the imaginary or imagined phenomena. When all of those imagined phenomena have been worn out or used up, then this wisdom that is free from complexity becomes manifest. That is buddhahood.

Imagined natures are just imputations by mind. Their nature does not exist, is not established. When one recognizes them as mere imputations, one is able to stop clinging, adhering to them, or regarding them as true. It is like an appearance of a snake in a dream. When one recognizes that the snake is just a dream appearance, then one stops hanging onto it as something true. What is important is to stop hanging onto things, clinging to things, discriminating things as true. When one does that, when one recognizes them as mere mistakes, one is able to stop clinging to them as true. At that point, one separates from such superficial phenomena. Separating in that way, wisdom becomes manifest.

If one sets it up in this way, then it is very easy to talk about the difference between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. As long as this basic wisdom, freedom from complexity is obscured, covered over, blocked, obstructed by imagined natures, by confusion and mistakes, then that is the state of being a sentient being. When that has been extinguished, exhausted, worn out, used up, then that is nirvāṇa. If one talks about it that way, then it is easy to make the distinction between saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. There is a very good reason that is given.

If one were to say that the way in which the three natures are empty is just the same, then it becomes difficult to distinguish saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. If one were to say that the way in which the imagined natures is empty, the way in which the dependent nature is empty, the way in which the thoroughly established nature is empty, then it becomes difficult to distinguish saṃsāra from nirvāṇa. If the way in which they are all empty is the same, it is difficult to make that distinction. Here it is not posited that way. It is not explained that way. It is possible to make distinction clearly. If you do not do it that way, if you say that the way in which they are all empty is just the same, it is hard to present it in a way that makes any sense when you think about it from the point of view of reasoning.

However, between these two schools, the rangtong or empty-of-itself school and the shentong or empty-of-other school, this is not something that is settled on the basis of faith. It is through investigation and analysis. If through one's own analysis and reasoning, then one comes to prefer one to the other, one does not necessarily have to the other just because it is the one that is supposed to think is better. One is allowed to examine this with one's own intelligence and reasoning and come to one's own conclusions. If one happens to like and prefer the rangtong or empty-of-itself school, then that is fine. One does not have to take up the shentong view on the basis of faith or feeling that one is supposed to. On the other hand, if one has a great confidence in the shentong school, that is fine. One does not have to take up the rangtong position. This is to be settled on the basis of investigating it with reasoning. It is not settled by faith.

There are two more lines of root verse. At this point we are settling what the difference between the kündzop or relative and the dondom or ultimate is.

Relative phenomena are just mistaken appearances, empty of their nature.

Dharmatā does not change. It is not empty of its nature.

This first line of the root verse,

Relative phenomena are just mistaken appearances, empty of their nature,

could be set in the form of a sign and a syllogism. If one were to do it that way, then "relative phenomena" is the subject. "Empty of their nature" is the quality that one is looking to establish or prove. "Just mistaken appearances" is the reason. One would say:

The subject, relative phenomena, are empty of their nature because of being mere mistaken appearances.

When one takes being nothing more than mistaken appearances as a reason, that is the reason showing why relative phenomena are empty of their nature.

If one were to give an example, then one would use the example of a dream. All the appearances in a dream are empty. It is not that some of them are empty and some of them are not. All of them are empty of their nature, empty of any nature of their own. All of them are just mistaken appearances. One would say that it is like the appearances in a dream. How is that? Because the appearances in a dream are nothing more than mistaken appearances. The second line says, "dharmatā does not change. It is not empty of its nature." If one set this in the form of a syllogism, one

would take dharmatā, the first term in the syllogism, as the subject of the syllogism. Here dharmatā refers to wisdom that is free from complexity. The syllogism would say that dharmatā is not empty of its nature because of not changing. If something does not change, it is not empty of its nature. In the text known as the Mahāyānottaratantra Shāstra, there is a section that is called the *Ten Presentations*. Within that, the ninth of them is what is known as *permanently unchanging*, which is an aspect or quality that is true of the sugatagarbha or buddha nature. The sugatagarbha does not change at the time of the basis or ground, it does not change at the time of the path, and it does not change at the time of the fruition. It does not change from one of those conditions to the other. This is demonstrated in the *Uttataratantra* by way of many examples. Both the root text and the commentary have now been translated. Each of you should read it well. There is an extensive explanation of the way in which the sugatagarbha is unchanging. That is something that one must understand. One must know the reasons for it and how to show that sugatagarbha is unchanging. You cannot just say sugatagarbha is unchanging because it is unchanging. That will not do. You cannot prove anything that way. There is no difference then between what you are trying to prove and the reason that you give for proving it. So it will not work just to say that sugatagarbha is unchanging because it is unchanging. You have to study these things and know how to explain them properly to understand them well. This is something that you should read in the *Uttataratantra* and study it carefully. In general, each and every one of you should read it. In particular, those of you who are the translators and the faculty for the Ngetön school should read it very carefully and study it well.

