

The Five Great Reasonings of the Middle Way by Tyler Dewar from The Karmapa's Middle Way - Feast for the Fortunate

∴ Appendix III

THE FIVE GREAT REASONINGS OF THE MIDDLE WAY

1. The Vajra Slivers (*dorje zekma/rdo rje gzegs ma*)

The vajra slivers reasoning analyzes causes. It is synonymous with the “refutation of arising from the four extremes” that is the main reasoning used by Chandrakīrti to refute the self of phenomena. When one analyzes to find whether things arise from themselves, from others, from both self and other, or causelessly, one finds no arising whatsoever, and determines that, because they do not arise, phenomena lack an inherent nature.

2. The Refutation of the Result's Presence and Absence

(*yö me kye gok/yod med skye 'gog*)

The refutation of presence and absence analyzes results. Focusing on a given result, such as a sprout “arisen” from a seed, one investigates whether the result was present at the time of its cause, or whether it was absent, both present and absent, or neither present nor absent. When one finds no permutation from among these four in which arising is observable, one concludes that the result does not truly arise from the cause, for true arising would necessarily involve one of these four.

3. The Refutation of the Four Permutations

(*mu shi kye gok/mu bzhi skye 'gog*)

The refutation of the four permutations analyzes both causes and results. If inherent production were to occur, it would necessarily involve at least one of the four following permutations: 1) one cause producing one result, 2) one cause producing many results, 3) many causes producing one result, and 4) many causes producing many results. When one finds no applica-

tion of any of these permutations when analyzing, one concludes that all causes and results lack an inherent nature.

4. Beyond One or Many (*chig du dral/gcig du bral*)

“Beyond one or many” analyzes the entities of phenomena themselves. One investigates to see whether any given phenomenon is one thing or many things. Multiplicity implies a collection of many single units. Therefore, when one searches any phenomenon and finds no single unit that cannot be mentally or physically dismantled into further constituent parts, one concludes that phenomena lack an inherent nature and do not truly exist.

5. Interdependence (*tendrel/rten 'brel*)

The reasoning of interdependence analyzes all phenomena and is known as “the king of reasonings,” since, in contrast with the above four, which are capable of refuting only the extreme of clinging to existence, the reasoning of interdependence is capable of refuting both extremes of existence and nonexistence. When one investigates to see if there is any phenomenon that bears its own nature, identity, or character without relying on another phenomenon to arise or be designated, one finds no phenomena that are not dependently arisen or dependently designated. Since true existence implies independent existence, one concludes that no phenomena truly exist. Furthermore, to dispel clinging to nonexistence, one reflects on how the phenomena that are determined to lack an inherent nature are not utterly nonexistent, for they appear in the world and arise in dependence upon other phenomena in a way that is renowned in the world.