Suppose that sugatagarbha were a changeable phenomena. What would be the problem there? What would be the fault of that? If sugatagarbha were something that changed, it would be impermanent. If it were impermanent, it would be a composite or conditioned phenomenon. If it were a composite or conditioned phenomenon, it would not be an effective antidote for saṃsāra because it would be something that would just fall apart. It would be something that would disintegrate and collapse. If one's antidote, the factor that enabled one to achieve liberation were itself something that has a nature of falling to pieces, then one's liberation, even when achieved, would similarly disintegrate. One would fall back. It would not endure. That is the way we understand things in the shentong system. Suppose that sugatagarbha were empty in the way one speaks of emptiness in the rangtong system, what would be the problem there? It would just be something that is a basis for an emptiness. If it were something that is a basis for an emptiness, then it would just be a relative phenomena.

The next two lines of root verse speak about the way in which the three natures exist and do not exist.

Imagined natures do not exist, dependent natures exist conventionally.

The thoroughly established nature does not exist relatively but does exist ultimately.

Imagined natures do not exist. We are speaking here about those phenomena that are just imputed or designated by conceptuality. Forget about them existing ultimately. They do not exist even relatively speaking. dependent natures do not exist ultimately, but they do exist relatively speaking. They do exist as relative phenomena. The thoroughly established nature is not imputed by conceptuality. It is not imputed by thought. For that reason, it does not exist relatively but it does exist ultimately. In this context, if something exists relatively, then it is necessarily an imputation by conceptuality. That is the meaning of relative here. It is a very profound way to understand things. One of the implications of this is that because the thoroughly established or perfectly existent nature is not imputed by conceptuality, it is something that ordinary people do not know anything about. As for imagined natures, the root verse says that imagined natures do not exist. We would take imagined natures as the subject. Their nonexistence is the quality one is seeking to prove. The reason has to be supplied. It is that it exists only implicitly in the root verse statement. The syllogism would read as follows. The subject, imagined natures—forget about their existing ultimately—do not even exist relatively because of being mistaken appearances. The second of the three natures, the dependent nature . . . In the root verse it says that dependent natures exist conventionally. We have a statement of a subject and a quality that one is seeking to prove. We supply the reason. The syllogism would then read,

Dependent natures do not exist ultimately but do exist relatively because they are the mistaken conceptuality that comes about through the force of habitual tendencies.

If the next line of root verse,

The thoroughly established nature does not exist relatively but does exist ultimately.

were set in the form of a syllogism, the syllogism would say:

The subject, thoroughly established natures, do not exist relatively but do exist ultimately because

Rinpoche gave two different sets of reasons, each of which has two parts to it. The first is: because of (1) being beyond conceptuality and (2) being the dharmatā conceptuality. Thus:

The subject, thoroughly established natures, do not exist relatively but do exist ultimately because of being beyond conceptuality and being the dharmatā of conceptuality.

Rinpoche restated that in another way:

The subject, thoroughly established natures, do not exist relatively but do exist ultimately because (1) they are not imputed by conceptuality and (2) are the dharmatā of that conceptuality.

We say then that the thoroughly established nature does not exist relatively, does not exist as a relative phenomena. What is the reason for that? It is because (1) it is not a relative phenomena or (2) it is not something imputed by conceptuality.

There are three more lines of the root verse.

Those three exist imputedly, substantially, and without complexity.
The emptiness of the nonexistent, the existent, and the ultimate.
Uncharacterized, not arising, the ultimate lack of nature.

The first of these three lines indicates the way in which each of the three natures does exist. The second of these three lines indicates the way in which each of the three natures does not exist. In sum, what is being explained through these three lines is the three ways in which there is no nature, the three ways in which a nature does not exist. The first line,

Those three exist imputedly, substantially, and without complexity,

indicates the way in which each of the three natures exist, respectively. The first one, "imputedly," describes the way in which imagined natures exist. Imagined natures are merely imputed by conceptuality. They are not things. They are not substantially existent. Second, "substantially" refers to the way in which dependent natures exist. Dependent natures are not imputed by conceptuality. They are not something that is just imputedly existent. They are things. They exist substantially. Third, "without complexity" refers to the way in which thoroughly established natures exist. Thoroughly established natures are devoid of complexity. They do not exist in the manner of a duality of apprehended and apprehender. The way in which they do exist is without the complexity of such.

If we set this in the form of a syllogism, we say:

In regard to the subject, the three natures, there are differences in the way they exist because (1) imagined natures exist as mere imputations by conceptuality, (2) dependent natures exist as substantial things, and (3) thoroughly established natures exist in a manner that is free from complexity.

The second line,

The emptiness of the nonexistent, the existent, and the ultimate.

speaks here about the way in which each of the three natures is empty. If we set this in the form of a syllogism, we would say:

In regard to the subject, the three natures, there is a difference in the way in which they are empty because (1) imagined natures are an emptiness of the nonexistent, (2) dependent natures are an emptiness of the existent, and (3) thoroughly established natures are the ultimate emptiness.

When we say ultimate emptiness, we mean the final, genuine, correct emptiness. When we speak of the thoroughly established nature being empty in the context of shentong or empty-of-other, we are not speaking about the sort of emptiness that is indicated in the rangtong or empty-of-itself school. In the rangtong school, the emptiness of which one is speaking is some phenomenon's lack of its own nature. We are not positing that in regard to thoroughly established natures. In the way that they are presented in the shentong school, they are not empty of their own nature. Rather, the emptiness of the thoroughly established nature is an emptiness of complexity and defilements. It is empty of those.

If we connect these three types of emptiness up to the example of the suffering that one experiences through being burned by a fire in a dream, we would speak about the way in which the different elements of that particular experience of emptiness, the fire that burns oneself, the dreaming consciousness or the dreaming conceptuality, and the true nature, dharmatā, or reality of that conceptual dreaming consciousness, are empty. We would say that the fire is an emptiness of the nonexistent because this fire does not exist as what it seems to be. It is not an external phenomenon in the way that it appears to be. It is not fire. It does not exist even relatively. It is an emptiness of the nonexistent. As for the conceptual dreaming consciousness, its emptiness is an emptiness of the existent, even if it is confused about what is going on. Nevertheless, that consciousness does exist. Its emptiness is an emptiness of the existent. If we speak about the dharmatā of that dreaming consciousness, in which case we are speaking about its clear, luminous, brilliant nature, its being wisdom free from complexity, the way in which it is empty is that it is an ultimate emptiness. It is a naturally pure nature. This is the way in which each of those three would be empty. These are good ways to be empty.

In the consequence school or prāsaṅgika system, emptiness means that phenomena are just names, just imputations by conceptuality. The sort of emptiness that they are describing is what is posited in regard to imagined natures when we are speaking in the context of the shentong school. That is to say the emptiness of the nonexistent. In the consequence or prāsaṅgika school one speaks about phenomena as merely dependent upon names, conceptions, imputations by conceptuality. That is the way in

which we describe imagined natures as empty when we are speaking from the point of view of the shentong school. The emptiness that is being described in the consequence school is just the emptiness of the nonexistent that in the context of the shentong school is applied to imagined natures. We find that fault with the way they present things.

This emptiness of the nonexistent, the emptiness that is characteristic of imagined natures when we are speaking from the point of view of the shentong school, if we posited that as the only emptiness, if we spoke of nothing other than that, then we would not be able to indicate the basis for saṃsāra or the basis for nirvāṇa. We would not be able to talk about the basis for becoming confused in saṃsāra and we would not be able to talk about the basis for release or liberation from saṃsāra, the basis for achieving nirvāṇa. It would be like talking about the various sorts of appearance in space like the appearances of a rainbow. They have no basis at all. We would not be able to indicate how it is that one becomes confused in saṃsāra, how one becomes released into nirvāṇa. If we speak about it in the way that the empty-of-other or shentong school discusses the various sorts of emptiness, we can distinguish the basis for becoming confused in saṃsāra and becoming liberated into nirvāṇa. This is something that becomes clear when one achieves enlightenment. Just how it is that one becomes confused within saṃsāra, within cyclic existence and how, when the basis for confusion has been exhausted, worn out, or extinguished, then wisdom becomes manifest. That is the basis for release into the nirvāṇa of complete enlightenment or buddhahood.

Dolpopa spoke about it this way. If one does not make the sort of distinction that is being presented in the shentong system, if one describes emptiness just in the way that it is described in the consequence or prāsaṅgika school, one ends up with liberation being a mere nothingness, just a cessation of body and mind. How is that? If one describes emptiness as just being a nonexistence of conceptual complexity, then when conceptual complexity has been extinguished, mind is extinguished. Mind just stops, ceases. There is nothing to become manifest. That is the problem that comes about if one does not distinguish well the basis for saṃsāra and the basis for nirvāṇa in terms of different sorts of emptiness. There is a verse from a lama whose name is Lama Jampo, the supplication to the guru called *Crying to the Gurus from Afar*, speaking to his guru, Dolpopa. It is his supplication to his own guru. He said that those poor, pathetic people who understand emptiness only in the way that the consequence or prāsaṅgika school or empty-of-itself school does, one should have compassion on them. He speaks about it that way. Why? Because if ultimate truth is asserted in the way that they do, then when one achieves liberation, it is a mere extinction of conceptual complexity. There is nothing to become manifest whatsoever. From that point of view, he says to have pity for those poor people for whom emptiness is just an emptiness of the nonexistent in the way that is talked about in the consequence school. One should have compassion for such people. What he is speaking about is

the necessity for them to transform or change their view. There are all kinds of verses like this. This is just one of them.

There is a recent new book by Shenpen Hookham called *The Buddha Within* that speaks about this shentong system. It cites passages from Sūtras and from Dolpopa and from other masters of this lineage. The words are set out in a very clear way. Those of you who are studying these philosophical schools of tenets would enjoy looking at her book.

The third line of this portion of the root verse,

Uncharacterized, not arising, the ultimate lack of nature.

describes the way in which each of the three natures lacks a nature of its own. We could set this in the form of a syllogism. In regard to the subjects, the three natures, there are differences in the way each of them lacks a nature. First, imagined natures lack any nature of characteristics. Second, dependent natures lack a nature of arising. Third, the thoroughly established nature is the ultimate lack of any nature. If we applied these three ways in which the three natures lack any nature of their own to the instance of a fire that is apprehended in a dream, we would say that the fire is of the first type. It lacks a nature of characteristics. This is because it is a mistaken appearance only. It does not have the characteristics of being hot and burning. Therefore it lacks the nature of characteristics. As for the conceptual consciousness or thought that apprehends that fire in a dream, conventionally it does exist. However, it is not genuinely or authentically produced and does not genuinely or authentically arise. For that reason, it lacks a nature of arising. The thoroughly established nature, which refers to the ultimate or the wisdom that is free from complexity, does not have dualistic stains. For that reason it is the genuine or authentic ultimate. It is the authentic lack of nature. We speak of it as a nature that is free from dualistic appearances. It is the basis for purification of stains. It is that which is to be made manifest. The next section of the root verse has five lines.

Therefore, all objects of knowledge are pervaded by emptiness.
The thoroughly established nature itself is unrelated with relative
phenomena,
Having abandoned definition, that which is defined, and illustrations.
It is asserted to be free from complexity, permanent, partless, and
present in all.
In other ways, the presentation accords with the mind only or
chittamātra school.

In the first line,

Therefore, all objects of knowledge are pervaded by emptiness.

to what does "therefore" refer? It refers to the three modes of emptiness and the three types of a lack of nature that we just discussed. If we were to set this line as a syllogism, we would say:

The subjects, all objects of knowledge, are pervaded by emptiness because of the three modes of emptiness and the three types of lacking a nature.

Then, considering the next three lines of root verse,

The true nature of the thoroughly established nature itself is unrelated
with relative phenomena,
Having abandoned definitions, that which is defined, and illustrations.
It is asserted to be free from complexity, permanent, partless, and
present in all.

if we were to set those three together in a syllogism, we would say:

The subject, the true nature of the thoroughly established nature, is unrelated with relative phenomena and has abandoned definition, that which is defined, and illustrations because it is asserted to be free from complexity, permanent, partless, and present in all.

Rinpoche commented that it is like the difference between gold ore and the ordinary stone with which gold ore is mixed. As far as the way in which things appear, they seem to be mixed up. As for their true nature, they are still distinct. These lines from the root verse speak of the thoroughly established nature as permanent, partless, and present in all, omni-present, all pervasive. To what do these qualities refer? We are saying that the luminous, clear mind that is the wisdom that is free from complexity is without change. From the point of view that it is unchanging, it is permanent. When we say that it is partless, we mean that it cannot be discriminated into different portions that make it up. It cannot be chopped up into different parts. When we say that it is present in all, this is like the way we talk about things in the context of mahāmudrā or dzokchen. . . These sorts of words, such as the first line that speaks of this luminous wisdom as being unchanging, is like the way it is presented in the *Uttaratantra*. Speaking of this final nature as being permanent and partless is the sort of language that one finds in many different places, both in sūtras and in tantras. The discussion or characterization of it as pervading all, as present in all, is like the language that one finds in mahāmudrā or dzokchen.

Now we go to the second part of our discussion. Remember that we began with identifying and settling what the two truths are. Now we will talk about the way in

which the shentong system is free from the faults of the mind-only school. We have four lines of verse.

In the system of the false aspectarians, the nature of consciousness is
said to be truly established and an object of mind.
Here wisdom itself is asserted to be truly existent because of being
noncomposite.
Therefore, the ultimate is free from the fault of being said to be a thing.

T: I asked Rinpoche what it meant to say that it was an object of mind. In the Tibetan it could be that one is saying it is a mental object, an object that is mind. You could also be saying that it is an object in the sense that it is something that can be taken to mind in the way of object and subject. I said, "Well, which of these is it?"

R: Both are true. It can be either way. In this false-aspect school, one is saying that ordinary consciousnesses or vijñāna have a nature that is truly established, truly existent. One would say that such consciousness is mental in its nature, a mental object and an object of mind. This sets it in contrast to the wisdom of which we were speaking. That is something that is neither an object for an ordinary, worldly mind nor is it an ordinary, worldly mind. It is something that is beyond that. The reason for bringing up this discussion about the false aspectarians and the mind-only school is that those who take the rangtong view of the prāsaṅgika or consequence school as the final view will look at this shentong school and regard it as an instance of the mind-only false-aspect school. They would bring it down there and say that at best that is what they are talking about. That is why the discussion is brought forth here, to make a distinction between how the false aspect branch of the mind-only school speaks of the nature of consciousness and how the shentong school speaks about the nature of wisdom.

Now we go to the third topic in our outline for this afternoon which is the discussion of the difference between the rangtong school and the shentong school. There are quite a lot of verses.

In shentong and rangtong, the way in which relative phenomena are
empty and
The cessation of all complex extremes in meditative equipoise are not
different.
As conventions in postmeditation, the existence or nonexistence of
dharmatā and,
At the end of analysis, wisdom's true establishment or nonestablishment
are different.
That ultimate truth is just the nonaffirming negative of inherent
existence is held to be a lifeless emptiness.

Positing ultimate truth as wisdom that is empty of duality and that knows itself is asserted to be the profound view that connects sūtra and mantra.

As for the first two lines of the verse,

In shentong and rangtong, the way in which relative phenomena are empty and
The cessation of all complex extremes in meditative equipoise are not different.

The way in which the rangtong and shentong schools explain how relative phenomena are empty is the same. Second, in meditative equipoise, all the extremes of complexity cease and stop. The way in which these two schools describe that cessation is not different. In the rangtong or empty-of-itself school, one speaks about settling into meditative equipoise and the wisdom of that meditative equipoise as a matter of all complexity ceasing, being severed. All complexity with regard to what? With regard to the realm or expanse of reality, dharmadhātu. One speaks about all complexity with regard to that as being stopped, severed. Mind settles into that in the manner of the object and subject becoming undifferentiable, inseparable. In the shentong school, one speaks about it in a different way. One talks about stopping all of the ways in which the mind apprehends objects. The true nature comes forth, becomes manifest. Everything that is extra in the way in which the mind apprehends things crumbles, is destroyed. The mind settles into itself or falls into self. One speaks about it as separation from all such ways in which mind apprehends, as the absence of ordinary ways of apprehending, and as the crumbling, falling apart, or destruction of mental complexity of whatever sort. In the context of post-meditation, when one is setting forth philosophical positions or schools of tenets and discriminating the difference and differentiating various sorts of philosophical positions, the consequence school does not make any assertions. It is free from assertions. The empty-of-other or shentong school does put forth assertions. The assertions are with regard to dharmatā or reality. In the prāsaṅgika school one does not assert either that dharmatā exists or that dharmatā does not exist. One is free from assertions with regard to it. In the shentong school, one holds that the dharmatā does exist.

At the end of analysis, wisdom's true establishment or nonestablishment are different.

When one arrives at the end or conclusion of analysis by way of a reasoning consciousness that analyzes for ultimacy, in the prāsaṅgika school one does not speak of this as truly established. One does not say that wisdom is truly established. Temporarily one says that it is not established. As for their final view, they neither say that it is established nor that it is not established. In the shentong school, one says

that wisdom is truly established. It is an ultimate that is truly established. What is the reason for its being truly established? Because it is an ultimate truth. One is not speaking of an ultimate truth that is merely the negation of some basis of designation. One is speaking about ultimate truth as ultimately true. For that reason one says that it is truly established or truly existent. That is the view in the shentong school. In the rangtong school one says temporarily that wisdom itself is not established, does not exist. As for their final view, they do not say that it exists. They do not say that it does not exist. They are free from assertions.

That ultimate truth is just the nonaffirming negative of inherent existence is held to be a lifeless emptiness.

The emptiness posited by the consequence school or *prāsaṅgika* school, which is merely the negative of an object of negation, is not the final or actual ultimate. It is a dead, corpse-like, lifeless emptiness. It is not the final, genuine ultimate. This notion of distinguishing between a lifeless emptiness and the final, genuine emptiness is spoken of also in the *Kālachakra Tantra* where it is said that a material object such as a vase that is empty of its own true nature, empty of any nature of its own, empty of inherent existence, is not the final emptiness. One could take the vase and break it into pieces, analyze the pieces, break them up further. They are not ultimately or truly established or inherently existent either. What one arrives at through that process is not the ultimate, final, actual emptiness. How does one describe or posit the real emptiness, the final, ultimate, genuine emptiness?

Positing ultimate truth as wisdom that is empty of duality and that knows itself is asserted to be the profound view that connects *sūtra* and *mantra*.

What is the real emptiness? It is the wisdom that illuminates itself and knows itself, that is devoid of or empty of apprehended and apprehender, that is primordially existent, existent from the start, that is empty of any stains whatsoever, the inseparability of awareness and the expanse or space, the undifferentiability of luminosity and emptiness, unpolluted in any way whatsoever. That wisdom is what needs to be realized. Realizing the emptiness of vases, pillows, etc., is not terribly helpful. What is presented as the ultimate? Just this wisdom that is empty of apprehended and apprehender, empty of duality, that is the true nature, that is the undifferentiability of luminosity and emptiness, the undifferentiability of awareness and space or expanse. This was said to be the final, true nature both by the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje and the sixteenth Karmapa, Rangjung Rikpe Dorje. Both said that the undifferentiability of awareness and the expanse is the final, true nature that is to be realized and that one must realize. If one realizes it, one will be freed from mistaken dualistic appearances. Merely realizing the way in which vases are empty will help very much.

perishable seminal point which is the fundamental support of body, speech and mind; and also the uncommon definitive order of the ground, path and result.

One should know that the intention of the final promulgation, even though not within the path upheld by the proponents of intrinsic emptiness (*rang-slong-pa*), is without contradiction by examining, one by one, the commentaries of the great lords of the tenth level and the teachings belonging to the tantrapiṭaka of the way of secret mantra.

Therefore, while the intention of the final transmitted precepts is not the same as that of the mundane Mind Only system in any of its forms, the purposes of the lower phases of the vehicle are gradually gathered within the higher, so that [Mind Only and the like] are not contradictory apart from their vindication of an extreme position. Indeed, one must truly comprehend that the great distinction of the higher over the lower phases is a feature of the precious teaching of the sublime Sugata. Otherwise, after one had been given teaching on suffering, selflessness, impurity and impermanence according to the first promulgation and everything had been established as emptiness according to the intermediate transmitted precepts, if one were then to grasp literally the meaningful intention revealed according to the final transmitted precepts concerning bliss, purity, permanence and true self,¹⁷⁹ without knowing how to accept them with an attitude confident in the four kinds of reliance, one would engage in conceptualising thoughts which would confuse those who require training and wrongly scrutinise the teaching.

With an intention directed toward this, the *Commentary on the Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle* (p. 74) says accordingly:

To sum up, there are four kinds of individuals who do not possess the eye which perceives the nucleus of the tathāgata. If you ask who these four are, they are as follows: ordinary persons, pious attendants, self-centred buddhas and bodhisattvas who have newly entered the vehicle. As it has been said,¹⁸⁰ “O Transcendent Lord, this nucleus of the tathāgata is not within the range of those who fall into views concerning worldly existence, who openly delight in deception and whose minds waver towards emptiness.”

This same point can also be proven thoroughly from all the transmitted precepts and treatises, but here one will suffice.

5 *The Provisional and Definitive Meaning of the Transmitted Precepts*

[92a.6-95b.6] When these teachings are allocated between the provisional meaning (*drang-don*) and the definitive meaning (*nges-don*), the three successive promulgations of the doctrinal wheel have the same common purpose, that is, to purify the stains covering the single nucleus of the tathāgata. They differ only in the greatness of their means which respectively purify the gross, subtle and very subtle stains that suddenly arise to obscure it. Thus, by teachings such as impermanence, the first promulgation arouses the mind from saṃsāra and causes it to approach nirvāṇa. In the second, the three approaches to liberation become an antidote to attachment to superficial characteristics, which include the mundane view of self; and the third intends that the extensive way of the sugatas be comprehended through the topics of that irreversible promulgation. This is extensively mentioned in passages such as the following from the *Sūtra of the Dialogue with King Dharmīśvara* (*Dharmīśvaraparyeṣāṣṭra*, T 147):

Son of the enlightened family, it is in the same way as, for example, a skilled jeweller, who knows well how gems are refined, takes an impure stone from a species of precious gemstones and, after wetting it in dirty salt water, has it cleaned with goats' hair, and similarly after then wetting it in a beverage has it cleaned with a woollen cloth, and afterwards, in the very same way, wets it in a herbal solution and has it cleaned with fine clean linen; when it is well refined, the stainless gem is said to be “a great gemstone of the species beryl”. Likewise, when a sentient being has first been induced to enter the Vinaya by the disturbing topics such as suffering and impermanence, and has then been made to realise the way of the tathāgatas by means of the three approaches to liberation, he subsequently is made to enter the objective range of the tathāgatas by the topics of the irreversible promulgation. To enter in this

way and realise reality is to become an unsurpassed object of offering.

Thus, the three successive [promulgations] of transmitted precepts are classified into those of provisional meaning and those of definitive meaning. It says in the *Sāra which Decisively Reveals the Intention* (*Saṅghinimocanasūtra*, T 106):

The first promulgation of the doctrinal wheel by the Transcendent Lord, through which the four sublime truths were taught to those who enter the vehicle of the pious attendants, is surpassed, circumstantial, of provisional meaning and continues to be a basis for debate. Then, beginning with the Transcendent Lord's teaching that things have no essence, the second promulgation of the doctrinal wheel which teaches emptiness to those who correctly enter the greater vehicle is surpassed, circumstantial, of provisional meaning and continues to be a basis for debate. And then, beginning with the Transcendent Lord's teaching that things have no essence, the third promulgation of the wheel of the exceedingly wondrous and amazing doctrine, which is well distinguished, was revealed to those correctly entering the entire vehicle. That promulgation of the doctrinal wheel is unsurpassed, not circumstantial, of definitive meaning and does not become a basis for debate.

The allocation of provisional and definitive meaning is determined in ways such as these.

The intermediate promulgation has accordingly been allocated provisional meaning because in this turning of the doctrinal wheel the enlightened attributes of ultimate reality, such as the powers of the sugatas, are mostly revealed to be empty of their own essence (*tang-stong*), though they are not actually empty of their own essence, and because it does not teach that these attributes are well distinguished and without inherent contradiction. For such reasons it is said to be surpassed and so on. Definitive meaning, on the other hand, is allocated to the third promulgation because [therein] things of relative appearance are empty of their own essence and the ultimate reality is empty of extraneous entities, so that the nature of these [attributes] is qualitatively well distinguished and then revealed.

If there are those who say that definitive meaning is contained in the intermediate promulgation because it teaches the transcendental perfection of discriminative awareness, but that the final promulgation has an intention of provisional meaning because it teaches the contrary, then they have not made an accurate examination. The attributes, such as uncreated and unceasing original quiescence, which are terms relating

to the transcendental perfection of discriminative awareness, are most extensively revealed in the final promulgation and very profoundly revealed in the vehicle of indestructible reality.

However, there is no distinction in the essence of the transcendental perfection of discriminative awareness, which is said to be distinguished as surpassed or unsurpassed depending on whether it is unclearly, clearly or very clearly revealed; for all the limitless [attributes] which are revealed by names such as the nucleus of the sugata, the expanse of reality, the mind of inner radiance, the naturally pure enlightened family, the genuine goal and the emptiness which is the essential nature devoid of substantiality, are identical in the naturally present, non-dual pristine cognition. This same [pristine cognition] is the transcendental perfection of discriminative awareness. Therefore the master Dignāga [in his *Epitome of the Transcendental Perfection of Discriminative Awareness*, v. 1] has said:

Being the transcendental perfection of
Discriminative awareness,
This non-dual pristine cognition is the Tathāgata.
Since it possesses the meaning
Which is to be accomplished,
This term applies to the central texts and path.¹⁸¹

The final transmitted precepts are conclusively proven to be the definitive meaning by all [scriptural] transmissions and [logical] reasoning. The Conqueror himself made the classification of provisional and definitive meaning, and moreover, in his own words said:

A monk who is called Asaṅga
Learned in the meaning of these treatises,
Will differentiate in many categories
The sūtras of provisional and definitive meaning.

The final [transmitted precepts] were accordingly allocated conclusive definitive meaning by this sublime [Asaṅga], whom the Conqueror had prophetically declared would differentiate the provisional and definitive meanings.

There are, on the other hand, no authoritative passages declaring the intermediate [transmitted precepts] to have definitive meaning and the final [transmitted precepts] provisional meaning. Indeed, even if the proponents of the Viñānavāda could have composed these final transmitted precepts as such, they would have mistaken the correct sequence revealed by the above simile of the refinement of gemstones and by other similes which refer to the medical treatment of ill-health and the study of letters.¹⁸² There would be no need even for the definitive order made by the Conqueror himself and the sublime [Asaṅga], and there would be limitless other such faults. In addition, after first teaching

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the provisional meaning and immediately the definitive meaning to those who require training, the provisional meaning would then be repeated, so that one would be obliged to consider just what is the Buddha's intention *vis-à-vis* the teaching. It should be known that by proceeding in this way, there would be all kinds of unbearable evils, such as allocating the conclusive definitive meaning to philosophical systems which propound substantial existence, slandering the buddhas and great bodhisattvas as holders of a relative teaching, and abandoning this doctrine of the nucleus.

Furthermore, since the three vehicles have reference to the definitive meaning gathered in the final promulgation, the definitive meaning is conclusively proven. This is extensively mentioned in passages such as the following from the *Sūtra of the Irreversible Wheel (Avaṁtara-kṛa-sūtra, T 240)*:

Then, in reverence to the Transcendent Lord, the great bodhisattva Madhurāṁgīhoṣa arose from his lotus posture and asked, "Transcendent Lord, what is the dimension of this world system of Patient Endurance?"

He replied, "Son of the enlightened family, in the western direction of this world system there is a world system which outnumbered the sands of the River Ganges."

Then he asked, "Transcendent Lord, in that world system which Transcendent Lord teaches the doctrine?"

"He is called the Tathāgata Śākyamuni."

"What manner of doctrine does he teach?"

"He begins from the three vehicles."

"What are the three vehicles?"

"He reveals the doctrine beginning with the three vehicles, which are the vehicle of the pious attendants, the vehicle of the self-centred buddhas and the greater vehicle."

"Do these conform to the doctrine revealed by the Transcendent Lord Buddha?"

"Son of the enlightened family, the doctrines revealed by the [different] Transcendent Lord Buddhas do conform."

"Just in what respect do the doctrines revealed by the Transcendent Lord Buddhas conform?"

And he replied, "The doctrines revealed by the Transcendent Lord Buddhas conform to the irreversible promulgation."